

## Written Answers.

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

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*Questions Nos. 1 to 14, inclusive, answered orally.*

*Questions Nos. 15 to 61, inclusive, resubmitted.*

*Questions Nos. 62 to 69, inclusive, answered orally.*

### Tax Code

70. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance his views on recent allegations made in the US Senate committee hearings that Ireland is being used by certain transnational corporations to significantly reduce their tax liability. [25452/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The corporation tax paid by some large multinational corporations and the rate at which they pay that tax is an issue that has attracted a lot of public and media attention recently. Every country in the world has its own particular tax system. These systems have been put in place and developed over the years to reflect their own circumstances. Some multinational corporations, with the assistance of legal practitioners and tax advisers, have exploited the differences in these systems to their own advantage. What is evident is that these corporations can organise their company structures to such an extent that they are able to minimise their corporate tax liabilities while still acting within the law.

In recent weeks national and international attention has turned to Ireland, our competitive corporate tax rate, and the tax arrangements employed by some multinational corporations based here. I want to reiterate some points that are very important to the debate.

Firstly, I want to make it clear that we do not have a special low corporation tax rate for multinational companies. Ireland's tax system is statute-based so there is no possibility of individual special tax rates for companies.

All companies resident in Ireland are chargeable to corporation tax at the 12.5% rate on the profits that are generated from their trading activities in Ireland. A higher 25% rate applies in respect of investment, rental and other non-trading profits. Chargeable capital gains are taxable at the capital gains tax rate of 33%.

The tax rates that were quoted publicly are, emphatically, not the rate of tax paid by such companies, or by any company, on their Irish activities. Having examined the document produced by the US Senate Subcommittee, it appears that the rate that is being quoted is reached by taking the Irish tax chargeable on the branch activities of companies that are not tax resident here, and dividing this figure by the entire global profit of the company concerned.

It is clearly wrong and misleading to attribute this rate of tax to Ireland. Companies which are not tax-resident in Ireland are not chargeable in Ireland in respect of their non-Irish profits, and these non-Irish profit figures should not be used to assert special tax rates that simply do not apply here.

Secondly, the ability of multinational entities to lower their aggregate, global tax payments using international structures reflects the global context in which Ireland and indeed all countries operate. This is an issue that we cannot solve on our own, and in a time where citizens are being asked to dig deeper into their pockets, Governments around the world are now taking co-ordinated action to ensure that these corporations pay their fair share of taxes.

I would like to reassure the house that Ireland has been proactive and has already taken the lead on many of these global issues, for example:

- The Irish Presidency has made significant progress on a number of key files in the area of tax evasion and tax fraud and we were able to bring a number of these to a successful conclusion:

- At the June Ecofin meeting we agreed a VAT anti-fraud package to combat sudden and massive VAT fraud.

- In May, significant progress was made on widening the scope of the EU Savings Directive which involves automatic exchange of information between tax authorities, an important step forward in an area where progress has been stalled for a number of years.

- And also in May we brokered an agreement among EU Finance Ministers to set out a road-map on aggressive tax planning and good governance.

All of these achievements have been acknowledged as significant by our EU colleagues. In fact, the EU Tax Commissioner, Algirdas Semeta, took to Twitter last week publicly thanking us for our “very successful Presidency” from a tax perspective.

- Beyond the EU, Ireland is actively participating in the OECD’s “Base Erosion and Profit Shifting” project, which will shortly produce an action plan that will be the main toolkit of the global effort to tackle this issue.

- And, in December last year, Ireland signed an Agreement with the United States to provide for the automatic reporting and exchange of information between the US Treasury and the Irish Revenue Commissioners. In so doing, Ireland was the fourth country in the world to sign such an agreement, which gave effect to the FATCA regulations. This was a welcome opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to combat tax evasion, and in particular, demonstrates our excellent relationship with the US authorities in such matters.

Both the OECD and EU work has clearly demonstrated that this is a global problem, which cannot be solved by one nation or even one continent acting on its own.

## **NAMA Debtors**

71. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Finance further to his response in Dáil Éireann where he set out that 45 National Asset Management Agency developers had a collective amount of €8 billion owing to NAMA when they were declared bankrupt outside of Ireland, if NAMA has made provision for the non-payment of what was owed by these developers on its books and what that means for NAMA’s financial outworkings. [31881/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As advised in response to a recent Parliamentary Question No. 82 of 20th June 2013, NAMA debtors who have been declared bankrupt outside of Ireland had, by reference to the nominal or par value of loans, exposure to debt of approximately €8 billion at the time of NAMA's acquisition of loans from the participating institutions. As also advised, NAMA has enforced over the assets securing these loans and continues to realise these assets.

Bankruptcy proceedings relate, generally, to any remaining unencumbered or unsecured assets held by the bankrupt. The role of the bankruptcy trustee is, therefore, to realise any other residual or unencumbered assets, including property and cash, which the bankrupt may have and to make a distribution to creditors including NAMA. The bankruptcy trustee can also seek to have the bankrupt contribute from post-bankruptcy earnings through an income payment order.

NAMA advises that it does not write off debt as a result of debtors filing for bankruptcy outside the jurisdiction of the State. Rather, it is a matter for the bankruptcy proceedings to deal with the outstanding debt. NAMA advises that even where the bankruptcy is discharged, the bankruptcy estate continues until such time as all assets have been liquidated and the debt, in so far as possible, has been repaid. NAMA advises that, in its position as a secured lender, its experience has been that bankruptcy has not tended to prejudice recoveries.

The Deputy may wish to refer to NAMA's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2012, which contains extensive information regarding the Agency's operations, including, as set out in pages 26-27 in particular, its insolvency activity and on the locus of debtor bankruptcy. The end 2012 financial statements takes account of the financial position of its whole loan book including those debtors that have declared bankruptcy. As with all debtor connections, NAMA conducts regular impairment reviews of connections whose principals have been declared bankrupt. The fact of being declared bankrupt does not in itself necessarily cause the impairment position to deteriorate. NAMA's security position is not impacted by bankruptcy proceedings.

It is important to point out that debtors are entitled to petition to bankrupt themselves in other jurisdictions if they are entitled to do so under the laws of that jurisdiction. The Deputy will be aware that for a debtor to avail of bankruptcy in any given jurisdiction he/she must first of all establish that jurisdiction as his/her centre of main interest (COMI). The establishment of COMI is a matter for the relevant authorities in the jurisdiction in which bankruptcy is sought. NAMA advises that in each instance of bankruptcy involving a NAMA debtor it reviews its options and selects the most appropriate method of ensuring the best possible return for the taxpayer. NAMA advises that it is currently challenging bankruptcy applications on the basis of COMI in two instances and in a further case is supporting the application of another secured bank with a view to having bankruptcy proceedings take place in Ireland.

NAMA advises that in each instance of bankruptcy involving a NAMA debtor it reviews its options and selects the most appropriate method of ensuring the best possible return for the taxpayer. As advised in NAMA's Annual Report and Financial Statements, the Agency, as a secured creditor, is generally neutral on the locus of bankruptcy proceedings and its experience has been that the location has not tended to prejudice recoveries. This position is based in part on its positive on-going engagement with several bankruptcy trustees of debtors who have been adjudged bankrupt in the UK. The Agency also advises that the bankruptcy regime in the UK is well-established, sophisticated and that bankruptcy trustees under the UK system possess extensive powers to compel production of legal and banking information, on a cross-border basis, from the bankrupt. These powers have been used in bankruptcy cases involving NAMA debtors to uncover significant undeclared assets.

NAMA further advises that the comparatively shorter duration of bankruptcy in the UK is not a consideration for the Agency as the bankrupt's assets remain in the control of the bankruptcy trustee long after the bankrupt may have been discharged from bankruptcy and any failure to make full disclosure may result in the period of bankruptcy being extended. NAMA advises that it challenges the release from bankruptcy of any debtor in instances where there is non-co-operation with the bankruptcy trustee.

### Personal Insolvency Practitioners

72. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Finance if he will abolish the 23% VAT rate on fees charged to families by a personal insolvency practitioner; the estimated cost to the Exchequer in the current year and a full year if VAT was not charged on home insolvency proceedings; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31478/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the service provided by personal insolvency practitioners does not qualify for exemption in accordance with the EU VAT Directive, Irish VAT law, and relevant decisions of the European Court of Justice. Therefore, like other insolvency services such as those provided by liquidators, receivers and examiners, the service provided by a personal insolvency practitioner is liable to VAT at the standard rate of 23%.

I am also informed by the Revenue Commissioners that under a personal insolvency arrangement, the personal insolvency practitioner's fees are ultimately deducted from the dividend payments to the creditors under the arrangement rather than charged to the debtor. As the debtor is availing of a personal insolvency arrangement because of their insolvent position, it is the creditor who is bearing the ultimate cost of the fees and the VAT on the fees.

Since information is not available on the volume of personal insolvency practitioner activity or the fees charged, it is not possible to estimate the cost to the Exchequer of exempting the service from VAT were it possible to grant such an exemption.

### Mortgage Arrears Proposals

73. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Finance if he has held negotiations with the troika over tracker mortgages; and if he is planning any regulatory or legislative changes to allow for borrowers in some circumstances to be moved off tracker mortgages. [31863/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware, I have no statutory function in relation to banking decisions made by individual lending institutions at any particular time. This is ultimately a commercial decision for the management team and board of each bank, having due regard to their customers and the impact on profitability. I must ensure that the banks are run on a commercial, cost effective and independent basis to ensure their value as an asset to the State, as per the Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies agreed with the EU Commission, the ECB and the IMF. A Relationship Framework has been specified that defines the nature of the relationship between the Minister for Finance and each bank. These Frameworks were published on 30 March 2012 and can be found at: <http://banking.finance.gov.ie/presentations-and-latest-documents/>

The Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) stipulates very strict and narrow conditions for any change of a tracker mortgage contract. As the Deputy is aware, the CCMA requires that a lender must not require the borrower to change from an existing tracker mortgage,

as part of any alternative repayment arrangement offered, except where:

- all other options, which would retain the tracker rate, have been considered to be unsustainable;
- the arrangement offered is affordable to the borrower;
- the arrangement is a long-term sustainable option.

The Central Bank has reviewed the CCMA and undertook a consultation in relation to the provisions in the CCMA. The revised CCMA was published on 27 June 2013 and came into effect on 1 July 2013.

The CCMA provides an integrated and cohesive package of consumer protection measures for borrowers facing or in mortgage arrears. It reflects the current mortgage arrears situation and seeks to deliver on the following principles, to:

- ensure appropriate resolution of each borrower's arrears situation;
- ensure that lenders deal with borrowers in a fair and transparent manner;
- support and facilitate meaningful engagement between lenders and borrowers; and
- ensure borrower awareness of the benefits of co-operating with their lender, and the consequences of not co-operating.

With regard to restructuring of mortgage loans, the CCMA requires lenders to explore all of the options for alternative repayment arrangements offered by that lender, for each particular case.

In addition, where an alternative repayment arrangement is offered by a lender, the revised CCMA requires the lender to outline the reasons why the alternative arrangement offered is considered to be appropriate and sustainable, as well as the advantages and any disadvantages or potential disadvantages of any arrangement offered, with regard to the individual circumstances of the borrower.

### **Bank Charges**

74. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the recent increase in bank charges by AIB; and if he has had any contact with the bank regarding this increase. [31884/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** While the Government is acutely aware of the increasing financial stress that some households and businesses are facing in the current environment, ultimately the pricing of financial products, including customer account charges, is a commercial matter for the management and the Board of the Institution. As the Deputy will be aware the Relationship Framework with the bank provides that the State will not intervene in the day-to-day operations of the bank or their management decisions. These frameworks are published on the Department of Finance website. I must ensure that the bank is run on a commercial, cost effective and independent basis to ensure the value of the bank as an asset to the State, as per the Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies agreed with the EU Commission, the ECB and the IMF.

I have been informed by AIB that these pricing changes will increase the average Mainte-

nance and Transaction cost for fee paying personal customers by €0.75 per month and by less than €2 per month for business customers. These fee increases do not affect the circa 40% of personal banking customers in AIB who avail of free banking via, “a way to bank free of maintenance and transaction fees”, if they are students or Advantage customers over the age of 60. Free banking offers also exist for start-up businesses and young farmers, while business customers have the option to negotiate fees on a case by case basis.

I have also been informed by the bank that for every ATM transaction the actual cost of providing the service is greater than the fee charged to customers for availing of the service. The bank also provides a guide on its website for customers on the way to reduce the cost of banking.

It should also be noted that the Central Bank of Ireland is required under section 149 of the Consumer Credit Act 1995 to approve any increases in bank charges and approval for these increases was received prior to the announcement last week.

In 2011, I requested that the Central Bank examine ways to improve Ireland’s payment infrastructure. The Central Bank established a Steering Committee which prepared and submitted the National Payments Plan to me. Government subsequently approved the plan in April 2013 and my Department is now working to implement its recommendations.

### **Overseas Development Aid Issues**

75. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance if he will outline, in relation to the proposals on taxation in the Lough Erne declaration made by the G8 in June and the call for greater policy coherence in the recent Irish Aid policy paper One World, One Future, the way Ireland is planning to respond to the call for developed countries to help developing countries collect the taxes owing to them, and for legislation to bring an end to tax offshoring; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31794/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have referred, in answers to other Parliamentary Questions, to work done under the auspices of the OECD in relation to assistance to developing countries in tax matters. In particular, the tax and development programme implemented by the OECD’s Committee on Fiscal Affairs (CFA) and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is concerned with supporting effective tax systems in developing countries. Notwithstanding our own severe budgetary challenges resulting from the international financial crisis, Ireland, through Irish Aid, is contributing to the funding of this work on tax and development. The OECD’s Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) project is an important initiative under the tax and development programme which is directly concerned with helping developing countries to collect their taxes.

To improve tax transparency and compliance in developing countries, civil society groups have for some time now been campaigning for multinational enterprises to publicly report on a country-by-country basis in their annual financial statements. Proponents of published country-by-country reporting suggest this would discourage profit-shifting between countries. Ireland supports the ongoing work at OECD level on tax and development issues, including work on country-by-country reporting. While supporting the principle of country-by-country reporting our position is that it should be rolled out carefully on a phased basis with an appropriate impact assessment. Ireland has given country-by-country reporting a significant boost by negotiating its extension to the financial services sector under our EU Presidency.

Effective exchange of information is a critical tool in ensuring that countries are able to

collect taxes owing to them. Ireland has now fully signed up to the joint Council of Europe/OECD Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. Ireland's instruments of ratification were deposited on 29 May of this year and the Convention/Protocol will enter into force on 1 September 2013. The deputy may wish to note, in particular, that an amending Protocol extends participation in this Convention to developing countries. This enables developing countries to access exchange of information with an ever-increasing range of countries without having to incur the expense of negotiating agreements with each of the countries concerned individually.

### **Banks Recapitalisation**

76. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Finance following the release of recordings of senior Anglo Irish Bank executives, his views on the apparent abuse of the bank guarantee scheme by Anglo Irish Bank to secure deposits from other institutions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31895/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The recordings to which the Deputy has referred are a matter of the most serious concern in the context of the background of the bank guarantee against which they were made. As I said last week in commenting on the affair, the content of the tapes has been very negative for Ireland's standing internationally and has resulted in extremely unfavourable press coverage abroad. Here at home, public anger, disgust and dismay at the tone and content of the transcripts is, understandably, almost palpable. I, too, am appalled at what I have read and heard.

The question of any abuse of the bank guarantee scheme in relation to deposit-taking by Anglo Irish Bank referred to by the Deputy is currently being examined by the Central Bank. The Bank is liaising with the Gardai on the matter and is examining whether or not any breaches of regulatory requirements may have occurred arising from the information contained in the transcripts. As the Deputy will appreciate therefore, I am not in a position to comment more specifically on this issue at this time.

The revelations of the past week or so bring to the fore the need for a banking inquiry as soon as possible. Of course, this will be a matter for the Houses of the Oireachtas themselves to determine. As I said recently in responding to a Parliamentary Question on the matter, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform indicated that he supported the objective of holding a legally robust, parliamentary banking inquiry when he announced last month the publication of his Department's 'Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013'. Indeed, Minister Howlin has since – in the wake of the publication of the transcripts - underlined the need for such an inquiry. While the primary purpose of the Bill is to create a legislative framework for Oireachtas inquiries generally, it would be of direct practical assistance in facilitating a banking inquiry in accordance with a decision of the Houses of the Oireachtas in this regard.

### **Tax Code**

77. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Finance in view of recent revelations about the low level of corporate tax paid by a number of high-profile companies based here, if he intends to change Ireland's corporate tax regime; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31888/13]

91. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider legislating to

make every company operating here but not tax resident here or in any other country deemed tax resident in Ireland. [31877/13]

94. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider establishing a 12.5% minimum effective tax rate and close off any loop hole in our corporate tax that allows some companies based here to pay less than the current 12.5% nominal rate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31854/13]

127. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Finance in the aftermath of recent revelations about the very low level of corporate tax paid by a number of high-profile companies based here, if he intends to change Ireland's corporate tax regime; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31851/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 77, 91, 94 and 127 together.

I want to make it clear that we do not have a special low corporation tax rate for individual companies. Ireland's tax system is statute-based so there is no possibility of individual special tax rates for companies.

However, I am aware of recent media reports which refer to the ways that some companies structure their international tax affairs to minimise their tax costs, and the fact that some of these reports make reference to Irish companies being part of these structures. By mixing up the Irish profits and the foreign profits of multinational groups, such reports can produce a global tax rate for the companies concerned that is lower than 12.5% — and an incorrect inference that the full Irish profits are not being charged.

All companies resident in Ireland are chargeable to corporation tax at the 12.5% rate on the profits that are generated from their trading activities in Ireland. A higher 25% rate applies in respect of investment, rental and other non-trading profits. Chargeable capital gains are taxable at the capital gains tax rate of 33%.

The profits charged in Ireland fully reflect the functions, assets and risks located here by a multinational group. The payments to the non-resident company represent the required remuneration of intellectual property assets funded and owned outside the State and its tax payments are properly reduced in these circumstances by reference to expenditure incurred for the purpose of its trade. Ireland cannot expect to receive or retain the remuneration of these assets.

The ability of entities to lower their global rate of tax using international structures reflects the global context in which Ireland and indeed all countries operate. Differences arise in the legal and tax systems between countries. International tax planning takes account of these differences in national systems and rules. What companies do outside of Ireland is beyond the scope of the Irish tax system. We cannot conclusively determine the effective rate of tax paid under international tax structures by reference to taxation in Ireland alone.

The only way to effectively deal with such arrangements is for countries to work together to examine these structures and to consider how international rules can be amended to ensure fair levels of taxation. Ireland remains fully committed to this approach to ensure fair play in international taxation. In this regard, Ireland is participating in projects at EU and OECD level which aim to address international tax issues.

Further, as part of the Irish Presidency of the EU, we were able to demonstrate our willingness to take the lead and made significant progress on a number of key files in the area of tax evasion and tax fraud. We were able to bring a number of these to a successful conclusion:

- At the June Ecofin meeting we agreed a VAT anti-fraud package to combat sudden and massive VAT fraud.

- In May, significant progress was made on widening the scope of the EU Savings Directive which involves automatic exchange of information between tax authorities, an important step forward in an area where progress has been stalled for a number of years.

- And also in May we brokered an agreement among EU Finance Ministers to set up a road-map on aggressive tax planning and good governance.

All these achievements were acknowledged as significant, no less than by EU Tax Commissioner Algirdas Semeta last week when he referred to our “very successful Presidency” from a tax perspective.

My Department has been actively engaged in the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (‘BEPS’) project. Following our invitation, the head of this project, Pascal Saint-Amans, spoke at our Tax and Economics conference last month and spoke very positively about Ireland’s support for the BEPS project. An Action Plan on BEPS will shortly be published: this Action Plan will be the main toolkit of the global effort to tackle this global issue. This is the appropriate forum in which to consider any potential changes to the Irish corporate tax system. My officials will take this under consideration as part of the regular Budgetary and Finance Bill process.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

78. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Finance if he believes additional measures beyond the recently passed personal insolvency legislation is now necessary in order to deal with the worsening mortgage crisis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31852/13]

119. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether additional measures beyond the recently passed personal insolvency legislation are now necessary in order to deal with the worsening mortgage crisis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31889/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 78 and 119 together.

The 2011 Keane Report on mortgage arrears identified personal insolvency reform, and in particular the introduction of new and more accessible debt resolution mechanisms, as a central catalyst for the resolution of the mortgage arrears problem. Indeed, it went as far as stating that, without effective bankruptcy legislation, the mortgage arrears problem will not be resolved. The Government has accepted the need for fundamental reform in this area and the new debt settlement frameworks as provided for in the 2012 Personal Insolvency Act will very soon be available to debtors.

However, the Government also accepts that personal insolvency reform on its own is not a sufficient response to deal with the problem. Other initiatives and measures are also required and are being implemented in tandem with personal insolvency reform. These include:-

- With Central Bank oversight, the development of mortgage arrears resolution strategies by mortgage lenders and the subsequent setting of performance targets for the main banks to require them to implement these strategies and, in particular, to propose sustainable solutions to their customers who are in mortgage difficulty. Associated with this is the recent Code of Con-

duct on Mortgage Arrears changes which seek to ensure an appropriate resolution of each case of mortgage difficulty and to require lenders to explore all meaningful alternative repayment arrangements offered by the lender for co-operating borrowers.

- The provision of general and, where appropriate, more targeted information and advice to mortgage holders which is free to the users of the service.

- The development of a “mortgage to rent” scheme as a social housing response to eligible households to allow them remain in their home.

The necessary overall strategy and building blocks to address the mortgage arrears problem are, therefore, now in place. These include the Central Bank targets initiative, the new Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, the fundamental change to personal insolvency legislation including the provision of new, more accessible and less penal resolution mechanisms to debtors and a comprehensive mortgage information and advice service.

The onus is now on lenders to move to address individual arrears cases in a comprehensive and speedy manner. Therefore, I expect the banks to increase the number of “split mortgage” and the other long term restructured mortgage arrangements put in place over the remainder of this year.

As part of the process banks are requested to make regular returns to the Central Bank on their performance against the targets and the Central Bank will audit the performance of the lenders in this regard. I can assure the Deputy that, both my Department and I will keep in close liaison with the Central Bank and individual banks on this important issue.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

79. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Finance his views on reports that some banks require customers to sign confidentiality agreements prior to concluding an arrangement on restructuring their debt; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31903/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have been advised by the Central Bank that confidentiality agreements should not impede consumers’ protections under the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA). Strong protections are included in the Code to protect indebted borrowers when dealing with their lenders.

In addition to these protections, provision 14 of the revised CCMA, which came into effect from 1 July, provides that a lender must prepare and make available to borrowers an information booklet providing details of its MARP. In the context of providing additional information in the MARP booklet, lenders must, if they make use of a confidentiality agreement or similar agreement, provide summary information in its MARP booklet.

The Central Bank is currently considering the issue of confidentiality agreements by lenders and has asked lenders to furnish information on their use.

From information received from lenders to date following contact by the Central Bank, it would appear that not all of the covered banks are using confidentiality agreements. Once the outstanding information from the lenders is received by the Central Bank the matter can be assessed further.

### **Personal Insolvency Practitioners**

80. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Finance if he will reconsider his decision to apply VAT to personal insolvency services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31927/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the service provided by personal insolvency practitioners does not qualify for exemption in accordance with the EU VAT Directive, Irish VAT law, and relevant decisions of the European Court of Justice. Therefore, like other insolvency services such as those provided by liquidators, receivers and examiners, the service provided by a personal insolvency practitioner is liable to VAT at the standard rate of 23%.

I am also informed by the Revenue Commissioners that under a personal insolvency arrangement, the personal insolvency practitioner's fees are ultimately deducted from the dividend payments to the creditors under the arrangement rather than charged to the debtor. As the debtor is availing of a personal insolvency arrangement because of their insolvent position, it is the creditor who is bearing the ultimate cost of the fees and the VAT on the fees.

### **Money Laundering**

81. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Finance if he supports the fact that publicly accessible Government registries of beneficial owners of companies, trusts and foundations be agreed as a part of the revised anti-money laundering directive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31781/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Commission published its proposals for a 4th Money Laundering Directive on 5 February 2013. Article 29 of the Draft Directive provides as follows:

“Article 29

1. Member States shall ensure that corporate or legal entities established within their territory obtain and hold adequate, accurate and current information on their beneficial ownership.

2. Member States shall ensure that the information referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article can be accessed in a timely manner by competent authorities and by obliged entities.”

Article 30 makes similar provisions in relation to Trusts and other legal arrangements. Neither Article requires the establishment of a Government registry. While I concur with the policy objective that beneficial owners of a company should be identifiable for the purposes of combatting money laundering and terrorist financing, the Commission's proposals are currently under discussion in a Working Party of the European Council.

The Deputy may be aware that the 3rd Money Laundering Directive requires financial institutions and other designated persons to identify any beneficial owner and take risk based and adequate measures to verify his identity so that the financial institution etc is satisfied that it knows who the beneficial owner is including, as regards legal persons, trusts and similar legal arrangements, taking risk based and adequate measures to understand the ownership and control structure of the customer. The 3rd Money Laundering Directive was transposed into Irish Law in the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010.

82. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Finance if the National Asset Management Agency is currently compiling a new portfolio of loans, similar to the grouping of loans behind the Project Aspen and Project Club initiatives, which will be sold on as a grouped asset; and if the sale of this portfolio will lead to a conflict of interest with the developer behind the loans able to advise any single third party with his particular expertise on the portfolio. [31883/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Decisions relating to the sale of loans or of properties that secure these loans are an operational matter for the Board of NAMA which is guided by its commercial mandate under the NAMA Act 2009. NAMA advises that decisions as to whether to sell loans or the assets securing them are determined by reference to whichever option will result in the best outcome for the taxpayer.

I am advised by NAMA that it has very clear rules regarding the open marketing of loans and all such sales are conducted in line with accepted international best practice. In line with this practice, as part of the formal loan sales process, potential purchasers are required to provide an undertaking that they will not engage with the debtor or other obligors at any stage during the sales process. Both debtors and potential purchasers are aware that the infringement of agreed protocols or undertakings may have an impact on NAMA's decisions as to whether and to whom it sells a particular portfolio. Furthermore, where NAMA approves the sale of any loan or approves the sale of any secured property by a debtor, it requires a confirmation that the purchaser is not connected to the debtor or other obligors.

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

83. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an update on the commitment given in the programme for Government to restructure the boards of covered banks and replace certain directors and other staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31667/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware, in response to the Nyberg report and with regard to the restructuring of the banking sector, I stated that:

*“a programme of rotation of board members, commencing with board members appointed before September 2008, will be expected to be part of the plan. This should apply to both Executive and Non-Executive Board members and provides a process to ensure a smooth succession of incumbent board members who were in place before September 2008. I would expect this succession to be substantially completed by early 2012, and will use my powers as shareholder to affect such changes if necessary”*

Across the financial institutions covered by the Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Act 2008, only one of the board members currently in place was in place in September 2008. That director, Mr Richie Boucher of Bank of Ireland, has passed a full fitness and probity review by the Central Bank.

The Central Bank Reform Act 2010 became operational on the 1st December 2011 when the Central Bank prescribed regulations into law setting out those functions (“controlled functions”) which would be covered by the Act, and a smaller subset of controlled functions (“pre-approval controlled functions” or “PCFs”) which will require the prior approval of the Central Bank before an appointment can be made to a Bank.

The Central Bank fulfils its functions under the Act by processing applications for approvals to all PCFs in all regulated financial service providers since 1 December 2011. The Central

Bank may refuse to approve a proposed appointment to a PCF role where it is of the opinion that the proposed appointee is not of such fitness and probity as is appropriate to perform the relevant function. Where the Central Bank refuses to approve a proposed appointment, then a regulated financial service provider may not appoint the person to the role.

Further, the Central Bank as part of its role in the on-going supervision of the financial services sector, including the banking industry, may from time to time consider that there is reason to suspect the fitness and probity of any person performing a controlled function and may commence an investigation into that person. The existence and progress of such investigations are confidential and details of such investigations may not be disclosed by the Central Bank.

As previously announced, the Central Bank wrote to all directors of the state-supported institutions in 2011 to determine their intention to remain in their posts beyond 1 January 2012. During the period of the review, many of the long-standing directors of the six State-supported credit institutions resigned. The Central Bank issued a statement on 28 June 2012 where it was outlined that the fitness and probity review of all sitting directors of the six banks and building societies covered by the State guarantee had concluded. A copy of this statement is available on the Central Bank website. In respect of remaining directors of these credit institutions, the Central Bank continues to carry out its role in respect of the supervision of the fitness and probity of those directors. New applications to sit on the boards of any of these institutions which remain under the Bank's active supervision will require the applicants to establish, to the satisfaction of the Bank, that proposed directors meet the Bank's minimum standards of fitness and probity.

All assessments of fitness and probity of persons being proposed to PCF roles, and of persons performing controlled functions are made with respect to the criteria set out in Section 25(3) of the Act and a Code issued by the Central Bank under Section 50 of the Act entitled "Fitness and Probity Standards (Code issued under Section 50 of the Central Bank Reform Act 2010).

### **Budget Consultation Process**

84. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Finance the consultations he will hold, here and with other EU countries and institutions and any others, before announcing the budget. [31873/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As with every Budget there will be considerable consultation with a wide variety of organisations. Officials from my Department are already engaging in meetings related to Budget preparation. Meetings take place throughout the year between my officials and officials of other organisations, such as the NTMA, the Revenue Commissioners and other Government Departments, most notably the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Given that there are still more than two months to Budget Day it is difficult for me to say exactly whom I will meet personally between now and then. However the Deputy will be aware that the Minister for Finance normally meets with IBEC, ICTU, the IFA, the ICMSA, the Construction Industry Federation and the Community and Voluntary Pillar in the run-up to the Budget and I would expect these meetings to take place as usual.

The Deputy will also be aware review missions to Ireland by the three external partners, the EU, the ECB and the IMF (the troika) take place each quarter as part of the regular review process of our EU-IMF Programme of Financial Support for Ireland. My colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Brendan Howlin T.D., and I meet with the EU-IMF

delegation during each quarterly review mission. These meetings are also attended by senior officials from both Departments. A wide range of topics related to the progress of the Programme are covered at these meetings, including fiscal policy, financial reforms, structural reforms, and economic developments. Budget 2014 will be discussed in this context.

With regard to EU institutions, the enhanced economic governance regime now in place for euro area Member States directly impacts on national budget preparations. Regulation 473/2013, one of the ‘two pack’ surveillance and coordination regulations, provides that euro area member countries must make public their draft budget not later than 15 October each year. The Regulation further provides that euro area Member States must submit a separate draft budgetary plan, containing all of the information in the budget but in a common standardised format, to both the Commission and the Eurogroup by 15th October. Therefore, there is no obligation to submit the draft budgetary plan to the Commission or Eurogroup before the budget itself is announced but it is a matter for individual Member States to comply with the new budgetary timeline in whichever sequence they decide as long as the deadline of 15th October is respected. I intend to submit Ireland’s draft budgetary plan to the Commission following the publication of the Budget.

### **Vehicle Registration Issues**

85. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if he sees merit in suggestions for purchasers of new cars to receive a vehicle registration tax rebate when they trade in a car less than ten years old against a new one; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31918/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Any proposal in the VRT area will be considered in the context of the annual Budget.

### **Mortgage Interest Rates Issues**

86. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider legislating to force lenders in covered institutions which have been rescued by the taxpayer to seek permission from the Financial Regulator when varying their mortgage interest rates. [31875/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I, as Minister for Finance, have no statutory role in relation to the mortgage interest rates charged by regulated financial institutions. It is a commercial matter for the banks concerned. The Central Bank has responsibility for the regulation and supervision of financial institutions in terms of consumer protection and prudential requirements and for ensuring ongoing compliance with applicable statutory obligations. The Central Bank has, however, no statutory role in the setting of interest rates by financial institutions, apart from the interest rate cap imposed on the credit union sector in accordance with the provisions of the Credit Union Act, 1997.

The mortgage interest rates that financial institutions operating in Ireland charge to customers are determined as a result of a commercial decision by the institutions concerned. This interest rate is determined taking into account a broad range of factors, including European Central Bank base rates, deposit rates, market funding costs, the competitive environment and an institution’s overall funding.

However, as part of the Central Bank’s work on mortgage arrears, lenders were asked to consider all avenues to help customers in arrears, including interest rate reductions. Currently,

several lenders do consider a temporary interest rate reduction but this is on a case by case basis.

### **Mortgage Arrears Rate**

87. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the mortgage arrears figures for the first quarter of 2013; reason the numbers in mortgage distress continue to increase; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31865/13]

177. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance his views on long-term mortgage arrears; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31515/13]

191. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the date on which the end of quarter two figures for mortgage resolutions targets will be published. [31709/13]

290. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which he and his Department continues to monitor the situation regarding mortgage arrears with particular reference to the need to ensure that homeowners who have fallen into arrears through no fault of their own are not unfairly treated and that cognisance is taken of the facts of each individual case particularly where, through loss of income or loss of employment has resulted in arrears; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32301/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 87, 177, 191 and 290 together.

The recent mortgage arrears and repossession statistics indicated that 95,554 (12.3%) of principal dwelling mortgage accounts were in arrears of over 90 days at the end of March 2013. While this represented an increase of around 3,200 accounts on the position as at end 2012, the rate of increase, while still upward, is not as strong as that which generally prevailed in recent years. The main reason for the increase in the level of mortgage arrears is of course the prevailing economic situation with the high level of unemployment, reduced disposable income and a decline in property prices all contributing to this. The mortgage arrears problem is a major problem that needs to be resolved for the long term economic and social health of the country and the Government has now put in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle the problem.

The Central Bank compiles and publishes quarterly mortgage arrears and repossession statistics for both primary domestic homes (PDH) and buy-to-let (BTL) mortgages and my Department closely monitors these statistics closely. Regarding future mortgage arrears data, the Central Bank will, over the coming months, commence the publication of additional statistics which will be designed to provide more information on the level of progress in relation to mortgage arrears resolution. One such measure is the number of newly agreed loan modifications during each reference quarter. This will be captured for both temporary and permanent mortgage restructure types. A second measure of progress is the performance of restructured loans. Current data collection only allows the user to identify whether a restructured account is in arrears or not; it does not capture information on those accounts that still have old arrears outstanding but which are meeting the terms of the new restructured arrangement. Reporting performance against specific resolution targets, as well as the full suite of key performance indicator data, should provide a more complete measure of progress in addressing arrears cases.

The necessary overall strategy and building blocks to address long term mortgage arrears are now in place. These include the Central Bank targets initiative, the new Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, the fundamental change to personal insolvency legislation including the provision of new, more accessible and less penal resolution mechanisms to debtors and a comprehensive mortgage information and advice service. The main onus is now on lenders to move

to address individual arrears cases in a comprehensive and speedy manner.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

88. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the negligible number of split mortgage arrangements in place to deal with distressed borrowers at the end of March 2013; if he has sought assurances that the banks are putting in place genuinely long-term solutions as required by the mortgage arrears resolutions targets programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31898/13]

114. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will indicate the measures he intends to take to seriously engage with the ongoing critical problem of mortgage arrears in view of the worsening statistics from the Central Bank; if he is considering recommending fresh measures that are effective in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31946/13]

118. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the use of split mortgages as a means of dealing with the mortgage crisis; if he will intervene to prevent some lenders charging interest on the split portion of mortgages; and if he will state how he believes the residual split at the end of the term should be managed. [31864/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 88, 114 and 118 together.

The “split mortgage” was suggested by the Inter-Departmental Mortgage Arrears Working Group (Keane Report) as one of the possible viable options for restructuring a mortgage in certain circumstances. The concept of a “split mortgage” involves splitting a distressed mortgage into an affordable mortgage and warehousing the balance. I am informed by the Central Bank that the majority of lenders have now introduced, or are in the process of introducing, a “split mortgage” as one of the alternative repayment arrangements to restructure a mortgage. While lenders have taken the broad approach set out in the Keane report, the product details vary from lender to lender. The most notable difference involves the interest rate charged on the warehoused element of the split mortgage and this varies from 0% up to the full mortgage interest rate. Also, the maximum amount that can be warehoused is dependent on each lender's own internal criteria. The split mortgage, like all other forbearance and modification arrangements, is based on affordability and sustainability of the arrangement from both the borrower and the lender's perspective. There is also a commercial and contractual leeway for the lender in formulating the details of any particular restructure or alternative repayment arrangement from the initial contractual requirements.

As lenders offer split mortgages with differing terms and conditions, the main supervisory issue is one of transparency and the Central Bank is of the view that all lenders should make public all terms and conditions and eligibility criteria for a “split mortgage” to aid both customers and financial advisors. In addition, the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears will require the lender, where an alternative repayment arrangement is offered, to outline the reasons why the alternative arrangement offered is considered to be appropriate and sustainable, as well as the advantages and any disadvantages or potential disadvantages of any arrangement offered, in the context of the individual circumstances of the borrower.

While the Central Bank engagement with lenders to require them to propose options for the sustainable resolution of mortgage difficulty is a major element of the strategy to deal with the mortgage arrears problem, other measures are also important. Among these is the reform of

personal insolvency legislation with more accessible and effective debt resolution mechanisms being made available to debtors and the less penal character of debtor insolvency.

The necessary overall strategy and building blocks to address the mortgage arrears problem are, therefore, now in place. These include the Central Bank targets initiative, the new Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, the fundamental change to personal insolvency legislation including the provision of new, more accessible and less penal resolution mechanisms to debtors and a comprehensive mortgage information and advice service.

The onus is now on lenders to move to address individual arrears cases in a comprehensive and speedy manner. Therefore, I expect the banks to increase the number of “split mortgage” and the other long term restructured mortgage arrangements put in place over the remainder of this year.

As part of the process banks are requested to make regular returns to the Central Bank on their performance against the targets and the Central Bank will audit the performance of the lenders in this regard. I can assure the Deputy that, both my Department and I will keep in close liaison with the Central Bank and individual banks on this important issue.

### **Tax Code**

89. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Finance if he has been in contact with any of the treaty countries that the State has tax arrangements with and have been mentioned alongside Ireland as providing the international loopholes for multinational corporations, with a view to curtailing the loopholes. [31878/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As I have said in answer to other Parliamentary Questions, company profits charged in Ireland fully reflect the functions, assets and risks located here by multinational groups. Profits charged here are aligned with real economic activity here - and these profits are charged at 12.5%. Very low rates computed in some cases are got by dividing the Irish tax by the sum of Irish profits *and* foreign profits of multinational companies. International tax planning opportunities largely arise from the interaction of different countries’ national tax laws and from international tax rules not keeping pace with current organization of multinational business. Addressing such issues comprehensively is beyond the scope of individual national tax systems or bilateral agreements between them.

The way to deal with international mismatches, gaps and loopholes effectively is for countries to work together on a multilateral basis to consider how national rules can be coordinated and international rules can be amended to address these issues. Ireland is committed to this approach and supports the OECD’s Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project, which is specifically concerned with addressing these issues. Ireland has concluded tax treaties with all member countries of the OECD, all of which have signed up to the BEPS project.

### **IBRC Liquidation**

90. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Finance the reason persons (details supplied) were employed by Irish Bank Resolution Corporation under this Government; if he will outline the amount they were paid since the nationalisation of Anglo Irish Bank; and if he will outline the severance and pension package each received. [31860/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have been advised by the Special Liq-

liquidators that they cannot comment on the remuneration packages of individual staff members of IBRC (in Special Liquidation). I have been advised by the Special Liquidators that any amounts paid by way of severance packages were in line with the packages paid to all employees of the bank. In relation to employees at the time of the liquidation, where relevant, senior executives are entitled to apply for a statutory redundancy payment, a payment in respect of accrued but unused annual leave and a statutory notice payment, subject to limits prescribed by statute.

*Question No. 91 answered with Question No. 77.*

### **Tax Code**

92. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether the Lough Erne declaration on corporation tax will pose difficulties for Ireland in attracting and retaining foreign investment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31922/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** At their historic Lough Erne meeting, the G8 held a very useful discussion on tax issues, culminating in the Lough Erne Declaration. This declaration outlined G8's commitment to "make a real difference" in ten particular areas. Four of these areas relate to tax. The Taoiseach has already welcomed the Declaration and asserted that it did not present a problem for Ireland. Perhaps the single most important element of the ten point plan was in relation to the automatic exchange of information to fight the scourge of tax evasion. Ireland fully supports this objective. A lot of our efforts in the tax area during the Irish Presidency were focussed on countering tax fraud and evasion, whether this arose in specific tax dossiers, such as VAT or Savings, or whether in a more general sense, such as the Council's response to the Commission's Action Plan and associated Recommendations. In that regard, following a very successful discussion at the Informal ECOFIN which was held in Dublin Castle in April, myself and Commissioner Semeta issued a joint letter to all Ecofin Ministers urging quick progress on seven particular tax proposals. I am pleased to inform the Deputy that progress has been made in all seven areas.

Ireland has nothing to fear from the Lough Erne Declaration. The technical discussions aimed at achieving the aspirations contained in the Declaration have been underway for some time by way of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project. Ireland is deeply involved in the BEPS discussions, a fact that has recently been acknowledged by the Director of the OECD's Committee on Fiscal Affairs. We look forward to seeing the final results of this work.

### **Banks Recapitalisation**

93. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Finance following the release of recordings of senior Anglo Irish Bank executives, his views on the apparent deception by Anglo Irish Bank on the level of recapitalisation required; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31894/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Like every citizen in this country who is working hard to restore the Irish economy I am deeply disturbed by the taped conversations involving Anglo executives in 2008 and dismayed to hear senior banking executives refer to the banking crisis with such arrogance. The Irish taxpayer has grimly endured the austere cost of the Bank recapitalisation and the bank guarantee. They are understandably outraged by these revelations. Irish citizens have suffered greatly as a direct result of the banking crisis and the events which have led to the bank guarantee. The recent revelations will only serve to reinforce

the Government's resolve to move this country back in the right direction by tightening up regulation and enforcing it.

The Government is determined to ensure the public is informed about what happened in Irish Banks and has published the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill which, once enacted, will provide the legal framework for a banking inquiry to be held within the current constitutional parameters.

*Question No. 94 answered with Question No. 77.*

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

95. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Finance if he believes the revelations contained in the recently publicised Anglo tapes have any implications for Government policy in relation to banking; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31853/13]

113. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which adequate provisions have been put in place to prevent a recurrence of the recently disclosed activities at the former Anglo Irish Bank; the degree to which the regulatory structures now in place are adequate in all circumstances; if it is recognised that the integrity of the Irish banking system is dependent on adherence to good governance in line with best international practice; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31886/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 95 and 113 together.

As there are a number of inquiries and investigations on-going into matters at the former Anglo Irish Bank, I am restricted in what I can say in relation to the recently disclosed activities at the former bank. I have already said that I found the taped conversations appalling. The Government is determined to find out exactly what happened and we propose to establish an inquiry to do exactly that. I have noted that the Governor of the Central Bank has also indicated that the Central Bank is examining the scope for action against those involved in the recently released tapes.

On the question of regulatory reforms, the Central Bank Reform Act 2010 was a crucial first step in the introduction of a new fully-integrated single structure within the Central Bank. It provided a statutory basis for a comprehensive domestic regulatory framework for financial services and set out new powers for the Central Bank to ensure the fitness and probity of nominees to key positions within financial service providers.

The Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2011, which is being considered at Report stage in the Seanad, further strengthens the ability of the Central Bank to impose and supervise compliance with regulatory requirements and to undertake timely prudential interventions. The reforms being brought in under the Bill are complemented by a number of strategically important reforms at EU level in financial services. Agreement has been reached on the single supervisory mechanism, one of the main cornerstones of Banking Union, which will provide for the European Central Bank to act as supervisor for systemic important banks throughout the Union. Agreement has also been reached on the Capital Requirements package which will ensure that European banks hold enough good quality capital to withstand future economic and financial shocks. Member States have also agreed in principle the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation and Directive.

In terms of promoting good corporate governance, I would also point to the Central Bank's

2011 Corporate Governance Code for Credit Institutions and Insurance Undertakings which imposes minimum core standards upon all credit institutions and insurance undertakings licensed or authorised by the Central Bank.

### **Budget 2014 Issues**

96. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Finance in the absence of a revised medium term fiscal statement in 2013, if he plans to provide an update on the size and composition of the 2014 fiscal adjustment prior to budget day; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31917/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware, Budget day will be on or before the 15th of October each year from now on, in line with the requirements of the two-pack of European Regulations formally adopted on the 30th of May 2013. Given that the Medium Term Fiscal Statement (MTFS) was published each October/November in prior years, it is proposed to incorporate the information normally published in the MTFS into the Budget Documentation. As such, the size and composition of adjustment will form part of the budgetary discussions themselves and will not be published prior to Budget day. I would like to reiterate that the Government remains committed to reducing the deficit below 3 per cent of GDP by 2015 and all budgetary decisions will be made with this overarching objective in mind.

### **EU Budget**

97. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Finance the steps he is taking to ensure that Ireland does not continue to overpay the EU through the use of inflated gross national income distorted by redomiciled companies. [31871/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware, Ireland's contribution to the EU Budget is an obligation of EU membership and is a charge on the Central Fund under national legislation. The contribution formula for the EU Budget is comprised of Traditional Own Resources, a VAT-based payment and a residual balancing component paid in accordance with a contribution key derived from each Member State's share of EU Gross National Income (GNI). This GNI element accounts for approximately two-thirds of Ireland's contribution to the EU Budget. The CSO prepares the GNI figures for Ireland in accordance with European and international statistical standards. In line with these methodologies, as the re-domiciled companies to which the Deputy refers are resident in Ireland, they must be incorporated in our national accounts. It should also be noted that revisions to Irish economic data are frequent due to the output fluctuations in the large multinational sector operating here. Indeed, should the position related to these re-domiciled firms unwind, this would serve to lower GNI, which would in turn reduce our EU contribution in future years.

The Deputy will be aware that the use of GNI as a contribution key favours Ireland, as unlike other countries this is significantly lower than our GDP. While my Department will continue to monitor the situation closely, it should be noted that under the current 2007 – 2013 MFF, Ireland has remained a net beneficiary from the EU Budget over the whole period. Furthermore, it is anticipated that Ireland will, almost certainly, continue to be a net beneficiary for the next number of years.

### **Money Laundering**

98. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Finance in relation to the anti-money laundering requirements applied to the purchase of prize bonds over €25 in value, if he has given consideration to the fact that this limit may have a detrimental impact on the sale of prize bonds; if a better balance could be achieved between the need for appropriate anti-money laundering requirements and convenience for ordinary customers who wish to purchase prize bonds as gifts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31890/13]

169. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance if there are plans to change the anti-money laundering requirements that apply to the purchase of prize bonds; if anti-money laundering requirements will apply to purchases of prize bonds over €25; if he will consider setting the limit to €100; if he will elaborate on the reasons for such a low limit being applied; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31647/13]

174. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will reconsider the requirement to have anti-money laundering requirements for prize bond purchases as they are very restrictive and may impact on the sales of same. [32082/13]

190. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to change the anti-money laundering requirements that apply to the purchase of prize bonds; if anti-money laundering requirements will apply to purchases of prize bonds over €25; if he will consider setting the limit to €100; the reasons for such a low limit being applied; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31707/13]

210. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Finance if in the context of the changes proposed in respect of anti-money laundering requirements for the purchase of prize bonds, if he will explore the achievement of a better balance in respect of the proposals, between the need for appropriate AML requirements, and convenience for ordinary customers who wish to purchase prize bonds as gifts and that AML identification requirements would only apply to the purchase of prize bonds over €100 in value, rather than the proposed limited of €25; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31754/13]

239. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will update Dáil Éireann on the requirement for application of anti-money laundering requirements on the purchase of prize bonds over €25 in value; and if he will engage with the Irish Postmasters' Union on this issue. [31820/13]

240. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Finance the current anti-money laundering requirements for Prize Bonds; his views on whether the current level is sufficient; if he has considered raising or lowering this threshold; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that many bonds are sold and given as gifts by persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31821/13]

243. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the concerns raised regarding the proposed introduction of anti-money laundering requirements to prize bonds purchases over €25 in value; if he will consider raising this threshold to €100; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31843/13]

253. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance if any consideration has been given to setting a limit of €100 before an anti-money laundering identification requirement is applied for the purchase of prize bonds; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32003/13]

254. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance if he has any concerns that the anti-money laundering identification requirement applied to the purchase of prize bonds

over €25 in value will be inconvenient for ordinary customers who want to purchase prize bonds as gifts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32004/13]

255. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Finance if changes in respect of anti-money laundering requirements for the purchase of prize bonds can be balanced in order to ensure the need for appropriate anti-money laundering requirements while also allowing for convenience for ordinary customers who wish to purchase prize bonds as gifts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32024/13]

268. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Finance whether the requirement to have anti-money laundering identification requirements applied to the purchase of prize bonds over €25 in value is restrictive and will have a strong impact on the sale of prize bonds by customers who wish to give them as gifts as if the limit was set at €100 before AML requirements were applied, it would be more appropriate and convenient for customers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32049/13]

269. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence from the Irish Postmasters' Union (details supplied) regarding proposed changes in respect of prize bonds. [32075/13]

270. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Finance if he intends to change the monetary limit at which anti-money laundering requirements are applied to the purchase of prize bonds from €25 to €100 and over to redress the imbalance in inconvenience experienced by customers wishing to purchase prize bonds as gifts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32143/13]

272. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider increasing the purchase limit of prize bonds from €25 to €100 before anti-money laundering requirements are applied in order to maintain a balance between the need for appropriate AML requirements and convenience for ordinary customers who wish to purchase prize bonds as gifts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32149/13]

273. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Finance if he will address the concerns raised in correspondence (details supplied) regarding prize bonds; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32155/13]

275. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Finance if he will increase the threshold for anti-money laundering identification requirement for the purchase of prize bonds to €100 from €25 for practicality purposes for ordinary prize bond purchasers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32173/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 98, 169, 174, 190, 210, 239, 240, 243, 253 to 255, inclusive, 268 to 270, inclusive, 272, 273 and 275 together.

European legislation has been adopted to protect the financial system and certain professions and activities from being misused for money laundering and financing of terrorism purposes. The anti-money-laundering obligations applicable in Ireland derive from the Third EU Money-Laundering Directive. The Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 was enacted in July 2010 to transpose the Third Money Laundering Directive (2005/60/EC) and its Implementing Directive (2006/70/EC) into Irish Law.

Part 4 of the Criminal Justice Act 2010 sets out the obligations of “designated persons” in relation to customer identification. One such obligation set out in the Act is the obligation to conduct customer due diligence, prior to the establishment of a business relationship. Customer

due diligence refers to the identification of customers and that of any beneficial owners of financial products associated with the customer.

An Post and the Prize Bond Company are deemed to be a “*designated person*” under the Criminal Justice Act 2010 as they fall within the definition of a “*financial institution*”. In light of this, An Post and the Prize Bond Company are required to comply with the relevant provisions of the Act in relation to the sale of Prize Bonds to customers. This means, in practical terms, that customer due diligence must be conducted on all purchases of prize bonds, irrespective of value.

The extent to which any particular person or product may be exempted from the customer due diligence requirements of the Act is determined by reference to the Act having regard to the underlying Directives.

The Central Bank of Ireland has no discretion to exempt certain firms from the requirement to comply with the Act.

In light of the above, I am exploring with the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) and my colleague the Minister for Justice whether or not exemptions available under the Directives may be applied to small value purchases of prize bonds facilitated on behalf of the State by An Post and the Prize Bond Company.

### **Promissory Note Issues**

99. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Finance if he has considered freezing the issuing internationally of the converted promissory notes, currently held at the Central Bank, pending an investigation into the handing of these notes to Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide, with a view to destroying the bonds if it is found that the promissory notes were issued on the basis of fraudulent and misleading information. [31858/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware the Promissory Notes were replaced with a portfolio of Irish Government Bonds in February 2013. The Promissory Notes were returned to the Department of Finance and cancelled at that time. As part of the transaction the Central Bank committed that the bonds would be sold in accordance with an agreed schedule and only where such a sale is not disruptive to financial stability. As the bonds are now legally owned by the Central Bank it would not be possible for me to freeze those bonds. I am deeply disturbed and outraged by the taped conversations involving Anglo executives in 2008 and dismayed to hear senior banking executives refer to the banking crisis with such arrogance. As the Deputy will be aware, there are a number of on-going criminal and other investigations into events in Anglo Irish Bank which will deal with these matters. The Government is determined to ensure the public is informed about what happened in Irish Banks and has published the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill which, once enacted, will provide the legal framework for a banking inquiry to be held within the current constitutional parameters.

### **Tax Code**

100. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which his Department continues to monitor allegations made to the effect that multinational corporations use this jurisdiction as a tax haven with consequent negative impact on the international reputation of this country; the measures taken to date to challenge and rebut all such affirmations with a

view to obtaining an unconditional withdrawal of such as were made at a recent COSAC meeting by an international philanthropist; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31887/13]

107. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the steps he is taking to ensure that the nature of Ireland's corporation tax regime is not misrepresented internationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31897/13]

281. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the steps that can be taken at international level to rebut the allegations of the existence of a tax haven in this country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32292/13]

283. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which allegations of the existence of a tax haven here have been adequately rebutted throughout Europe and globally with particular reference to the need to protect the integrity of this country's international reputation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32294/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 100, 107, 281 and 283 together.

Officials in my department, alongside their colleagues in the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the IDA, and our embassies and consulates around the world, have been working hard to supply factual information on our corporate tax strategy. This corporate tax strategy is based on the three Rs of Rate, Regime, and Reputation. We have an outstanding record of attracting companies of real substance to invest and create thousands of jobs in Ireland. These companies are here for a number of reasons including: our talented English-speaking workforce, good education system, and ease of doing business. Therefore tax is just one reason why companies choose to locate in Ireland. Officials are also working to make sure that the nature of our corporation tax regime is not misrepresented or misunderstood.

Erroneous allegations are monitored and a response is issued where appropriate. Of course we cannot respond to every allegation and nor would we wish to. However to give one example of where a response was considered appropriate, the Irish Ambassador to the United States recently wrote to the Co-Chairs of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to correct some misleading and inaccurate references to Ireland made during a recent hearing.

### **Banks Recapitalisation**

101. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Finance when he intends to seek access to the European Stability Mechanism to retroactively recapitalise Ireland's banking sector; and if he believes there is any potential in achieving recapitalisation through the ESM of anything more than the current value of the banks. [31869/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware on the 20th June 2013 the Eurogroup of Euro-area Finance Ministers agreed a framework under which the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) will operate its direct recapitalisation instrument. It is expected that this facility will come into force towards the end of the first half of 2014. In addition the Eurogroup also agreed to consider retro-active recapitalisation of banks on a case-by-case basis once the instrument enters into force. This provides one potential avenue for Ireland to recoup some of the funds it put into the Banks in the wake of the banking crash. However, there is a long way to go in the negotiations and as each case will be considered on its merits it would not be appropriate for me to pre-judge the outcome at this early stage.

*Question No. 102 answered with Question No. 69.*

## Property Taxation Exemptions

103. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Finance in relation to the local property tax, if a person who has previously paid for tests which showed that his or her home has pyrite, is required to pay for a new building assessment which would cost him or her more than the local property tax exemption that he or she is seeking; and the steps available to him or her in this situation. [31775/13]

112. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Finance the way a person with pyrite secures an exemption in relation to the local property tax. [31776/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 103 and 112 together.

Section 10A of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 (as amended) provides that an exemption from the charge to Local Property Tax (LPT) will apply for a temporary period of at least three consecutive years for residential properties that have been certified under Regulations made by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government as having “significant pyritic damage”.

The Finance (Local Property Tax) (Pyrite Exemption) Regulations 2013 require that residential property owners demonstrate significant pyritic damage in accordance with the recently published standard by the National Standards Authority of Ireland, I.S. 398 – Reactive Pyrite in sub-floor hardcore material – Part 1. This standard provides guidance on the Building Condition Assessment, as well as on the sampling and testing to be carried out, to establish the presence of significant pyritic damage.

To be eligible for an exemption from LPT, a liable person must obtain a certificate from a competent person, such as an engineer, confirming the presence of significant pyritic damage and cannot claim the exemption until the relevant certificate has been issued in respect of the residential property concerned. Once they have the relevant certificate, the liable person should notify the Revenue Commissioners in writing that they wish to claim the exemption. By virtue of the LPT legislation, the liable person can, as it suits their particular circumstances, opt to claim the exemption from that date forward or retrospectively if they received the certificate after they had already met their LPT obligations for a particular liability date.

Special arrangements will apply in respect of the years 2013 and 2014. Liable persons who do not have the relevant certificate on the first liability date of 1 May 2013 (liability date for 2013), or by 1 November 2013 (liability date for 2014), will be required to pay LPT for those periods. Where a certificate is issued after either of these dates but on or before 31 December 2013, a liable person may elect for retrospective exemption for one or other of the years 2013 and 2014. This election must be made on or before 31 January 2014. Where a liable person elects for retrospective exemption for the years 2013 or 2014, any LPT that has already been paid will be refunded by Revenue. Any refund is subject to Revenue’s usual four year time limit on the refund of tax.

Depending on when in a three year valuation cycle the certificate is issued, the exemption may last for up to five years. It is the date of the certificate and not the date of the claim for the exemption that determines when the exemption first starts from. Where a property qualifies for the exemption, it continues to apply even where the property is subsequently remediated before the end of the exemption period.

For those persons who have previously paid for tests to be carried out, I am advised that, conscious of the need to reduce costs to liable persons who own properties with significant

pyritic damage, the Regulations provide for the use, where feasible, of the results from testing of the sub-floor hardcore undertaken prior to the publication of I.S. 398-1:2013, to classify the hardcore material, if the testing that has already been carried out is in accordance with, or equivalent to, the test methods provided in this standard, and this has been validated as such by a competent person. However, a Building Condition Assessment, in accordance with I.S. 398-1:2013, will be required to be carried out by a competent person irrespective of when the testing is, or was, carried out. Affected homeowners may be eligible to recoup the cost of the Building Condition Assessment, subject to a maximum limit of €500 (including VAT), under the pyrite remediation scheme currently being developed by the Pyrite Resolution Board.

The rules governing when, and for how long, the exemption applies are complicated and are best explained by the use of examples. I am advised that further detailed information and examples on how the exemption for residential properties with significant pyrite damage operates are provided by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, on [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie), or can be accessed from the LPT pages of the Revenue website, [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

### **Tax Avoidance Issues**

104. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the fact that non-governmental organisations and some Governments have called for the UN tax committee to be transformed into an intergovernmental body; if he supports the establishment of an intergovernmental body on tax matters under the auspices of the United Nations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31947/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The issues of tax fraud and evasion and aggressive tax planning need to be addressed as quickly as possible. Everybody recognises that an international response is required and that individual countries cannot resolve these issues by way of unilateral action. The OECD has been looking at this issue for some time and will present its proposals on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) to the G20 meeting of Finance Ministers on 18 and 19 July - the proposals are expected to be published shortly before the G20 meeting. Ireland has been deeply involved in this OECD work. The Deputy is correct in saying that the OECD does not include all countries, however, as part of the BEPS project, the OECD has sought the views of a large number of non-OECD countries. A recent meeting at the OECD headquarters in Paris was attended by a significant number of non-OECD countries, including China, Brazil, India, South Africa and Russia, as well as a representative of the UN. I warmly welcome the OECD’s initiative in this regard as it is vital to achieve a global response to this problem. Furthermore, the OECD launched a three year tax and development programme in 2011 to enhance the enabling environment for developing countries to build appropriate and adequate tax regimes. Ireland contributed €300,000 to this development programme.

The OECD has developed the necessary expertise to tackle these difficult issues and it is now demonstrating this expertise by producing results. While a proposal to establish an intergovernmental body on tax matters under the auspices of the United Nations might have some merit in the future, I do not believe that it would be the right approach at this particular point in time. We need solutions quickly and the OECD is the appropriate organisation to develop these solutions.

### **Universal Social Charge Application**

105. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to reform the univer-

sal social charge, if he is considering integrating it with PRSI; the issues that would arise from such integration; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31907/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Universal Social Charge (USC) was introduced from 1 January 2011 to replace the Income Levy and the Health Levy. It was a necessary measure to widen the tax base, remove poverty traps and raise revenue to reduce the budget deficit. The USC is a tax in nature and not a social contribution as it does not possess the attributes of a social security contribution. Payment of the USC does not guarantee a benefit nor is there a defined relationship between payments under the charge, contributions and benefits paid, as there normally is with a social insurance system. PRSI is applied on a narrower earned income base, the rates of charge differ by sector and other non-income related criteria, and there are cash benefit entitlements that derive from the maintenance of a contribution record that varies by sector i.e. employee, self-employed and public servant. These differences mean there are considerable non-tax policy issues that would need to be resolved before PRSI could be incorporated in to the USC charge. Delivering on a commitment in the Programme for Government, the USC was reviewed by the Department of Finance in the lead up to Budget 2012. The report is available at [www.finance.gov.ie](http://www.finance.gov.ie). As the Deputy will be aware, it is a long-standing practice of the Minister for Finance not to comment in advance of the Budget on any tax matters that might be the subject of Budget decisions.

### Credit Union Fund Issues

106. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether additional capital will be required by the credit union sector; his views on the progress made to date in securing the future of credit unions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31928/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In its final report, the Commission on Credit Unions identified the financial position of credit unions in Ireland, stating that the declining fortunes of the Irish economy have not only put an additional brake on credit union development but have contributed to regression in some credit unions. In response to this, the Commission set out a range of measures to provide a strong foundation for addressing the difficult problems in the sector. Specifically, in terms of the stability of credit unions, the Commission made recommendations in relation to restructuring, stabilisation and resolution. A core recommendation was that the sector be restructured on a voluntary, incentivised and time-bound basis in order to allow the credit union sector perform to a greater level of efficiency. The Government contributed €250 million to the Credit Union Fund in December 2012 to support the restructuring of the credit union sector by the Credit Union Restructuring Board. The board is working to the timetable set out in the Commission's report and is expected to complete its work by the end of 2015 with any necessary disbursement of funding taking place before then. Any funding provided to credit unions will be on a recoupable basis. The Commission recommended that a statutory stabilisation fund be established to address short-term problems at credit unions that are viable but undercapitalised. The statutory basis for stabilisation is in place under the Credit Union and Co-operation with Overseas Regulators Act 2012 and my Department is conducting an analysis in advance of implementation of a levy by the end of 2013. The Commission also recommended that resolution powers provided to the Central Bank under the Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) Act 2011 should be considered for those credit unions that meet certain conditions set out in that Act. The Government has provided resolution funding for credit unions of €250 million. Funding will be based on a principle of recoupment over the medium term via a levy under the Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) Act 2011. I am satisfied that these measures, together with governance and regulatory changes, introduced on foot of the Commission Report will underpin a stable credit union sector into the future.

*Question No. 107 answered with Question No. 100.*

### **NAMA Debtors**

108. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Finance the steps the National Asset Management Agency is taking to protect its claim over assets held by borrowers who file for bankruptcy in the UK; the success it has had to date in securing these assets; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31911/13]

**Minister for Finance(Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy may wish to refer to NAMA's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2012, which contain extensive information regarding the Agency's operations, including, as set out in pages 26 and 27 in particular, its insolvency activity and on the locus of debtor bankruptcy. NAMA advises that in each instance of bankruptcy involving a NAMA debtor it reviews its options and selects the most appropriate method of ensuring the best possible return for the taxpayer. The Agency advises that, as a secured creditor, it is generally neutral on the locus of bankruptcy proceedings and its experience has been that the location has not tended to prejudice recoveries. This position is based in part on its positive ongoing engagement with several bankruptcy trustees of debtors who have been adjudged bankrupt in the UK. The Agency also advises that the bankruptcy regime in the UK is well-established, sophisticated and that bankruptcy trustees under the UK system possess extensive powers to compel production of legal and banking information, on a cross-border basis, from the bankrupt. These powers have been used in bankruptcy cases involving NAMA debtors to uncover significant undeclared assets. NAMA further advises that the comparatively shorter duration of bankruptcy in the UK is not a consideration for the Agency as the bankrupt's assets remain in the control of the bankruptcy trustee long after the bankrupt may have been discharged from bankruptcy and any failure to make full disclosure may result in the period of bankruptcy being extended. NAMA advises that it challenges the release from bankruptcy of any debtor in instances where there is non-cooperation with the bankruptcy trustee. NAMA also advises that, even when a bankruptcy is discharged, the bankruptcy trustee continues to deal with outstanding debt until as all assets have been realised and the debt, in so far as possible, has been repaid.

### **NAMA Loans Sale**

109. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Finance further to reports of a case being taken in New York concerning the overcharging of interest on Anglo Irish Bank loans, if his attention has been drawn to the details of this case; the provisions that have been made by either the special liquidator at Irish Bank Resolution Corporation and or the National Asset Management Agency to deal with the potential ramifications including financial compensation of those overcharged interest; and if there is a possibility of loans being declared void, or the danger of loans becoming unsellable by the special liquidator as a result of this case. [31879/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Unfortunately, I am not in a position to comment directly on cases currently in before the Courts. I have been advised by the Special Liquidators that in the Republic of Ireland any claims made in relation to the potential overcharging of interest would likely rank as unsecured creditors in the liquidation. I am further advised by the Special Liquidators that these allegations are not expected to have a significant impact on the sales of those loans by the Special Liquidator.

## Financial Services Sector

110. **Deputy Seamus Kirk** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider tightening the regulations on the extent and nature of advertising in which moneylenders may engage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31912/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Moneylenders are licensed by the Central Bank of Ireland in accordance with the provisions of Part VIII of the Consumer Credit Act 1995 (as amended). Moneylenders have to apply to the Central Bank each year for renewal of their licences. In addition to the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act 1995, a licensed moneylender must comply with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Code for Licensed Moneylenders and with the European Communities (Consumer Credit Agreements) Regulations 2010. Licensed moneylenders must comply with the following specific provisions with regard to advertising: Chapter 3 of the Moneylenders Code, Regulation 4 (1) and Regulation 7 of the Regulations, and Part II of the Act. Compliance with these pieces of legislation is monitored on an ongoing basis through a robust annual licensing process, ongoing supervision, themed inspections, mystery shops, consumer intelligence and complaints from the Financial Services Ombudsman. Failure to adhere to the provisions may lead to proceedings under our Administrative Sanctions Procedures, which enable us to sanction and to fine regulated entities for breaches of regulatory requirements.

Since 1 December 2011, licensed moneylenders are also subject to a new fitness and probity regime. The ML Code sets out General Principles with which a moneylender must comply. For example, a moneylender must act honestly and professionally, with due skill, care and diligence in the best interest of consumers. Chapter 3 of the ML Code places specific requirements on moneylenders in relation to the contents and presentation of advertisements. The main areas covered by Chapter 3 of the ML Code require moneylenders to ensure advertisements are fair and not misleading, clearly understood, complete and accurate. The Central Bank deals with regulated entities, including moneylenders, where there are concerns around the fairness, clarity, accuracy and potential for an advertisement to be construed as misleading in their overall content and presentation and actively follows up on any issues identified. For example, where key information in relation to a product or service in advertisements is not sufficiently prominent and is included in smaller print to other parts of the advertisement, the Central Bank will address this with the individual entity.

## Fuel Laundering

111. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the operation of the green diesel scheme; the way the loss to the taxpayer from diesel smuggling can be reduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31929/13]

236. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the money that could be saved for the Exchequer if fuel dyeing was discontinued. [31808/13]

245. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the cost to the Exchequer each year as a result of diesel laundering. [31940/13]

246. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he has considered ending the process of dyeing diesel and instead offering a rebate to farmers, transport firms, hauliers and so forth, to compensate for accessing the more expensive diesel type. [31941/13]

252. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he has considered the in-

roduction of one excise duty for all diesel including green diesel, with a rebate system for agricultural and other users of green diesel; and if he will set out the financial ramifications of such a move. [32002/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 111, 236, 245, 246 and 252 together.

I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners, which have responsibility for the collection of mineral oil tax, that they are very aware of the threat fuel fraud poses to the Exchequer and to legitimate businesses. The most serious risk in relation to illicit trade in mineral oil products is from the laundering of markers from diesel that is subject to a reduced rate of mineral oil tax on condition that it is not used in road vehicles. EU Directive 2003/96/EC, which sets out the requirements for the taxation of energy products and electricity, permits diesel used for certain industrial and commercial purposes to be subjected to a lower rate of energy tax than that applied to auto-diesel. Those purposes include agricultural, horticultural and piscicultural works and in forestry, in stationary motors and in plant and machinery used in construction, civil engineering and public works. The Directive provides also that diesel used for certain other purposes, such as sea fisheries and commercial navigation, must be exempted from energy tax. Where diesel is released for consumption subject to a lower rate of energy tax, or is exempted from that tax, the fuel concerned may not be used as auto-diesel and must be marked, in accordance with EU Directive 95/60/EC on fiscal marking of gas oils and kerosene (and its associated Decisions), to distinguish it from auto-diesel. The corresponding provisions of Irish law are contained in the Mineral Oil Tax Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 231 of 2012). Under these regulations, a specified substance and a blue dye must be added to the fuel, resulting in a green coloured marker.

This system of marking diesel has been an effective and efficient means of delivering a tax rebate on a product used by a very large number of users across a wide range of uses. Fuel laundering to remove the marker added to lower-taxed mineral oil for off-road use has been a persistent problem over the years. However, it remained a marginal activity because the sulphur content of marked fuel was higher than that for road fuel and therefore the sulphur content continued to distinguish laundered fuel from genuine road fuel. Environmental requirements in relation to the sulphur content of fuel changed from the beginning of 2011, which resulted in marked fuel with the same sulphur content as road fuel coming onto the market. With this change, fuel laundering became more viable and criminal gangs intensified their laundering and distribution activities dramatically from the first half of 2011. In response, Revenue has made action against fuel laundering one of its priorities and is implementing a comprehensive strategy to tackle the problem through enhanced supply chain controls, the acquisition of a more effective fuel marker and continued robust enforcement action.

This strategy included strengthening the licensing conditions for auto-fuel traders in 2011 and the introduction of a new licensing system for marked fuel traders in October 2012. In addition, since January 2013, all licensed fuel traders are required to make electronic returns to Revenue of their fuel transactions each month. These supply chain control measures are designed to make it difficult for fuel criminals to source marked fuel for laundering and to get laundered product onto the market. Analysis of the monthly returns of fuel trading will enable Revenue to identify suspicious or anomalous fuel transactions and patterns of distribution. Analysis of the first few months of returns data is well advanced. Traders found to be involved in suspicious activity will be investigated and if they are unable to account properly for the source or disposal of product, they will face revocation of their licence, tax assessment and prosecution where appropriate. In addition, Revenue and HM Revenue & Customs in the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2012 on a joint approach to finding a more effective marker for use in both jurisdictions. A number of proposals for a new marker submitted in response to an Invitation to Make Submissions are being evaluated. The outcome of this

process is expected later this year. Revenue, in co-operation with other law enforcement agencies on both sides of the Border, continues to intensify enforcement action against fuel fraud and this work has yielded significant results to date. In the past two years 97 filling stations throughout the State were closed for breaches of licensing conditions. Since the beginning of 2010, over 2.8 million litres of fuel have been seized and 29 oil laundries detected and closed down, including five oil laundries in 2013 to date.

While there have been a number of calls for the replacement of the current marking scheme with a rebate scheme, a change of this nature would impact on a wide range of users, would be costly to implement and would, itself, be at risk from fraud. Marked gas oil has a variety of uses including the propulsion of trains, the operation of agricultural, construction and industrial machinery, commercial sea-navigation (including fishing) and commercial and home heating purposes. A change to a rebate system for all users would involve the establishment of an expensive repayments system and place a new administrative burden on oil traders, users and the Revenue Commissioners. It would also impose significant cashflow costs for those currently using marked gas oil. Also, repayment schemes are vulnerable to abuse and the introduction of a wide-ranging scheme such as that proposed would not necessarily offer greater security against fraud than the current arrangements.

It has been suggested recently that huge savings could be made by moving from the current system of marking rebated fuel to one based on making repayments to those users that currently use marked fuel. This seems to be based on the erroneous view that adding the prescribed markers to rebated fuel is exceptionally costly and is borne by the Exchequer. This is not the case; the cost of the markers is negligible and is borne by the industry. The cost to the Exchequer of marked fuel is the tax foregone and an alternative system based on direct repayments to users would not produce any savings for the Exchequer and might be more costly if the incidence of fraud were greater. If the fuel for off-road use was not marked under the new system, it could be diverted easily to road use; if it was marked it could be laundered as at present. It would also be the case that marked fuel from Northern Ireland would continue to be available and could be laundered by fuel criminals based in Border areas.

For these reasons, I am not proposing any change to the existing scheme. I strongly support the current strategy being implemented by Revenue and am confident that it will succeed with the co-operation and support of the legitimate trade. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the industry has worked very closely with them in developing and implementing their strategy. Revenue regularly reminds motorists and the public generally that, in addition to its impact on the Exchequer and legitimate trade, they should be aware of the risks posed to their vehicles by using laundered fuel and the fact that sourcing fuel in this way is funding criminal activity. The legitimate retail trade can also contribute to closing down this illegitimate trade by providing information on the outlets that are selling laundered diesel. Revenue chairs the Hidden Economy Monitoring Group (HEMG) and has established regional sub-groups of the HEMG to facilitate the reporting of information by traders through their representative associations. Retailers who suspect or have evidence that laundered diesel is being sold in their area should report this through their representative associations to the Revenue. Such reports are treated as confidential and are fully investigated by Revenue.

*Question No. 112 answered with Question No. 103.*

*Question No. 113 answered with Question No. 95.*

*Question No. 114 answered with Question No. 88.*

## **Banking Debt**

115. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Finance the reason over a year after the Eurogroup statement of June 2012 was welcomed as a seismic shift Ireland continues to pay off banking debt as sovereign debt. [31867/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy will be aware that there were discussions with our external partners on the issue of payment to bondholders. I have advised the House on a number of occasions that our European partners expressed strong reservations about burden sharing with senior bondholders and the rationale for this position. This commitment was agreed with our external partners and was the basis on which Ireland's financing strategy was built. However, the Deputy will also be aware that under the Irish Presidency significant progress in dealing with Ireland's banking debt has been made. In February the successful conclusion of negotiations with the ECB facilitated the replacement by the Irish Government of the Promissory Notes issued to IBRC with a series of longer term, non-amortising floating rate Government bonds. This has resulted in significant benefits to the State including spreading the cost of the Promissory Notes from a weighted average life of c.7-8 years to c.34-35 years at a lower funding cost for the State, resulting in significant annual interest savings.

The Government has also successfully negotiated a further extension of the maturities of our EU loan facilities. Recently the EU Finance Ministers agreed in principle to further extend the maximum weighted average maturities on our EFSF and EFSM loans by up to 7 years, over and above the extension agreed in 2011. This further maturity extension removes a re-financing requirement of some €20 billion for the Irish state in the years 2015 to 2022. This extension of maturities has a number of significant benefits for Ireland, including smoothing our redemption profile, improving our long term debt sustainability and it has a positive impact on the cost of Exchequer borrowing through creating further downward pressure on our borrowing costs.

The Deputy will also be aware that under the Irish Presidency the European Union finance ministers agreed a deal on new rules that will force investors and wealthy savers to share the costs of future bank failures. The plan stipulates that shareholders, bondholders and certain depositors with more than €100,000 should share the burden of saving a bank, instead of a taxpayer-funded bailout.

These new rules will likely come into force by the end of the year and mark a revolutionary change in the way banks are treated and it is a major milestone in our effort to break the vicious link between the banks and the sovereign.

Finally, on the 20th June 2013 the Eurogroup of Euro-area Finance Ministers agreed the framework under which the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) will operate its direct bank recapitalisation instrument. It is expected that this facility will come into force towards the end of the first half of 2014. In addition the Eurogroup also agreed to include retro-active recapitalisation of banks in the framework, to be considered on a case-by-case basis once the instrument enters into force.

There is still a lot of negotiation to be done on this aspect of the facility but the agreement now in place keeps the possibility to apply to the ESM for a retrospective direct recapitalisation of the Irish banks open for us, should we wish to avail of it.

## **Tax Reliefs Application**

116. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Finance if he has revised the projected

savings from a cap on the tax relief for pensions generating an income of €60,000; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31925/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In my Budget 2013 speech, I announced that changes to give effect to the commitment in the Programme for Government to cap taxpayers' subsidies for pension schemes which deliver pension income of more than €60,000 will be put in place in 2014. An examination of the various options for change is continuing.

An estimated full year saving of €250 million was provided for in respect of these changes, as outlined on page A 10 of the Budget 2013 booklet. The Budget 2013 booklet makes clear, however, that the savings figure is provisional as further detailed analysis of the necessary changes and their impact would be required. This detailed analysis is ongoing.

### **IBRC Account Holders**

117. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the issue of the losses accrued by credit unions because of the liquidation of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation; the way these losses will affect members of the credit union movement; and if he is in contact with the credit union movement to discuss these losses. [31876/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am not in a position to discuss the specifics of any customer accounts in IBRC (in special liquidation). However, I am advised by the Special Liquidators that there are certain tracker bond products which were sold to a number of Credit Unions which were liabilities of IBRC at the time of the liquidation. I am further advised that these products have a structured deposit element which is covered by the Deposit Guarantee Scheme for that element of the product. As a result the first €100k of any claim from these depositors is covered under the DGS Scheme. I have been advised that the Special Liquidators are aware of a number of depositors who fall outside the eligibility criteria for the ELG Scheme due to the nature of the investment product. Unfortunately, if a deposit is not eligible under the ELG scheme the depositor will rank as an unsecured creditor in the liquidation. At the time that this investment product was purchased by Credit Unions, there was no additional guarantee provided by the State. It was always the case that the ELG scheme covered only those liabilities which were entered into during the issuance window.

*Question No. 118 answered with Question No. 88.*

*Question No. 119 answered with Question No. 78.*

### **Youth Unemployment Measures**

120. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Finance in view of the phasing out of quantitative easing, which is likely to be followed by rising interest rates, his views on whether it is more imperative than ever to pursue policies that will enhance growth and reduce unemployment, particularly youth unemployment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31893/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have consistently said that addressing the deterioration in the labour market is the key macro-economic objective of the Government. All of the economic policies being implemented by the Government – restoring order to the public finances, repairing the banking system, promoting competitiveness improvements – are designed to generate sustainable economic growth, so that employment growth is sufficient to

make inroads into current unacceptably high rates of unemployment. I would point out that progress is being made. For instance, employment has been expanding since the third quarter of last year, and the unemployment rate in May – at 13.7 per cent – was lower than the peak of 15.1 per cent recorded early last year. Having said that, I fully recognise that there is a long way to go and that much more needs to be done.

I am also conscious of the disproportionate impact that the crisis has had on the young, and in particular the rise in youth unemployment, both in Ireland and elsewhere in the European Union. This is why the European Council last week agreed on a comprehensive approach to combat youth unemployment and identified a number of measures to be implemented, including launching a new ‘investment plan’ to support SMEs and boost the financing of the economy.

Finally, I would like to emphasise the *Action Plan for Jobs 2013* which set out over 333 actions to be undertaken in the coming year to support job creation and complement measures already undertaken in the *Jobs Initiative* and the *Pathways to Work*.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

121. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an overview of the submissions made to the Central Bank’s review on the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears; and if he will state the number of submissions that proposed the following, namely, a removal of the 12 month moratorium on repossessions, a removal or loosening of the three contacts rule with owners in mortgage difficulty, the facilitation of a movement off tracker mortgages in some cases, and the need for a greater role for Money Advice and Budgeting Service in the resolution process. [31866/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Central Bank has now concluded a review of the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA), following a public consultation process, with in excess of 230 submissions received. The revised CCMA was published on 27 June 2013 and came into effect on 1 July 2013. The submissions made to the public consultation, as well as a feedback document which outlines the Central Bank’s response to the main issues raised in the consultation, have both been published on the Central Bank’s website [www.centralbank.ie](http://www.centralbank.ie).

### **Irish Nationwide Report**

122. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the reason he has not published the Irish Nationwide report to date; and if a banking inquiry is established, whether he will be forwarding the report to the inquiry team. [31862/13]

227. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance when he plans to publish the report into Irish Nationwide, commissioned in 2009. [31773/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 122 and 227 together.

I have been advised that given the on-going nature of the investigations by the authorities, including in particular the investigation being conducted under the Central Bank’s Administrative Sanctions Procedure into historic lending practices at INBS, as well as internal considerations within the bank, the report cannot legally be published at this time. Publication of the report may be considered when the Central Bank proceedings are concluded or when any Garda

investigation has been finalised (or any proceedings arising from such investigation concluded).

If the Houses of Oireachtas Bill is approved by Oireachtas it will provide the necessary legal framework to allow a formal parliamentary inquiry to be held. The Department will co-operate fully with that inquiry and will forward all information which is legally possible.

### **Equality Proofing of Budgets**

123. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Finance if he will report on progress on examining the use of equality proofing in the budgetary process this year. [31872/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I would like to make the Deputy aware that the Programme for Government does contain a commitment to require all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions. Furthermore, the Cabinet handbook requires a statement on the likely effects of the decision sought on equality and persons experiencing or at risk of poverty or social exclusion to be included in Memoranda to Government. Consequently, Government does consider each of these important issues at an individual policy or programme level. I would also remind the Deputy that the State and its bodies take the provisions of equality legislation into account in the development and delivery of its policies and services. Finally, as referenced in previous parliamentary questions, the often quoted Scottish model is expenditure focussed and as such is more appropriate to my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

### **Vehicle Registration Issues**

124. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Finance if he will give serious consideration to removing VRT from potentially life saving additional safety features on new vehicles; his views on whether persons are choosing to go without optional extra safety features because of the VRT cost burden; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31479/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that vehicle registration tax (VRT) is charged on the open market selling price (OMSP) which for new vehicles is defined in Section 133 (2) of the Finance Act 1992 as: *(2) (a) For a new vehicle on sale in the State which is supplied by a manufacturer or sole wholesale distributor, such manufacturer or distributor shall declare to the Commissioners in the prescribed manner the price, inclusive of all taxes and duties, which, in his opinion, a vehicle of that model and specification, including any enhancements or accessories fitted or attached thereto or supplied therewith by such manufacturer or distributor, might reasonably be expected to fetch on a first arm's length sale thereof in the open market in the State by retail.*

Safety features are an integral part of all vehicles and it would be impossible to distinguish some or all of these features and attribute a value to them for the purpose of excluding them from the OMSP. Therefore, I have no plans to reduce or scrap the VRT on safety features.

The Revenue Commissioners further advise me that they have no evidence to suggest that the charging structure is impacting on purchasing decisions in relation to extra safety features on new vehicles.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

125. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if he has raised with his UK counterparts their plans for the future of Ulster Bank; his views on the importance of the institution to banking here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31914/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware, the UK Chancellor, Mr George Osborne in his recent Mansion House speech, in dealing with the future of the two UK banks in which the British Exchequer has a significant shareholding, made some references to Ulster Bank in the context of the future orientation of RBS. Earlier that day the Parliamentary Committee on Banking had issued its report and the Chancellor was using the opportunity of his Mansion House speech to provide some initial reaction to the report which contains references to RBS and Ulster Bank.

As the Deputy is aware, the Chancellor has proposed that RBS be split into a good bank and a bad bank. This proposal is the subject of a review to be conducted by the Treasury with external assistance within a short timeframe. As of now, the precise implications for Ulster Bank are unclear but given the important position of the bank in the Irish market it is and will be an issue my officials will be following closely as part of their normal engagement with their UK counterparts. In particular, I expect that my officials will be engaging with the Treasury to offer any necessary assistance that the UK authorities may require on Ulster Bank and in particular its role in the Irish market.

### **Budget 2014 Issues**

126. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Finance the budget adjustment in budget 2014 according to the plans he has sent to Ministers; and the proportion of this adjustment which is tax related and the proportion which is expenditure related. [31874/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The April Stability Programme update set out the consolidation path for 2014 and 2015 (Table 2 page 6), consistent with Budget 2013, showing the composition of revenue and expenditure measures. The general government balance (Table 8 page 22) was forecast using the technical assumption that the benefits of the promissory note restructuring would be used for deficit reduction. The exact quantum and composition of adjustment in 2014 will be considered in the context of Budget 2014 discussions later this year. As has been discussed previously, the additional fiscal space by the promissory note restructuring will be central to these discussions with consideration to the latest economic and fiscal information. The Department of Finance has recently presented the Budget Strategy Memorandum to Cabinet. This is part of the normal budgetary process and gives an outline of the emerging fiscal and economic outlook for this year and next. This is a confidential document and is not published.

I would like to reiterate that the Government remains committed to reducing the deficit below 3 per cent of GDP by 2015 and all budgetary decisions will be made with this overarching objective in mind.

*Question No. 127 answered with Question No. 77.*

### **European Stability Mechanism**

128. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide a report on the Eurogroup summit of June focussing on the negotiations on the retroactive use of the European Stability Mechanism to recapitalise Ireland's pillar banks. [31868/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As you are aware the Euro-Area Heads of State or Government agreed on 29th June 2012 to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereigns, and that when a Single Supervisory Mechanism is in place involving the ECB, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) could recapitalize banks directly. The Euro-Area Heads of State or Government confirmed this position and mandated EU Finance Ministers to prepare an operational framework by mid-2013. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken at technical, senior official and Ministerial level on the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument. This work culminated in agreement on the main features of the operational framework for the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation (DBR) Instrument at the June 20th Eurogroup meeting of Euro-Area Finance Ministers in Luxembourg.

We have succeeded in having specific provision for retrospective recapitalisation included in the framework, which states that "The potential retroactive application of the instrument should be decided on a case-by-case basis and by mutual agreement." There is still a lot of negotiation to be done on this aspect of the facility but the agreement now in place keeps the possibility to apply to the ESM for a retrospective direct recapitalisation of the Irish banks open for us, should we wish to avail of it.

This overall framework builds upon the agreement secured on the 29th of June 2012, and is an important step in the Eurozone's efforts in this regard. It is expected that the earliest date that the ESM Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument can come into effect will be towards the end of the first half of 2014, given the need to satisfy national procedures, and also the requirement to have the Single Supervisory Mechanism in place and operational beforehand.

### **Budget 2014 Issues**

129. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Finance his views on recent research by the Nevin Economic Research Institute which states that a combination of a stimulus programme, tax adjustments and savings from the recently restructured deal on promissory notes, rather than extensive public expenditure cuts could be used to reduce the State's deficit to 3% of GDP by 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31892/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Government is eager to hear reasonable proposals for budget measures from all interested parties and organisations. We will consider them fully and give them due consideration. The April Stability Programme update set out the consolidation path for 2014 and 2015 (Table 2 page 6), consistent with Budget 2013, showing the composition of revenue and expenditure measures. The general government balance (Table 8 page 22) was forecast using the technical assumption that the benefits of the promissory note restructuring would be used for deficit reduction.

The exact quantum and composition of adjustment in 2014 will be considered in the context of Budget 2014 discussions later this year. As has been discussed previously, the additional fiscal space by the promissory note restructuring will be central to these discussions with consideration to the latest economic and fiscal information.

### **Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive**

130. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the timeline he envisages for the completion of talks on putting in place a Europe wide bank resolution mechanism; the obstacles that exist currently to the completion of such an agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31904/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** On 26 June 2013 European Finance Ministers agreed a common position on the bank recovery and resolution directive. This agreement provides a negotiating mandate to enter into discussions with the European Parliament. Trilogue discussions (Council/Parliament/Commission) will commence next week under the Lithuanian Presidency and are expected to conclude by the end of this year. This timeline was endorsed by EU leaders at last week's European Council, which welcomed the agreement in the Council on the bank recovery and resolution directive, inviting Council and Parliament to start negotiations with the aim of concluding before the end of the year.

Ireland fully supports conclusion of these talks by the end of the year. The introduction of an EU-wide bank recovery and resolution process, which would set out the framework for how banks in distress are to be resolved, is one of the key elements of the EU Banking Union initiative which is intended to break the link between sovereigns and banks. There is a shared ambition amongst Member States and MEPs to progress these negotiations and the urgency of bringing these talks to a conclusion has been highlighted many times by the European Council.

To complete the Banking Union, the Commission will bring forward a proposal in the summer for a Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) for banks covered by the Single Supervisory Mechanism. We will engage constructively in the Council consideration of these proposals.

### **Bank Stress Tests**

131. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Finance the reason bank stress tests will not take place prior to the planned end of Ireland's EU-IMF programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31926/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The original timeline for Ireland's next stress test under the Troika programme, was linked to the EU wide EBA stress test timeline, and has changed in light of the evolving calendar for the next EU-wide bank diagnostic exercises in the lead-up to the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM). The intention is to ensure that appropriate preparations are made early so that the Irish banks are in the strongest possible position when the ECB fully assumes its supervisory role under the SSM. This is expected around mid-2014.

Consequently, the Irish authorities, in consultation with the troika, will this year conduct a series of diagnostics to provide greater clarity regarding the underlying quality of banks' balance sheets. A key element will be a comprehensive Balance Sheet Assessment to be finalised by end-November 2013. The various preparatory supervisory steps that the authorities are undertaking will ensure that a stress test of the Irish banking sector will be conducted ahead of, but in close proximity to, the EU-wide exercise in 2014.

### **Financial Transactions Tax**

132. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance the reason he continues to oppose the introduction of an EU wide financial transactions tax. [25453/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As I have previously stated, Ireland's position is that a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT) would be best applied on a wide international basis to include the major financial centres. If it cannot be introduced on a global basis, it would be better if it were introduced on at least an EU-wide basis to prevent any distortion of activity within the Union. This is in line with the Commission's desire that the tax should

be applied on a global basis. Such an approach would avoid the danger of activities gravitating to jurisdictions where taxes are not levied on financial transactions. The FTT that is currently being discussed at EU level is not an EU-wide FTT – 11 Member States are considering adopting an FTT by way of enhanced cooperation. Therefore our position has not changed. I have also previously indicated Ireland's principled opposition to dealing with tax measures under "enhanced co-operation".

An FTT could impact the financial services industry, especially in the IFSC, and lead to some activities moving abroad, particularly if it was not introduced on an EU wide basis.

An FTT could affect transactions in Irish Government bonds, including in the secondary market, and may also affect the ECB's ability to give effect to its own monetary policy via the repurchase ("repo") market. A significant number of countries have also raised this point in respect of their own debt management. Members of the Economic and Financial Committee Sub-Committee on EU Sovereign Debt Markets have recently stated that the introduction of the FTT would have a significantly negative effect on Sovereign Debt Markets and may impair the good-functioning of secondary markets for sovereign debt resulting in reduced liquidity, reduced investor demand and therefore higher financing costs for States. The European Investment Bank (EIB) has also expressed concerns and has suggested that serious consideration be given to the general exemption of all transactions on sovereign bonds, EIB bonds and bonds issued by Multilateral Development Banks from the scope of the FTT.

We are also concerned that the Commission's own projections are that an FTT could reduce EU growth and raise the cost to ordinary, non-financial companies for their use of financial products. Both these aspects would be harmful to EU recovery.

If Ireland were to participate in the FTT it would require us to abolish our current tax on financial transactions, a Stamp Duty on transfers of shares in Irish incorporated companies, which currently stands at 1%.

One of the Commission's aims in introducing an FTT was to ensure that the financial sector makes a fair contribution to the cost of the crisis. Ireland is committed to the principle that the banks will contribute to the cost of State's support – the banks have been charged for the Government's guarantee of their liabilities and the NAMA Act provides for a surcharge on the banks should NAMA result in a loss for the taxpayer. The Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) Act 2011 provides for the introduction of such a levy on authorised credit institutions, to be paid into a bank resolution fund.

The draft Proposal for a Council Directive implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of financial transaction tax is currently being discussed in the relevant Council working group. As the Deputy is aware, Ireland held the Presidency of the EU from January to June 2013 and during our Presidency we aimed to progress this file as transparently and inclusively as possible. The first read-through of the draft directive is not yet complete, further amendments to the text are likely and it is unclear what the final form of the Directive will be.

As of 1 July, Lithuania has assumed the Presidency of the EU. Ireland intends to fully contribute to future Working Party meetings. We will continue to monitor discussions on the FTT to ensure the compatibility of any proposed measure with the internal market and with existing taxes on financial transactions, including our Stamp Duty; and with a view to protecting our existing financial services business.

The Deputy may be aware that the UK has challenged the legality of the decision of 22 January 2013 of the Council to authorise enhanced cooperation on a common framework of FTT and the scope and objectives of the initial Commission proposal.

## **NAMA Expenditure**

133. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Finance if he will outline where and when the National Asset Management Agency intends to spend the €2 billion it has announced as part of its investment plan which will see it overhauling assets underlying loans in the south of Ireland. [31880/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I refer the Deputy to pages 29-31 and pages 53-54 of NAMA's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2012, which contain detailed information on the Agency's funding in Ireland to enable construction projects currently in progress to be completed and to develop new projects to meet prospective supply shortage in certain market segments. The Report includes examples of some significant capital projects currently approved for funding by NAMA. I am advised by NAMA that it has, to date, approved development funding of over €800m for projects in Ireland that over €500m of this has been drawn down in respect of a range of commercial, retail and residential projects, including projects located in Dublin, Cork, Drogheda, Galway and Kildare. NAMA is seeking investment propositions to deploy its development capital on a commercial basis.

## **Corporation Tax**

134. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will give an update on his response to the proposed reduction to 12.5% of Northern Ireland's corporation tax rate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24138/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As a rule we do not comment on the tax regimes of other jurisdictions. However, the OECD has consistently stated that low corporation tax rates combined with a broad base is the best way to encourage economic growth while still maintaining tax revenues. That is what we have been doing for many years and what we will continue to do. A reform of the Northern Ireland corporation tax rate and base has the potential to generate benefits in that part of the island, as well as on this side of the Border. Some commentators might see it as a case of Northern Ireland entering into direct competition with us on corporation tax, but I do not see it that way – I see it as having the potential to benefit both sides of the Border thereby providing an impetus for the island as a whole.

Of course there is strong evidence that a low corporation tax rate on its own will not be enough to attract significant FDI and we have consistently demonstrated that Ireland's attractiveness for foreign multinational corporations is based on a whole range of factors – one of which happens to be our 12.5% tax rate.

## **Derivatives Market**

135. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Finance the steps being taken to regulate food securities trading on the stock market; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31477/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** On June 13 2013, the Irish Presidency reached a breakthrough in talks at Council level on the MiFID II and MiFIR proposals which aim to make financial markets more efficient, resilient and transparent, and to strengthen the protection of investors.

The achievement of a Council General Approach, which was endorsed at Ecofin on 21 June

2013, signals a significant step forward by the EU towards protecting against excessive financial speculation in the food and other commodity derivative markets.

The regulation of derivative trading in the EU has been part of Council discussions within the EU since September 2010 when the Commission published its proposal for the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) to regulate this market in the context of over-the-counter (OTC) trades. This EU Regulation, which is directly applicable in all Member States, entered into force on 16 August 2012.

In particular, the Council text of MiFID II contains important provisions relating to position management, position limits and product intervention. These provisions are in respect of all financial instruments, including commodity derivatives, and have the purpose of providing regulators with tools to avoid excessive speculation in financial instruments, including commodity derivatives. Competent authorities will be obligated to establish and apply position limits on the size of a position in a commodity derivative which a person can have over a specified period of time.

Furthermore, competent authorities will have product intervention powers whereby they may prohibit or restrict trading of financial instruments or prohibit or restrict investment activities when there is a threat to the orderly functioning and integrity of financial markets or commodity markets. The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) will have contingency and coordination powers in position management and product intervention to ensure consistent application across all Member States. In the exercise of its powers, ESMA will also have to consult public bodies competent for the oversight, administration and regulation of physical agricultural markets.

EMIR and MiFID II combined are expected to result in a tighter regime for all derivatives, including food securities, whether traded OTC or through exchanges. The measures are intended to keep pace with trends in derivatives trading, in line with G20 commitments made at the 2009 Pittsburgh summit.

Council General Approach will be progressed further by the Lithuanian Presidency when they begin negotiations with the European Parliament at Trilogues.

We will continue to monitor developments on this file throughout the legislative process.

### **Money Laundering**

136. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Finance if he supports the fact that tax crimes be made a predicate offence of money laundering and that this be agreed as part of the revision of the third anti-money laundering directive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31782/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Commission published its proposals for a 4th Money Laundering Directive on 5 February 2013. Those proposals are currently being examined by an Expert Working Party of the European Council. The Draft Directive proposes that tax crimes be included as a predicate offence for money laundering. This is already the case under Irish Law where all crimes, including tax crimes, are predicate offences for money laundering.

### **State Banking Sector**

137. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance if he intends to sell his shares in AIB and Bank of Ireland in the next 12 months; if he will outline his strategy in disposing of his shares in the pillar banks. [31870/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have previously indicated that the State does not want to be an investor in banks and will seek to exit its various holdings at the appropriate time and when market conditions permit. At its results briefing last March, Bank of Ireland indicated that it was considering a range of options relating to its preference shares. I can confirm to the Deputy that officials in the Department of Finance, as part of their regular interaction with Bank of Ireland management, have discussed options regarding the State's current holding of €1.8bn of preference shares. Should an opportunity arise to sell the shares or have them redeemed, the transaction will be considered having assessed the best interests of the State.

As regards AIB, I remain very supportive of the bank's efforts to return itself to profitability and ultimately generate an exit for the taxpayer. Getting the bank back to profitability as quickly as possible is the best way to achieve this goal and indeed support our economic recovery.

### **European Stability Mechanism**

138. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if he is satisfied that there was enough progress on banking debt during the Irish Presidency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31474/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As you are aware the Euro-area Heads of State and Government agreed on 29th June 2012 to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereigns, and that when a Single Supervisory Mechanism is in place involving the ECB, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) could recapitalise banks directly. The Euro-area Heads of State and Government confirmed this position and mandated EU Finance Ministers to prepare an operational framework by mid-2013. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken at technical, senior official and Ministerial level on the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation (DBR) Instrument during the Irish Presidency. This work culminated in agreement on the operational framework for the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument at the June 20th Eurogroup of Euro-area Finance Ministers meeting in Luxembourg.

This framework builds upon the agreement secured on the 29th of June 2012, and is an important step in the Eurozone's efforts to restore market confidence in the single currency and its banking system.

It is expected that the earliest date that the ESM DBR can come into effect will be towards the end of the first half of 2014, given the need to satisfy national procedures, and also the requirement to have the Single Supervisory Mechanism in place beforehand.

We have succeeded in having provision for retrospective recapitalisation included in the framework. Although there is still a lot of negotiation to be done on this aspect of the facility I am satisfied with the progress made during the Irish Presidency as the agreement now in place keeps open the possibility for us to apply to the ESM for a retrospective direct recapitalisation of the Irish banks, should we wish to avail of it.

### **European Banking Union**

139. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Finance if he is satisfied that there has been enough progress on strengthening banking regulation during the Irish Presidency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31475/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** When Ireland assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in January the highest priority was afforded to the completion of the Banking Union, with the aim of breaking the link between banks and sovereigns which had been unanimously agreed by European leaders on 29 June 2012. Real progress was made during the Irish Presidency in setting down the first real steps to a European Banking union with the agreement on the creation of a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) - a very significant step forward towards ensuring financial stability and thus facilitating growth.

We have also achieved agreement on the Capital Requirements Directive IV, (CRDIV) which aims to strengthen the capital requirements for banks and the overall effectiveness of regulation for the sector and enhance financial stability.

On 26 June 2013 EU finance Ministers agreed a common position on the proposal for a harmonized bank recovery and resolution regime. This agreement will now allow negotiations to start with the European Parliament on the file and also on the related Deposit Guarantee Scheme Directive. Furthermore, the Eurogroup has agreed on the main features of the operational framework for direct bank recapitalisation by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

These achievements represent significant milestones towards Banking Union. The June 2013 European Council meeting concluded that the completion of the Banking Union is key to ensuring financial stability, reducing financial fragmentation and restoring normal lending to the economy.

To complete the Banking Union, the Commission will bring forward a proposal in the summer for a Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) for banks covered by the SSM. We look forward to further progress under the incoming Lithuanian Presidency to reach agreement in the Council by the end of the year so that all elements of the banking union can be agreed by the end of the current parliamentary term of the European Parliament, as called for by the European Council.

### **Departmental Staff Numbers**

140. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Taoiseach the number of staff in his Department who availed of term time in 2012; the average duration of such in 2012; the number that will do so in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31452/13]

141. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Taoiseach the number of staff in organisations or agencies under the aegis of his Department who availed of term time in 2012; the average duration of such in 2012; the number that will do so in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31453/13]

**The Taoiseach:** I propose to take Questions Nos. 140 and 141 together.

Three staff availed of the Shorter Working Year (formerly known as term time) in my Department in 2012 and the average duration was 6.66 weeks. To date, 5 members of staff have indicated that they wish to avail of the scheme in 2013.

The National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO), incorporating the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), is the only agency under the aegis of my Depart-

ment. No staff in NESDO availed of the Shorter Working Year scheme in 2012 and no applications have been received to date in 2013.

### **Departmental Staff Training**

142. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Taoiseach the number of staff in his Department who availed of study or training leave in 2012; the average duration of such leave; if all staff availing of this leave received full pay and benefits during the time; the number that will do so in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31454/13]

143. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Taoiseach the number of staff in organisations or agencies under the aegis of his Department who availed of study or training leave in 2012; the average duration of such leave; if all staff availing of this leave received full pay and benefits during the time; the number that will do so in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31455/13]

**The Taoiseach:** I propose to take Questions Nos. 142 and 143 together.

Some 11 staff from my Department availed of study leave in 2012. The average duration of leave taken was 4.05 days. To date in 2013, 6 staff have availed of study leave. The average duration of leave taken is 4.58 days.

Staff have yet to apply for courses for the 2013 - 2014 academic year. Therefore it is not possible to anticipate the amount of study leave that will be taken later this year.

The National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO) is the only agency under the aegis of my Department. One member of staff in NESDO availed of 5 days study leave in 2012. There have been no applications for study leave to date in NESDO in 2013.

Staff apply for study leave under the terms of Circular 23/2007. Under the terms of the circular, study leave is paid leave. No benefits have been paid to staff beyond the terms of the circular.

Training takes place during normal working hours and the question of leave does not arise.

### **Economic Competitiveness**

144. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Taoiseach if he will outline gross value added for the most recent five years for which data is available; and the way gross value added compares with Northern Ireland and Britain over this time period. [29746/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Paul Kehoe):** The following table provides details on GVA at basic prices for the years 2006-2012.

To assist the Deputy the CSO has included data on Northern Ireland and the UK using data from Eurostat and the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in the UK.

**GVA at basic prices**

Year	Northern Ireland (£ millions)	Northern Ireland (€ millions) converted to Euros	United Kingdom (€ millions)	Ireland (€ millions)
2006	26,835	35,359	1,743,359	154,979
2007	28,310	41,369	1,839,619	165,443
2008	28,607	35,926	1,621,219	158,938
2009	27,969	31,393	1,419,859	145,452
2010	29,155	33,986	1,525,881	140,969
2011	29,870	34,417	1,542,742	143,890
2012	Not Available	Not Available	1,680,638	147,475
	Source: UK Office For National Statistics	Converted from Sterling to Euro using yearly average Exchange Rates	Source: Eurostat	Source: CSO Ireland
		Source: Central Bank Of Ireland		

Sources:

[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=nama\\_nace10\\_c&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=nama_nace10_c&lang=en).

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=regional+GVA>.

Ireland's GVA in basic prices is available on the CSO website in the Quarterly or Annual National Accounts.

### Departmental Staff Rehiring

145. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Taoiseach the number of temporary clerical officers that have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31580/13]

**The Taoiseach:** Five Temporary Clerical Officers were employed by my Department over the last 3 years, none of whom were retired public/civil servants.

Recruitment to the Civil Service is governed by the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 and by the Civil Service Regulation Acts, 1956-2005. The 2004 Act established the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) and the Public Appointments Service (PAS). The CPSA is the regulator of public service recruitment in Ireland and the PAS provides a centralised recruitment, assessment and selection body for the Civil Service.

The CPSA has developed Codes of Practice to apply to open recruitment and internal promotion competitions. The Codes cover the areas of probity, selection on the basis of merit, equity and fairness, protection of the public interest, implementation of best practice and good governance. Selection processes must focus on the competencies required for a post and there is no provision under the Codes to focus recruitment for posts in the Civil Service on the basis

of age. All eligible candidates must be considered on an equal basis.

### **Official Engagements**

146. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Taoiseach if he will report on his visit to Boston; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31783/13]

**The Taoiseach:** I visited Boston from 18 to 20 May following an invitation from Fr. William Leahy, President of Boston College to receive an honorary degree in Law and to deliver the Commencement Address at the Boston College 2013 Graduation ceremony. I was pleased to accept the honorary degree and deliver the Commencement Address on behalf of the Irish people on Monday May 20.

On the Monday morning, I addressed a business breakfast organised by the IDA and Enterprise Ireland and attended by senior executives from a range of companies with business interests in Ireland and in the US. I highlighted the strengths of Ireland as a location in which to do business and for companies looking to internationalise or expand their existing geographical footprint.

I also addressed the annual Commencement Eve Dinner at the college on Sunday May 19, along with a number of other guests who were also receiving honorary degrees.

I was invited as the guest of honour at a dinner on Saturday May 18 at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library to mark the 50th anniversary of President Kennedy's visit to Ireland in 1963.

I also visited the memorial site of the Boston Marathon Bombings at Copley Square along with Commissioner of Police Edward Davis, where I placed a floral tribute as a gesture of respect to the dead and injured.

### **Cabinet Committee Meetings**

147. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Taoiseach the number of times the various Cabinet sub-committees have met since the last recess. [31784/13]

**The Taoiseach:** Since the Easter recess: the Cabinet Committee on Mortgage Arrears and Credit Availability has met twice, the Cabinet Committee on Public Service Reform has met once, the Cabinet Committee on Health has met three times, the Economic Management Council (EMC) has met five times, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Infrastructure has met twice, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs has met on two occasions; a sub-committee of this Committee, dealing specifically with Pathways to Work, has also met twice in this time, the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy has met twice, and the Cabinet Committee on European Affairs has met twice.

### **European Council Meetings**

148. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Taoiseach if he will report on his meetings with other Heads of State during the last EU Council. [31785/13]

**The Taoiseach:** I attended the European Council in Brussels on 27-28 June. While I had

no formal bilaterals with other Heads of State or Government, I did of course see them all at the meeting.

On the morning of the 27th June, I had a meeting with European Commission President Barroso and European Parliament President Schulz at which we reached political agreement on the MFF.

I also had a formal bilateral meeting with President Van Rompuy immediately in advance of the European Council meeting, as is customary for the Head of State or Government from the Member State currently holding the Presidency.

### **International Summits**

149. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Taoiseach if he will report on the cost to his Department of the G8 Summit in County Fermanagh. [31786/13]

**The Taoiseach:** The G8 Summit in County Fermanagh on 18/19 June was hosted and paid for by the British Government.

There may be some minor travel costs accruing to my Department, in respect of a small number of officials who were involved in work related to my participation at the Summit. These costs have yet to be established.

### **Departmental Staff Numbers**

150. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Taoiseach the number of senior staff in his Department that were in the Department at the time of the banking guarantee in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31965/13]

151. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Taoiseach the number of senior staff in his Department, who were there at the time of the banking guarantee that are in the same positions they held at the time. [31967/13]

152. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Taoiseach in view of his statements regarding the banking guarantee, in which he stated that there were no files of any import held in his Department regarding events at that time, if he has asked officials in his Department for oral or written recollections of what happened at that time. [31968/13]

**The Taoiseach:** I propose to take Questions Nos. 150 to 152, inclusive, together.

There were 28 senior members of staff in my Department at the time in question. This includes civil servants at the grade of Principal Officer and above and Special Advisers to the then Taoiseach.

Of those, 7 are still serving in the Department, one of whom is in the same position.

I have previously informed the House that I asked senior officials in my Department about the papers held in the Department relating to the night of the bank guarantee. I have also previously expressed in the House my concerns at the paucity of relevant documentation in the Department.

My Department will co-operate fully with any inquiry established into these matters.

## **Passport Applications**

153. **Deputy Michael Lowry** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the position regarding a second business passport application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary; the reason for the delay in issuing a decision in this case; when a decision will issue in this case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31563/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** The Passport Service may in limited circumstances issue an additional passport in accordance with the terms of the Passports Act, 2008 to a citizen where business, frequent travel or particular visa requirements make it necessary to hold a second travel document. A passport application for such business purposes was lodged with the Passport Service 2nd January 2013 by the person in question. The documentation submitted did not meet the criteria for a business passport. In order to verify the basis of applicant's need for a business passport, the Passport Service has been in contact with his employer and requested under section 7(2) of the Act additional information in order to finalise the application. Unfortunately, no response has been received by the Passport Service in this matter. In light of this, the Passport Service will be writing to the applicant to inform him of this shortcoming in his application.

## **Northern Ireland Issues**

154. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the reporting mechanism that exists to provide reports to the Irish and British Governments on the implementation of the Good Friday and St. Andrew's Agreements; if the Governments receive a written report from the devolved institutions on progress; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31480/13]

158. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide a list of the provisions of the Good Friday and St. Andrew's Agreements which have not been implemented; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31495/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 154 and 158 together.

There is no formal requirement on the devolved institutions to report to the Irish and British Governments on the implementation of the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements.

Some provisions of the Good Friday and St. Andrews agreements such as a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, an Irish Language Act and an examination of the future of North South economic cooperation have not yet been implemented but nevertheless there has been good progress on the implementation of the Agreements in recent years.

The North South Inter-Parliamentary Association – as provided for in the Agreement - met for the second time in Plenary at Stormont last month. The Association provides a forum for regular and formal discussions between Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas on issues of mutual interest and concern. The Association will meet twice yearly on a rotational basis.

Another important commitment under the Good Friday Agreement was realised in October 2012 with Digital Switchover on the island of Ireland on 24 October 2012, when TG4 and Radio na Gaeltachta became available in Northern Ireland.

A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland which takes account of the separate and specific con-

text of Northern Ireland is an important outstanding provision of the Good Friday Agreement. I believe that all parties in the Oireachtas share my frustration at the lack of progress on a Bill of Rights and I continue to engage actively with the British government and the Northern Ireland Executive on this issue. Some of the contentious issues around parades, flags and identities have at their heart rights issues and a Bill of Rights is the key to dissolving the obstacles to progress on these issues.

Recent events have recalled the positive role that civil society continues to play in Northern Ireland and points to the valuable role that could be played by the Civic Forum envisaged by the Agreement and I will continue to encourage its development.

The first Term of Reference of the St Andrews Agreement Review which called for an examination of the efficiency and value for money of Implementation Bodies has essentially been completed. The Second and Third Terms of Reference of the Review look to the future of North South co-operation. This has not progressed as rapidly as I would have wished and was a subject of discussion when I met with the First and Deputy First Minister on 29 April. I hope that we will be in a position to make substantial progress at the next North South Ministerial (NSMC) Plenary meeting on 5 July.

While the North South Consultative Forum is still outstanding, it continues to be raised at NSMC Plenary meetings and will be considered further with our Northern colleagues.

The Government will continue to encourage progress on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement, particularly during my ongoing schedule of close contact with the Secretary of State, and with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

### **Foreign Conflict Issues**

155. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will support a letter of appeal to the UN, Navi Pillay, to ask the Syrian Government to release Mazen Darwish of the Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression, noted for its humanitarian work and commitment to non-violence, who has been in prison for some 18 months at this stage. [31490/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** Mazen Darwish is a journalist and Director of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. With two of his colleagues he was detained by individuals believed to be from Syrian Air Force Intelligence in February 2012. He has been charged with ‘promoting terrorism acts’ under Syrian counter-terrorism law. There have been allegations that the detainees have been kept mostly in solitary detention, denied access to their relatives and lawyers and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Mr. Darwish has been designated as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. Following the arrests, the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, released a statement calling on the Syrian authorities to release immediately Mr. Darwish and all other human rights defenders who have been arrested and to release all political prisoners in Syria. She stressed the need for the Syrian Government to respect freedom of expression and the freedom of human rights defenders to carry out their work, in line with Syria’s international obligations. I fully support the High Representative’s statement and join her in calling for Mr. Darwish’s immediate release. Ireland supports also a resolution on Syria which was passed by the United Nations General Assembly in May and which demanded that the Syrian authorities immediately release the imprisoned staff, publish a list of all detention facilities and immediately allow access by independent monitors to all detention facilities. On 17 May, nineteen human rights organisations released a joint public statement which also called for Mr. Darwish’s

urgent release. Mr. Darwish's case was originally due to go to trial on 19 May but, according to reports, it has now been postponed until 21 August.

I have not to date been approached regarding signing a letter of appeal to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in relation to this case. I have made clear my own concern in relation to this case and I would support any efforts which Ms. Pillay is able to make in this regard.

### **Arms Trade**

156. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views that the current arms embargo is facilitating the Government side in the Syrian conflict, is depriving Government opponents their right to self-defence; the measures being taken to confront those supplying arms to the Syrian Government; and the way he feels this is facilitating a peaceful negotiated settlement to the conflict. [31491/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** The brutal repression unleashed by the Assad regime in March 2011 in response to peaceful demands for change and reform in Syria has led to a full-scale civil war, with a mounting death toll (now in excess of 93,000) and one of the gravest humanitarian situations ever faced by the international community. The action of Russia, Iran and other parties in arming and assisting the Assad regime is wrong and should cease immediately. In the face of relentless violence, the EU adopted wide-ranging sanctions against Syria. These included, until last month, a ban on the export of weapons to Syria as part of an effort to stop the fighting and to promote a process of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. I remain firmly of the view that the provision of weapons to Syrian opposition groups, however well-intentioned, runs the risk of exacerbating an already heavily militarized conflict and fuelling further instability and violence in the wider region.

Instead of adding to the stock of weaponry in Syria, I would like to see a global arms embargo imposed through a UN Security Council resolution which would cut off all weapon flows to Syria. Believing that this would be the best means of getting the regime and the opposition to focus on political dialogue rather than on military action, Ireland and many of its international partners have called for a global arms embargo. Regrettably, it has not been possible to achieve this because of lack of agreement within the Security Council.

The bloody and destructive conflict rages on, accordingly. The continuing supply of heavy weapons to the Syrian Government, which has used them to inflict massive damage on built-up areas, has been especially damaging. At the same time, there has been no decisive alteration in the balance of forces on the ground. The prolonged stalemate we are witnessing in Syria only reinforces my view that there can be no military solution to this crisis.

I believe that the supply of weapons to the warring parties can only lead to further destruction and casualties and runs the risk of launching an arms race, with potentially devastating consequences for the stability of the wider region. I fear also that the supply of arms to Syria severely undermines the diplomatic efforts which are underway to promote a political settlement to the conflict, such as the US-Russia proposal to convene an international peace conference on Syria (Geneva II).

At the EU Foreign Affairs Council meetings on 27 May and 24 June, both of which I attended, it was clear that there is broad agreement among the 27 member States to lend full and active support to the Geneva II initiative. This initiative was also strongly endorsed by the G8

leaders meeting in Enniskillen on 17/18 June.

Promoting a power-sharing agreement between Syrian authorities and the opposition is clearly the only way to end the violence and to respond to the legitimate aspirations of so many Syrians for peace and democracy. Ireland and its EU partners will continue to work hard to achieve these vital objectives.

### **Humanitarian Aid**

157. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the extent of Irish Aid to the humanitarian situation in Syria and the camps where there are Syrian refugees; where specifically it is being directed; the points of entrance to Syria for this aid; and how confident he is that aid is getting to where it is most needed. [31492/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Joe Costello):** The tragic crisis unfolding in Syria and in neighbouring countries has resulted in enormous humanitarian needs requiring an urgent response from the international community. As the number of fatalities moves towards 100,000, there are now close to 7 million people who are in need of immediate life saving support. In addition to more than 4 million people who are displaced within Syria, there are currently 1.7 million Syrians who have fled the violence to take refuge in neighbouring countries. Estimates suggest that the total number of refugees could be as high as 3.5 million by the end of the year. To date Ireland has provided almost €10m to support the delivery of life saving supplies to those most affected by the crisis. This includes Ireland’s pledge of €4.7 million made at the Kuwait Pledging Conference for Syria in January, which was met in full. This significant support marks us out as one of the most generous contributors in the world to the humanitarian response on a *per capita* basis. This funding has supported the provision of water, food, shelter and vital medicines to IDPs and host families within Syria and also to refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon.

Humanitarian access has been a huge challenge for those delivering assistance inside Syria. Restrictions imposed by the Assad regime, combined with logistical constraints and increasing insecurity have made it very difficult to access vulnerable populations. Until recently this meant that donors such as Ireland focused their funding to key UN partners and the Red Cross/Red Crescent – agencies based in Damascus which had negotiated certain levels of access with the Syrian regime and were capable of delivering assistance to large numbers of beneficiaries. These agencies also play the key role in supporting the host governments in neighbouring countries to provide assistance to the refugee populations.

By early 2013 UN agencies were reaching 2 million people in Syria every month, however the needs were escalating rapidly and serious gaps remained. The UN recognised that innovative and alternative forms of aid delivery, including cross-border operations were necessary to get aid into the hard-to-reach areas. NGOs have more flexible operational systems and they now key to reaching vulnerable populations in specific areas of the country. The increasing refugee caseload has also meant that NGOs now have a more defined role in refugee camps and host communities in neighbouring countries. Ireland’s funding to our NGO partners will enable the delivery of assistance in the hard to reach areas of north and north-west Syria from an operational base in Turkey. The support for our NGO partner in Lebanon and Jordan will ensure that refugees awaiting registration in the refugee camps and informal settlements receive desperately needed assistance.

We have worked closely with all the agencies that receive Irish Aid support to ensure that the necessary systems are place to monitor and evaluate the use and impact of Ireland’s assis-

tance. Ireland also insists that our partners adhere to best practice in humanitarianism including promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing humanitarian action. Equally, we are committed to the full implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which clearly articulates the EU and its Member States' commitment to uphold and promote the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

*Question No. 158 answered with Question No. 154.*

### **Overseas Development Aid Provision**

159. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the way in which Ireland's overseas aid programme will support agricultural research in developing countries, with a view to assisting farmers to grow more nutritious and sustainable food; the way in which access to markets can be improved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31512/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Joe Costello):** Ireland is a long-standing supporter of pro-poor agricultural research in developing countries through our overseas development programme, Irish Aid. I am gratified that the international donor community has now become more aware of the importance of agriculture and agricultural research in enhancing rural livelihoods and reducing poverty. Given the huge contribution that agricultural research makes in reducing poverty and hunger, we have committed to continuing this strong support in our new Policy for International Development, '*One World, One Future*', which I launched in May.

Irish Aid supports agricultural research in developing countries in a number of ways. We provide funding for the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research – CGIAR, including support to research programmes on Agriculture and Nutrition, and on Agriculture and Climate Change. I have seen the difference this kind of operational research is making. In Malawi, Mozambique and Ethiopia, the introduction of the nutritious orange fleshed sweet potato is improving the diversity and nutritional value of crops produced by small holder farmers in a sustainable manner. Through our Programme of Strategic Co-operation, Irish Aid will continue to work with a variety of Irish research institutions such as Teagasc and our Universities, and with our civil society partners, to support innovative research which can support pro-poor development.

We will also continue to support the sharing of agricultural research with farmers, through national agricultural research and extension services, and through organisations that work directly with smallholder farmers to support their uptake of new agricultural inputs and technologies. Some examples include organisations that share research on plant diseases through village-level plant 'clinics', and on new farming practices through local radio programmes.

Supporting smallholder farmers to access markets is an important priority for Irish Aid. We support a number of important market-access programmes in our key partner countries, such as smallholder farmer-led enterprises in pigeon-pea and potatoes in Malawi, enhancing market opportunities for smallholder farmers in the cashew and pineapple sector in Mozambique, and supporting smallholder farmers to improve cocoa quality and market access in Tanzania. We also support smallholder farmer associations and groups in Malawi, Tanzania and Ethiopia, recognising that this is an important element of building farmers' capacity to improve their productivity and access to markets.

## Overseas Development Aid Provision

160. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the way in which Ireland's overseas aid programme is assisting developing countries to deal with and increase resilience to environmental hazards and climate change challenges; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31516/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Joe Costello):** Environment and climate change challenges are at the heart of Ireland's contribution, through our aid programme, to the fight to end extreme poverty and hunger in the world. Through Ireland's development assistance programme, managed by Irish Aid in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we place a strong emphasis on building community resilience, reducing disaster risk and addressing climate change challenges in programmes in our key partner countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. At international level, we provide funding and support to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction as part of our commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action, which provides the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts. We also provide strategic support for the work of a number of leading global environment and development agencies, such as the World Resources Institute and the International Institute for Environment and Development.

In 2009, the international leaders made a global commitment to provide US\$30 billion for climate actions in developing countries between 2010 and 2012. I am pleased to confirm that Ireland has fully met its commitment to provide €100 million in assistance under this global three-year commitment.

Addressing the links between hunger, malnutrition and climate change was a central development priority for Ireland's EU Presidency in the first half of 2013. Working in cooperation with Mary Robinson, the Government hosted a high level international conference in Dublin in April to focus on these interlinked challenges. This seminal event allowed us to hear the experience of local people from developing countries where climate change is having a direct impact on the poorest communities. One of the key messages from this conference is that we must take a truly integrated approach if we are to achieve sustainable development in a changing climate.

During Ireland's EU Presidency, we also helped to strengthen EU action on building the resilience of vulnerable communities in developing countries.

Looking ahead, it is important that the issues of climate change and development have been set as a key priority area for action in the Government's new Policy for International Development, '*One World, One Future*' which I launched in May. This policy commitment will assist us in our efforts to ensure that the world's poorest communities can develop in a way that is resource-efficient, climate resilient and therefore sustainable.

## Departmental Staff Rehiring

161. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31574/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** My

Department engages Temporary Clerical Officers (TCOs) primarily to assist the Passport Service during the annual peak passport demand period. A small number of additional TCOs were also recruited in 2012 to assist the Department in the lead up to and for the duration of Ireland's EU Presidency in the first half of this year. Details of the numbers of TCOs engaged over the past three years are set out in the table below. TCOs are recruited through selection processes conducted by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and FÁS / Department of Social Protection on behalf of my Department. With the exception of officers who retired under the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) or the HSE voluntary retirement scheme, there is nothing to prevent retired civil or public servants from participating in competitions held by these bodies or from being appointed if qualified, eligible and successful. In cases where retired public or civil servants are occasionally re-employed by the Department, this is generally on a pension abatement basis which means in effect that they continue to receive their pensions and are paid correspondingly reduced salaries by the Department.

### Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

#### Recruitment of Temporary Clerical Officers (TCOs)

Year	Number of TCOs recruited	Duration of contracts	Number who were retired public/civil servants
2011	85	Between 3 and 6 months	3
2012	12512 (EU Presidency)	Between 3 and 6 months September 2012 – July 2013	3
2013	136	Between 6 and 7 months	4

#### Foreign Conflicts

162. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade further to Parliamentary Question No. 123 of 11 June 2013, his views on the further level of civil and political unrest in Turkey; if any Irish citizens have been caught up in the demonstrations taking place; his views on the case involving one Irish citizen receiving consular assistance from the Embassy of Ireland in Ankara; the plan Ireland has in place for assisting other Irish citizens in the region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31675/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** As outlined in my reply to the Deputy's Question of 11 June, the recent unrest in Turkey is a cause of deep concern. The excessive use of force by police is deeply regrettable and should be investigated immediately. I would call on the government to fully engage with the protestors on their legitimate concerns, and I would urge calm and restraint on all sides. As also outlined previously, my Department is aware of one Irish citizen who was directly affected by the demonstrations. He was unhurt and given consular assistance by the Irish Embassy in Ankara. I do not intend to comment further on this case. We will provide similar assistance in any other cases which may arise. As outlined in my reply of 11 June, my Department acted as soon as the demonstrations started, heightening the warning in its travel advisory, urging Irish citizens to avoid demonstrations and alerting them to the cities and areas affected. Given the potential for further demonstrations and the possibility of violence, we are advising Irish citizens to exercise caution and to stay well away from the vicinity of all demonstrations, including apparently peaceful demonstrations.

The Department and the Embassy in Ankara continue to follow the situation closely and have been providing advice to concerned Irish citizens. The phones of the Department and the Embassy are monitored out-of-hours for calls from citizens seeking advice or assistance.

### **Foreign Conflicts**

163. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on the current civil and political unrest in Brazil; if any Irish citizens have been caught up in the current demonstrations taking place; the plan Ireland has in place for assisting Irish citizens in the region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31676/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** I am following closely developments in Brazil in light of the wave of demonstrations that have been taking place there. These demonstrations began earlier this month as a protest at a rise in bus fares. Demonstrations have since spread to cities across the country and have become an expression of broader discontent on a range of issues. Grievances are reported to include the quality of public services, corruption and the cost of public spending on preparations for the 2014 World Cup. While most of the public gatherings have been peaceful in nature, there have been regrettable incidents of violence. There are also reports of vandalism and of looting carried out by fringe elements taking advantage of the situation.

The grievances raised by demonstrators highlight complex issues that require work over time. Brazil is a country that has been enjoying strong economic growth and positive social development since its return to democracy a little over 25 years ago. Notably, Brazil has developed and delivered policies that have lifted an estimated 40 million people from poverty. The demonstrations of recent weeks have highlighted issues which many citizens now wish to see addressed by their authorities.

The Government of Brazil has expressed willingness for dialogue on these issues while, at the same time, making clear the need for violence and vandalism to cease. Brazil's President Rousseff met last week with representatives of those protesting on public transport issues. She also met with Governors and Mayors from across Brazil to discuss the range of issues raised by the protestors. The President has since announced an increase in funding for key public services, and has also proposed consultations on political reforms.

The Ambassador in Brazil and his colleagues continue to monitor the situation carefully. I am informed that no Irish citizens have sought consular assistance as a result of the current unrest in Brazil. From the outset of these demonstrations, the Embassy has been seized of the need to keep Irish citizens informed of developments and, to this end, it has liaised with EU and other Embassies in Brasília, many of which have consulates and networks of citizens across the country, to ensure the widest possible flow of information. The Embassy has also been in touch with many of the Irish citizens resident in Brazil and has also continued to update the travel advisory on my Department's website. We continue to strongly suggest that all Irish citizens monitor the local and national news for up to date information and that they avoid demonstration locations so far as is possible. Our Embassy in Brasilia and the Consular Assistance section in Dublin stand ready to provide consular assistance to any Irish citizens who may require it.

### **Consular Services Provision**

164. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will request the ambassador to attend at the court of appeal in the case of a person

(details supplied). [31677/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** I can inform the Deputy that the Embassy of Ireland in Lithuania and the Consular Assistance Section in Dublin has, at my request, provided consular assistance to the person in question since that person's initial detention. We are in regular contact with the appropriate Lithuanian authorities in response to questions or matters which have arisen during the period of imprisonment. The person and his next of kin are kept informed of the Embassy's representations to the Lithuanian authorities on various matters, and the outcomes of these representations. I wish to inform the Deputy that at the request of the person's family the Consul of our Embassy in Vilnius attended the Appeal Hearing of 27 June.

### **Human Rights Issues**

165. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has made any representations to federal authorities in Bosnia in relation to the ongoing political stalemate regarding the issue of identity cards which has meant every child born since February is not legally recognised as existing under law; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that such political stalemate has meant the death of a three month old child due to delay in treatment sought in Serbia but who could not travel without the relevant documents as the child was not recognisable under law; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that currently another child seeks treatment which is delayed due to the inability to retrieve a passport; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31736/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** As I stated in this House on 26 June, I am aware of failure of the national Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt a law on the Unique Master Citizen Number (JMBG), which is required for Bosnian citizens to exercise certain rights such as having access to health insurance and identity documents. This has had the consequence that as of 12 February newborn Bosnian citizens cannot get a JMBG. I am also aware of the tragic death of baby Berina Hamidovic, and send my heartfelt condolences to her family. This failure to legislate for the express good of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina is deplorable, and I call on the Parliament to act to rapidly adopt this important legislation. The Bosnian Parliament is fully responsible for handling this matter and it is an issue that must be solved at State level.

### **Emigrant Support Services**

166. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade further to Parliamentary Question No. 49 of 30 May 2013, if he has received the full report that the consul general in Boston requested from the executive director of the Irish International Immigration Centre, Boston, following on from an incident relating to an Irish J1 visa holder; the measures being taken to ensure incidents like this do not occur in the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31937/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** Since 2009, the Irish International Immigrant Centre in Boston (IIIC) has been accredited by the US State Department as a visa sponsor for the J1 Irish work and Travel 12 month programme. The terms and conditions under which the IIIC participates in this programme are determined by its contractual relationship with the State Department. The IIIC provides legal and welfare services to immigrants from Ireland and other countries, and advocates for the rights of immigrants

and changes to US legislation to enable immigrants to become permanent residents and US citizens. Following the incident referred to by the Deputy, our Consul General in Boston met with the Executive Director of the IIC expressed his concern to the organisation and requested a full report on the incident. Subsequent to that meeting the IIC has issued a public apology for the manner in which the incident was handled.

However, it is important to recognise that thousands of Irish citizens have received considerable direct assistance over the past two and a half decades from the IIC and through our Consulate in Boston we will continue to work with the IIC to ensure that the needs of Irish citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, are recognised and addressed be met.

I have recently received an independent report prepared at the request of the Consul General in Boston. The Report concluded that the IIC provides an important service to the Irish community in Boston and operates the J1-IWT Programme in an effective and professional manner. It also recommended that the organisation review the manner in which it communicates with clients participating in the programme.

### Northern Ireland Issues

167. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his attention has been drawn to the case of a person (details supplied) in County Down being held in Maghaberry Prison for over six months, whose disproportionately restrictive bail conditions if acceded to would affectively ban them from living with their family in their home town and prevent them from even visiting their family doctor; if he has discussed the case in his meetings with the British Secretary for State Ms Teresa Villiers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31977/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** The detention of the person referred to does not arise by virtue of powers vested in the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland but under devolved powers vested in the Northern Ireland Courts which are independent in the exercise of their functions. This is in keeping with the devolved settlement arising from the Good Friday Agreement and the Hillsborough Agreement. As such it would be inappropriate for me to seek to influence the matters to which the Deputy refers.

### Passport Application Numbers

168. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide a country by country per annum breakdown of Irish passports given out by embassies over the past ten years; the fees collected per annum; the number of passports issued domestically over the past ten years and fees collected; the number of emergency passports issued domestically over that period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32032/13]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** Prior to the full introduction of our current technology system in Oct 2005 the Passport Service only recorded figures for passports issued on the island of Ireland. These pre-2006 records below do not differentiate between emergency and non-emergency passports.

Year	Issued in Ireland
2003	467,653
2004	506,889

Questions - Written Answers

Year	Issued in Ireland
2005	568,228

The following table outlines the country by country per annum breakdown down commencing in 2006.

-	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Abu Dhabi					418	830	898
Abuja	125	178	179	200	208	208	256
Addis Ababa	7	14	22	5	5	11	17
Ankara	86	48	79	75	84	91	77
Athens	137	147	112	149	150	119	145
Auckland	2325	2379	2336	1817	1868	2062	1832
Beijing	453	464	459	484	524	544	618
Berlin	1257	1431	1369	1438	1597	1494	1474
Berne	715	612	676	712	809	800	756
Boston	2105	2135	2006	1771	1831	1788	1794
Brasilia	30	85	102	80	86	115	100
Bratislava	14	19	10	14	29	23	18
Brussels	638	620	650	693	648	749	588
Bucharest	15	22	42	38	46	50	60
Budapest	44	74	49	53	64	71	64
Buenos Aires	246	265	262	211	178	205	162
Cairo	149	174	179	213	207	234	271
Canberra	3712	3866	3848	4323	4745	4940	5646
Cardiff		5	6	197			
Chicago	1643	2086	2216	2018	1994	1671	1632
Copenhagen	176	186	233	177	246	173	166
Dar-Es-Salaam	38	22	26	34	48	45	46
Edinburgh		71	73	74	76	49	33
Hanoi		16	85	76	76	81	100
Helsinki	72	59	81	78	82	75	85
Kampala	58	35	39	32	31	41	41
Kuala Lumpur	395	361	412	447	426	407	468
Lilongwe				6	15	10	11
Lisbon	160	154	144	122	182	154	143
Ljubljana	19	18	31	21	39	36	29

-	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
London							
Lusaka	139	123	97	73	86	90	73
Luxem- bourg	277	258	205	243	240	231	233
Madrid	1427	1389	1317	1464	1439	1442	1502
Maputo	33	64	54	69	49	57	31
Maseru	6	3	9	3	6	3	4
Mexico	176	198	161	165	175	182	138
Moscow	88	105	82	89	85	84	90
New Delhi	107	108	121	109	113	123	138
New York	5523	6006	6036	5558	5486	4960	5281
Nicosia	115	87	96	121	112	125	109
Oslo	93	90	86	104	115	101	101
Ottawa	2285	2353	2374	2113	2159	2173	2128
Paris	1640	1595	1520	1627	1787	1629	1554
Prague	106	107	81	119	76	95	104
Pretoria	2852	3291	3300	2873	2756	2703	2586
Riga		1	7	10	7	4	11
Riyadh	701	785	786	908	671	338	355
Rome	465	443	431	437	459	478	388
San Fran- cisco	3222	3548	3647	3274	3220	3197	3094
Sydney	2939	3092	2777	2803	3005	2959	3282
Seoul	63	78	65	76	69	77	85
Shanghai	75	107	101	86	94	114	113
Singa- pore	352	327	339	401	435	452	417
Sofia	25	17	20	34	32	37	36
Stock- holm	217	239	235	257	276	264	249
Tallinn	19	3	13	6	8	10	7
Tehran	12	11	12	15	8	10	3
Tel Aviv	131	173	128	145	125	179	167
The Hague	851	773	738	705	827	811	730
Tokyo	205	189	177	161	173	158	162
Valetta	1	60	37	47	64	55	75
Vienna	157	182	143	169	173	134	191
Vilnius		1	14	13	8	20	22
Warsaw	64	77	67	59	83	116	85
Washing- ton	986	936	830	846	769	769	739

The following table outlines passports issued in Ireland from 2006 to 2012.

Questions - Written Answers

-	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Passports	536,265	526,916	496,551	491,527	522,691	534,127	561,710
Emer-gency Passports	1157	1116	902	848	482	534	323

An annual revenue/cost statement for Passport Service for the last ten years (period 2003-2012) is set out below. Passport revenues and costs are recorded collectively covering Embassies abroad and offices at home.

-	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Revenue	€23,426,000	€30,135,000	€32,651,000	€30,856,000	€30,544,000
Current	€19,965,000	€21,267,000	€29,741,000	€33,736,000	€42,606,000
Capital	€4,163,000	€6,303,000	€6,752,000	€7,569,000	€153,000
Total Costs*	€24,128,000	€27,810,000	€37,959,000	€42,332,000	€42,759,000

  

-	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Revenue	€29,720,000	€31,687,000	€32,995,000	€35,880,000	€39,834,000
Current	€37,723,000	€36,245,000	€34,135,000	€31,363,000	€33,281,000
Capital	€435,000	€467,000	€1,625,000	€295,000	€0
Total Costs*	€38,158,000	€36,712,000	€35,760,000	€31,658,000	€33,281,000

\*The cost figures do not include the cost of a range of shared services provided to the Passport Service e.g. financial management, human resource management and legal services provided by the Department.

*Question No. 169 answered with Question No. 98.*

### IBRC Investigations

170. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention had been drawn to so called Anglo Irish Bank tapes prior to their publication in a daily newspaper. [31662/13]

279. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Finance if he, or officials in his Department who worked on the restructuring of the promissory notes, were aware of the Anglo Irish Bank tapes before the finalisation of the restructuring of the promissory notes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32201/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 170 and 279 together.

I can confirm that neither I nor any official in the Department of Finance was aware of the contents of the tapes referred to until now.

I am advised that these tapes formed part of the material that was supplied to An Garda Síochána over four years ago as part of their investigation into matters at Anglo Irish Bank. These investigations have led to a number of criminal charges being brought against former employees of Anglo Irish Bank.

### Property Taxation Collection

171. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Finance if a person (details supplied) in

County Limerick is correctly registered for the property tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31714/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the property owner in question is registered for Local Property Tax (LPT) and that he submitted a Local Property Tax Return on 2 May 2013 in which ‘Band 1’ was indicated which, based on the information supplied by the Deputy, is the correct band. It is important to note that LPT is a self-assessment tax, which means the taxpayer makes his or her own assessment of the market value of the property. Revenue has confirmed to me that the ‘Band 3 demand’ to which the person refers is the Notice of Estimate that Revenue issued to each liable person in addition to the LPT 1 Return form. The estimate is automatically displaced by the taxpayer’s own assessment once the LPT Return is filed, and Revenue has confirmed this has happened in this case.

### Proposed Legislation

172. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Finance if a review of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 is currently under way to allow patients who self refer to claim reimbursement for physiotherapy expenses; if so, the progress that has been made with regard to reviewing the legislation; if it will be completed in advance of the Finance Bill in October; if not, the reason for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31789/13]

181. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider an amendment to the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 allowing for a return to the situation whereby patients are allowed to claim reimbursement for physiotherapy expenses when they self refer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31565/13]

241. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Finance his views on proposing an amendment to the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 that would return the situation whereby patients are allowed to claim reimbursement for physiotherapy expenses if they refer themselves. [31824/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 172, 181 and 241 together.

The position is, as I have stated on many occasions in the House, that this issue was raised during the debates in the Seanad on Finance Bill 2013, during which I agreed to re-examine the matter during the course of this year.

My Department is currently in the process of examining the issue and when the analysis is completed and the findings are presented to me, I will make any necessary decisions in the context of Finance (No 2) Bill 2013.

### Fuel Laundering

173. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Finance the number of detections of the illegal use of agricultural green diesel that have been discovered by customs officers for each of the past seven years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31812/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the numbers of detections of the illegal use of marked diesel in the period in question were as set out in the following table.

### Detections of Illegal Use of Marked Diesel

Year	Number of Detections
2007	1,067
2008	1,095
2009	859
2010	1,239
2011	1,160
2012	1,169
2013 (to June 27th)	714

*Question No. 174 answered with Question No. 98.*

### Pension Provisions

175. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Finance his views on a submission (details supplied) regarding pensions; if the stated position is acceptable under current legislation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31483/13]

179. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views regarding a Permanent TSB pension scheme in respect of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31539/13]

192. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding pensions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31711/13]

274. **Deputy Seán Ó Feargháil** asked the Minister for Finance if he will address the serious concerns raised in correspondence (details supplied) regarding a deferred pension scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32157/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 175, 179, 192 and 274 together.

As the Deputies will be aware the pension arrangements for the staff of Permanent TSB are a matter for the management of that company and for the trustees of the relevant pension schemes. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the implications for an individual arising out of any proposed restructuring by Permanent TSB of its defined benefit pension schemes. I understand that that the matter has recently been heard by the Labour Court.

### Bank Codes of Conduct

176. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will review the code of conduct on mortgage arrears for the credit and insurance undertakings to establish bank processes in respect of possessing homes and debt collection; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31514/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Central Bank has just concluded a review of the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) and I have no plans to repeat the review. The Central Bank's review included a public consultation process, with in excess of

230 submissions received. The revised CCMA was published on 27 June 2013 and came into effect yesterday, 1 July 2013. The submissions made, as well as feedback document outlining the Central Bank's response to some of the main issues raised, are available on the Central Bank's website [www.centralbank.ie](http://www.centralbank.ie). The revised Code provides a framework which complements the work of the Central Bank which has for some time been intensively working with lenders to ensure that they have a range of longer term options, such as 'trade-down mortgages', 'split mortgages' and 'sale by agreement' or other appropriate options as may be developed by lenders for their customers with distressed mortgages. The CCMA provides an integrated and cohesive package of consumer protection measures for borrowers facing or in mortgage arrears. It reflects the current mortgage arrears situation and seeks to deliver on the following principles, to:

- ensure appropriate resolution of each borrower's arrears situation;
- ensure that lenders deal with borrowers in a fair and transparent manner;
- support and facilitate meaningful engagement between lenders and borrowers; and
- ensure borrower awareness of the benefits of co-operating with their lender, and the consequences of not co-operating.

With regard to restructuring of mortgage loans, the CCMA requires lenders to explore all of the options for alternative repayment arrangements offered by that lender for each particular case.

In addition, where an alternative repayment arrangement is offered by a lender, the revised CCMA requires the lender to outline the reasons why the alternative arrangement offered is considered to be appropriate and sustainable, as well as the advantages and any disadvantages or potential disadvantages of any arrangement offered, with regard to the individual circumstances of the borrower.

*Question No. 177 answered with Question No. 87.*

### **Charities and Voluntary Organisations**

178. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if an application in respect of an organisation (details supplied) will be expedited and approved. [31531/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** This is a matter for the Revenue Commissioners. I am advised by Revenue that the organisation referred to by the Deputy has a charitable tax exemption and recently sought approval to amend its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The required approval was granted by Revenue on 16 May. I am informed that Revenue made direct contact with the charity on foot of the Deputy's representation to ensure there were no further issues requiring clarification. The charity confirmed that there are no outstanding issues.

*Question No. 179 answered with Question No. 175.*

### **Pension Provisions**

180. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if he will address the issues that have been raised relative to retirement funds such as approved retirement funds and

approved minimum retirement funds and the fact that persons have lost money which was set aside for their pension funds; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31541/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised that there are a small number of pension funds that may not be entitled to compensation under the deposit guarantee scheme, DGS, or the eligible liabilities guarantee scheme, ELG, due to the nature of the products or deposit options in which those account holders invested. It is important to note that at the time the products were offered to customers there was no additional guarantee provided by the State in respect of those products.

It was always the case that the ELG scheme covered only those liabilities which were entered into during the issuance window. In relation to the DGS Scheme, I am advised that the DGS Regulations explicitly specify which deposits are excluded from coverage under that Scheme. Deposits held by pension funds and retirement funds fall within the category of excluded deposits, though small self-administered pension schemes are included. The decision to include SSAPs and exclude ARFs, AMRFs and other pension funds/instruments was based on the fact that SSAPs are usually small schemes administered by the member(s) of the scheme whilst ARFs are managed by a qualified fund manager through a credit or investment institution.

There are currently no plans to alter the terms of the Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

If customers are concerned about the coverage for their pension fund they can contact either my Department in respect of queries on the ELG Scheme or the Central Bank with queries about the DGS Scheme.

*Question No. 181 answered with Question No. 172.*

### Departmental Staff Rehiring

182. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Finance the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31573/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The following is the position with regard to the employment of temporary clerical officers over the last three years.

Year	Number of Temporary Clerical Officers employed	Number of retired public/civil servants
2011	Nil	Nil
2012	6	Nil
2013	Nil	Nil

The clerical officers applied for temporary positions in the Public Service through the Public Appointments Service, (PAS) which is the centralised provider of recruitment, assessment and selection services for the Civil Service. The terms and conditions for the recruitment of temporary clerical officers is determined by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and managed by PAS. PAS services can be viewed at [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie).

### Property Taxation Collection

183. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the payment options available to a person wishing to pay the local property tax with no current account and whose only income is jobseeker's benefit; and if he will consider allowing persons in such cases to pay by standing order, as it is the cheapest option. [31585/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that Revenue does not use standing orders for tax payments because they do not facilitate the orderly collection of taxes for the Exchequer. For example, the customer sets the date of payment of a standing order. Where there are insufficient funds on the date payment is due, no payment will be made. Revenue will not be notified of any unpaid standing orders and would be obliged to check each month to ensure each standing order is paid, and to pursue each monthly payment with the taxpayer. Managing large amounts of standing orders creates significant reconciliation difficulties.

By contrast, direct debit gives greater certainty and facilitates the orderly collection of taxes while ensuring safeguards for customers. A direct debit requires the customer (the payer) to authorise Revenue (the payee) to take a payment. The customer can cancel the payment at any time. From an Exchequer point of view, if the payment goes unpaid, Revenue will be advised within five working days and will be able to pursue payment then. This is not possible with standing orders. In addition, with direct debits Revenue will always know the source of the payment and will be able to update the customer record electronically. It is not possible to manage standing orders in this fashion.

Accordingly, the option of paying LPT by standing order is not possible. Revenue has provided a very wide range of payment options ranging from debit/credit cards to phased arrangements, including payment via a range of service providers. It would not be reasonable for me to suggest that Revenue would move to a payment system which is riskier from the Exchequer's point of view and is less efficient in that it leads to administrative delays and costs.

By way of general comment, it is my understanding that it would be unusual for financial institutions to make standing orders available other than from current accounts and that the types of accounts which are suitable for standing orders would also usually be suitable for direct debit.

Finally, as I have previously informed the House, an individual whose only income is a Department of Social Protection (DSP) payment, such as jobseeker's benefit, will qualify for a deferral of LPT. Full details of all payment methods and deferral arrangements are available on Revenue's website [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

### **Property Taxation Application**

184. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if those who are on interest-only mortgages are exempt from local property tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31595/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Government decided the LPT should apply to all owners of residential property with limited exemptions. Limiting the exemptions available allows the rate to be kept low for those liable persons who do not qualify for an exemption.

There is no specific exemption for property owners who have an interest only mortgage. However, such individuals may be eligible for a deferral of LPT should they meet the qualifying conditions. To qualify for a deferral, the residential property must be occupied as a sole

or main residence. The gross annual income thresholds for a full deferral will be €15,000 for a single person and €25,000 for a couple, whether married persons, civil partners or qualified cohabitants. A person may claim a deferral if their gross income will not, “as can reasonably be foreseen at the liability date” exceed these thresholds in that year.

A deferral of up to 50% of the LPT liability will be possible where the gross annual income of the liable person does not exceed €25,000 for a single person or €35,000 for married persons/civil partners/cohabitants.

The full and partial deferral thresholds may be increased in the case of properties occupied as a sole or main residence and subject to a mortgage, which may of particular relevance to owner-occupiers with an “interest only” mortgage. In such cases, the gross income thresholds may be increased by 80% of the gross mortgage interest payments. The deferral option in such qualifying cases will apply until the end of 2017, as long as the claimant continues to satisfy the qualifying criteria.

### **IBRC Liquidation**

185. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will seek a report from the Chairman of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation identifying the number of instances in 2007 and 2008 where voluntary, non-profit organisations with deposits in Anglo Irish Bank converted those deposits into apparently higher-yielding shares; the typical number of bank-initiated contacts with such organisations in advance of deposits being moved into shares; the aggregate loss to the affected depositing shareholding organisations arising from Anglo’s campaign to effect the transfer of deposits made by such bodies into shares over the period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31617/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware, on 7 February 2013 the Oireachtas passed legislation (Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Act 2013), appointing joint Special Liquidators to IBRC with immediate effect to wind up its business and operations. The Chairman of IBRC, along with the Board were relieved of their duties on that day and therefore it would not be appropriate for me to request a report as suggested. Unfortunately I am unable to interfere in operational matters in the bank. Should customers have a specific complaint in relation to the conduct of the bank they should take the matter up with the Special Liquidators of IBRC in the first instance. It is the Special Liquidators who now have responsibility for the day to day management of the bank.

### **Tax Code**

186. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider developing a mechanism whereby new contractors setting up businesses may avail of a reduced rate of relevant contracts tax similar to that of existing contractors; his views that such a provision would be conducive to the creation of employment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31637/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that Relevant Contracts Tax (RCT) provides for withholding tax to be applied on certain payments made by Principals to subcontractors and is designed to promote tax compliance in the construction, forestry and meat processing sectors. The tax withheld by Principal contractors is paid over to Revenue and the subcontractor is given credit for any tax withheld. From 1 January 2012, the Revenue Commissioners have made available a new online system for the

operation of RCT and the system provides for three rates of deduction - zero, 20% and 35%. The zero rate recognises that it would be undesirable to deduct tax from compliant subcontractors. One criterion for qualifying for the 0% rate is that the subcontractor has throughout the previous three years complied with all the obligations imposed by the Tax Acts, Capital Gains Tax Acts and the Value Added Tax Acts in relation to (i) the payment or remittance of taxes, interest and penalties, (ii) the delivery of returns and (iii) the supply, on request, of accounts or other information to Revenue. Notwithstanding this, the legislation provides for the granting of a 0% rate where a person satisfies Revenue that the three year compliance history ought to be disregarded.

For new tax registrations, the Revenue system automatically grants a rate of 20% as a three year compliance history does not exist. However, this may be changed to 0% if the subcontractor satisfies the Revenue that in all the circumstances the three year compliance period ought to be disregarded.

I am also advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the rate of deduction is reviewed periodically and, if a subcontractor who has been allocated the 20% rate meets the necessary conditions, the deduction rate is adjusted to zero. Similarly where a subcontractor no longer meets the conditions associated with either the zero or 20% rate the deduction rate is adjusted upwards as appropriate.

RCT plays an important role in ensuring tax compliance by subcontractors in the relevant sectors and it is the view of the Revenue Commissioners that it would not be appropriate to automatically allocate a zero rate to newly established subcontractors. Revenue has to be satisfied that a subcontractor has established a satisfactory record of tax compliance.

### **Tax Credits**

187. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the revenue that would be raised for the Exchequer if tax credits for a person's earnings were capped at €100,000, and of every €2 earned after €100,000, €1 in tax credits was lost. [31665/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated full year yield to the Exchequer, estimated by reference to 2013 incomes, of restricting the main personal and employee tax credits in the manner mentioned by the deputy would be of the order of €460 million. This estimate is derived from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2010 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends in the interim. It is therefore provisional and likely to be revised.

It should also be noted that a married couple who has elected or has been deemed to have elected for joint assessment is counted as one tax unit.

### **Tax Credits**

188. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding an application for incapacitated child credit in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31673/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have been advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the person's claim for incapacitated child credit has been processed. A tax credit certificate for 2013 and PAYE Balancing Statement (P21) for 2012, including the credit,

issued to the person concerned on 12 April 2013. A PAYE Balancing Statement (P21) for 2011 will issue shortly to include the credit.

### **NAMA Staff Recruitment**

189. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Finance in view of the fact that several executives of the National Asset Management Agency have taken up employment with private equity groups, his plans to tighten up regulations and guidelines relating to the movement between public and private sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31701/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy refers in his question to NAMA. I would point out that all NAMA staff are employees of the NTMA and are assigned to NAMA by the NTMA. Under the NTMA business model, all employees are recruited on the basis of individually negotiated contracts. In addition to NAMA, the NTMA carries out a range of commercial asset and liability functions on behalf of Government and its ability to successfully perform these functions is critically dependent on its ability to attract employees – often with specialist skills – from the private sector, including those at middle and senior management level. It is simply not possible for the NTMA and NAMA to carry out the work that they do on behalf of the taxpayer without recruiting the relevant expertise from outside of the public sector. Mobility with the private sector is a critical component of the NTMA model and if it is to be successful we have to accept that expertise can move in both directions. That is the basis on which close to 300 staff have been recruited to NAMA from the private sector over the past three years and it would not have been possible to move from a standing start in December 2009 to become fully operational with a €32 billion balance sheet a year later without having that ability to recruit the appropriate expertise and experience from the private sector. That expertise and experience is now producing results for NAMA: you will have noted that NAMA recently announced a profit for the second consecutive year and that it has generated cash of over €12 billion in its three years of existence.

There are extensive safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of information held by NTMA employees, including those assigned to NAMA. Employees assigned to NAMA by the NTMA, as is the case with all other NTMA staff, 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. Employees assigned to NAMA are also subject to a prohibition on release of confidential data under Sections 99 and 202 of the NAMA Act 2009. NTMA employees, including those assigned to NAMA, are subject to the Official Secrets Act. Contravention of these prohibitions is a criminal offence. These protections do not cease at the point of resignation but rather apply indefinitely and extend to former employees.

The notice period for NTMA employees assigned to NAMA is typically three months. NTMA contracts for employees assigned to NAMA have a provision entitling the NTMA to place the employee on garden leave at any point during the notice period during the time the employee may not work for another employer.

As was indicated by the Chief Executive of the NTMA at a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform on 24 January last, the NTMA has been engaged in a review of its policy in respect of notice periods and post-termination restrictions on employment. The review commissioned by the NTMA was conducted by the law firm, Matheson, and has now been completed. Arising from the review, I am advised that the NTMA is implementing a number of changes to its employment contracts, including the introduction of longer notice periods of 3 to 6 months (up from 1 to 3 months) for middle and senior manage-

ment employees and garden leave provisions to be included in all employment contracts. These changes have been introduced for new NTMA employees and existing NTMA employees as they are promoted. As I pointed out above, the three-month notice period and garden leave provisions already apply to NTMA staff assigned to NAMA.

In addition, I am advised that additional post-termination restrictions on employment are being considered on a case-by-case basis in respect of NTMA senior management employees in particular. However, the imposition of such restrictions needs to be carefully balanced against the NTMA's need to recruit good candidates for whom such restrictions may act as a significant disincentive to taking up employment with the NTMA.

*Question No. 190 answered with Question No. 98.*

*Question No. 191 answered with Question No. 87.*

*Question No. 192 answered with Question No. 175.*

### Tax Yield

193. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the amounts of VAT, excise duty or other indirect taxes taken as a proportion of income tax, for example, for every €1 taken in income tax, €1.20 is taken in VAT. [31717/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The table provided shows the tax revenue received to the Exchequer in the first 5 months of 2013 in respect of income tax and indirect taxes and also provides the requested ratios.

Tax Revenue end May 2013	€ million	Ratio to Income Tax
Income Tax	6,122.19	1.00
Value Added Tax	4,994.04	0.82
Excise Duty	1,833.03	0.30
Customs	84.96	0.01

### VAT Rates Reductions

194. **Deputy Ann Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance if it is envisaged that the special rate of VAT set at 9% for tourism related activities including that of restaurants and hotels initially implemented between 1 July 2011 and 31 December 2013 will be extended in view of the level of employment creation that has arisen because of this introduction and the benefits that have been passed on to the consumer since the 9% VAT rate was introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31718/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Any proposals to maintain the 9% rate into 2014 will be considered in the context of Budget 2014.

### Universal Social Charge Exemptions

195. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the cost of abolishing the additional 3% universal social charge on income for self-employed earners over €100,000. [31721/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the full year cost, estimated by reference to 2013 incomes, from abolishing the additional universal social charge of 3%, which is currently applicable to self-employed income in excess of €100,000, would be of the order of €130 million. This estimate is derived from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2010 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends in the interim. It is, therefore, provisional and likely to be revised.

### **Universal Social Charge Yield**

196. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the revenue that would be raised for the Exchequer by increasing the top rate of USC paid by PAYE workers by an additional 3% on income over €100,000, similar to that charged to self-employed top earners. [31727/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the full year yield, estimated by reference to 2013 incomes, from extending the additional universal social charge of 3%, which is currently applicable to self-employed income in excess of €100,000, to all PAYE income earners at this level of income would be of the order of €71 million. The Universal Social Charge is an individualised charge and as such, the estimate of yield is based on individual incomes of more than €100,000. The estimated yield is based on confining the extension of the 3% rate to the portion of income which is in excess of €100,000, that is, the increase is not applied to the portion of total income earned up to €100,000. This estimate is derived from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2010 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends in the interim. It is, therefore, provisional and likely to be revised.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

197. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Finance in view of the increasing magnitude of the mortgage crisis here and the Central Bank of Ireland's new Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, if he has taken into consideration consumer protection advocates' comments on the changes as absolutely appalling, including the removal of the 12 month moratorium on legal action, reduction in protection of home owners from excessive contact from banks and the lack of independent appeal if a home owner cannot comply with lender requests; the way he will empower home owners in the resolution process in order to address the power imbalance between lender and home owner; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31737/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Central Bank has now concluded a review of the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, CCMA, following a public consultation process, with in excess of 230 submissions received. The revised CCMA was published on 27 June 2013 and came into effect on 1 July 2013. The submissions made, as well as feedback document outlining the Central Bank's response to some of the main issues raised, are available on the Central Bank's website, [www.centralbank.ie](http://www.centralbank.ie). The CCMA provides an integrated and cohesive package of consumer protection measures for borrowers facing or in mortgage arrears. It reflects the current mortgage arrears situation and seeks to deliver on the following principles, to:

- ensure appropriate resolution of each borrower's arrears situation;

- ensure that lenders deal with borrowers in a fair and transparent manner;
- support and facilitate meaningful engagement between lenders and borrowers; and
- ensure borrower awareness of the benefits of co-operating with their lender, and the consequences of not co-operating.

With regard to the moratorium, to clarify, the 12 month moratorium applied from day 31 after arrears first arose and did not take into account any time taken by the lender to gather information from the borrower, complete an assessment or make an offer. The revised CCMA requires a lender to wait at least eight months from the date the arrears arose, before legal action can commence against a co-operating borrower.

Separately, regardless of how long it takes the lender to assess a case, and provided that the borrower is co-operating, the lender must give three months' notice to the borrower before they can commence legal proceedings where:

- the lender does not offer an alternative repayment arrangement; or
- the borrower does not accept an alternative repayment arrangement offered by the lender.

This will give co-operating borrowers time to consider other options that may be available to them, such as voluntary surrender, voluntary sale or a personal insolvency arrangement. The combined effect of the protection period and the notice period is that, for a co-operating borrower, legal proceedings may not commence until three months from the date the letter is issued (where lender declines to offer an arrangement or where the borrower does not accept an arrangement offered) or eight months from the date the arrears arose, whichever date is later. The revised CCMA also sets out a requirement for lenders to draw up a contacts policy that will apply to all communications with borrowers in arrears or pre-arrears, and must be approved by the lender's board of directors.

To mitigate against the risk of harassment resulting from the removal of the limit on contacts, provision 22 of the revised CCMA will require lenders to ensure that:

- a) communications with borrowers are proportionate and not excessive, taking into account the circumstances of the borrower, including that unnecessarily frequent communications are not made;
- b) communications are not aggressive, intimidating or harassing;
- c) borrowers are given sufficient time to complete an action they committed to, before follow up communication is attempted; and
- d) steps are taken to agree future communication with borrowers.

In relation to appeals, the Central Bank does not have the power to require lenders to delegate commercial decisions in relation to debt restructuring to independent parties. A complaint may of course be made to the Financial Services Ombudsman, FSO, including in respect of an appeal. The FSO will consider whether the lender complied with the CCMA in reaching the decision and may direct a lender to re-assess the borrower's case.

The Deputy will also be aware that the new Personal Insolvency Act provides new statutory insolvency frameworks to allow debtors, through the utilisation of a professional personal insolvency practitioner, and creditors, to consider an arrangement to resolve unsustainable mortgage and personal debt. The legislation provides a legal framework for the resolution of mortgage arrears, as well as other personal debt, and it will provide certainty for borrowers and

lenders alike about the consequences of non-payment and failure to reach agreement. The effect of this legislation is to rebalance the relationship between debtors and creditors and to offer more accessible and effective options to debtors to deal with debt difficulty.

Also, in preparing a Personal Insolvency Arrangement which can include mortgaged assets, there is an onus on a personal insolvency practitioner to formulate a proposal, insofar as reasonably practicable, on terms that will not require the debtor to dispose of an interest in or cease to occupy a principal private residence. The Insolvency Service of Ireland, which will oversee the operation of the new insolvency frameworks, has now been established and will shortly begin accepting applications for the new personal insolvency processes.

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

198. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether banking regulation has got tighter here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [23707/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** A well-regulated, effectively supervised, competitive and more stable financial services sector is crucial to our economic recovery. It is important too for the continued development of Ireland as a centre for international financial services and as a location of choice for international foreign financial services firms. A range of reforms have been introduced to underpin a more effective and efficient financial regulatory regime. The Central Bank Reform Act 2010 gave effect to significant structural changes in the operation of financial regulation in Ireland. It provided a statutory basis for a comprehensive domestic regulatory framework for financial services and set out new powers for the Central Bank to ensure the fitness and probity of nominees to key positions within financial service providers. The Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2011, which is being considered at Report Stage in the Seanad, further strengthens the ability of the Central Bank to impose and supervise compliance with regulatory requirements and to undertake timely prudential interventions. These reforms followed on from the reports of Prof. Honohan and Messrs. Regling and Watson which identified a range of regulatory failures which were instrumental in the financial crises.

At EU level, the Irish Presidency succeeded in agreeing a number of dossiers which balance responsible governance with the need to avoid unnecessary burdens, thereby ensuring that opportunities for economic growth and job creation are maximised. That work will ensure that our regulatory framework is benchmarked against other EU and international jurisdictions and enable us to work in building growth for the future that is underpinned by a sound regulatory environment.

### **Tax Code**

199. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if he is concerned about the rate of corporation tax here within the EU; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [25194/13]

201. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if Prime Minister Cameron has expressed concerns to him regarding tax structures of global companies here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [25196/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 199 and 201 together.

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On the question about contacts from Prime Minister Cameron regarding the tax structures of global companies here I can inform the Deputy that there has been no contact from Prime Minister Cameron regarding the tax structures of global companies here. The Government has consistently stated its commitment to the 12.5% corporation tax rate which has the support of all the major parties and the majority of Deputies in this House. We have a very strong track record of attracting companies of real substance to invest and create thousands of jobs in Ireland. Many of the large Multi-National Corporations, MNCs, are here for many years and regard Ireland as an excellent base from which to serve their customers in Europe and further afield. Our competitive taxation system is just one element of what makes Ireland attractive to MNCs. We remain committed to our competitive 12.5% tax rate and I have no concerns whatsoever regarding Ireland's ability to maintain this rate.

In addition a low corporate tax rate is a tool to address the economic limitations that come with being a peripheral country, as compared to "core" countries. Furthermore taxation is a powerful instrument of economic policy. Retaining the right of EU Member States to decide taxation rules and levels allows Member States to take account of their differing positions in the economic and business cycle. Therefore taxation may also be used as a tool to stimulate the economy or to cool it down in case of risks of overheating. However, it is important to make a distinction between a competitive tax economy and harmful tax competition. Ireland does not engage in harmful tax competition. Ireland just like other EU countries believes in fair tax competition and building on the work of the Global Forum on Tax Transparency, unfair tax competition is an issue that needs to be examined.

### EU Issues

200. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if he was consulted regarding the recent nomination to the board of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [30041/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As Governor for Ireland on the Board of Governors of the EBRD, it is my responsibility to nominate a candidate to represent Ireland on the Board of Directors. In this regard I can confirm that I nominated and voted in favour of Mr. Sean Donlon's appointment to the Board which will take effect from 1 August 2013.

*Question No. 201 answered with Question No. 199.*

### Single Euro Payments Area

202. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance if he is satisfied with progress made on the implementation of a single euro area payments scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24428/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The aim of the Single Euro Payments Area, SEPA, project is to create a single market for euro-denominated retail payments. SEPA is an EU initiative that will change the way that these payments are processed across Europe. SEPA will allow payment systems users to make euro-denominated retail electronic payments to payees located in any of the participating countries, using a single payment account and a single set of payment instruments (the participating countries are the EU member states, together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Monaco). SEPA comes into full effect on 1 February 2014 and businesses will need to ensure that payroll, direct debit and accounting systems are SEPA-ready. SEPA will introduce new business rules in relation to retail

electronic payments and implement common standards in all participating countries for issuing and executing the underlying payment instructions. SEPA will deliver tangible benefits to businesses, for example by allowing faster settlement and simplified processing will improve cash flow and reduce costs.

The implementation of SEPA within Ireland is overseen by the National Payments Plan, NPP, Steering Committee, which was established in 2012 to modernise the way payments are made in Ireland. In this regard, an NPP-SEPA sub-group has been formed, consisting of representatives of consumers, businesses, Government and banks. Officials from my Department are represented on this group which provides an avenue for the discussion of any issues that arise in the process of migrating to SEPA. Progress towards migration is being made and progress will continue to be monitored closely to ensure an efficient migration to SEPA. More information on SEPA can be found on the website [www.readyforsepa.ie](http://www.readyforsepa.ie).

### **European Investment Bank Loans**

203. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance the way the European Investment Bank investment can be maximised to support jobs and assist reaching the targets for employment growth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24427/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Since Mr. Werner Hoyer's appointment as President of the EIB in 2012, there has been a deepening and widening of engagement between Ireland and the Bank. A joint High Level Working Group, HLWG, was established to identify concrete and flexible mechanisms to enhance the Bank's support for Ireland's growth agenda. The EIB and Ireland are strongly committed to working together to enhance the Bank's activity in the country and this commitment is beginning to bear results. EIB group activity in Ireland in 2012 was almost €600 million, representing an increase of over €100 million in 2012 over 2011 levels and covering a diversified range of sectors and transactions. Funding in 2013 is on track to improve upon on 2012 levels. Financing for SMEs is a key part of reaching targets for employment growth, SMEs are vital to Ireland in terms of job creation and boosting economic growth. To put this in context SMEs make up 99% of Irish businesses and account for almost 70% of employment in the State. A number of Government Departments including the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation are working closely together to ensure that Ireland secures as much funding for our SMEs as possible.

There have been positive results in this regard as evidenced with the recent announcement of the EIB of the provision of €200 million for investment in AIB for small and medium companies across Ireland. This represents the latest EIB support for SMEs in Ireland since an earlier lending programme intermediated by AIB in 2011. As part of the Management Committee visit to Ireland in April, the EIB delegation met with myself and a number of other Government Ministers including Deputy Bruton, where it was highlighted that access to funding for Irish SMEs is a priority for Ireland.

The Deputy may be aware that earlier this month, my colleague, the Minister for Education and Skills signed a €100 million loan agreement with the European Investment Bank, EIB, to further support the Government's investment in school buildings. SMEs are likely to have significant involvement in these building projects. Most recently, the European Council welcomed a report last week, which the European Commission and the EIB had prepared on the financing of the economy. At that meeting, the European Council agreed on a number of measures and welcomed the intention of the Commission and the EIB to implement them as a matter of priority and to present a comprehensive report on their implementation ahead of its October 2013 meeting, with quantitative objectives, instruments and a timetable. The following measures

were agreed:

- To step up efforts by the EIB to support lending to the economy by making full use of the recent increase of EUR 10 billion in its capital. The European Council called on the EIB to implement its plan to increase its lending activity in the EU by at least 40% over 2013-2015. To this effect, the EIB has already identified new lending opportunities of more than EUR 150 billion across a set of critical priorities such as innovation and skills, SME access to finance, resources efficiency and strategic infrastructures;

- To expand joint risk-sharing financial instruments between the European Commission and the EIB to leverage private sector and capital markets investments in SMEs. These initiatives should ensure that the volume of new loans to SMEs across the EU is expanded, respecting the principles of financial soundness and transparency as well as the MFF ceilings. The Council, in consultation with the Commission and the EIB, will specify without delay the parameters for the design of such instruments co-financed by the Structural Funds, aiming at high leverage effects. The necessary preparations should be made to allow these instruments to begin operating in January 2014;

- To increase the European Investment Fund's credit enhancement capacity;

- To gradually expand of the EIB's trade finance schemes to favour SME business across the Union, especially in programme countries;

- To strengthen the cooperation between national development banks and the EIB to increase opportunities for co-lending and exchanges of best practices;

- To develop alternative sources of financing in close cooperation with Member States.

### **Small and Medium Enterprises Supports**

204. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether formal targets for debt resolution for the small and medium enterprise sector similar to the mortgage arrears resolution targets process would assist economic recovery and job creation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24551/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In June 2013 the Central Bank set quarterly institution-specific performance targets for covered banks to move distressed borrowers onto longer-term solutions. The targets set reflect the banks' capacity, processes and systems. The Credit Review process remains available to any SMEs whose credit has been reduced or withdrawn by the pillar banks as well as when credit is refused by them. I would strongly advise any SME whose credit is reduced or withdrawn to avail of the services of the Credit Review Office. The Government recognises that SMEs are the lifeblood of the economy and will play a vital role in the recovery of employment growth in our country. It also recognises that businesses with legacy debts may be viable. One of the key priorities of the Programme for Government is to ensure that an adequate pool of credit is available to fund SMEs in the real economy during the restructuring and downsizing programme.

### **Bank Charges**

205. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the impact of increased bank charges on business activity and employment levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24434/13]

206. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether business activity and maintenance of employment is being hampered by the failure of banks to reduce variable loan rates in line with the recent ECB rate reduction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24429/13]

213. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Finance the steps taken to ensure that banking lending rates to the small and medium enterprises sector reflect international borrowing rates and that bank charges reflect the need to support SMEs. [24453/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 205, 206 and 213 together.

The Government recognises that SMEs are the lifeblood of the economy and will play a vital role in the recovery of employment growth in our country. It is also very conscious of the costs faced by SMEs in doing business and one of the aims of the Action Plan for Jobs 2013 is to reduce controllable costs of doing business. I have no statutory function in relation to business interest rate and decisions made and charges imposed by individual lending institutions at any particular time. The decisions financial institutions operating in Ireland make on the interest rates and other fees they charge to customers are commercial decisions for the institutions concerned. Interest rates are determined by a broad range of factors including ECB base rates, deposit rates, market funding costs, the competitive environment, and an institution's overall funding.

Given concerns over breakdown in monetary transmission and in particular increasing fragmentation within the Single European Market as highlighted by the high interest rates for SME lending in the periphery the ECB is currently considering a number of options that could reduce costs of funding in the periphery. In particular a technical group made up of the EU EIB and ECB is currently exploring the possibility of developing a market for SME-backed ABS as a way to enhance actual credit flows to SMEs.

### **Job Creation Issues**

207. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance the level of economic growth that would be required to bring the unemployment rate below 10% by 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24407/13]

215. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Finance his response to the view that increases in growth rates will not deliver the scale of job creation required to reduce significantly the rates of unemployment. [24464/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 207 and 215 together.

Over the past few quarters, we have seen a number of relatively encouraging developments in the labour market. Data from the latest Quarterly National Household Survey show that employment on an annual basis increased by 1.1% in the first quarter of 2013, the second successive quarter of annual growth. In May, the standardised unemployment rate stood at 13.7%, substantially down from the peak rate of 15.1% in February of last year.

In line with these latest developments, my Department is forecasting modest employment growth in 2013, with employment expected to continue expanding thereafter. However, over the medium term increased labour supply is likely to result from the assumed economic recovery as participation rates pick-up and the pace of outward migration slows. In other words,

while this pick-up in employment is expected to result in some decrease in the unemployment rate in the next few years, increasing labour supply will likely curtail, at least to some extent, the decline in the unemployment rate.

As outlined in the *Irish Stability Programme – April 2013 Update*, my Department expects the unemployment rate to average 12.8% in 2015. This is based on annual average GDP growth of 2.3%. However, I would stress that this unemployment projection takes account only of policies which are known. The impact of measures yet to be announced will be factored into the Department's macroeconomic forecasts as and when the specifics of these measures become available. If the pace of economic growth is stronger than expected then unemployment could potentially fall more rapidly; however, as outlined above, labour supply might also increase at a faster pace.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that the Government remains committed to tackling the unacceptably high level of unemployment. Reflecting this, the *Action Plan for Jobs 2013* set out over 333 actions to be undertaken in the coming year to support job creation and complement measures already undertaken in the *Jobs Initiative* and the *Pathways to Work*.

### **Credit Review Office Remit**

208. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether the Credit Review Office has sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate; his views on the success to date of the Credit Review Office; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24412/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy may be aware that I published an independent assessment of the Credit Review Office late last year and that this assessment was broadly positive about the effectiveness of the Office. That said, I remain concerned at the low level of numbers of SMEs seeking reviews by the Credit Review Office. The most recent report by the Credit Reviewer shows that the Credit Review Office upheld the credit appeal in 135 cases or 57% of cases decided. The upheld appeals have resulted in €16.8M credit being made available to SMEs and farms, protecting 1,297 jobs. This shows that there is a strong prospect of success for SMEs going to the Credit Review Office and I would strongly encourage SMEs refused credit to seek a review by the Office. I find it difficult to understand why SMEs and farms who are at risk of going out of business are not willing to seek a review of a refusal of credit.

The independent assessment contained a number of recommendations to make the CRO more effective in encouraging and increasing the supply of credit to SMEs. One of these recommendations was to increase the resources of the CRO and I sanctioned the appointment of additional reviewers at budget time last year. The recent CRO report stated that the procurement process for additional reviewers has been completed and that the implementation of the remaining recommendations in the assessment within the CRO's remit would follow the training of these reviewers. I am satisfied that the CRO now has sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate of encouraging and increasing the supply of credit to SMEs. In looking at the implementation of other recommendations, my officials have also been considering where the CRO should fit into the overall strategy of ensuring credit availability for viable SMEs and the level of resources is one aspect of this strategy. I expect that the deliberative process on the strategy will conclude shortly.

### **Tobacco Smuggling**

209. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if the Revenue Commissioners plan to have a confidential e-mail address for members of the public to report illegal cigarettes smuggling; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31741/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised that the Revenue Commissioners are in the process of reviewing their confidential channels available to the public to report illegal activity in relation to tobacco, including smuggling and illegal selling. The provision of a confidential email address is one option which is under consideration. I am also advised that Revenue have a confidential tobacco telephone/hotline that is available on a 24-hour basis. Members of the public are encouraged to contact this hotline 1800-295-295 with any information pertaining to illegal activity.

*Question No. 210 answered with Question No. 98.*

### **Tax Yield**

211. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the total taxable profits of companies here in 2012 and the corporation tax paid that year, in value and as a percentage. [31756/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that statistical data is not yet available for the year 2012 as corporation returns associated with 2012 accounting periods are not yet due in many cases.

### **Tax Yield**

212. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he has considered setting a minimum threshold for profits to be retained here for corporation tax purposes, if the company is incorporated here and or resident for tax purposes. [31757/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Companies incorporated or resident in the State for tax purpose are chargeable to corporation tax on all of the profits arising from their trading activities here after taking account of allowable deductions and reliefs as provided for in the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. Dividends and other distributions are not deductible in computing profits for tax purposes: whether a company retains its profits or distributes them to its shareholders or parent company does not affect the amount of those profits that is chargeable to corporation tax, and I am assuming that this is not what the Deputy has in mind. Setting a minimum threshold of profits for corporation tax purposes would involve restricting deductible amounts, in respect of what would otherwise be allowable deductions and reliefs, to a percentage of profits before those deductions and reliefs. For companies whose net taxable profits would otherwise be below such a threshold, imposing such a cap on the aggregate amount of deductions and allowances would effectively increase the rate of tax above 12.5%. I do not believe that such an approach would provide a suitable basis for taxing company profits or that it would be a desirable option in the context of our 12.5% corporation tax regime and its important role in generating investment and jobs in the economy.

*Question No. 213 answered with Question No. 205.*

### **Banking Sector Issues**

214. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Finance if he will outline the impact of change in cash handling charges on enterprises; and if he will consider developing a guide to banking costs including cost comparisons between the pillar banks. [24452/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware the Relationship Frameworks with the banks provide that the State will not intervene in the day-to-day operations of the banks or their management decisions. These frameworks are published on the Department of Finance website. I must ensure that the banks are run on a commercial, cost effective and independent basis to ensure the value of the banks as an asset to the State, as per the Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies agreed with the EU Commission, the ECB and the IMF. However, AIB has informed me of the following: “While AIB’s standard notes lodged fee is one of the most competitive in the market, we are aware that the above changes will impact on c. 5% of our business customers.”

Changes to European Regulations in 2011 have meant that AIB is now obliged to check cash lodgements for fitness and authenticity before lodgement to the Central Bank. Historically, AIB was one of the only banks to offer a discount to some of its business customers who prepared lodgements to an agreed standard. This removed the requirement to check the cash in such lodgements and thus allowed for reduced cash handling/notes lodged rates (€0.25 and €0.17) off the standard €0.45c per €100 fee. As a result of the manual nature now involved in checking-counting cash, a review has taken place of AIB’s historical cash handling fees.

In this regard, we have written to all impacted customers offering them the opportunity to approach the Bank to discuss their transaction fee arrangements in advance of the next fee charging period. These discussions and any potential revised fee negotiation and transaction fee arrangements can be put in place up to 30th August next and back dated to the start of that fee quarter. AIB’s business customers often negotiate individual fee arrangements based on their specific circumstances and needs, and the bank is offering them the opportunity to do so in the coming months in order to minimise the impact of the above changes.

More broadly, there may be opportunities for business customers to reduce their overall cash handling and fees through some electronic banking services such as:

- AIB’s Point of Sale systems
- AIB has also launched its ‘contactless payment’ service for transactions up to €15 which involves customers holding their card up to a secure reader which records the transaction in seconds
- For business customers with larger cash lodgement requirements, the use of AIB’s centralised Lodgement Processing may reduce costs.
- In-store ATMs offer the ability to recycle cash and which may reduce cash lodgement costs.

In the case of Bank of Ireland I have been informed that with effect from 8 April 2013, the Bank has changed how it accepts coin lodgements from its business customers. The changes include:

- Only full sachets/sacks of coin will be accepted for lodgement or withdrawal
- In addition, coin will not be accepted in priority lodgement bags or nightsafe wallets
- Cash in transit services must be used for bulk coin lodgement

Bank of Ireland has indicated that it will continue to offer its business customers the opportunity for more efficient day-to-day banking. The Bank has indicated it remains committed to communities nationwide and this change will ultimately deliver an enhanced customer experience and provide greater access to branch staff and their expertise for more complex transactions. The bank has indicated it will be working closely with its customers to ensure an easy transition. With regard to developing a guide to banking costs including cost comparisons between the pillar banks it would not be appropriate for my department to undertake this activity.

*Question No. 215 answered with Question No. 207.*

### **Tax Code**

216. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Finance if he has had any discussions with Prime Minister Cameron recently in relation to Ireland's tax affairs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [29127/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I can confirm to the Deputy that I have not met with Prime Minister Cameron to discuss Ireland's tax affairs.

### **European Investment Bank Loans**

217. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Finance if it is his objective, through coordination with the European Investment Bank and Allied Irish Banks plc, to ensure that moneys granted by the former are loaned to enterprises which are best placed to both generate sustainable employment and increase domestic renewable energy capacity; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24134/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The EIB is currently revising its lending criteria. The draft lending criteria were published on its website on 24 June 2013 having being approved by the Bank's Management Committee. They will be submitted for discussion and approval to the Bank's Board of Directors on 23 July 2013. The new EIB Energy Lending criteria are fully aligned with EU policy priorities to deliver economic growth, energy security and sustainable development. The EIB is fully committed to playing its part in bringing Europe out of the crisis by working with national authorities, public investors and private business to finance effective growth and jobs investment projects while delivering on sustainability and meeting strategic objectives for energy security. Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Networks are key areas for EIB investment and support the EU climate objectives. Climate action considerations are mainstreamed in all EIB sectorial strategies and integrated into all operational activities. In addition, the Bank's Corporate Operational Plan (COP) specifies a clear target that 25% of the EIB's overall lending has to be in support of climate action activities. The EIB funds available from AIB are targeted to support the financing of all investments and expenditures incurred in the context of the development of SMEs and Mid-Caps through eligible projects. They are not specifically targeted at any specific sector and it is important that sectors should not be excluded from using these funds. A key outcome of investment initiatives by SMEs and Mid-Caps is expansion and growth for companies, including additional employment.

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

218. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if it is the practice of all Irish banks to make recordings of internal land line phone calls; and if these recordings are kept within the banks or are provided to the Central Bank of Ireland. [31763/13]

219. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if it is the practice of Irish banks to keep records of phone calls between banks and if these recordings are provided to the Central Bank or Ireland. [31764/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 218 and 219 together.

I have been advised by the Central Bank that they do not require Banks to record calls. As such the Central Bank does not require any recordings to be made available to it.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

220. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if the special liquidator is in possession of all recordings-transcripts of phone calls made at Anglo Irish Bank-Irish Bank Resolution Corporation until its liquidation, as well as minutes of meetings; and, if not, if the Central Bank holds this information or if it has been submitted to the Garda as part of its ongoing investigation. [31765/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** From the date of the nationalisation of Anglo Irish Bank on 16 January 2009, the Minister for Finance directed the bank to co-operate with all regulatory investigations. I am advised by the bank that they are fully co-operating and in that context the Bank has provided originals and/or copies of large data sets under compulsion/court order to the Chartered Accountants Regulatory Body (CARB), Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation (GBFI), Office of Director of Corporate Enforcement (ODCE), the then Financial Regulator (FR) and the Nyberg Banking Commission. In particular the Bank has informed me that: in 2009, the ODCE seized under Court Search Warrant approximately 3 million electronic documents and in excess of 5,000 original hard copy documents; in 2009, the FR compelled the production of approximately 45,000 hard copy documents and approximately 9 million electronic documents; the electronic material remains in the possession of the Bank as the FR investigation was deferred in 2009; in 2010, the GBFI under Court Order received significant quantities of electronic and hard copy documents and recordings requested in respect of 18 employees of the Bank whose lines were recorded; in 2010, the Bank was compelled to provide large volumes of electronic and hard copy material to the Nyberg Banking Commission; minutes of meetings as requested were provided to CARB, the ODCE, the GBFI, the Banking Commission and the FR; and in civil litigation copies of various items including certain recordings were provided to parties to such litigation. The originals of the above materials (save where seized) rest with IBRC (in Special Liquidation) and their legal advisors hold copies of certain of the materials.

I am advised that the Central Bank was not aware of the tapes or the content contained therein. The Central Bank is carefully studying the various transcripts emerging. This is something that is viewed very seriously. The Central Bank will be liaising with the Gardaí in this regard and is also examining whether or not any breaches of regulatory requirements may have occurred arising from the information contained in the transcripts.

### **Banking Sector Investigations**

221. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if any of the auditors assigned to Anglo Irish Bank-Irish Bank Resolution Corporation, or the Garda investigation team into the bank and potential fraud, have identified any gaps in the minutes of meetings held in the run up to the guarantee and subsequently, or in recordings of phone calls. [31766/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Department does not have responsibility or insight into the investigations undertaken by the Gardaí or any other authorised investigating bodies. I have not been made aware of any gaps in information, including phone recordings, by the current or former auditors of IBRC/Anglo Irish Bank or by the Garda Síochána in relation to these matters. Under statute the Garda Síochána are the body responsible for criminal investigations in the State. Neither, the Department of Finance nor the Government have previously had access to these tapes or related documentation. They went directly from Anglo Irish Bank to An Garda Síochána as part of the material that was supplied to them over four years ago as part of their investigation into matters in Anglo Irish Bank. It would be completely inappropriate for the Department of Finance to act outside of its legal powers and interfere with any investigation that could compromise potential future criminal or civil investigations by the bodies responsible under statute.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

222. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance following the revelations made by a national newspaper regarding internal recorded phone calls in Anglo Irish Bank, if his attention has been drawn to the way those tapes came to be in possession of that newspaper. [31767/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have been advised that the Joint Special Liquidators are investigating the possible source of the leak of the ‘Anglo tapes’ to the national newspapers. Based on the tapes disclosed up to Monday 1st July 2013 it appears that they form part of data sets that are held by the Bank and their advisors and which have been provided as part of the Regulatory Investigations and civil litigation which the Bank is involved in. These various data sets are held by the Bank itself, the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation, such other regulatory parties to whom the GBFI may have provided those materials and participants and advisors involved in the various civil litigation the Bank is involved in.

I am advised that the Special Liquidators are taking the leaking of this material very seriously and they have written to the Gardaí and the Data Protection Commissioner in that respect. They have also written to all parties whom they know have access to this material. I am also advised that the Special Liquidators intend to appoint an independent party to investigate if the leak came from IBRC or KPMG. These investigations are on-going.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

223. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he or anyone in his Department issued a request to Anglo Irish Bank for copies of recorded phone calls between bank employees prior to the release of such tapes by a national newspaper. [31768/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I can confirm that neither I nor any official in the Department issued a request to Anglo for copies of recorded phone calls between bank employees prior to the release of such tapes by a national newspaper. The Department of Finance does not have statutory powers to investigate such matters. It would be completely inappropriate for the Department of Finance to act outside its legal powers and conduct inves-

tigations that could compromise potential future criminal or civil investigations by the bodies responsible under statute. I am advised that these tapes formed part of the material that was supplied to An Garda Síochána as part of their investigation into matters at Anglo Irish Bank.

### **Banking Sector Investigations**

224. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he is satisfied that his Department has issued all material held by it to the gardaí investigating potential fraud at Anglo Irish Bank. [31769/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Department of Finance has fully complied with all on-going investigations into matters at Anglo Irish Bank by An Garda Síochána and the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement and the Investigation Team in the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation including the supply of all relevant documentation requested.

### **Banking Sector Investigations**

225. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if the former Government appointee to Anglo Irish Bank (details supplied) was aware of the existence of recorded phone conversations at Anglo Irish Bank which appeared to reveal a concerted attempt to defraud the Irish State by bank employees; and if so, if he alerted the previous or the current Government to the existence or content of these tapes. [31770/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Neither the Department of Finance nor the Government were aware of the content of the recorded phone conversations at Anglo Irish Bank referred to in the question. The contents of the tapes were not raised with my Department by the Board of IBRC, I am not aware if Mr Dukes knew of their existence.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

226. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he has made inquiries regarding the existence of other recorded phone calls in existence in the other State owned, or proportionately owned State banks, around the time of the guarantee; and if he has sought such information. [31771/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware banks are required to record phone calls for a variety of reasons. I have not sought access to these recordings as under statute the Garda Síochána are the body responsible for criminal investigations in the State. I understand that the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation have requested access to various documents/materials in the banks, including audio recordings, and that the banks have fully complied with these investigations to date. It would be completely inappropriate for the Department of Finance to act outside of its legal powers and interfere with any investigation that could compromise potential future criminal or civil investigations by the bodies responsible under statute. Any phone calls that are relevant around this period may feature as part of the forthcoming banking inquiry for which the legislation is currently before the House. Under the proposed legislation responsibility is assigned exclusively to the Houses of the Oireachtas to determine the requirement for a formal inquiry, the terms of reference of that inquiry and the procedural and organisational aspects of the inquiry. I expect that the Houses will move quickly

to initiate such an inquiry once the legislation is on the statute books.

*Question No. 227 answered with Question No. 122.*

### **Banking Sector Investigations**

228. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance his views that the auditors working for Anglo Irish Bank at the time of the banking guarantee, who gave it a clean audit and have since been found to have a prima facie case to answer even by their own regulatory body, the Chartered Accountants Regulatory Board, have supplied all of their relevant material, from phone call recordings, minuted meetings, emails and so on to the Garda investigation team on Anglo Irish Bank, and/or to his Department; and if this material has been requested. [31774/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Under statute the Garda Síochána are the body responsible for criminal investigations in the State. The Department does not have responsibility or insight into the investigations undertaken by the Gardaí or the Central Bank. It would be completely inappropriate for the Department of Finance to act outside of its legal powers and interfere with any investigation that could compromise potential future criminal or civil investigations by the bodies responsible under statute.

### **Tax Avoidance Issues**

229. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the recent European Council meeting discussions on tax evasion and avoidance measures in the European Union. [25451/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I welcome the recent European Council discussions on tax fraud, evasion, and aggressive tax planning that took place on the 22nd May. These discussions took place following on from a successful Ecofin meeting which I chaired on the 14th May, where council conclusions were agreed on the European Commission Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and evasion, and associated Recommendations on aggressive tax planning and good governance in tax matters. Agreement on these conclusions was brokered by the Irish Presidency following discussions at official level in the Working Party on Tax Questions, and at senior official level in the High Level Working Party, before final agreement was adopted at Ecofin. During the Irish Presidency in the tax area I have prioritised files aimed at tackling tax fraud and evasion and aggressive tax planning and I am pleased to be able to inform the deputy that we have had some significant achievements in this area. In April EU Tax Commissioner Algirdas Semeta and I issued a joint letter to EU Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) urging action against tax fraud, evasion, and aggressive tax planning, and outlined seven key areas where work could be taken forward. I am pleased to inform the deputy that we have made progress in all seven areas. In addition to the above mentioned May Ecofin council conclusions, at the recent June Ecofin we reached agreement on the VAT anti-fraud package. We have also made progress in widening the scope of the EU Savings Directive towards the new global standard of automatic exchange of information, and agreement was also reached on the related Negotiating Mandate for the Commission to align EU savings tax agreements with selected European third countries. Furthermore we reached agreement on the adoption of the Fiscalis 2020 programme and work has begun to revise the Directive on Administrative Cooperation to further widen the scope of automatic exchange of information within the EU. Finally the subgroup of the Code of Conduct on Business Taxation presented a report on intra-EU hybrid entity mismatches which demonstrated the scope for coordinated action in the EU

against aggressive tax planning.

### **Mobile Telephony**

230. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of funding his Department received arising from the mobile spectrum sale; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26704/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Multi Band Spectrum Auction was conducted by the Communications Regulator, who has statutory responsibility for the management of the Spectrum Asset. The auction took place on 15th November 2012, with the amount to accrue to the Exchequer being approximately €854 million. €450 million, associated with upfront fees, was surrendered to the Exchequer on 14/12/2012. Following the successful conclusion of discussions with the successful applicants on some residual matters a further €24 million is projected to be transferred to the Exchequer this year. The balance, mainly associated with annual usage fees, will be received yearly until 2030.

### **Tax Code**

231. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Finance the reasons he sought to introduce tax breaks for executives in multinational companies which would have reduced to 23% the income tax rate for eligible executives earning up to €500,000; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24439/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Section 14 of Finance Act 2012 introduced the Special Assignee Relief Programme which is designed to reduce the cost to employers of assigning key individuals in their companies from abroad to take up positions in the Irish based operations of their employer. For example, such individuals could be transferred to head up new divisions of the company and thus lead to additional investments in Ireland. An exemption from income tax on 30% of salary between €75,000 and €500,000 is provided for qualifying employees that are assigned for a minimum of 1 year and the relief is available for a maximum period of 5 years. USC continues to be payable on the full income amount. Social Insurance is also payable where the individual is not liable to it in their normal State of residence. The scheme has been introduced for an initial three-year period ending on 31 December 2014, at which point it will be reviewed. Depending on the outcome of that review, I will decide whether the relief should be retained. It is worth noting that the existence of similar incentives in other European countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland would indicate that such incentives can be a persuading factor when companies decide where to locate investment projects. In tandem with our corporation tax rate, this relief will help us to compete for Foreign Direct Investment.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

232. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Finance if he will compare the cost of the outsourcing of cleaning and security in his Department, as opposed to direct recruitment; and if he will justify this increased cost against the backdrop of the pursuance of savings and efficiencies. [24515/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In response to the Deputy's question my

Department provides shared accommodation services to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Security services in respect of buildings occupied by staff of either Department are not outsourced. Cleaning services for buildings occupied by staff of both Departments are outsourced. My Department is in the process of completing a tender process in relation to the provision of cleaning and maintenance services to the Departments. As with the provision of all services achieving best value for money is Department's main priority. The tender prices on offer compare favourably when compared to the estimated costs such as wages, pension and other costs associated with recruiting sufficient staff to carry out the cleaning requirements in relation to buildings occupied by both Departments.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

233. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether Bank of Ireland should outsource work currently being carried out by bank employees here to other countries abroad, in view of the significant State investment in the bank and the high unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31796/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware, I have no statutory function in relation to banking decisions made by individual lending institutions at any particular time. This is ultimately a commercial decision for the management team and board of each bank, having due regard to their customers and the impact on profitability. Notwithstanding the fact that the State is a minority shareholder in Bank of Ireland, I must ensure that the bank is run on a commercial, cost effective and independent basis to ensure its value as an asset to the State, as per the Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies agreed with the EU Commission, the ECB and the IMF. A Relationship Framework has been specified that defines the nature of the relationship between the Minister for Finance and each bank. These Frameworks were published on 30 March 2012 and can be found at <http://banking.finance.gov.ie/presentations-and-latest-documents/>.

Under the terms of the Relationship Framework, this would be considered a commercial matter and therefore not require prior ministerial approval. As I recently responded to Deputy McGrath in PQ 16720/13, Bank of Ireland supplied the following information in response to the Deputy's question on plans in relation to outsourcing:

“Bank of Ireland reviews on an on-going basis how best to deliver products and services to its customers in an efficient, cost effective and empathetic manner. As a matter of policy Bank of Ireland, as a commercial organisation, does not make public comments on its commercial deliberations unless or until these are considered to be issues which will have a material impact on the Group's operations, financial statements, customers and/or staff.”

### **Tax Code**

234. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the revenue lost to the Exchequer as a result of tax free lump sums allowed upon retirement; and the way these lump sums are treated for tax purposes. [31806/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The following arrangements currently apply to retirement lump sums paid under pension arrangements approved by the Revenue Commissioners. Lump sum amounts up to €200,000 are paid free of tax. They are also paid free of USC. The portion of a lump sum between €200,001 and €575,000 is taxed on a ring-fenced basis at 20%. This means that no tax credits or other tax reliefs can be set against this portion

of the lump sum. No USC is chargeable. Any amount of a lump sum in excess of €575,000 is taxed at the individual's marginal rate of tax (credits and other tax reliefs are available). In this instance, USC is chargeable on the excess. These amounts are lifetime amounts with prior lump sums aggregating with later lump sums.

As there is no general requirement for data on the number of persons who are receiving payments of retirement lump sums of less than €200,000 to be returned to my Department or to the Revenue Commissioners, I am not in a position to provide definitive figures on the Exchequer impact of the tax-free retirement lump sums allowed. Based on broad assumptions and an extrapolation of certain available data, it is estimated that the additional tax yield from taxing lump sums of up to €200,000 at 20% in respect of the public service could be about €85 million in a full year. I have no data on which to provide a similar estimate in relation to the private sector. I should point out, however, that one significant difference between public sector and private sector pension schemes is that private sector schemes invariably allow scheme members the option of commuting part of their pension fund for a tax-free lump sum. The option of receiving benefits in the form of pension only is not available to members of public sector schemes. Depending on the impact of any tax charge on retirement lump sums, the option to commute part of a pension fund may no longer be exercised by private sector pension scheme members or may be exercised in a manner that reduces the value of the lump sum taken to minimise or avoid any immediate tax charge.

### **Tax Credits**

235. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the cost to the Exchequer of increasing the PAYE tax credit by €5 per week for all income earners below €60,000 per annum. [31807/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated full year yield to the Exchequer, estimated by reference to 2013 incomes, of increasing the employee (PAYE) tax credit in the manner mentioned by the deputy would be of the order of €235 million. This estimate is derived from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2010 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends in the interim. It is therefore provisional and likely to be revised. It should also be noted that a married couple who has elected or has been deemed to have elected for joint assessment is counted as one tax unit.

*Question No. 236 answered with Question No. 111.*

### **Tobacco Smuggling**

237. **Deputy Robert Dowds** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an update on the number of tobacco seizures in each month since January 2011; and the amount of cigarettes and tobacco seized in each month since January 2011. [31811/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the monthly seizures of cigarettes and tobacco in 2011 and 2012, and this year to 31 May, are as detailed in the following tables.

**2011**

Month	Cigarette Seizures	Number of Cigarettes Seized	Tobacco Seizures	Quantity Seized (Kilograms)
January	789	10,939,140	111	472
February	822	8,091,205	134	133
March	1,155	10,794,099	132	210
April	777	5,435,572	73	121
May	1,133	7,848,277	128	321
June	831	20,834,846	133	205
July	752	11,029,341	109	2,724
August	934	3,087,755	172	2,497
September	997	14,093,544	165	2,840
October	847	2,674,637	118	714
November	867	2,380,390	95	283
December	684	11,882,143	131	638

**2012**

Month	Cigarette Seizures	Number of Cigarettes Seized	Tobacco Seizures	Quantity Seized (Kilograms)
January	654	1,625,944	116	621
February	731	2,139,561	93	336
March	723	1,870,649	105	306
April	652	43,068,330	95	137
May	819	7,601,016	115	773
June	696	2,110,869	126	272
July	676	8,379,138	160	263
August	618	1,315,452	103	273
September	738	13,274,574	141	360
October	663	9,612,366	117	281
November	724	2,621,542	127	1,392
December	417	1,986,889	97	262

**2013**

Month	Cigarette Seizures	Number of Cigarettes Seized	Tobacco Seizures	Quantity Seized (Kilograms)
January	507	1,496,741	94	325
February	494	1,255,479	125	536
March	551	1,946,456	98	248
April	457	990,767	94	104
May	548	4,327,337	114	1,058

**Property Taxation Application**

238. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Finance if the local property tax is

deductible as an expense against rental income; the plans and progress that have been made in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31816/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The inter-departmental group, chaired by Dr Don Thornhill, which considered the design of a property tax (the “Thornhill Group”) recommended that the Local Property Tax (LPT) paid in respect of a rented property should be deductible for income tax or corporation tax purposes, in a similar manner to commercial rates. The Group recognised the considerable pressures on the public finances and the need to bridge the gap between expenditure and revenue, and therefore suggested that consideration be given to phasing in deductibility over a period of years. The Group also considered that it is for Government, having regard to the prevailing budgetary situation, to decide on the time span for phasing-in deductibility and on what percentage of LPT to allow as a deduction from gross rents for tax purposes. The Government accepted the recommendation of the Thornhill Group on this matter but has not considered the manner or the timing in which this will happen.

*Questions Nos. 239 and 240 answered with Question No. 98.*

*Question No. 241 answered with Question No. 181.*

### National Treasury Management Agency Remuneration

242. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if any bonuses were paid to National Treasury Management Agency staff in 2011 and 2012, and if so, to whom and the amount of each bonus. [31828/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The amounts of performance-related pay paid to staff of the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) and the number of staff in receipt of such payments in 2011 and 2012 are set out in the table below:

Year	Total Amount of Performance-related pay	Number of Staff who received Performance-related pay
2011	€62,610	5
2012	€43,100	6

The NTMA employed a total of 500 staff at the end of 2012. The staff who received performance-related payments were key personnel in various business units across the NTMA. No performance-related payments were made to members of the NTMA senior management team in respect of 2011 and 2012.

*Question No. 243 answered with Question No. 98.*

### EU Directives

244. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Finance if he will outline measures taken at the June ECOFIN meeting to secure protections against excessive financial speculation in the food and other commodity derivative markets through the review of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive; the progress that has been made on this issue at administrative level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31934/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** On June 13 2013, the Irish Presidency reached a breakthrough in talks at Council level on the MiFID II and MiFIR proposals which

aim to make financial markets more efficient, resilient and transparent, and to strengthen the protection of investors. The achievement of a Council General Approach, which was endorsed at Ecofin on 21 June 2013, signals a significant step forward by the EU towards protecting against excessive financial speculation in the food and other commodity derivative markets.

The regulation of derivative trading in the EU has been part of Council discussions within the EU since September 2010 when the Commission published its proposal for the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) to regulate this market in the context of over-the-counter (OTC) trades. This EU Regulation, which is directly applicable in all Member States, entered into force on 16 August 2012.

In particular, the Council text of MiFID II contains important provisions relating to position management, position limits and product intervention. These provisions are in respect of all financial instruments, including commodity derivatives, and have the purpose of providing regulators with tools to avoid excessive speculation in financial instruments, including commodity derivatives. Competent authorities will be obligated to establish and apply position limits on the size of a position in a commodity derivative which a person can have over a specified period of time.

Furthermore, competent authorities will have product intervention powers whereby they may prohibit or restrict trading of financial instruments or prohibit or restrict investment activities when there is a threat to the orderly functioning and integrity of financial markets or commodity markets. The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) will have contingency and coordination powers in position management and product intervention to ensure consistent application across all Member States. In the exercise of its powers, ESMA will also have to consult public bodies competent for the oversight, administration and regulation of physical agricultural markets.

EMIR and MiFID II combined are expected to result in a tighter regime for all derivatives, including food securities, whether traded OTC or through exchanges. The measures are intended to keep pace with trends in derivatives trading, in line with G20 commitments made at the 2009 Pittsburgh summit. Council General Approach will be progressed further by the Lithuanian Presidency when they begin negotiations with the European Parliament at Trilogues. We will continue to monitor developments on this file throughout the legislative process.

*Questions Nos. 245 and 246 answered with Question No. 111.*

### **Bank Guarantee Scheme Bond Repayments**

247. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the losses imposed on subordinated bondholders in covered institutions from liability management exercises in each year since 2008; the number of legal actions currently under way against the State in respect of these actions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31963/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The following table details the liability management exercises.

Liability Management Exercises

-	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
-	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Total Subordinated Bonds:					
BoI(1)					
Consideration <sup>2</sup>	600	700*	3,300*	800*	N/a
Nominal Value	600	1,700	4,700	2,300	N/a
Average Discount	0%	59%	30%	65%	N/a
AIB (incl EBS)					
Consideration	200	1,366	1,842	1,052	N/a
Nominal Value	200	2,470	2,377	4,882	N/a
Average Discount	0%	34.97%	37.80%	72.58%	N/a
Permanent TSB					
Consideration	162	N/a	N/a	455*	N/a
Nominal Value	162	N/a	N/a	1,459	N/a
Average Discount	0%	N/a	N/a	69%	N/a
IBRC (incl INBS) <sup>3</sup>	Ended 30 Sep 2008	Ended 31 Dec 2009	Ended 31 Dec 2010	Ended 31 Dec 2011	Ended 31 Dec 2012
Consideration	72	895	301	34	N/a
Nominal Value	102	2,784	1,890	174	N/a
Average Discount	29.4%	67.8%	84.1%	80.5%	N/a

\*Includes amounts redeemed at par

1) BOI figures are rounded to their nearest hundred million.

2) Consideration provided as part of the Liability Management Exercises was in the form of cash, equity and other debt instruments.

3) Foreign exchange rates are as at end financial period.

The purpose of the Liability Management Exercise (LME) transactions was to create additional core tier 1 capital and to strengthen the quality of the capital base of the Banks.

Since this Government came to into power, we reduced the cash required from the State by €5.8bn, from burden-sharing with subordinated bondholders. The contribution from burden-

sharing with bondholders amounts to approximately €15bn since the banking crisis began.

There are currently no legal actions under way against the State in respect of these actions.

### Departmental Staff Numbers

248. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of senior staff in his Department who were in the Department at the time of the banking guarantee in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31964/13]

249. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of senior staff in his Department, who were there at the time of the banking guarantee and who are in the same positions they held at the time. [31966/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 248 and 249 together.

At the end of 2008 the number of senior staff serving in my Department was as follows:

Senior Staff	Nos.
Secretary General Finance	1.00
Secretary General PSMD	1.00
Second Secretary	3.00
Assistant Secretary	14.00
Principal	56.50

Since 2008 my Department has changed its organisational structure and its deployment of staff in response to recent events in the economy and the financial system. It has demonstrated considerable flexibility in dealing with these issues.

A Resource and Priority Review for the Department was recently undertaken by the Management Advisory Committee (MAC). Our objectives and resources are reviewed on an on-going basis and the context of this review was the significant block of work reflected in the Department, business plans, particularly, as we draw to the end of the Presidency and move into the earlier budgetary cycle this year and the parallel development of the Economic Plan present a perfect time to undertake this Resource and Priority Review. The intention is to have a further planning review of resources and priorities towards the end of this year in preparation for 2014.

### Tax Code

250. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will give a commitment to not taxing maternity benefit; and if he will support the Commission on Taxation on this issue. [31974/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The position is, as I have stated on many occasions in the House, that from the 1st of July 2013, Maternity Benefit will be treated as taxable income. The underpinning legislation for this measure was contained in the Finance Act 2013, which was passed by the Oireachtas and signed into law on 27 March 2013.

### Revenue Commissioners Investigations

251. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which the cash purchase of housing or other properties is monitored by the Revenue Commissioners to determine the origin of the cash; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32001/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that they have available to them a range of information sources from which they can monitor cash purchases of houses and other real estate which allows the Commissioners determine whether any tax issues arise from any such cash transactions. Under Section 42 of the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 all designated bodies (including all financial institutions) are required to report to An Garda Síochána and the Revenue Commissioners all suspicious transactions, including any unusually large cash movements. Similarly, any solicitors or other practitioners who execute property transfer instruments are also designated persons for the purposes of the money laundering legislation and must satisfy themselves as to the source of purchase monies in drawing up the transfer instrument and report anything untoward to the Gardaí and to Revenue.

In addition, citizens can, and do, report directly to Revenue instances of unusually high amounts of cash used by individuals in transactions and Revenue reviews all such useful information supplied. This affords all citizens an opportunity to assist in combatting possible shadow economy, money laundering or other nefarious activities.

I am further advised that the Revenue Commissioners audit and compliance programmes are under constant review to ensure that they are focussed on the areas of greatest risk, with a specific focus on those sectors that traditionally have been susceptible to shadow economy activity specifically cash businesses, such as the hospitality sector, including bars, nightclubs, fast-food/restaurants and entertainment, and white collar cash activities, such as doctors, dentists, solicitors, accountants, engineers etc. The Commissioners recognise that a use to which undeclared cash can be put is to purchase properties and Revenue's risk systems are geared to identify possible instances of such behaviour.

To facilitate and enhance this approach, Revenue has a well established computerised Risk Evaluation Analysis and Profiling (REAP) system. This contains large amounts of data that has been sourced directly from taxpayers via their tax returns as well as information received from a wide range of third parties. As the Commissioners administer the Stamp Duties regime, they also have access to details of all real property sales, purchases and voluntary transfers in the State and this data is also fed into the REAP system.

While REAP ranks the full taxpayer population in terms of risk, it also facilitates the selection of individual cases based on single or multiple business rules. One such rule identifies cases where significant capital expenditure has been incurred, specifically the purchase of houses and other real property, which is out of line with the person's visible or declared means. Additional data sources available to Revenue that would help identify whether a property was purchased using loans from financial institutions include the Tax Relief at Source system as well as information on borrowings returned by taxpayers in their tax returns. In due course, Local Property Tax data will be analysed to identify property ownership patterns which may be further indicators of risk. I am satisfied that the Revenue Commissioners have a very strong focus on the risk to tax compliance posed by all aspects of the cash economy and have a range of programmes in place to manage the tax risks involved.

*Question No. 252 answered with Question No. 111.*

*Questions Nos. 253 to 255, inclusive, answered with Question No. 98.*

### **Tax Collection**

256. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance if he will confirm that VAT is being collected on sales in Irish airport duty free areas to customers travelling within the EU and whether these sales have been audited in recent years to ensure VAT is applied to these sales; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32037/13]

257. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide in tabular form the amount of VAT collected from sales in duty free areas in our airports in each year from 2008 to the present; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32038/13]

258. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance the ratio between duty free, and duty applied sales in Irish airports from 2008 to the present; the way the application of VAT and other stamp duties audited; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32039/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 256 to 258, inclusive, together.

I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that VAT is chargeable and is being collected on sales in Irish airport duty free areas, to customers travelling within the EU in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Value-Added Tax Consolidation Act 2010 which provides that VAT is chargeable and payable on the supply for consideration of goods or services when the place of supply is the State.

The Revenue Commissioners are not in a position to provide a breakdown of the VAT collected from sales in duty free areas versus VAT on other sales in duty free areas by individual retailers as the information furnished on VAT returns does not require the VAT from particular activities of a taxable person to be separately identified on returns. In addition, the matter of tax payments made by specific taxpayers is a matter for the Revenue Commissioners and in such circumstances is confidential to the taxpayers concerned.

The Revenue Commissioners do not have information on the ratio between duty free and duty applied sales in Irish airports as, again, VAT returns do not require this information to be returned to the Revenue Commissioners.

The Revenue Commissioners, for operational and confidentiality reasons, are not in a position to provide details of risk interventions including audits of individual customers or of how these are managed. However, the Commissioners continue to monitor and review all aspects of risk in relation to the correct application of VAT and duty on sales at Irish airports and appropriate interventions are carried out as required.

### **Companies Law Issues**

259. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if the Irish Government made information regarding yearly profits and tax payments by corporations including subsidiaries available to the public or is the Government planning to do so before the end of 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32040/13]

261. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if the Irish Government is requiring multinational companies including subsidiaries to provide an annual report on their turnover, number of employees, subsidies received, profits and tax payments on a country by country level for all countries in which they operate, or is the Government planning to introduce such reporting before the end of 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32042/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 259 and 261 together.

The issue of “country by country reporting” is topical at EU level at present. Up until now, “country by country reporting” was required only for those companies who were involved in extractive industries (e.g. mining, oil exploration etc.). Under the Irish Presidency of the EU agreement was reached on extending “country by country reporting” to the financial services industry. Measures to transpose the EU provisions into national legislation are expected to be in place in two years time.

The Government has no plans to unilaterally introduce such a scheme before the end of this year. The best way to progress the issue of “country by country reporting” is in a co-ordinated way at EU and international level.

### **Companies Law Issues**

260. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if the Irish Government made information regarding the beneficial owners of companies including subsidiaries, trusts and foundations available to the public or is the Government planning to do so before the end of 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32041/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I assume that the Deputy’s question relates to proposals for the 4th Money Laundering Directive published by the Commission on 5 February 2013. Article 29 of the Draft Directive provides as follows:

“Article 29

1. Member States shall ensure that corporate or legal entities established within their territory obtain and hold adequate, accurate and current information on their beneficial ownership.

2. Member States shall ensure that the information referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article can be accessed in a timely manner by competent authorities and by obliged entities.”

Article 30 makes similar provisions in relation to Trusts and other legal arrangements. Neither Article requires information on beneficial ownership to be made available to the public. The Commission’s proposals are currently under discussion in an Expert Working Party of the European Council. The Deputy may be aware that the 3rd Money Laundering Directive requires financial institutions and other designated persons to identify any beneficial owner and take risk based and adequate measures to verify his identity so that the financial institution etc is satisfied that it knows who the beneficial owner is including, as regards legal persons, trusts and similar legal arrangements, taking risk based and adequate measures to understand the ownership and control structure of the customer. The 3rd Money Laundering Directive was transposed into Irish Law in the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010.

*Question No. 261 answered with Question No. 259.*

### **Mutual Assistance Requests**

262. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of requests for information regarding tax matters that the Irish Government has received from non-OECD countries in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; and if he will make a statement on

the matter. [32043/13]

263. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of the requests for information regarding tax matters received from non-OECD countries in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 which were sent from one of the least developed countries (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32044/13]

264. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of cases the information requested by a non-OECD country was provided by the Irish Government to the non-OECD country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32045/13]

265. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of cases in which information was requested by one of the least developed countries and was provided by the Irish Government to the LDC; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32046/13]

266. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of requests for information regarding tax matters the Irish Government has received from OECD countries in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32047/13]

267. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of cases for which information was requested by an OECD country and was provided by the Irish Government to the OECD country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32048/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 262 to 267, inclusive, together.

I assume the Deputy is referring to exchange of information in relation to direct taxes. All of Ireland's mutual assistance requests in relation to direct taxes take place in accordance with the exchange of information provisions in: Ireland's Double Taxation Treaties; the EU Council Directive 2011/16 on administrative co-operation in the field of taxation; and Ireland's Tax Information Exchange Agreements. A full list of Ireland's Double Taxation Treaties and Tax Information Exchange Agreements is available on the Revenue website [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

The total number of exchange requests regarding direct tax matters received from non-OECD countries in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 is as follows: 2009, 23; 2010, 18; 2011, 26; and 2012, 23. Information was provided in all cases.

Ireland does not have an exchange of information provision with any of the countries listed as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (other than Zambia). No request for information in relation to direct taxes has been received from or provided to Zambia. The total number of requests for information regarding direct tax matters received from OECD countries in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 is as follows: 2009, 89; 2010, 157; 2011, 176; and 2012, 142. Information was provided in all cases.

Effective exchange of information is a critical tool in ensuring that countries are able to collect taxes owing to them. Ireland has now fully signed up to the joint Council of Europe/OECD Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. Ireland's instruments of ratification were deposited on 29 May of this year and the Convention/Protocol will enter into force on 1 September 2013. The Deputy may wish to note, in particular, that an amending Protocol extends the opportunity to participate in this Convention to developing countries. This enables developing countries, which sign and ratify the Convention, to access exchange of information with an ever-increasing range of countries without having to incur the expense of negotiating individual agreements with each of the Convention countries concerned.

*Questions Nos. 268 to 270, inclusive, answered with Question No. 98.*

### **Treatment Abroad Scheme**

271. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will review an application for the treatment abroad scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [32144/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that with regard to claims in respect of tax relief for qualifying health expenses where the relevant health care is obtained outside the State, the following is the current position: -

(a) the health expenses are allowable provided that the practitioner (GP, consultant or dentist) is entitled under the laws of the country in which the care is provided to practise medicine or dentistry there;

(b) the cost of maintenance or treatment in a hospital, nursing home or clinic is allowable provided the expenses are necessarily incurred in association with the services of a practitioner or refer to diagnostic procedures carried out on the advice of a practitioner.

If the claim relates to the years 2007 – 2009 inclusive, the position was that the cost of the services of a practitioner and the cost of maintenance or treatment in a hospital or similar institution approved for the purposes of the relief by the Minister for Finance after consultation with the Minister for Health is allowable.

With regard to the case specified, the claims in respect of 2007 and 2008 relate to a hospital/clinic that has not been approved. Where an individual has availed of the services of a hospital abroad prior to 2009, they may apply to the Minister for Finance to have it placed on the approved list.

*Questions Nos. 272 and 273 answered with Question No. 98.*

*Question No. 274 answered with Question No. 175*

*Question No. 275 answered with Question No. 98.*

### **Consultancy Contracts Issues**

276. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Finance the current list of public relations or related consultancy contracts and agreements that the Central Bank of Ireland is currently in or has procured in the last five years, including in recent weeks; if any of these public relations deals regarding media management has been directly or indirectly related to the recent Anglo Irish Bank tapes controversy; the value of these public relations arrangements; the starting date of negotiations and the proposed length of each deal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32174/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Central Bank that it does not currently engage nor has it procured any such services over the last five years. In 2011, a one off specific service was provided by an external PR adviser at a cost of €169.40. The Central Bank has also informed me that as part of the National Payments Plan, marketing

agencies have been and will be engaged to assist in developing communications plans relating to specific, defined public policy initiatives. These agencies have been and will be selected through competitive tender processes, and the costs of these will be split between the Central Bank, my own Department and industry.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

277. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the way AIB and Permanent TSB can advertise for business and investment when it is accepted that they are insolvent institutions with no capacity to offer secure liquidity; the exact extent of the insolvency-liquidity crisis in the above named institutions; his views on the way this will impact on the interest of those taxpayers who might respond to advertised business offers from insolvent institutions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32187/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy will be aware Allied Irish Bank and Permanent TSB each hold Irish banking licences issued by the Central Bank of Ireland and are subject to regulations which require inter-alia each institution to be solvent. Further details of the financial position of each institution are available in the respective annual reports which are available on their websites. AIB and Permanent TSB are licensed banks and accordingly are legally entitled to engage in regulated activities, which includes, inter alia, accepting deposits from the public.

I have been informed by the Central Bank of Ireland (“Central Bank”) that the Consumer Protection Code applies to the regulated activities of regulated entities operating in the State and sets out General Principles with which a regulated entity must comply. For example, a regulated entity must act honestly and professionally, with due skill, care and diligence in the best interest of consumers. Chapter 9 of the Consumer Protection Code places specific requirements on regulated firms in relation to the contents and presentation of advertisements.

The main areas covered by Chapter 9 of the Consumer Protection Code require regulated firms to ensure advertisements are fair and not misleading, clearly understood, complete and accurate.

The Central Bank deals with regulated entities where concerns around the fairness, clarity, accuracy and potential for an advertisement to be construed as misleading in their overall content and presentation, and actively follows up on any issues identified. For example, where key information in relation to a product or service in advertisements is not sufficiently prominent and is included in smaller print to other parts of the advertisement, the Central Bank will address this with the individual entity.

### **VAT Rates Reductions**

278. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Finance if consideration will be given to the introduction of a special reduced VAT rate for housing repair, maintenance and improvement work carried out as suggested by Chambers Ireland. [32194/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I would point out that a reduced rate of VAT (13.5%) already applies to the supply of housing repair, maintenance and improvement work on residential properties. In order to apply a lower reduced VAT rate to these services, the only rate possible would be the 9% VAT rate. While EU VAT law provides that a VAT rate of 5% or more may be applied to the supply of construction services on residential dwellings,

the EU VAT Directive also provides that Member States may only apply up to two reduced rates of VAT and Ireland already operates reduced VAT rates of 9% and 13.5%. In this context, in order to apply a rate of 5% to the supply of such construction services, all activity at the 9% rate would have to be applied at the 5% rate and such a move would be excessively costly to the Exchequer.

Furthermore, while it is possible under EU VAT law to apply the 9% VAT rate to the supply of construction services on residential dwellings, it is not possible to apply this rate to construction services on non-residential property. This is because the application of the 13.5% rate to these services in Ireland is part of a derogation under the EU VAT Directive, which provides that as Ireland applied a reduced rate to such construction services on 1 January 1991, we are entitled to retain this historic treatment, provided the rate is charged at 12% or more. This would mean that if housing repair, maintenance and improvements was applied at the 9% VAT rate, this would involve two separate rates applying to the same services depending on the type of dwelling concerned, which would be complicated to administer.

*Question No. 279 answered with Question No. 170.*

### **Tax Reliefs Availability**

280. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Finance if he will outline the tax relief available on tuition fees; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32291/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Section 473A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 provides, subject to certain conditions, for tax relief at the standard rate of income tax (20%) as regards a portion of qualifying fees paid by an individual in respect of a third level education course including a postgraduate course. Qualifying fees means tuition fees in respect of an approved course at an approved college and includes what is referred to as the “student contribution”. No other fees (e.g. administration fees, examination fees, capitation fees) qualify for tax relief. For the tax year 2011 and subsequent tax years, the maximum qualifying fee per course per academic year is €7,000.

The tax relief is confined to tuition fees actually borne by the claimant. Tuition fees that are, or will be, met directly or indirectly by grants, scholarships, employer contribution or other means are to be deducted in arriving at the fees qualifying for tax relief.

An individual can claim tax relief on fees paid by him or her in respect of an approved course pursued by other individuals (e.g. a son or daughter) and that the claim may cover more than one student. Only a portion of the qualifying fees in each claim is eligible for relief. Each claim is restricted by the amount shown in the following table.

Year	Full time(Where any one of the students in respect of whom relief is claimed is a full-time student).	Part time(Where all the students in respect of whom relief is claimed are part-time students).
2011	€2,000	€1,000
2012	€2,250	€1,125
2013	€2,500	€1,250
2014	€2,750	€1,375
2015	€3,000	€1,500

The restriction applies to each claim, the subject of which may be one or more students.

Therefore, if a person is claiming for more than one student they will get full relief, subject to the maximum limit, for the second and subsequent students claimed.

Example

A parent with two children in college full time in the academic year 2013/14 and paying €8,000 in fees (including the 'student contribution') for each child gets the following relief.

Maximum qualifying fee per student per year is €7,000 by two = €14,000

Less the 2013 restriction €2,500 = €11,500

Tax relief @20% = €2,300

*Question No. 281 answered with Question No. 100.*

### **Tax Residency Issues**

282. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the suggestions recently made at the COSAC meeting in Dublin to the effect that this country is deemed to be a tax haven whereby multinational corporations are facilitated in the avoidance or evasion of tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32293/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The globally recognised definition of what constitutes a "tax haven" is set down by the OECD. Four criteria have been identified: minimal or no tax rates; lack of transparency; lack of exchange of information and lack of substance or economic activity. None of these four criteria apply to Ireland, a fact that has been acknowledged in recent months by Algirdas Semeta, the European Commissioner responsible for tax policy. The Director of the OECD's Centre for Tax Policy and Administration has also acknowledged recently that Ireland competed fairly for Foreign Direct Investment. However, not everyone agrees with the OECD's criteria. Some commentators, whether they be political, media, academic or business, hold a different view and have developed their own criteria to identify countries they regard as tax havens. Some of these commentators' analysis erroneously includes Ireland and many other countries with high reputations, as problem jurisdictions. These commentators are entitled to their opinion but in my view, and in the view of many countries around the world, they have got it wrong.

I would like to remind the Deputy of a few salient facts:

- We have a very strong track record of attracting companies of real substance to invest and create thousands of jobs in Ireland. Many of the large Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) are here for many years and see Ireland as an excellent base to serve their customer in Europe and further afield.

- These corporations have set down significant roots in the Irish economy and the Irish Government will continue to take steps to enhance our attractiveness through investment in our people, investment in our infrastructure and our strong commitment to Europe.

- Over 1,000 MNC's have successfully located in Ireland and, despite the challenges that the Irish economy has faced in recent years, that pipeline has remained strong. Over 100,000 are employed directly by Multi-national companies in Ireland and they are an integral part of our past, our present and our future. Indeed, it is estimated that over 250,000 people are employed indirectly across the country servicing this key sector of our economy.

- These are companies of real substance and they are certainly not “post-box” companies – the Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) that establish operations in Ireland have created many thousands of sustainable, well-paid, jobs.

- Our competitive taxation system is, of course, an element of the Irish package and we remain committed to our competitive 12.5% tax rate.

- Our taxation system is open and transparent and all companies in Ireland pay tax at 12.5% on their profits earned in Ireland. Of course, profits earned by these companies that are outside the scope of the Irish tax system are not subject to Irish tax. Incorrectly counting these profits as “Irish profits” is often the reason for the inaccurate analysis of the Irish taxation system and throws up very low effective tax rates. However, we can only tax profits that are liable to tax in Ireland.

- Added to all of this, we exchange tax information with 80 different jurisdictions around the world through our network of international agreements, either by way of a Double Taxation Agreement or a Tax Information Exchange Agreement.

Aggressive tax planning by companies is a major issue for legislators across the world and needs to be addressed. However, it is clear to us from our work at the forefront of efforts at European and OECD level that these issues cannot be addressed at national level alone - we need a co-ordinated international response. The OECD’s Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project represents that international response and work is well underway in this regard. Ireland has given its full support to the project and is working closely with our international partners on this important work. I look forward to seeing the results.

*Question No. 283 answered with Question No. 100.*

### **IBRC Investigations**

284. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which efforts are being made to bring to a conclusion any issues arising from recent disclosures in respect of the former Anglo Irish Bank, with particular reference to ensuring that those involved are not rewarded for the consequences; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32295/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am obviously very concerned at the contents of these tapes. I am advised that the Central Bank is carefully studying the various transcripts emerging. This is something that is viewed very seriously by the Central Bank and they will be liaising with the Gardaí in this regard and is also examining whether or not any breaches of regulatory requirements may have occurred arising from the information contained in the transcripts.

As the Deputy is aware the Garda Síochána are the body responsible for criminal investigations in the State. I understand that the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation have requested access to various documents/materials in the banks, including audio recordings, and that the banks have fully complied with these investigations to date. It would be completely inappropriate for the Department of Finance to act outside of its legal powers and interfere with any investigation that could compromise potential future criminal or civil investigations by the bodies responsible under statute. I am advised that the tapes have previously been provided by Anglo/IBRC to the Gardaí and a number of other authorities involved in investigations relating to Anglo Irish Bank and it is up to them to determine if they will proceed with action on foot of these tapes.

The Government is determined to ensure the public is informed about what happened in Irish Banks in the period leading up to and during the financial crisis. The Government has now published the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill which, if enacted, will provide the legal framework for a banking inquiry to be held within the current constitutional parameters. It is important that all relevant parties participate fully with any resulting inquiry.

### **Bank Charges**

285. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which he and his Department monitor the levels of bank charges being imposed by various banks; the basis for such charges, nationally and internationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32296/13]

286. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which bank charges have been applied for the first time or increased in each of the past five years to date internationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32297/13]

287. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the total amount collected by way of bank charges by the various lending institutions in each of the past five years to date including credit card companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32298/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 285 to 287, inclusive, together.

I, as Minister for Finance have no statutory role in relation to bank charges imposed by regulated financial institutions. This is a commercial matter for the lending institutions concerned.

The Central Bank has advised me that under Section 149 of the Consumer Credit Act, 1995 (as amended), credit Institutions and bureaux de change must notify the Central Bank if they wish to:

- Introduce any new customer 'charge' for providing a service or
- Increase any existing customer 'charge' for providing a service.

Service means any service provided by a credit institution to a customer in respect of the following:

- Making and receiving payments;
- Providing foreign exchange facilities;
- Providing and granting credit;
- Maintaining and administrating transaction accounts used for the services specified including issuing statements.

These charges are assessed by the Central Bank in accordance with the criteria laid down in the legislation as follows:

- The promotion of fair competition between holders of authorisations and credit institutions;
- The commercial justification submitted in respect of the proposal;

- The impact new charges or increases in existing charges will have on customers, and
- Passing on costs to customers.

The Deputy may wish to note that the Government has committed in the latest Troika programme to undertake an assessment of banks' fee income relative to peers in selected other jurisdictions with a view to completing an external review of our regulation of bank fees by end-December.

### **Banking Sector Issues**

288. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which he has achieved agreement at EU level regarding the likelihood of the European Central Bank becoming involved in the issue of banking debt; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32299/13]

289. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the steps taken at EU level in relation to existing and future banking debt resolution; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32300/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 288 and 289 together.

As you are aware the Euro-area Heads of State and Government agreed on 29th June 2012 to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereigns, and that when a Single Supervisory Mechanism is in place involving the ECB, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) could recapitalise banks directly. The Euro-area Heads of State and Government confirmed this position and mandated EU Finance Ministers to prepare an operational framework by mid-2013.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken at technical, senior official and Ministerial level on the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation (DBR) Instrument. This work culminated in agreement on the operational framework for the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument at the June 20th Eurogroup of Euro-area Finance Ministers meeting in Luxembourg.

This framework builds upon the agreement secured on the 29th of June 2012, and is an important step in the Eurozone's efforts to restore market confidence in the Eurozone. It is expected that the earliest date that the ESM DBR can come into effect will be towards the end of the first half of 2014, given the need to satisfy national procedures, and also the requirement to have the Single Supervisory Mechanism in place beforehand.

The European Central Bank, as the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM), will complete assessments of banks in the Eurozone. Asset quality reviews will take place in Quarter 4 2013 or early 2014. These will be followed by stress tests in early 2014. Both tests will assess capital and identify any bank shortfalls that might need to access the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

Finally, we have succeeded in having provision for retrospective recapitalisation included in the framework. There is still a lot of negotiation to be done on this aspect of the facility but the agreement now in place keeps open the possibility for us to apply to the ESM for a retrospective direct recapitalisation of the Irish banks, should we wish to avail of it.

*Question No. 290 answered with Question No. 87.*

## **EU-IMF Programme of Support Value**

291. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the full extent of benefits achieved for the Irish taxpayer and the Exchequer arising from various renegotiations at EU-ECB-IMF level in respect of the bailout, banking guarantee and-or other legacy debts inherited from his predecessors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32302/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** There have been a number of improvements to the terms and conditions of our Programme of Financial Support, including the loans, since it was initially agreed in late 2010. For example, we have agreed the reversal of the minimum wage cut, and also on the use of up to half of the proceeds of asset sales for investment in projects of a commercial nature. Changes to the programme loans have included reductions of the interest rates and, in the case of the EU facilities, extension of maturities. In addition, we have negotiated the replacement of the Promissory Notes issued to the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation (IBRC) with a series of longer term, non-amortising floating rate Government bonds. When the programme was initially agreed in late 2010, the average interest rate on the €67.5 billion available to drawdown from the external sources was estimated by the EU Commission to be 5.82% on the basis of market rates at that time. The average life of the borrowing was initially set at 7.5 years.

In July 2011, the Euro Area Heads of State or Government (HOSG) agreed to reduce the cost of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) loans, and similar reductions were subsequently agreed for the interest rates on the loans provided by the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM) and also by the bilateral lenders (UK, Sweden, Denmark).

In the case of the EFSF, which is providing a total of €17.7 billion in funding to Ireland, the changes to the interest rates removed the interest rate margin, which was 2.47%. The revised pricing structure for the EFSF loans incorporates a guarantee commitment fee of 0.1% per annum and a service fee to cover the cost of operations of the EFSF. It also provides that EFSF lending done after that point will be done on a floating rate basis. The overall reduction in the interest rate margin which Ireland pays to the EFSF is estimated to be in the region of 2.7 to 2.8 percentage points which includes the margin and other structural changes. The original weighted average maturity of Ireland's EFSF loans was increased to 15 years at this time.

For the EFSM facility, in October 2011 the EU Council of Ministers approved an EU Commission proposal to eliminate the margin of 2.925% on the facility which, when fully drawn, will amount to €22.5 billion. This applied to EFSM disbursements back to the date upon which they were issued. The actual cost of funding depends on the prevailing market rates at the time of each drawdown. The original weighted average maturity of EFSM was extended from 7.5 years to 12.5 years at this time.

The United Kingdom bilateral loan of GBP 3.3 billion has been re-negotiated to remove the interest rate margin of 2.29% although the base interest rate has been changed from a GBP interest rate swap level to the UK Debt Management Office cost of funds plus a service fee of 0.18%. The bilateral loans with Sweden and Denmark, which will amount to total disbursements of €1 billion by the end of the programme, were negotiated after the interest rate margin reductions on both the EFSF and EFSM facilities and their interest rate is floating three month EURIBOR plus a margin of 1.00%.

Given these interest cost changes, the total savings on the original EU facilities, based on the original average maturity of 7.5 years, is some €9 billion, or approximately 5.5% of 2012 GDP. This reduces the annual repayment on these loans by an average of €1.2 billion per year over the initially envisaged 7.5 years.

In April of this year, EU Finance Ministers agreed in principle to further extend the maximum weighted average maturities on our EFSF and EFSM loans by up to 7 years, over and above the extension agreed in 2011. This further maturity extension removes a refinancing requirement of some €20 billion for the Irish State in the years 2015 to 2022. This extension of maturities has a number of significant benefits for Ireland, including smoothing our redemption profile, improving long term debt sustainability and it also has a positive impact on the cost of Exchequer borrowing through creating further downward pressure on our borrowing costs.

As you are aware the Euro-Area Heads of State or Government agreed on 29th June 2012 to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereigns, and that when a Single Supervisory Mechanism is in place involving the ECB, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) could recapitalize banks directly. The Euro-Area Heads of State or Government confirmed this position and mandated EU Finance Ministers to prepare an operational framework by mid-2013.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken at technical, senior official and Ministerial level on the ESM's Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument (DBR). This work culminated in agreement on the main features of the operational framework for the ESM's DBR Instrument at the June 20th Eurogroup meeting of Euro-Area Finance Ministers in Luxembourg.

We have succeeded in having specific provision for retrospective recapitalisation included in the framework, which states that "The potential retroactive application of the instrument should be decided on a case-by-case basis and by mutual agreement." There is still a lot of negotiation to be done on this but the agreement now in place keeps the possibility to apply to the ESM for a retrospective direct recapitalisation of the Irish banks open for us, should we wish to avail of it.

This overall framework builds upon the agreement secured on the 29th of June 2012, and is an important step in the Euro Area's efforts in this regard.

It is expected that the earliest date that the ESM Direct Bank Recapitalisation Instrument can come into effect will be around mid-2014, given the need to satisfy national procedures, and also the requirement to have the Single Supervisory Mechanism in place and operational beforehand.

In February this year, the successful conclusion of negotiations with the ECB facilitated the replacement by the Irish Government of the Promissory Notes issued to IBRC with a series of longer term, non-amortising floating rate Government bonds. This has resulted in significant benefits to the State including spreading the cost of the Promissory Notes from a weighted average life of c.7-8 years to c.34-35 years at a lower funding cost for the State, resulting in significant annual interest savings.

There have been no renegotiations of the bank guarantee at EU/ECB/IMF level and therefore no savings arise. It may be said, however, that the general improvement in financial stability that the Government has brought about through the actions that it has taken, facilitated the ending of the bank guarantee for new liabilities from 29 March, 2013, onwards.

### **Small and Medium Enterprises Supports**

292. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which small and medium enterprises' working capital requirements continue to fall short of what is needed in the present climate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32303/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Access to finance for SMEs is a key

aspect of the Action Plan for Jobs 2013. It is the Government's vision that all viable businesses operating in Ireland should have the opportunity to access sufficient finance to meet their enterprise needs in a manner that supports growth and employment in the economy. The working capital requirements of many SMEs are often fulfilled by short term credit in the form of overdrafts or short term loans. The Government has imposed SME lending targets on the two domestic pillar banks for the three calendar years, 2011 to 2013. Each bank was required to sanction lending of at least €3 billion in 2011, €3.5 billion last year and €4 billion in 2013 for new or increased credit facilities to SMEs. Both banks have achieved their 2011 and 2012 targets and the recent Credit Review Office report commented "At the end of quarter 1, both banks' sanctions are on or near where they would be expected to meet the target, taking account of the seasonality which has been identified over the past two years."

The pillar banks are expected to lend to viable businesses both for investment and working capital purposes. The Credit Review Office is available to assist businesses which have been refused credit. The recent CRO report shows that the Credit Review Office upheld the credit appeal in 135 cases or 57% of cases decided. The upheld appeals have resulted in €16.8M credit being made available to SMEs and farms, protecting 1,297 jobs. This shows that there is a strong prospect of success for SMEs going to the Credit Review Office and I would strongly encourage SMEs refused credit to seek a review by the Office.

The Government has taken a number of actions, particularly where SMEs have been refused credit, to improve the situation in relation to credit availability to SMEs.

The Temporary Partial Credit Guarantee scheme addresses the situation where the SME is outside the risk appetite of the banks. This can arise because of the SME's lack of collateral or the banks' lack of understanding of the business model, the market, the sector or the technology. The three main SME lenders are all participating in the Guarantee scheme.

The Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme will provide loans of up to €25k to start-up, newly established, or growing microenterprises employing less than 10 people, who have commercially viable proposals that do not meet the conventional risk criteria applied by banks.

### **Mortgage Protection Policies**

293. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance the extent to which his Department continues to monitor the level of default in respect of mortgage protection or life cover by various insurance companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32304/13]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** My Department does not keep up to date information on the level of default by insurance companies with particular reference to mortgage protection or life cover. I have made enquiries with the Central Bank about this matter which I understand relates to cases where a person can no longer afford to pay for the protection and/or has claim rejected.

The Central Bank has informed me that it does not collect this information.

It should be noted that if a policyholder has a complaint about an insurance company not honouring a claim on a policy, they can refer the matter to the Financial Services Ombudsman for adjudication <http://www.financialombudsman.ie/>.

### **Suicide Prevention**

294. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he is willing to devise an anti-suicide, prevention and awareness strategy or policy for post-primary school students to undertake in view of the fact that they are too young to avail of the existing programmes on offer like and. [31463/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I am also aware of the serious problem of youth suicide and of the role that schools can play in the area of prevention and ensuring the education system is more responsive to those with emotional or mental health difficulties. I can inform the Deputy that last January I launched the Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, which were developed by my Department in conjunction with the Department of Health. They are informed by consultation with key education partners and by the findings of recent research. The guidelines provide practical guidance to post-primary schools on how they can promote mental health and well-being in an integrated way and they also provide evidence-based advice on how to support young people who may be at risk of suicidal behaviour. The Guidelines have been developed to bring coherence to and build upon the multitude of practices that are already in place in schools to promote well-being. They emphasise the need to integrate all elements by using a coordinated whole-school approach in the promotion of positive mental health. This involves building and integrating school self-evaluation processes, implementing the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, developing the whole-school guidance plan, adopting the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) continuum of support, and building effective inter-agency relationships. Support for schools will be integrated into existing CPD work plans for the SPHE support service and will be coordinated nationally in collaboration with NEPS and HSE to ensure a streamlined approach. Copies of the Guidelines have been circulated to schools authorities.

In addition in the same period I had published, along with my colleague, Minister Fitzgerald, an Action Plan on Bullying which sets out twelve actions to help prevent and tackle bullying in primary and second level schools. I have ring-fenced €500,000 to support implementation of these actions this year. Officials from my Department have already commenced work on the implementation of the actions. In particular, an awareness raising initiative on cyber bullying targeted at young people is already underway and my Department is supporting the Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying in second level schools which took place in March. Work has also commenced on developing new anti-bullying procedures for schools in consultation with the school management bodies, teacher unions and national parents councils. These new procedures are due to issue to schools for the start of the next school year. Preliminary work has commenced on other aspects of the Action Plan on Bullying. Implementation will continue in the coming months. Also the Framework for Junior Cycle, published in October 2012, is underpinned by 8 principles one of which is “Wellbeing”, Through Wellbeing “the student experience will contribute directly to their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience. Learning takes place in a climate focused on collective wellbeing of school, community and society”. The Framework contains 24 Statements of Learning which students should experience. One of these statements aims to ensure that the student “takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others”. In addition, there are six key skills required for successful learning by students across the curriculum and for learning beyond school. One of the six key skills of Junior Cycle is “Staying Well”.

As part of the revised Junior Cycle, short courses are being prepared by the NCCA not only in PE but also in SPHE and will be available for schools from September 2014. These courses may be assessed as a part of the School Certificate in the new Junior Cycle. The overall focus of my Department’s Well-being and Suicide prevention policy is to provide a safe and supportive growing environment for students imparting skills and knowledge in relation to their

emotional well-being and development and assisting them to seek help when they or their peers are in crisis or approaching crisis. Programmes such as Asist and SafeTALK are designed to impart skills and knowledge in recognising developing emotional crisis situations among young people and identifying the appropriate support and referral paths to tend to their needs. Both programmes, in the formal education setting, are by their nature aimed at adults tending to young people rather than for use by young people themselves.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

295. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to establish an multi-denominational post-primary school in County Galway in view of the increased population figures in recent years. [31461/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** As the Deputy may be aware, two new post-primary schools (in Doughiska and Claregalway) will be opening in September 2013, both of which will be multi-denominational. These new schools are being established in order to provide sufficient places for the increased numbers of post-primary pupils within the general area. The Forward Planning Section of my Department will continue to analyse demographic data for all areas of the country, including Galway county, to identify where new schools will be required over the coming years. Should the need for any new post primary school emerge in Galway county it will be open to Patron bodies to apply for patronage in line with the established process, which was announced in June 2011.

### **School Staffing**

296. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason teaching positions are being falsely advertised when they are already filled by internal candidates; if he will reintroduce the voluntary redeployment scheme for all teachers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31500/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Teaching vacancies are filled in the first instance through the redeployment of surplus permanent teachers. The core function of the redeployment arrangements is to facilitate the redeployment of all surplus permanent teachers to other schools that have vacancies. The redeployment of all surplus permanent teachers is key to the Department's ability to manage within its payroll budget and ceiling on teacher numbers. Thereafter the recruitment and appointment of teachers to fill teaching posts is a matter for the individual school authority, subject to procedures agreed under Section 24(3) of the Education Act 1998 (as amended by the Education (Amendment) Act 2012).

A pilot voluntary redeployment scheme operated at post primary level this year to assist in the redeployment of surplus permanent teachers in the Sligo area. This scheme was confined to schools in close proximity to the surplus schools in Sligo. This pilot scheme operated only for redeployment in 2013. My Department has no plans to introduce a separate voluntary redeployment scheme.

### **School Enrolments**

297. **Deputy Robert Dowds** asked the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the planned changes to enrolment policy, if he will ensure that Gaelscoileanna at both primary and

secondary level are able to give priority to children who come from households where Irish is in use. [31502/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** As the Deputy is aware, I announced at this year's Teacher Union Conferences that I will shortly bring to Government draft heads of a bill – the Education (Admission to School) Bill 2013. I will seek to publish the Bill in draft form to allow a full public discussion, including inputs from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection and the education partners. I also intend to publish draft regulations that I plan to make when the Bill is enacted. In bringing forward these proposals, it is not my intention to unnecessarily intrude into how schools do their business. My policy objective is to ensure that the way in which schools decide on applications is structured, fair and transparent. As the Bill and the Regulations will be published in draft form, they will also be subject to a lot of detailed scrutiny before becoming law. I will be reflecting carefully on the views expressed in the consultation process to ensure they strike the right balance between school autonomy and fairness in our education system.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

298. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if students of a school (details supplied) will be moved to their temporary location when the new term starts in September. [31528/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The major building project for the school referred to by the Deputy is at an advanced stage of architectural planning. The current stage 2(b) includes applications for Planning Permission, Fire Safety Certificate, Disability Access Certificate and the preparation of tender documents. The project is listed on the five year school building programme to go to construction in 2014/2015. The project includes the temporary relocation of the school to allow construction on the existing site. The transfer of students to the temporary accommodation will be programmed in time to allow the commencement of construction on site. It is not proposed to relocate the students to the temporary accommodation prior to this.

### **School Transport Eligibility**

299. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding a bus route (details supplied) in County Kerry. [31536/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon):** Under the terms of my Department's Primary School Transport Scheme children are eligible for transport where they reside not less than 3.2 kms from and are attending their nearest national school as determined by my Department/Bus Éireann, having regard to ethos and language. Bus Éireann, which operates the School Transport Scheme on behalf of my Department, has advised that the child referred to by the Deputy, in the details supplied, is not attending his nearest national school and is therefore not eligible for school transport.

Children who are not eligible for school transport may apply for transport on a concessionary basis subject to a number of conditions, including the following:

- routes will not be extended or altered;
- additional vehicles will not be introduced, nor will larger vehicles or extra trips using ex-

isting vehicles be provided to cater for children travelling on a concessionary basis;

- no additional State cost will be incurred.

The family in question should liaise with their local Bus Éireann office regarding the availability of transport on a concessionary basis for the 2013/14 school year.

### **Special Educational Needs Staffing**

300. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the way the recent cuts to special needs assistants will affect schools in Ballymun and Finglas, Dublin. [31544/13]

**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, including the allocation of resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to schools. The NCSE operates within my Department's established criteria for the allocation of Special Education supports and the staffing resources available to my Department.

Whereas the allocations of SNA support for individual schools may change each year in line with a school's enrolment of children with care needs, there has been no reduction to the overall number of SNA posts being provided for schools for the coming school year. This provision remains at 10,575 posts, which is the same number as in recent years, and will ensure that all children who qualify for access to SNA support for the coming school year will receive access to such support. There has been no cut to the number of SNA posts available for allocation. Allocations are made to schools annually taking into account the assessed care needs of children qualifying for SNA support each year. Where a school may receive a reduction in SNA support in a given school year, this is not a cut to support, but a reflection of the number of qualifying children and the extent of care support that they require.

Details of the SNA allocations which have been made to schools by the NCSE for the 2013/2014 school year are available on the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie), which provides details of the SNA allocations for each school on a school by school and per county basis, including schools in Ballymun and Finglas, Dublin.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

301. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31571/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The number of Temporary Clerical Officers employed in my Department for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 were 9, 6 and 8 respectively. Temporary Clerical Officers for the Department are recruited through the Public Appointments Service selection process which is in compliance with the Commission for Public Service Appointment's Code of Practice for Appointment to positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. There were no retired public/civil servants among these 23 temporary staff employed in those years.

## European Council Meetings

302. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if copies of presentations by persons (details supplied) to the final education Council meeting to be held under the Irish Presidency in Brussels in May 2013 will be made available. [31592/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Mr Sahlberg and Ms Blower both made oral interventions at the Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Ministerial Council meeting on 16 May 2013. A summary record of the discussion, which includes a brief outline of these interventions, has been prepared by the Council General Secretariat and is available on the Council's website at the following address: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/137150.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/137150.pdf).

## School Accommodation

303. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will outline all approvals for additional accommodation and emergency works in an area (details supplied) in 2013 to date by his Department's school building unit; if he will include the school name, roll number, date approved, type of additional accommodation or emergency work approved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31593/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The information requested by the Deputy is available on my Department's website at [www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie) by clicking on 'Schools and Colleges', then 'Building Works' and then on 'Devolved Schemes'.

## Departmental Expenditure

304. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 235 of 12 March 2013, in view of the fact that the State over the past four years has spent nearly €5 million on payslips and postage to school employees and pensioners, the progress that has been made in his Department in implementing a cost effective online payslip system that is intended to be rolled out by the end of 2014; if consideration has been given to bringing this forward in view of the significant savings it would yield for the State; if the scheme will be similar to the online payslip facility that ran on a pilot basis for officials from his Department in Tullamore, County Offaly; if physical payslips ceased to be issued by his Department to officials nationwide by 15 March 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31615/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Further to my response to the Deputy's earlier Parliamentary Question No. 235 of 12th March 2013, it has not been possible to progress the implementation of a cost effective online payslip system for school employees and pensioners, in the intervening period, due to other priorities. Since March of this year, there have been significant developments to the school employee/pensioner payrolls, including an allowance review for recently appointed teachers, implementation of the Local Property Tax, in addition to measures provided for under the Haddington Road Agreement and the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Act 2013.

Work is also ongoing on the implementation of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 along with preparation for the implementation of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) European Union Regulation etc. As regards the Department's staff, I can confirm that the on-

line payslips pilot has completed and as scheduled the issuing of physical payslips for all staff on the Department's ICT network, ceased with effect from 15th March 2013. A solution is still being investigated with regard to the officers on field duties, as they are not on the Department's ICT network.

### Student Grant Scheme Delays

305. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of students per county who are currently awaiting payment of the Student Universal Support Ireland grant; the date on which these outstanding payments will be made; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31621/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The attached table details the number of students awarded maintenance that have yet to be paid, as on 2nd July, 2013, for the 2012/13 academic year by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI). SUSI has confirmed that those yet to be paid are students that were awarded in June, but are awaiting confirmation of registration from the college or students who were awarded, or/and who have not yet provided their bank details. SUSI is continuing to make payment to students as expeditiously as possible, once they receive the necessary confirmation.

County	Yet to be paid
Carlow	0
Cavan	0
Clare	4
Cork	40
Donegal	16
Dublin	114
Galway	27
Kerry	19
Kildare	26
Kilkenny	14
Laois	10
Leitrim	4
Limerick	21
Longford	6
Louth	15
Mayo	11
Meath	13
Monaghan	9
Offaly	5
Roscommon	13
Sligo	11
Tipperary	16
Waterford	21
Westmeath	2
Wexford	13
Wicklow	12

County	Yet to be paid
Outside Ireland	29
	442

### Student Grant Scheme Application Numbers

306. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of students who applied for Student Universal Support Ireland grants to pursue a course of study outside the State; the number of these who were erroneously informed by the Department that they would receive a grant to cover the course fees; the steps he has taken to adequately compensate any students in this situation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31622/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I understand from Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that some 702 students applied for support to pursue a course of study outside of the State in 2012/13.

The Deputy will be aware that the provision of information and decisions on student grants are operational matters for SUSI rather than for my Department. While some students may have had the impression that a grant award would be made to them on the basis of their telephone discussion with SUSI regarding the progress or detailed aspects of their application, I understand that it is the policy of SUSI not to confirm or give any indication to students regarding the decision or award of a grant otherwise than formally in writing and following full assessment. There are internal review procedures as well as internal and external appeals mechanisms in place whereby students may query or appeal any aspect of the assessment of their grant application by SUSI and there is also the possibility of referral to the Ombudsman in respect of SUSI's administrative procedures.

The Deputy will appreciate that, in the context of SUSI having received in excess of 69,000 applications in 2012/13, some administrative errors will inevitably arise when handling a high volume of applications within a relatively short timeframe. In a very small number of cases where an administrative error was made by SUSI in actually awarding a grant, and the formal award of a grant in writing was subsequently rescinded by SUSI, the grant scheme does not provide for the award of a grant where the applicant is not entitled to receive a grant under the terms of the scheme.

### Student Grant Scheme Administration

307. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of the preparations made by his Department to resolve the issues with the Student Universal Support Ireland grant system; his views on whether the system will be effective in the coming academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31623/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Accenture Report, which reviewed the operations of SUSI, contained a series of recommendations, many of which are already being implemented by SUSI. In line with these recommendations and in preparation for the 2013/14 academic year, both the online application system and the application assessment process have been further developed to enhance their effectiveness and to deal with the difficulties experienced in year one. A number of new initiatives will make the application process more efficient this year including direct information sharing between SUSI and Government

agencies such as the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Social Protection, the General Register Office and the Central Applications Office. These links should significantly reduce the number of documents required from applicants themselves.

In addition the staff resources recommended by the review have already been sanctioned. The resources include three additional management posts and some 23 (whole time equivalent) additional processing staff. This will help to ensure that qualifying students have their applications assessed as quickly as possible. SUSI has also significantly developed its training programme to meet the training needs of new and existing staff. In addition, the closing date will be a month earlier to facilitate earlier application and decision on a grant application. Also SUSI is working closely with all third level institutions to improve the payment process for the 2013/14 academic year.

### **Student Grant Scheme Eligibility**

308. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reasons supplementary welfare allowance is not considered as a qualifying payment for the special rate of maintenance grant for third level study; if he will reconsider his position in respect of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31624/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Persons in receipt of the supplementary welfare allowance may apply for a student grant. Assuming that students satisfy all of the relevant terms and conditions of the student grant scheme, eligible students on this payment qualify for the standard rate of grant and student contribution or fees where applicable. Supplementary welfare allowance is not an eligible payment for the special rate of grant because it is considered to be a short-term payment. I have no plans at present to extend the student grant scheme to include it as an eligible payment.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

309. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the actions that have been taken by him to implement the 2010 framework for action for the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood education settings to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31625/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Education Settings was developed as a research project by Mary Immaculate in Limerick. The Framework has formed the basis for a Certificate in Inclusive Care and Education which is a Level 6 Special Purpose Award designed to provide those working with young children with the specific body of knowledge and skills required to support the inclusion of children with SEN in early childhood education settings. The framework is used more as a pedagogical tool by lecturers/tutors for courses on inclusion of children with special needs rather than directly by practitioners.

### **Bullying in Schools**

310. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the anti-bullying forum established by him in 2012 has issued a final report and recommendations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31651/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Minister Fitzgerald and I published an Action Plan on Bullying on 29th January which sets out twelve actions to help prevent and tackle bullying in primary and second level schools. I have ring-fenced €500,000 to support implementation of the Action Plan this year. Officials from my Department have commenced work on the implementation of the actions. In particular, an awareness raising initiative on cyber bullying targeted at young people has taken place and will continue. My Department supported the Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying in second level schools which took place in March.

Work is also well advanced on developing new anti-bullying procedures for schools in consultation with the school management bodies, teacher unions and national parents councils. These new procedures are due to issue to schools for the start of the next school year. Implementation of these and the other actions identified in the Plan will continue in the coming months.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

311. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if resource hours will be provided for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny. [31659/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Deputy will be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including Resource Teaching support for children with more complex special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such supports.

All schools were advised to apply to the NCSE for resource teaching support for the 2013/14 school year by 15th March 2013. The NCSE has now published details of all of their allocations for resource teaching support for the 2013/2014 school year. These details are now available on the NCSE website, [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie), and detail the allocations made for each school on a per county basis.

I am committed to ensuring that the resources which will be required to ensure that the allocations can be made to schools at existing levels will be provided, including resources required to meet any late demand expected to arise between now and the start of the school year. I have therefore requested the NCSE to advise me by the end of September on the level of additional demand arising from late or emergency applications for the remainder of the school year. All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENO. Parents may also contact their local SENO directly to discuss their child's special educational needs, using the contact details available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

312. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when construction of the extension to a college (details supplied) will commence following its inclusion in a recent Government stimulus programme. [31663/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The major building project for Castleknock Community College is at an advanced stage of architectural planning, stage 2b. Further clarification on the stage 2(b) submission was recently received by the Department

from the school authority and this is currently under review. Authorisation has been given to commence the pre-qualification process for contractors. On satisfactory completion of stage 2 (b) and assuming no issues arise, authorisation will be given to commence the tender process.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

313. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide extra funding to schools through the National Council for Special Education to ensure that students with special needs do not have reduced access to special education resource hours. [31664/13]

317. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify the situation in relation to special needs assistants and resource teacher allocations; if he will bring certainty to parents and school communities that the necessary supports for children with special needs will be provided; if he will acknowledge the important role played by SNAs and resource teachers in ensuring that children with special needs progress and develop in the mainstream school setting; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31733/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 313 and 317 together.

I wish to advise the Deputy that the level of resources devoted to supporting children with Special Educational Needs has been maintained at €1.3 billion this year. This includes provision for 10,575 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and nearly 10,000 Learning Support and Resource Teachers. These resources have been protected despite the ongoing severe financial position. The ongoing commitment of my Government to protecting frontline supports for children with special educational needs is an acknowledgment of the important role played by SNAs and resource teachers in ensuring that children with special needs can progress and develop and be included in mainstream school settings.

Whereas the allocations of SNA support for individual schools may change each year in line with a school's enrolment of children with care needs, there has been no reduction to the overall number of SNA posts being provided for schools for the coming school year. This provision remains at 10,575 posts, which will ensure that all children who qualify for access to SNA support for the coming school year will receive access to such support. The total number of SNA posts allocated to schools for the 2012/13 school year was 10,487 posts. For the 2011/12 school year it was 10,320 posts. It is estimated that there will be sufficient SNA posts to provide access to SNA support for all children who require such support in the coming school year.

In relation to the allocation of resource teaching support for schools from September 2013, demand for support has risen again this year, due to a combination of demographic growth and increased assessments. Despite the fact that the overall number of posts available to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for allocation to schools had been maintained at existing levels, the allocations initially announced by the NCSE on 19th June were reduced to take into account of the growth in demand, within the maintained number of posts, in order to ensure that equivalent allocations could be made for all qualifying children. On 25th of June, I announced that I have now authorised the NCSE to restore the level of resource teaching allocations which can be provided for students with special educational needs to the 2012/13 levels. This will mean that there will not now be any reduction to resource teaching time for children over the level which applied last year.

I also committed to ensuring that the resources which will be required to ensure that the allo-

cations can be made to schools at existing levels will be provided, including resources required to meet any late demand expected to arise between now and the start of the school year. The NCSE have now published revised details of the Resource Teaching allocations for all schools, based on existing allocation levels. Details of these allocations are now provided at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie). In the longer term, it is proposed to develop a new model to improve how resources for children with special Educational needs are allocated to schools. I am concerned that the scale of increased demand for resource teachers this year, if it were to continue, would make the current system unsustainable. I am asking the NCSE to consider the reasons for the unprecedented 12 per cent rise in applications for resource teacher support this year, which compares with an annual 1.3 per cent increase in the number of students attending school in the current year.

The Deputy will be aware that the NCSE recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools. I have, as suggested by the Report, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group to develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools. In the interim, I wish to ensure that children will not be disadvantaged while we move towards a new model which will ensure greater fairness and quality of education for children with special educational needs. That is why I have made the decision to maintain the existing allocation levels this year.

### **Student Grant Scheme Appeals**

314. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when a student grant will be approved on appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31692/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the applicant referred to by the Deputy was issued with an ineligibility letter on 15th August 2012. Following an appeal to SUSI and subsequent requests for supporting documentation, a decision on the appeal was issued on 8th April 2013 advising her that she was deemed ineligible to receive a grant. Where an individual applicant has had an appeal turned down, in writing, by SUSI, and remains of the view that SUSI has not interpreted the scheme correctly in his/her case, an appeal form outlining the position may be submitted by the applicant to the Student Grant Appeals Board. The relevant appeal form will be available on request from SUSI.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

315. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reasons a person (details supplied) in County Leitrim will now have to share a special needs assistant despite the fact that the person has needed a full-time SNA since the beginning of their education up until the end of the current academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31712/13]

**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, including the allocation of resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to schools. The NCSE operates within my Department's established criteria for the allocation of Special Education supports and the staffing resources available to

my Department. All schools were advised to apply to the NCSE for resource teaching and SNA support for the 2013/14 school year by 15th March 2013. Details of the SNA allocations which have been made to schools by the NCSE for the 2013/2014 school year are now available on the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie), which provides details of the SNA allocations for each school on a school by school and per county basis.

Where schools have enrolled children who were not considered at the time that these allocations were made, or where schools are seeking a revision to the quantum of SNA support which has been allocated to them for the coming school year, they should contact the NCSE regarding this matter. In general a revision to SNA allocations will only be made in circumstances where schools can demonstrate that they do not have sufficient SNA posts to cater for the assessed care needs of all qualifying children in their school. All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENO. Parents may also contact their local SENO directly to discuss their child's special educational needs, using the contact details available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

### **School Transport Eligibility**

316. **Deputy Paul J. Connaughton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the options in terms of school transport that are open to atheist families where the only secondary school in their catchment area is Roman Catholic where their children will be excluded from some religious school activities; if children from these families can avail of the nearest school transport to a secondary school that respects their value system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31719/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon):** The purpose of my Department's Post Primary School Transport Scheme is, having regard to available resources, to support the transport to and from school of children who reside remote from their nearest education centre. From the commencement of the 2012/13 school year, catchment areas are no longer a factor in determining eligibility for school transport. Children are now eligible for transport where they reside not less than 4.8 kms from and are attending their nearest education centre as determined by the Department/Bus Éireann, having regard to ethos and language. In relation to school transport provision, ethos relates to religious ethos and is in the context of provision for minority religions. Families should liaise with their local Bus Éireann office to establish their school of eligibility for school transport purposes.

*Question No. 317 answered with Question No. 313.*

### **Special Education Review**

318. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he intends to comply with last October's ruling from the Ombudsman for Children that he should publish an autism policy document; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31744/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Further to the encouragement of the Ombudsman for Children last year and mindful that greater clarity on my Department's policy on the education of children with autism would be useful for schools and parents, my Department is currently in the process of preparing a comprehensive statement of existing policy within the boundaries of one document. This process is ongoing.

My Department's policy on the education of children with Autism resides within the overall policies on the education of children with special educational needs. In the main these policies

are non condition specific. In this context, the Autism policy, whether expressed in a multiple of documents or in a single document, should not be viewed as a separate ‘stand alone’ policy. The new policy statement will not be exclusive. Policies are subject of necessity to change from time to time. Also, the new statement will neither alter nor add to existing policy. It will reflect the current policy in a coherent and articulate manner for the benefit of schools and parents. My Department is conscious of the need to adapt existing policies and to develop new policies as new research or learning becomes available. The National Council for Special Education has a formal role under Section 20.1(j) of EPSEN to advise the Minister ‘in relation to any matter relating to the education of children and others with disabilities’. I have now requested the NCSE to prepare Policy Advice on the Educational Provision for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The NCSE have commissioned research which will not be finalised until mid to late 2014 and I expect that this research will inform much of the work in preparing the policy advice. Accordingly it is not expected that the report will be finalised until early 2015.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

319. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a psychologist employed by the Health Service Executive recommends that a child with autism receive early intensive behavioural intervention for a specified number of hours each week, his views on whether it is proper for a teacher to utilise his Department’s preferred eclectic approach, which professional behavioural psychologists warn is incompatible with EIBI; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31745/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department’s position is that as each child with autism is unique, they should have access to a range of different approaches to meet their individual needs. Applied Behavioural Analysis, or ABA, is one of the approaches used in special classes for children with autism. The use of ABA as part of the range of interventions is particularly useful for addressing behavioural issues. My Department supports the use of ABA and training is provided for teachers in its use. However, the Department does not accept, based on research, advice and best practice, that ABA should be the only approach used. While ABA helps to improve behaviour, other approaches, such as Treatment and Education of Autistic Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS) are just as important in developing children’s communication and speech skills. It is important that children have access to a range of approaches so that their broader needs can be met. As children differ significantly from one another and as children’s needs vary and change over time, it is not possible to impose a method or approach that will work for all children with autism. This child centred approach is based on advice received from international experts on autism, NEPS, the Inspectorate and the report of the Irish Task Force on Autism.

The Deputy may be interested to note that teachers in special schools have been using ABA principles for more than 25 years. ABA involves the systematic application, at any time during the child’s day, of behavioural principles to modify behaviour. The effectiveness of behavioural interventions to improve the performance of children with autism and to ameliorate behavioural difficulties has been recognized for decades. To clarify the position regarding psychological assessment reports prepared by health service staff which identify a child’s educational needs, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has provided guidance to their staff which clarifies that if a report prepared by HSE staff identifies a child’s educational needs the report should not specify how the education sector should meet those needs.

### **Student Grant Scheme Delays**

320. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason it has taken over a year to receive a grant decision in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 13; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31747/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the applicant referred to by the Deputy was issued with a decision on the 28th May 2013 advising her that she was deemed ineligible to receive a grant. I understand from SUSI that incomplete documentation had been received.

If an individual applicant considers that she/he has been unjustly refused a student grant, or that the rate of grant awarded is not the correct one, she/he may appeal, in the first instance, to SUSI. Where an individual applicant has had an appeal turned down, in writing, by SUSI, and remains of the view that SUSI has not interpreted the scheme correctly in his/her case, an appeal form outlining the position may be submitted by the applicant to the Student Grant Appeals Board. The relevant appeal form will be available on request from SUSI.

### **Student Grant Scheme Delays**

321. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason students who have completed first year in third level education have not yet received decisions regarding their grant applications and the steps he is taking to rectify this matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31748/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I understand from Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that there are a small number of applications awaiting a decision, and the turnaround time on receipt of outstanding documentation is two to three working days. There are a number of appeals in the system also which are being prioritised. Many of the recommendations in the Accenture report on the review of SUSI's system have already been implemented.

In preparation for the 2013/2014 Academic year both the online application system and the application assessment process have been further developed to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency and respond to experiences from year 1. The staff resources recommended by the Review have already been sanctioned. These developments will help to ensure that qualifying students have their applications assessed as quickly as possible.

### **Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

322. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if his attention has been drawn to the increase in pupil-teacher ratio at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare which will rise from 22 to 32 in the next academic year; if he will commit to addressing the need for the school to be properly resourced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31760/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Government has protected frontline services in schools to the greatest extent possible in this year's budget and there will no reduction in teacher numbers in primary schools for the 2013/14 school year as a result of the budget. The DEIS scheme for disadvantaged schools is also fully protected with no overall

changes to staffing levels or funding as a result of the budget. The criteria used for the allocation of teaching posts for the 2013/2014 school year is set out in the Staffing Schedule (Circular 0013/2013) which is available on the Department website. The key factor for determining the level of staffing resources provided at individual school level is the staffing schedule for the relevant school year and pupil enrolments on the previous 30 September. The staffing schedule also includes an appeals mechanism for schools to submit an appeal under certain criteria to an independent Appeals Board. Details of the criteria for appeal are contained in the staffing schedule, Circular 0013/2013. The allocation process at individual school level is currently underway. The final staffing position for all schools will ultimately not be known until the Autumn. At that stage the allocation process will be fully completed and all appeals to the Staffing Appeals Board will have been considered.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

323. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding an appeal for July provision hours in respect of children (details supplied) in County Donegal; the reason these children are not being treated individually despite the fact that they need a full-time one-to-one special needs assistant during the school year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31762/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Deputy will be aware that the July Education Programme is available to all special schools and mainstream primary schools with special classes catering for children with autism that choose to extend their education services through the month of July. My Department also provides for a July Programme for pupils with a severe/profound general learning disability. Where school based provision is not feasible, home based provision may be grant aided. The allocation of home based provision to siblings for July Provision is reflective of the school grouping principle. This is where one teacher is allocated to a class of six pupils at the appropriate educational level, primary or post primary. Accordingly it is considered appropriate, as in a school situation, that a tutor can provide tuition at the appropriate educational level to more than one sibling at that level simultaneously in the home. The school grouping principle does not purport to replicate or mirror all aspects of school based provision. The age or ability of siblings is reflected in their education level as determined by education and health professionals. In general where a child is receiving their education in a class setting with other children of mixed age and ability, this should carry through to their July Provision. However in recognition of the differing needs of some siblings, including the brothers referred to by the Deputy, separate allocations can be considered on a case by case basis. Applications in this regard will require supporting documentation including professional reports from a psychologist or a letter from the principal of the school detailing the existing arrangements currently in place for the respective children and providing reasons why they cannot be tutored together in the home. Separate allocations have been approved for the siblings referred to by the Deputy.

### **State Examinations Issues**

324. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if there are any concessions awarded to a student (details supplied) in County Wexford who became seriously ill during a recent State examination; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31772/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The State Examinations Com-

mission has statutory responsibility for operational matters relating to the certificate examinations. In view of this I have forwarded your query to the State Examinations Commission for direct reply to you.

### Higher Education Institutions Expenditure

325. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total annual cost in Trinity College Dublin of providing free open online courses worldwide as part of a new global partnership with Futurelearn; if he will provide a breakdown of the cost of the programme design, server maintenance, advertising and any other line item costs associated with free online courses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31777/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The position is that higher education institutions, including universities such as Trinity College Dublin, are autonomous bodies and their day to day operational affairs including issues such as the provision of online courses are the responsibility of the management authority and governing body of the University. However, I understand that the HEA has been in contact with the college and has been informed that the platform, technical and marketing costs of these courses are covered by FutureLearn with the programme development costs covered by Trinity. The HEA also understand that to date no costs have been incurred and Trinity College expect future costs to be minimal. They will be monitoring the cost-benefit of this initiative.

### Higher Education Institutions Expenditure

326. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide an overview of the headline financial situation in terms of revenue, deficit and debt in Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, University College Cork, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, Dublin City University and the University of Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31778/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Details of the headline financial situation in respect of the seven Universities are set out in the following document. These details are based on 2011/12 funding statements of the Universities.

#### PQ - Revenues, Deficits & Debt

##### 2011/12 Funding Statements

-	-	UCD	TCD	UCC	NUIG	NUIM	UL	DCU	Total
-	-	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m
	Please indicate if 2011/12 Funding Statements are draft or audited	Draft	Audited	Draft	Audited	Audited	-	-	-

-	-	UCD	TCD	UCC	NUIG	NUIM	UL	DCU	Total
-	-	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m	€'m
Total Revenue		338.5	265.9	273.8	221.3	96.8	156.0	132.8	1,485.1
Surplus / (Deficit) for year		3.3	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.0	5.2
Accumulated Revenue Reserves		(3.2)	0.4	0.0	8.5	0.5	(1.5)	0.3	5.1
Debt > 1 year *		94.1	133.9	55.0	-	-	10.5	1.0	294.5

\* Debt is defined as bank loans and borrowings due in greater than 1 year as reported in the funding statements.

### Teaching Contracts

327. **Deputy Paschal Donohoe** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason a person (details supplied) has not gained access to the supplementary teachers panel in view of the fact that the person has worked 191 days since becoming qualified on 1 October 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31829/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The core function of the redeployment arrangements is to facilitate the redeployment of all surplus permanent teachers to other schools that have vacancies. The redeployment of all surplus permanent teachers is key to the Department's ability to manage within its payroll budget and ceiling on teacher numbers. Thereafter, schools are required under the panel arrangements to fill permanent vacancies from supplementary panels comprised of eligible fixed-term (temporary/substitute) and part-time teachers. The application process for the supplementary panels was introduced for the 2012/13 school year. The arrangements for panel access for fixed term (temporary/substitute) and part-time teachers for the 2013/14 school year are set out in Department Circular 0038/2012 which is available on the Department website. The Supplementary Panel is created for eligible primary teachers in fixed term/temporary positions (this includes substitute positions) and part-time positions who meet the relevant eligibility criteria outlined in Part 2 of this circular. The teacher referred to by the Deputy failed to meet the criteria and is therefore ineligible to be included on the supplementary panel.

### Schools Building Projects Status

328. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding the proposed building project for a school (details supplied) in County Cavan; the pres-

ent stage of this project, when it is proposed that the project will move to the next stage; the likely timescale for construction to commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31837/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The major building project, for the school referred to by the Deputy, is currently at an early stage of architectural planning, stage 2a. My Department's over-riding objective in identifying school building projects to progress to tender and construction is to ensure that every child has access to a physical school place and that our school system is in a position to cope with increasing pupil numbers. To ensure that this is achieved, 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 that I announced in March 2012 is focused on meeting those demographic needs. The Deputy will be aware that I also recently announced a €50 million investment in school building projects as part of the Government's "Investing in Infrastructure & Jobs" Package. The projects considered for inclusion in that package were all at a significantly more advanced stage of architectural planning than the project referred to by the Deputy. In view of the funding constraints, it is not possible to progress all projects within the Department's building programme concurrently. School Building Projects currently in architectural planning, but not included in the Five Year Programme or Stimulus Package, will continue to be progressed to final planning stages in anticipation of the possibility of further funds being available to my Department in future years. The project referred to by the Deputy remains available to be considered for progression in that context. However, this is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the relevant stages of architectural planning.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

329. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of the number of psychological assessments for learning support and resources hours that were successfully submitted for the allocation of hours in 2011 and 2012 which were carried out privately; the number of private assessment which did not result in the allocation of hours; the total number of assessments which were carried out by NEPS in the same period; the number of these that were successful and unsuccessful for the same period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31841/13]

**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 primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including Resource Teaching support for children with more complex low incidence special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such supports. I can inform the Deputy that all primary and post primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA), full details of which are on the Department's website. Where a NEPS psychologist is not assigned to a school, authorities therein may access psychological assessments through SCPA. Under this scheme schools can have an assessment carried out by a member of the panel of private psychologists approved by NEPS, and NEPS will pay the psychologist the fees for this assessment directly. It should be noted that in common with many other psychological services, NEPS encourages a staged assessment process, whereby each school takes responsibility for a pupil's initial assessment, educational planning and remedial intervention. Only if there is a failure to make reasonable progress in spite of the school's best efforts, will a child be referred for individual psychological assessment. It

is the responsibility of the school Principal in the first instance to identify and prioritise pupils for assessment under the process described above. The Deputy will be aware that some parents also acquire assessments for their children either privately, or through an assessment by the Health Service Executive. As all applications for low incidence resource teaching support are considered by the NCSE, I have referred the Deputy's question regarding the nature of the supporting assessments which have accompanied such applications for support to the NCSE in 2011 and 2012, and the number of applications approved, for their consideration and direct reply to the Deputy. The Deputy will be aware that the NCSE recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools. This policy advice is available on the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie). The policy advice concluded that children with special educational needs are well supported in schools. However, the NCSE also concluded that the current allocation system does not always provide all children with special educational needs with the same access to supports, as some children may be delayed in receiving supports due to difficulties in accessing an assessment for a diagnosis of disability which is needed to trigger additional teaching support for students with more complex disabilities under the current allocation system. I have, therefore, as recommended by the Report, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group which will consider this issue and develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

**330. Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children at primary level awaiting psychological assessments from NEPS, in tabular form by county; the maximum time a child is waiting by county; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31842/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I can inform the Deputy that all primary and post primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through my Department's National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA) which is administered by NEPS. NEPS does not keep waiting lists for assessments of children but in common with many other psychological services and best international practice, NEPS has adopted a consultative model of service. The focus is on empowering teachers to intervene effectively with pupils whose needs range from mild to severe and transient to enduring. Psychologists use a problem solving and solution focused consultative approach to maximize positive outcomes for these pupils. NEPS encourages schools to use a continuum based assessment and intervention process whereby each school takes responsibility for initial assessment, educational planning and remedial intervention for pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Teachers may consult their NEPS psychologist should they need to at this stage in the process. Only in the event of a failure to make reasonable progress, in spite of the school's best efforts in consultation with NEPS, will the psychologist become involved with an individual child for intensive intervention. This system allows psychologists to give early attention to urgent cases and also to help many more children indirectly than could be seen individually. It also ensures that children are not referred unnecessarily for psychological intervention. This process has been embedded by NEPS psychologists in the Primary sector with the production by the Department of Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support guidance and resource materials which has been distributed to all schools since 2007/8. In late 2010 similar support documentation was produced in relation to Emotional and Behavioural difficulties in the Primary sector and in relation to a formal Post-Primary Continuum process. The continua described above all involve a graduated problem solving model of assessment and intervention in schools processes which

moves from basic classroom based interventions to more specialised and individual interventions and comprise three distinct school based phases characterised as follows: Classroom Support – is an intervention which is co-ordinated by the Class Teacher and is carried out in the regular classroom, School Support - is an assessment and intervention process which is usually co-ordinated by the learning support/resource teacher working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support. School Support Plus – is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement by the relevant external service (predominantly NEPS) in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate, despite carefully planned interventions at previous levels. The staged model recognises that pupils present with a wide range of issues and difficulties and allows for their amelioration and intervention at the level most appropriate to the particular need. The continuum approach ensures that pupils presenting within this range are dealt with quickly and at the appropriate level without the establishment of a waiting list for formal assessment.

### **Student Grant Scheme Eligibility**

331. **Deputy Paschal Donohoe** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of applicants to Student Universal Support Ireland seeking grant support who failed to complete the previous academic year; if SUSI monitors the attendance of students in receipt of support grants regarding lectures throughout the academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31935/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The information in relation to students who dropped out of college is not available. The Deputy would be aware that affordability is just one of the factors that impact on students, continued participation in higher education. There are a range of wider factors that also impact on participation, including social and cultural issues, prior academic attainment and teacher and parental expectations. Students awarded a grant are paid the maintenance element subject to confirmation and verification of attendance from the institution being attended. Student Universal Support Ireland receives confirmation of satisfactory attendance from the further education sector on a monthly basis and from the higher education sector on a semester basis. Students who have previously attended, but not completed an approved course of study are required to complete an equivalent period of study on an approved course before being eligible to be considered for a grant.

### **Student Grant Scheme Appeals**

332. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reasons for the delay in processing a third level grant in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Longford who was informed verbally on 10 June 2013 that the appeal had been upheld; the reason the person was informed on 21 June that the appeal had not been processed as it was only sent to the appeals section on 12 June 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31938/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the applicant referred to by the Deputy appealed the original decision of the awarding authority regarding progression and a grant award letter issued on 12th April, 2013. The applicant was unhappy with the level of award and subsequently appealed this decision to SUSI on 10th May, 2013. On the 1st July, 2013 a request for supporting documentation was issued to the student. When this is returned

the student will be notified directly of the outcome.

### Special Educational Needs Staffing

333. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide a definitive statement on the proposed cuts to special needs assistants' working hours and resource teaching allocations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31939/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I wish to advise the Deputy that the level of resources devoted to supporting children with Special Educational Needs has been maintained at €1.3 billion this year. This includes provision for 10,575 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and nearly 10,000 Learning Support and Resource Teachers. These resources have been protected despite the ongoing severe financial position. In relation to special needs assistants, there has been no proposed cut to SNA numbers or their working hours. Whereas the allocations of SNA support for individual school's may change each year in line with a schools enrolment of children with care needs, there has been no reduction to the overall number of SNA posts being provided for schools for the coming school year. This provision remains at 10,575 posts, which will ensure that all children who qualify for access to SNA support for the coming school year will receive access to such support. The total number of SNA posts allocated to schools for the 2012/13 school year was 10,487 posts. For the 2011/12 school year it was 10,320 posts. The demand for SNAs for the 2013/2104 school year currently stands at 10,490 leaving some 85 posts available for late demand. It is therefore estimated that there will be sufficient SNA posts to provide access to SNA support for all children who require such support in the coming school year. In relation to the allocation of resource teaching support for schools from September 2013, demand for support has risen again this year, due to a combination of demographic growth and an increased number of assessments. The overall number of posts available to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for allocation to schools had been maintained at existing levels and accordingly the allocations initially announced by the NCSE on 19th June were reduced to take into account of the growth in demand, within the maintained number of posts, in order to ensure that equivalent allocations could be made for all qualifying children. The Deputy will be aware that I announced recently that I have now authorised the NCSE to restore the level of resource teaching allocations which can be provided for students with special educational needs to the 2012/13 levels. This will mean that there will not now be any reduction to resource teaching time for children on the level which applied last year. I also committed to ensuring that the resources which will be required to ensure that the allocations can be made to schools at existing levels will be provided, including resources required to meet any late demand expected to arise between now and the start of the school year. The NCSE have now published revised details of the Resource Teaching allocations for all schools, based on existing allocation levels. Details of these allocations are now provided at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

I am concerned that the scale of increased demand for resource teachers this year, if it were to continue, would make the current system unsustainable. I have therefore asked the NCSE to consider the reasons for the unprecedented 12 per cent rise in applications for resource teacher support this year, which compares with an annual 1.3 per cent increase in the number of students attending school in the current year. The Deputy will be aware that the NCSE recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools. I have, as suggested by the Report, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group to develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools. In the interim, I wish to ensure that children will not be disadvantaged while we move towards a new model which will ensure greater fairness and quality of education for children

with special educational needs. That is why I have made the decision to maintain the existing allocation levels this year.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

334. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will respond to correspondence (details supplied) regarding autism. [31955/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I previously advised the Deputy that the Home Tuition Scheme is not operated in an inequitable manner. The case which is referred to by the Deputy does not constitute an inequitable arrangement. If parents of pupils eligible for home tuition approach my Department with proposals to either collectively provide the tuition for their children in a group setting or to approve a direct payment arrangement, it would be unreasonable for my officials not to consider them on their merits. The Home Tuition scheme is not intended as a long term placement option for children with autism. The preferred policy of my Department is that children with autism are educated in school settings where children may have access to individualised education programmes (IEPs), fully-qualified professional teachers, special needs assistants, the appropriate school curriculum with the option, where possible and appropriate, of full or partial integration and interaction with other pupils. The Deputy will be aware that the establishment of a network of autism-specific special classes in schools across the country to cater for children with autism has been a key educational priority in recent years.

### **Special Educational Needs Expenditure**

335. **Deputy Eric Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding cuts to the educational provision for children with disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31962/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I wish to advise the Deputy that the level of resources devoted to supporting children with Special Educational Needs has been maintained at €1.3 billion this year. This includes provision for 10,575 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and nearly 10,000 Learning Support and Resource Teachers. These resources have been protected despite the ongoing severe financial position.

Whereas the allocations of SNA support for individual schools may change each year in line with a school's enrolment of children with care needs, there has been no reduction to the overall number of SNA posts being provided for schools for the coming school year. This provision remains at 10,575 posts, which will ensure that all children who qualify for access to SNA support for the coming school year will receive access to such support. The total number of SNA posts allocated to schools for the 2012/13 school year was 10,487 posts. For the 2011/12 school year it was 10,320 posts. It is therefore estimated that there will be sufficient SNA posts to provide access to SNA support for all children who require such support in the coming school year. In relation to the allocation of resource teaching support for schools from September 2013, demand for support has risen again this year, due to a combination of demographic growth and increased assessments. Despite the fact that the overall number of posts available to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for allocation to schools had been maintained at existing levels, the allocations initially announced by the NCSE on 19th June were reduced to take account of the growth in demand, within the maintained number of posts, in order to ensure that equivalent allocations could be made for all qualifying children.

The Deputy will be aware that I announced recently that I have now authorised the NCSE to restore the level of resource teaching allocations which can be provided for students with special educational needs to the 2012/13 levels. This will mean that there will not now be any reduction to resource teaching time for children on the level which applied last year. I also committed to ensuring that the resources which will be required to ensure that the allocations can be made to schools at existing levels will be provided, including resources required to meet any late demand expected to arise between now and the start of the school year. The NCSE have now published revised details of the Resource Teaching allocations for all schools, based on existing allocation levels. Details of these allocations are now provided at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie). The Deputy will be aware that the NCSE recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools. I have, as suggested by the Report, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group to develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools. In the interim, I wish to ensure that children will not be disadvantaged while we move towards a new model which will ensure greater fairness and quality of education for children with special educational needs. That is why I have made the decision to maintain the existing allocation levels this year.

### **Ombudsman's Remit**

336. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he has drafted plans to extend the remit of the Ombudsman to third level institutions; when he expects to move forward with the measure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31970/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** For the Deputy's information, under Schedule 1 of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012, "Reviewable Agencies", higher education institutions in receipt of public funding are included as entities whose actions are reviewable by the Ombudsman. See <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2012/a3812d.pdf>.

### **Third Level Charges**

337. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a study on the impact of rising student fees on participating families will be carried out; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32000/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Under my Department's free fees scheme eligible full-time undergraduate students have their tuition fees paid on their behalf by the Exchequer. As the Deputy will be aware the student contribution will increase to €2,500 for the next academic year and is payable by students who qualify under the free fees scheme. Students who qualify under my Department's student grant scheme have the student contribution paid on their behalf by the Exchequer. The Government is aware of the financial pressures on families and, conscious of this, tax relief provisions have been put in place which provide for tax relief so that second and subsequent siblings do not have to bear the full cost of the student contribution. In addition, my Department, through the Higher Education Authority (HEA), requested institutions to put arrangements in place whereby students may opt to pay the contribution in two instalments. The HEA is undertaking a study on the sustainability of the current funding system for higher education. This study was initiated at my request and an initial report has been published. This report makes it clear that immediate work is required to prepare for a longer term approach to a system that can be maintained through a sustainable

funding base which will be able to address the continual expansion of the sector while protecting the quality of education. The HEA is continuing its work in this area and I will be advised further as this work progresses. The report will help inform decision-making as to the future funding of the sector.

### **Freedom of Information Requests**

338. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Education and Skills under the practice in his Department of replying to freedom of information questions, if he will outline the material that is made available when such a request is received; if it is factual to say that only written correspondence to his Department is made available; if he keeps a diary of telephone calls, conversations and representations he receives from Deputies orally or from his officials; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32021/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The FOI Acts 1997 and 2003 establish the statutory right to access records held by public bodies covered by the Act. For the purposes of the Act a record is described as “including any memorandum, book, plan, map, drawing, diagram, pictorial or graphic work or other document, any photograph, film or recording (whether of sound or images or both), any form in which data (within the meaning of the Data Protection Act, 1988 ) are held, any other form (including machine-readable form) or thing in which information is held or stored manually, mechanically or electronically and anything that is a part or a copy, in any form, of any of the foregoing or is a combination of two or more of the foregoing”. Subject to the provisions of the Acts, if the information sought is contained in a record held by my Department, and falls within the definition outlined above, a member of the public has a right of access to this record.

### **Teacher Employment Contracts**

339. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the terms of the employment contract that is offered to the principal of a school; if it is a set format or if each contract is formulated by the board of management of the particular school; and the criteria set down by his Department in relation to contracts of employment of a principal. [32022/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Teachers are employed under a contract of employment with the Board of Management of a school or a Vocational Education Committee (VEC). A Board of Management/VEC, as employer, must provide his/her employee with a written statement of the particulars of the employee’s terms of employment e.g. place and hours of work, responsibilities, disciplinary/grievance procedures etc, some of which are statutory requirements under the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994.

### **State Examinations Issues**

340. **Deputy Shane Ross** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if anyone will be held accountable for the errors in the leaving certificate higher level mathematics paper 2 taken on 10 June 2013; how students will be compensated for the errors in the paper; if students will be given an opportunity to sit an accurate replacement examination in order to ensure their futures are not compromised by mistakes made by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32023/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The State Examinations Commission was established as an independent agency in 2003 to deal with all operational issues relating to State Examinations. The SEC acknowledges that these errors may have caused confusion and distress for some candidates and has apologised publicly. The SEC has expressed its regret for these errors.

When errors occur, the SEC must focus on two issues. As a priority, it seeks to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged as a result of an error that has occurred. Therefore, the impact of these errors on students' answers will be taken into account by the Chief Examiner when finalising the marking schemes for these exams. The marking schemes will, as usual, be published along with those in all other subjects after the issue of results, in mid-August in the case of the Leaving Certificate and mid-September for Junior Certificate. Leaving Certificate students can view their marked examinations scripts to see how the published marking scheme has been applied to their work, while all students have the option of appealing their results. Then, in the context of the specific error, the SEC reviews its existing processes and procedures in order to implement measures to strengthen the quality assurance underpinning the preparation of examination papers.

I have asked the SEC to report to me on this issue.

### **Student Grant Scheme Applications**

341. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding a Student Universal Support Ireland application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32025/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the student referred to by the Deputy made an application for the 2013/14 academic year on 21st May 2013. A document checklist issued to the applicant on 13th June 2013. When the requested documentation is returned the student will be notified directly of the outcome.

### **Student Grant Scheme Payments**

342. **Deputy Gerald Nash** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when payment of a higher education grant will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Louth as same was approved by award letter on 1 May 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32026/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland that the student referred to by the Deputy has been awarded a grant and an award letter issued on 1 May 2013. SUSI also confirmed that they are awaiting an invoice from the applicant's college for the fees.

### **Special Educational Needs Staffing**

343. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding the restriction on recruitment of special needs assistants to those who have been in permanent positions or temporary positions for more than five years; if similar protections will be put in place for those who have been working in temporary positions for less than five

years; if discretion will be afforded to schools for recruiting personnel with qualifications and experience relevant to the needs of their students; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32033/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I assume that the Deputy is referring to that aspect of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 (the Haddington Road Agreement) that relates to supplementary assignment arrangements for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The contractual position in respect of SNAs is outlined in their contract of employment (Department of Education and Skills Circulars 12/05 (Post-Primary) and 15/05 (Primary)). This outlines that the allocation of special needs assistant posts to schools will be reviewed on an annual basis. This review is conducted by the NCSE and the employment of Special Needs Assistants may be reduced from full-time to part-time or terminated by way of redundancy where the allocation is reduced. Details of redundancy arrangements are outlined in Department Circular 58/06. Under the Croke Park Agreement the Government gave a protection from compulsory redundancy to permanent public servants. However, this does not apply to SNAs because an existing exit mechanism i.e. DES Circular 58/06 was already in existence. This was allowed for in the Croke Park Agreement. Recently, a new set of proposals was put forward by the Labour Relations Commission which now form the Haddington Road Agreement. These arose from an intensive and difficult set of negotiations between the Public Services Committee of ICTU and the Government that took place against a backdrop of continuing significant difficulties in the finances of the State. The Government has agreed to implement the terms of the Haddington Road Agreement for grades represented by Unions which have signed up to the Haddington Road Agreement. As both Unions that represent SNAs namely, SIPTU and IMPACT, have signed up to the Haddington Road Agreement, the Department has implemented supplementary assignment arrangements for SNAs for the 2013/2014 school year. The detailed arrangements are set out in Departmental Circular 0037/2013 which issued on 1 July 2013.

### **July Education Programme**

344. **Deputy Paschal Donohoe** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason the July provision hours have been halved this year in respect of persons (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32056/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Deputy will be aware that the July Education Programme is available to all special schools and mainstream primary schools with special classes catering for children with autism that choose to extend their education services through the month of July. My Department also provides for a July Programme for pupils with a severe/profound general learning disability. Where school based provision is not feasible, home based provision may be grant aided. The allocation of home based provision to siblings for July Provision is reflective of the school grouping principle. This is where one teacher is allocated to a class of six pupils at the appropriate educational level, primary or post primary. Accordingly it is considered appropriate, as in a school situation, that a tutor can provide tuition at the appropriate educational level to more than one sibling at that level simultaneously in the home. The school grouping principle does not purport to replicate or mirror all aspects of school based provision. The age or ability of siblings is reflected in their education level as determined by education and health professionals. In general where a child is receiving their education in a class setting with other children of mixed age and ability, this should carry through to their July Provision. However, in recognition of the differing needs of some siblings, including the brothers referred to by the Deputy, separate allocations will be considered on a case by case basis. Applications in this regard will require supporting documentation

including professional reports from a psychologist or a letter from the principal of the school detailing the existing arrangements currently in place for the respective children and providing reasons why they cannot be tutored together in the home. Separate allocations have been made to the children referred to by the Deputy.

### **Postgraduate Loan Scheme Implementation**

345. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if there have been any discussions with banks to provide reduced-interest loans to help students with the funding of postgraduate courses, as is the current practice in certain financial institutions in the UK; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32058/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Department, with support and advice from the National Treasury Management Agency, met with a number of commercial providers in relation to the provision of credit to enable postgraduate students to pursue their studies. A new loan initiative was introduced by Bank of Ireland in 2012 to provide finance for fees and living costs. While developed in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills, it is a Bank of Ireland product and further information on the terms and conditions of the loan is available from the bank. A number of financial institutions already offer loans for postgraduate studies.

### **Irish Language Issues**

346. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the progress that has been made to introduce part-immersion education in the Irish language in schools where Irish is not the language of instruction, as recommended in the 20-year strategy for the Irish language for 2010-30; if there is a pilot scheme in place; if not, when he will establish same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32063/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** To date, my Department has focused on the implementation of educational actions in the 20 Year Strategy that relate to curriculum, assessment and teacher education. For example, the NCCA is currently developing a new integrated language curriculum for English and Irish at primary level which will be available for infants to second class in 2014. Consideration of partial immersion in schools where English is the medium of instruction will take place in light of the progress made in relation to curriculum and teacher education measures. There are currently no plans to carry out a pilot of partial immersion education in these schools.

### **Emergency Works Scheme Applications**

347. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will approve the application of a school (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32073/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Following receipt of an application from the school authority I am pleased to inform the Deputy that my Department recently approved funding under the Emergency Works Scheme. The school authorities have been informed of this decision.

## **Student Grant Scheme Applications**

348. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding an application made to Student Universal Support Ireland in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; when a decision will issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32088/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the applicant referred to by the Deputy was issued with a decision on the 29th January 2013 advising him that he was deemed ineligible to receive a grant. If an individual applicant considers that she/he has been unjustly refused a student grant, or that the rate of grant awarded is not the correct one, she/he may appeal, in the first instance, to SUSI. Where an individual applicant has had an appeal turned down, in writing, by SUSI, and remains of the view that SUSI has not interpreted the scheme correctly in his/her case, an appeal form outlining the position may be submitted by the applicant to the Student Grant Appeals Board. The relevant appeal form will be available on request from SUSI.

## **Bullying in Schools**

349. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on correspondence regarding a case of alleged bullying and assault in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Leitrim; and the action he will take on same. [32089/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I appreciate the concerns you raise in your question. Officials from my Department have been in communication with the person in question and have offered advice on both the parental complaint procedure and the child protection procedures. As the Deputy may be aware, my Department sets out the constitution of Boards of Management and rules of procedure but it is not directly involved in the management of schools. Under the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management is the body charged with the direct governance of a school, and it is the Board of Management which employs the teachers at the school. Accordingly, whereas my Department provides funding and policy direction for schools, it does not have the power to instruct schools to follow a particular course of direction with regard to individual complaint cases. The Department's role is to provide clarity and guidance to parents about how their complaint can be progressed. It does not make judgment on individual complaints. The case which you reference is in a VEC school which is a statutory body that recruits, employs and pays its own staff. Accordingly, my Department does not have a direct role in this issue and officials in my Department are not in a position legally to intervene in the dispute in question. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children may independently investigate complaints relating to the administrative actions or non-actions of a school recognised by my Department, provided the parent has firstly and fully followed the school's complaints procedures. The key criterion for any intervention by the Ombudsman for Children is that the administrative actions or non-actions of a school has, or may have, adversely affected the child. If there are any child protection concerns, the person in question may wish to report the matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE), who have statutory responsibility for child protection. On the other hand, they may wish to report the matter to my Department, who will deal with it in accordance with its procedures. My officials have recently written to the HSE on the matter.

As the Deputy is probably aware, on 29th of January last, Minister Fitzgerald and I published the Action Plan on Bullying which sets out twelve actions to help prevent and tackle bullying

in primary and second level schools. As part of the Action Plan, new anti-bullying procedures for all primary and second level schools are currently in development in consultation with the education partners. These new procedures will include requirements for noting and reporting bullying incidents. These will be issued to all schools at the beginning of the next school year.

### **National Council for Special Education**

350. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of applications for low-incidence resource teaching hours received by the National Council for Special Education since the closing date for the last round of applications in March 2013; and when a determination on those applications is expected to be announced. [32098/13]

351. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of applications for special needs assistant support received by the National Council for Special Education since the closing date for the last round of applications in March 2013; and when a determination on those applications is expected to be announced. [32099/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 350 and 351 together.

The Deputy will be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support and Resource Teaching support for children with more complex low incidence special needs, as defined by my Department's Circular SP ED 02/05. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such supports.

All schools were advised to apply to the NCSE for resource teaching support for the 2013/14 school year by 15th March, 2013. The NCSE has now published details of all of their allocations for SNA and resource teaching support for the 2013/2014 school year. These details are available on the NCSE website, [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie), and indicate the allocations which have been made for each school on a per county basis. As the Deputy's questions refer to the total number of applications received by the NCSE for SNA and low incidence resource teaching hours prior to the due date of 15th March, 2013, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NCSE for their consideration and direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Assessments**

352. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the proportion of applications in each of the past five years for low-incidence resource teaching that were supported by assessments carried out by the National Educational Psychological Service and the proportion of these that were successful. [32100/13]

353. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the proportion of applications in each of the past five years for low-incidence resource teaching that were supported by assessments carried out under the scheme for the commissioning of psychological assessments and the proportion of these that were successful. [32101/13]

354. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the proportion of applications in each of the past five years for low-incidence resource teaching that were supported by assessments carried out privately and the proportion of these that were suc-

cessful. [32102/13]

355. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the proportion of applications in each of the past five years for the support of a special needs assistant that were supported by assessments carried out privately and the proportion of these that were successful. [32103/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 352 to 355, inclusive, together. 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 primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support and Resource Teaching support for children with more complex low incidence special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such supports. I can inform the Deputy that all primary and post primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA), full details of which are on the Department's website. Where a NEPS psychologist is not assigned to a school, authorities therein may access psychological assessments through SCPA. Under this scheme schools can have an assessment carried out by a member of the panel of private psychologists approved by NEPS, and NEPS will pay the psychologist the fees for this assessment directly. It should be noted that in common with many other psychological services, NEPS encourages a staged assessment process, whereby each school takes responsibility for a pupil's initial assessment, educational planning and remedial intervention. Only if there is a failure to make reasonable progress in spite of the school's best efforts, will a child be referred for individual psychological assessment. It is the responsibility of the school Principal in the first instance to identify and prioritise pupils for assessment under the process described above. The Deputy will be aware that some parents also acquire assessments for their children either privately, or through an assessment by the Health Service Executive. As all applications for SNA and low incidence resource teaching support are considered by the NCSE, I have referred the Deputy's question regarding the nature of the supporting assessments which have accompanied such applications for support to the NCSE, for their consideration and direct reply to the Deputy. The Deputy will be aware that the NCSE recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools. This policy advice is available on the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie). The policy advice concluded that children with special educational needs are well supported in schools. However, the NCSE also concluded that the current allocation system does not always provide all children with special educational needs with the same access to supports, as some children may be delayed in receiving supports due to difficulties in accessing an assessment for a diagnosis of disability which is needed to trigger additional teaching support for students with more complex disabilities. I have, therefore, as recommended by the Report, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group which will consider this issue and develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools.

### **Special Educational Needs Staffing**

356. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children in each of the past six years who have been assigned low incidence resource teaching. [32104/13]

358. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children in mainstream education in receipt of low incidence resource teaching and the number of teachers employed to provide the resource teaching. [32106/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 356 and 358 together.

The Deputy will be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including Resource Teaching support for children with more complex special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such supports.

I wish to advise the Deputy also that I have now authorised the NCSE to restore the level of resource teaching allocations which can be provided for students with special educational needs to the 2012/13 levels.

The NCSE has now published revised details of the Resource Teaching allocations for all schools, based on existing allocation levels. The NCSE has recently published comprehensive policy advice on Supporting Students Special Educational Needs in Schools, which contains detailed information regarding the number of pupils with special educational needs being supported in schools, and the number of pupils in receipt of additional supports by disability category. This report is available at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie). The report sets out that, in the 2012/13 school year, additional teaching resources were allocated to schools for 21,421 primary and 9,781 post primary students with low incidence special educational needs. 5,265 additional teaching posts were made available to the NCSE in 2012/13 for allocation in respect of pupils with low incidence special educational needs.

As applications for additional resource teaching support for children with low incidence disabilities are considered by the NCSE, I have referred the Deputy's question regarding the number of children who have been allocated additional resource teaching support for the past six years to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

In the longer term, it is proposed to develop new allocations system to improve how resources for children with special Educational needs are allocated to schools.

I have, as suggested in the NCSE policy advice on Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools, requested the NCSE to establish a Working Group to develop a proposal, for consideration, for a new allocation model for teaching supports for children with Special Educational Needs based on the profiled educational needs of children in schools.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

357. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children in mainstream, special class and special school settings in each of the past five years who have been assigned the support of a special needs assistant; and the number of special needs assistants deployed to support these children in each setting. [32105/13]

**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, including the allocation of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to schools. The NCSE operates within my Department's established criteria for

the allocation of Special Education supports and the staffing resources available to my Department.

The NCSE allocates a level of SNA support for each school annually taking into account the assessed care needs of all of the qualifying children enrolled in the school. SNAs are then deployed by schools in a manner which best meets the care support requirements of the children enrolled in the school for whom SNA support has been allocated. It is a matter for schools to allocate support as required, and on the basis of individual need, which allows schools flexibility in how the SNA support is utilised.

Some 10,575 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) SNA posts have been made available for allocation to schools by the NCSE for the coming school year, subject to qualifying applications being received. The number of SNA posts available for allocation has been maintained at a time when there has been a requirement to make savings across a range of expenditure areas.

The NCSE has allocated 10,490 SNA posts to schools for the 2013/14 school year, providing for access to SNA support for 22,000 pupils. The total number of SNA posts allocated to schools for the 2012/13 school year was 10,487 posts.

Details of the SNA allocations which have been made to schools by the NCSE for the 2013/2014 school year are now available on the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie), which provides details of the SNA allocations for each school on a school by school and per county basis.

As all applications for SNA support are considered by the NCSE, I have referred the Deputy's question regarding the number of children who have been assigned SNA support for the past five years to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

*Question No. 358 answered with Question No. 356.*

### **Special Educational Needs Staffing**

359. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children in special classes in primary schools and the number of teachers employed to teach them. [32107/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I wish to advise the Deputy that details of the special classes which are attached to mainstream schools at primary and post primary level are detailed on a county by county, and school by school basis, on the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

There are 495 special classes attached to mainstream primary schools in the current school year. At primary level, one teacher is allocated to each approved special class.

Details of any new special classes which will be opened for the 2013/14 school year will be detailed on the NCSE website once this has been finalised.

I wish to explain to the Deputy that pupil numbers vary in Special Classes on the basis of the disability categorisation of the special class, which ranges from a 6:1 to 11:1 pupil teacher ratio. It is not possible to provide an actual figure for enrolment levels in special classes, as class numbers can fluctuate throughout the school year as pupils enrol and leave special classes, while in some cases pupils are partially integrated between special and mainstream classes.

360. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the current staffing details of the inspectorate at both primary and post-primary level, including the numbers of inspectors at each grade in each business area. [32108/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** There are 123.3 whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff currently in the Inspectorate. There are 66.5 inspectors at inspector grade, 46.8 at senior/divisional grade, 8 at the grade of assistant chief inspector, 1 deputy chief inspector and 1 chief inspector. The 113.3 inspectors at inspector or senior/divisional grade include 57 primary inspectors, 54.3 post-primary Inspectors and 2 inspectors designated as primary/post-primary. The Chief Inspector and Deputy Chief Inspector are responsible for the overall management of the Inspectorate. 101.3 WTE staff are assigned to inspection and advisory services in five regional business units and 20 Inspectorate staff are assigned to policy work including evaluation support, self-evaluation, school improvement and curriculum and assessment policy.

### **Probationary Teachers**

361. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of primary teachers who applied to undergo probation during the last academic year; the number who were assigned an inspector; the number who completed the probation process successfully; the number who were deemed to need more time; and the number who were unsuccessful. [32109/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Preliminary figures for the 2012/2013 school year indicate that 2,421 applications to undergo probation were received from primary teachers. Some 91 applications were not eligible and the remaining 2,330 teachers were allocated to inspectors for one or two inspection visits in accordance with the probation circular. At the last update on 21st June 2013 the Inspectorate had completed 3,736 inspection visits to teachers on probation, representing 97% of the total number of inspection visits required; and the programme was on target to have all eligible teachers inspected before the end of the school year. Since the inspection programme has only just concluded information on the outcomes of the inspection visits is not yet available. A summary of the inspection outcomes, with validated figures, will be available within a few weeks and will be provided to the Deputy.

### **Schools Numbers**

362. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to introduce a database of primary school pupils. [32110/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The development of a database for all schools and colleges aided by my Department is vital to the provision of evidence-based data on progression of students through the system and, especially, to identify those at risk of dropping out or under-achieving. My Department has committed to the development of such a database in its Data Strategy 2008-2010. As part of the development of the Data Strategy consultations were carried out with many of my Department's agencies to discuss how data could best be collected and shared in a manner which reduces the overall administrative burden for the school and allows for the most efficient operation and provision of services to the pupil.

There have been a number of developments in recent years in the area of pupil data collection from post-primary schools. My Department is currently in the process of streamlining the post-primary returns process to allow for a live online system allowing for easy exchange of

information that reflects the up-to-date situation in regard to enrolment at any one time and to cut down on administrative burden and the scale of paper-based information flows across the Department and its associated agencies. This is currently in a pilot phase.

My Department has begun preliminary work on extension of this development to primary level schools. Once this is done, my Department will have access to an integrated live Learners database covering primary and post-primary level, which will allow for the effective monitoring of progression, and for enhanced policy planning using real-time data.

### **School Accommodation**

363. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when the inventory of school accommodation will be completed. [32111/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department provides an online inventory of school accommodation which is available for completion by schools on the Department's Esinet portal. The Inventory captures key data and statistics on the existing school building stock throughout the country at both primary and post-primary levels. To date approximately 80% of schools have completed or are in the process of completing the online inventory.

In tandem with this a pilot study was undertaken by my Department to develop an inventory of education infrastructure and related community assets in five areas in the country. The geographic areas included for the pilot study were Tuam, Navan, Clonmel, Portlaoise, and part of Limerick City.

The research information gathered from this pilot study was in a format compatible with current Department information systems, such as the Geographic Information System (GIS). This allows my Department to overlay the new information such as site maps, floor plans and other data on to its current GIS mapping system.

It is the intention that this expanded inventory data will now be developed on an incremental basis at a national level.

### **School Management**

364. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to allow schools to retain details of school attendance electronically. [32112/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department is currently streamlining the arrangements for the maintenance of school attendance records at primary level and will be publishing a circular in this regard in the coming days.

Preparatory work has also been commenced by my Department on the development of a primary online pupil database. My Department envisages starting a consultation process with the management bodies and relevant education partners in relation to this work in early Autumn 2013.

As the nature and scope of the primary pupil database project develops, further consideration will be given by my Department as to how electronic records systems at school level could in the future fit with the database. In this regard, my Department will also engage further with the relevant partners in relation to the minimum requirements relating to areas such as data

integrity, audit trails, data protection, oversight and other core system requirements which will need to be met by any such electronic systems.

### School Accommodation

365. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details, on a county basis, of rented school accommodation at primary level, including the annual rent. [32113/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** A list of Primary schools renting temporary accommodation on a county by county basis, is set out in the following table for the Deputy's attention.

#### Primary schools renting Temporary Accommodation - June 2013

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
040771*	St Brigids NS	Carlow	Pre-fab	€15,329.26
11135K	St Mary's NS	Carlow	Pre-fab	€24,752.48
16080N*	St Phadraig Naofa	Carlow	Pre-fab	€18,868.20
	St Phadraig Naofa	Carlow	Pre-fab	€18,868.20
17514C	Clonegal NS	Carlow	Pre-fab	€15,830.00
17994T	SN Fhoirtcheim	Carlow	Pre-fab	€14,710.80
	SN Fhoirtcheim	Carlow	Pre-fab	€3,517.80
18424G	St Joseph's NS	Carlow	Building	€9,636.03
20295K**	Carlow Educate Tog	Carlow	Land	€18,983.00
	Carlow Educate Tog	Carlow	Building	€63,960.00
20370V	Saplings School	Carlow	Pre-fab	€71,955.00
	Saplings School	Carlow	Building	€10,530.00
08453H*	Crubany NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€14,966.63
	Crubany NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€14,966.63
08490N	St Clare's PS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,949.40
	St. Clare's PS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,949.40
	St. Clare's PS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,949.40
16057S	Convent of Mercy NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€13,751.40
	Convent of Mercy NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€13,751.40
16083T	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,853.01
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,405.37
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€4,477.20
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€4,477.20
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€4,477.16
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€15,350.00

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€15,350.04
	St Mary's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€2,878.20
16959M	Curragh NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€2,761.16
17326B*	St Felim's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€12,202.62
17625L*	Knocktemple NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€31,340.40
18857O**	Carrigabruise NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€12,280.32
19439B	Holy Family NS	Cavan	Building	€60,500.00
19608V	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€13,469.97
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,598.71
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€5,082.64
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€16,598.71
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€13,124.59
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€14,103.18
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€14,103.18
	St Kilian's NS	Cavan	Pre-fab	€14,103.18
19871N	Scoil Naomh Pdraig	Cavan	Pre-fab	€4,466.91
20026G	GS Bhreifne	Cavan	Building+Land	€30,000.00
04919H*	St John's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€15,254.46
	St John's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
14757N	Scoil na Mainstreach	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
15301V*	Kildysart NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€5,180.76
	Kildysart NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€5,180.76
16186G*	Inch NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
16677C	CBS Bunscoil Inis Senior School	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,472.20
	CBS Bunscoil Inis Senior School	Clare	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	CBS Bunscoil Inis Senior School	Clare	Pre-fab	€3,280.00
	CBS Bunscoil Inis Senior School	Clare	Pre-fab	€8,789.17
	CBS Bunscoil Inis Senior School	Clare	Pre-fab	€3,280.00
16908S	Sixmilebridge NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,951.90

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Sixmilebridge NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Sixmilebridge NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Sixmilebridge NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Sixmilebridge NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€13,111.80
16946D*	Parteen NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€16,117.92
	Parteen NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
17583V**	Knockanean NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Knockanean NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Knockanean NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€9,785.88
	Knockanean NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€9,785.88
18639E	Ballynacally NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19274S*	St. Conaire's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St. Conaire's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St. Conaire's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19849U	GS Donncha Rua	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
	GS Donncha Rua	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
	GS Donncha Rua	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
	GS Donncha Rua	Clare	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
19999Q	GS Uí Choimín	Clare	Building	€25,297.95
20075T*	St. Mochulla's NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
20086B**	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€52,037.86
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€52,037.86
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Ennis Educate Together NS	Clare	Land	€29,692.00
20245S	Ennistymon National School	Clare	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
	Ennistymon National School	Clare	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
	Ennistymon National School	Clare	Pre-fab	€7,675.20
	Ennistymon National School	Clare	Pre-fab	€7,675.20
20312H	Raheen Wood Steiner NS	Clare	Building	€34,767.00
	Raheen Wood Steiner NS	Clare	Building	€8,858.00
20313J	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€9,360.00
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Land	€15,000.00
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Mol an Oige NS	Clare	Pre-fab	€5,468.58
01272O	Glandore NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,029.48
02114B*	Ballygiblin NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,256.96
04118T*	Bishop Ahern NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,763.37
07242M	Cloghroe NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Cloghroe NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€7,483.32
	Cloghroe NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Cloghroe NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€3,453.84
10047I	Macroon Convent NS (St Joseph's)	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,678.84
	Macroon Convent NS (St Joseph's)	Cork	Pre-fab	€33,793.81
	Macroon Convent NS (St Joseph's)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Macroon Convent NS (St Joseph's)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Macroom Convent NS (St Joseph's)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00
10523O	Fermoy Adair NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,624.52
10724B	South Abbey NS	Cork	Building	€71,000.00
	South Abbey NS	cork	Building	€21,280.00
11992I**	Whitegate Mixed NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Whitegate Mixed NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
12004A	Mallon No1 NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€7,771.14
12041G*	St. John the Baptist, Middleton NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€18,362.91
	St. John the Baptist, Middleton NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€18,362.91
12263B	Scoil Cnoc Gogáin	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,129.04
	Scoil Cnoc Gogáin	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,129.04
12473M	Scoil Mhuire na nGrós (Greenmount Monastery NS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Mhuire na nGrós (Greenmount Monastery NS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€22,446.91
	Scoil Mhuire na nGrós (Greenmount Monastery NS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€21,816.74
	Scoil Mhuire na nGrós (Greenmount Monastery NS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Mhuire na nGrós (Greenmount Monastery NS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€0.00
12505W	Kilbarry NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€3,338.71
13234W**	Cloughduv NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,739.48
	Cloughduv NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,867.48
13375R*	Scoil Bhríde	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,396.15

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Bhríde	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,396.15
	Scoil Bhríde	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
13512B*	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,088.26
	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,088.26
	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,088.26
	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,629.60
13728B	Castletownshend NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,603.41
	Castletownshend NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,865.17
13779S*	Dromahane NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,908.19
	Dromahane NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,329.60
13828F**	St. Columba's Boys NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€45,000.00
13889C	Shanbally NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,431.60
	Shanbally NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
14052V**	St Colmans BNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,369.15
14839P	Clondrohid NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,247.93
	Clondrohid NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	Clondrohid NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,735.10
15165Q	Ballintotas NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,710.80
	Ballintotas NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,710.80
15484J*	SN an Chroí Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,236.00
	SN an Chroí Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,953.71
	SN an Chroí Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,953.71
	SN an Chroí Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	SN an Chroí Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
15646J	Coomhala NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,116.80
15701O*	Bartlemy NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,949.40
15792U*	SN Naomh Micheál	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,076.20
16087E	Kealkil NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€20,787.00
	Kealkil NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,157.40
16271U**	Watergrasshill NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Watergrasshill NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€10,233.60
	Watergrasshill NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,193.00
16339F	St Joseph's NS	Cork		€3,038.10
17011W	St Mochomóg's NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,590.38
17103E**	Scoil Chlochair Mhuire	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,693.56
	Scoil Chlochair Mhuire	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,693.56
17152R	Knockskeagh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€20,787.00
17168J*	SN Inis Eoghain	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,797.00
17297U	St Fergal's NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
17360B*	SN Mhuire	Cork	Pre-fab	€18,420.48
	SN Mhuire	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
17505B*	Brooklodge NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,514.19
17533G	Rahan NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
	Rahan NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
	Rahan NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
17600S**	Scartleigh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€21,586.50
	Scartleigh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scartleigh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scartleigh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€3,517.80
	Scartleigh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€9,036.64
17609N**	Rathcormac NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,152.40
17804L	SN Cnoc Na Manach	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,476.79
17823P*	Glantane NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
17972J*	Killmurry NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,450.47
17993R*	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (B) (Glasheen BNS)	Cork	Pre-fab	€36,457.20
	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (B) (Glasheen BNS)	Cork	Pre-fab	
	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (B) (Glasheen BNS)	Cork	Pre-fab	
18000W**	Scoil Mhuire Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	Scoil Mhuire Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Mhuire Naofa	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
18128C	Scoil Mhuire NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
18217B	Scoil Padre Pio	Cork	Pre-fab	€47,970.00
	Scoil Padre Pio	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,233.64
	Scoil Padre Pio	Cork	Pre-fab	€16,233.64
18428O	Bailenóra NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€23,025.60
	Bailenóra NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,303.48
	Bailenóra NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€3,221.48
18468D*	St Mary's NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,076.20
18483W	School of the Divine Child	Cork	Pre-fab	€7,385.79
	School of the Divine Child	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,927.63
18535P*	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,541.92
	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,541.92
	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,076.20
	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,468.58
	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,509.20
	St John's GNS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,509.20
18829J	Summercove NS	Cork		€13,943.25
19256Q*	Scoil Ghobnatan	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
19351K	Cill Chriodain	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Cill Chriodain	Cork	Pre-fab	€11,798.79
	Cill Chriodain	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,376.42
19381T	Rathmore NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
19404F*	Scoil Mhuire SN	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,271.21
	Scoil Mhuire SN	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,305.78
19415K	Scoil an Athar Tadhg	Cork	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	Scoil an Athar Tadhg	Cork	Pre-fab	€42,505.78
	Scoil an Athar Tadhg	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,482.58
	Scoil an Athar Tadhg	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,678.27
	Scoil an Athar Tadhg	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,906.39
19557H	Caheragh NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,704.23
19760E*	Scoil Triest	Cork	Pre-fab	€54,685.80
	Scoil Triest	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,750.22
	Scoil Triest	Cork	Pre-fab	€2,750.22
19761G*	St Peter's NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€15,196.90

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
19801P	Drimoleague Junior School	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Drimoleague Junior School	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,468.58
19851H**	GS de Hide	Cork	Building	€7,500.00
19881Q**	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.22
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€18,548.40
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€10,918.13
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.22
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,357.96
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,357.96
	GS Charraig Uí Leighin	Cork	Pre-fab	€5,743.19
19909M	GS Pheig Sayers	Cork	Building	€65,311.98
19978I	Maulatrahane Central NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€1,768.46
19993E**	GS an Ghoirt Alainn	Cork	Land	€32,000.00
20006A**	GS Chloch na gCoillte	Cork	Building	€294,462.00
20025E	GS Droichead na Bannan	Cork	Building	€120,000.00
20049S	Ringaskiddy Lower Harbour NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,559.07
	Ringaskiddy Lower Harbour NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,589.02
	Ringaskiddy Lower Harbour NS	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,749.03
20074R	St Gabriel's Spec School	Cork	Building	€2,700.00
20106E**	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,413.59

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,413.59
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,160.74
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,160.74
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,160.74
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,160.74
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,160.74
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,112.58
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,112.58
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,112.58
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,112.58
	Scoil Niocláis	Cork	Pre-fab	€28,142.40
20107G**	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,070.79
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Building	€3,000.00
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,332.04
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€6,332.04
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€13,239.72
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Building	€95,850.00
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Building	€2,000.00
	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,662.25

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20151J	Gaelscoil Mhu-scraí	Cork	Building+Land	€110,700.00
20204E	Kilworth National School	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
20222G*	Scoil Chuil-Aodha/Barr dInse	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
20239A	Gaelscoil Ui Drisceoil	Cork	Building	€242,568.30
	Gaelscoil Ui Drisceoil	Cork	Building	€67,809.90
	Gaelscoil Ui Drisceoil	Cork	Pre-fab	€12,202.41
20265B	Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile	Cork	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile	Cork	Land	€66,420.00
	Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,625.00
	Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile	Cork	Pre-fab	€4,875.00
20310D**	Carrigaline Ed Tog NS	Cork	Building	€39,360.00
	Carrigaline Ed Tog NS	Cork	Building	€61,500.00
20335T**	Scoil Phádraig Naofa	Cork	Building	€22,000.00
20336V**	Midleton Educate Together NS	Cork	Building	€30,750.00
20354A**	Cara Jnr School	Cork	Building	€61,000.00
	Cara Jnr School	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,000.00
	Cara Jnr School	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,000.00
	Cara Jnr School	Cork	Pre-fab	€14,000.00
11843O*	Niall Mor NS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,678.82
12077E	Scoil Naomh Fiachra	Donegal	Pre-fab	€13,239.72
	Scoil Naomh Fiachra	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,936.43
	Scoil Naomh Fiachra	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,937.35
	Scoil Naomh Fiachra	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,937.35
16672P**	Lurgybrack NS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,943.36

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
16821G*	St Patricks GNS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€25,961.37
16903I	Faugher NS	Donegal	Building	€9,514.71
17728V*	SN Talamh na Coitle	Donegal	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
18625Q	Scoil Cholmcille	Donegal	Pre-fab	€13,431.40
	Scoil Cholmcille	Donegal	Pre-fab	€13,431.39
19313C	Glenswilly NS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€16,117.92
	Glenswilly NS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,289.20
	Glenswilly NS	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,289.21
19724A**	Little Angels Special School	Donegal	Pre-fab	€20,723.04
19967D	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Iosagain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19971R**	Gaelscoil Ad-hamhnain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€40,928.50
	Gaelscoil Ad-hamhnain	Donegal	Pre-fab	€12,525.09
20097G	Gaelscoil Bhun Chranncha	Donegal	Building	€73,594.58
	Gaelscoil Bhun Chranncha	Donegal	Building	€16,200.00
	Gaelscoil Bhun Chranncha	Donegal	Building	€15,862.89
20144M	Gaelscoil Chois Feabhail	Donegal	Building+Land	€54,000.00
20167B	Gaelscoil Eirne	Donegal	Building+Land	€46,800.00
20235P**	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,332.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,099.60
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,247.20
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€3,173.40
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€19,427.85
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€19,427.85

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€55,350.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Land	€95,000.00
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€38,855.70
	Letterkenny Educate Together	Donegal	Pre-fab	€10,332.00
00752A	Central Model Senior Mixed NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,571.76
01170G*	Naul National School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,584.98
	Naul National School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,389.98
	Naul National School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,194.99
01795A	Central Model Infants School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,016.96
	Central Model Infants School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,704.37
	Central Model Infants School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,704.37
03359N*	Ballyroan Boys NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€1,887.60
06200O*	St Mary's BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,741.30
07546J	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,011.63

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
11583O	St. Andrew's NS	Dublin	Building	€7,346.45
	St Andrew's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,959.37
	St Andrew's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,959.37
	St Andrew's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,959.37
14180H	Holmpatrick NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
14463T	St Columba's NS	Dublin	Building	€12,000.00
16333Q	St. Patricks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,468.58
	St. Patricks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,468.58
16461C**	St Finian's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€33,962.76
	St Finian's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Finian's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
16972E*	SS Peter & Paul JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	SS Peter & Paul JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	SS Peter & Paul JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,103.18
17055T**	Scoil Naomh Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,152.40
	Scoil Naomh Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Scoil Naomh Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Scoil Naomh Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
17083B*	Scoil Mhuire gan Smal	Dublin	Pre-fab	€3,532.34
17472M	Hedgestown NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,320.92
17569E	St Oliver Plunkett NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Oliver Plunkett NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,873.77
17912O	St John Boscoss SBS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,450.47
	St John Boscoss SBS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,944.73
	St John Boscoss SBS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,296.50
	St John Boscoss SBS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,296.50
	St John Boscoss SBS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,296.50
17953F*	Edmondstown NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,477.20

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
17961E**	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,728.04
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,728.04
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,848.87
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,848.87
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,359.26
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,359.26
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,359.26
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€2,631.78
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€2,631.78
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€2,631.78
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€2,631.78
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,051.55
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,051.55
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,051.55
17961E	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,727.43
	Lusk NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,727.42
17978V	Naiscoil Ide	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,696.60
	Naiscoil Ide	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,696.60
18046A**	Scoil Bhríde BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,030.60
	Scoil Bhríde BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,030.60
	Scoil Bhríde BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,054.89
18047C**	Scoil Bhríde GNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,924.16
	Scoil Bhríde GNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scoil Bhríde GNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scoil Bhríde GNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,832.60
18210K	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.84
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.84
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.84
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.84

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.85
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.85
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.85
	St Michaels House Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,440.85
18386B*	Marist NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€3,198.00
	Marist NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€3,198.00
18411U*	St Marys NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,795.71
	St Marys NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,899.25
	St Marys NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,899.25
18632N	SN Eoin Bosco	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
18671A	St Michaels House	Dublin	Building	€140,000.00
18763F	St Michaels Special NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€41,574.00
	St Michaels Special NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Michaels Special NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
18778S	St. Mochta's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,081.01
	St. Mochta's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,081.01
	St. Mochta's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,081.03
18815V	Our Lady of Lourds	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,254.46
18976W*	St Colmcilles BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€7,437.58
	St Colmcilles BNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,116.33
19001G	Ballyboughal NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
19066L*	Loreto Primary	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,706.61
19220S*	Scoil Ide	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
	Scoil Ide	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
19221U	Scoil Aine	Dublin	Pre-fab	€24,944.40
	Scoil Aine	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Aine	Dublin	Pre-fab	€3,654.42
19259W	St. Patricks GNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€48,743.13

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
19281P	Mater Special School	Dublin	Building	€45,000.00
19390U	St. Marks SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
19435Q*	St Francis Xavier JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,390.96
	St Francis Xavier JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,376.26
	St Francis Xavier JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Francis Xavier JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€22,449.96
19462T	Scoil Maelruain Junior	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
19470S	St Francis Xavier SNR	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,966.64
19472W*	St Marks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€37,374.52
	St Marks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Marks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Marks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€16,976.81
	St Marks JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€16,976.81
19474D	St Colmcille's JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,177.00
	St Colmcille's JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,177.00
19509T/19510E	Talbot SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Talbot SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Talbot SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
19515O*	St. Teresa's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,946.93
	St. Teresa's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,946.93
	St. Teresa's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,946.93
	St. Teresa's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,946.92
19535U	St Cronan's SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Cronan's SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Cronan's SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€31,660.20
	St Cronan's SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,687.46
	St Cronan's SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,687.46
19574H	Divine Word NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€18,996.12
	Divine Word NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19594N	St Pauls Youth Encounter Project	Dublin	Building	€6,394.00
19605P	Scoil Mhuire JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,694.71
19624T**	St Catherine's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,417.65

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Catherine's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€54,366.00
	St Catherine's NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€39,644.13
19625V	Scoil Realt na Mara	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,605.12
	Scoil Realt na Mara	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,605.12
	Scoil Realt na Mara	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,605.12
19628E	St. Fiachra's Senior NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
	St. Fiachra's Senior NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
	St. Fiachra's Senior NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
19652B*	Sacred Heart NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€26,974.20
19660A	Rush NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,192.41
	Rush NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,937.16
	Rush NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,304.77
	Rush NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€11,304.77
19662E	St Michael's Primary School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€20,467.20
19676P	Scoil Aine Naofa	Dublin	Pre-fab	€22,386.00
	Scoil Aine Naofa	Dublin	Pre-fab	€22,386.00
19757P**	St Michaels Special NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€28,782.00
19782O	St Brigids JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	St Brigids JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€7,035.60
	St Brigids JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€7,035.60
	St Brigids JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	St Brigids JNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
19817H**	Scoil Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,066.46
	Scoil Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scoil Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Scoil Mhuire	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,300.00
19834H	St Aidans NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	St Aidans NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	St Aidans NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	St Aidans NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
19877C	Holy Family SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€5,180.76
	Holy Family SNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,600.30

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
19878E**	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,027.90
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,027.90
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,317.49
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,450.47
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,450.47
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,284.15
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,284.15
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,284.15
	Holy Rosary PS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,284.15
19907I*	Gaelscoil Molo-ga	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,710.84
19926M**	Gaelscoil Cholaiste Mhuire	Dublin	Building+Land	€328,227.20
19949B	Muslim NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,354.85
19991A	Ghaelscoil na Camoige	Dublin	Building	€62,000.00
20012S**	Griffith Barracks Multi D School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,977.70
	Griffith Barracks Multi D School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€15,977.70
20021T	Henrietta St School	Dublin	Building	€13,973.12
20028K**	Setanta Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,616.24
	Setanta Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,616.23
	Setanta Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,616.23
	Setanta Special School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€21,616.23
20043G	Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna	Dublin	Pre-fab	€3,198.06
20047O**	Gaelscoil Bharra	Dublin	Land	€4,800.00
	Gaelscoil Bharra	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,933.20
	Gaelscoil Bharra	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,212.11
20103V	John Scottus NS	Dublin	Building	€38,092.14
20139T**	Inchicore NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€10,275.89
	Inchicore NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,157.40
	Inchicore NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€4,157.40
20152L**	North Dublin Muslim School	Dublin	Building	€113,436.00
	North Dublin Muslim School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€53,144.95

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	North Dublin Muslim School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	North Dublin Muslim School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	North Dublin Muslim School	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,141.28
20168D**	Glasnevin Educate Together NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€12,844.86
	Glasnevin Educate Together NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€16,629.60
20190T**	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€31,980.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€28,142.10
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,808.22
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,808.23
	Holly Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€45,379.62
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,987.50
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€19,987.50
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,698.04
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,698.04
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,698.04
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€7,540.00
	Holy Trinity NS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€7,540.00
20220C	Gs Ui hEarcain	Dublin	Building	€100,000.00
20304I**	St Francis of Assisi	Dublin	Land	€92,250.00
	St. Francis of Assisi	Dublin	Pre-fab	€538,740.00
20308Q**	Belmayne ETNS	Dublin	Land	€92,250.00
	Belmayne ETNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€538,740.00
20334R**	Gaelscoil Ros Eo	Dublin	Pre-fab	€13,814.63
	Gaelscoil Ros Eo	Dublin	Land	€12,350.00
	Gaelscoil Ros Eo	Dublin	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Gaelscoil Ros Eo	Dublin	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
20372C	ABA Facility (Saplings)	Dublin	Building	€60,000.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20375I	Abacus	Dublin	Building	€15,300.00
20378O	St Kevins (Abacus Unit)	Dublin	Building	€15,300.00
20381D	Red Door Learning Centre	Dublin	Building	€58,000.00
20401G	Stepaside ETNS	Dublin	Pre-fab	€8,000.00
03607G	Leitrim NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,693.35
04506F	Oranmore BNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€16,693.56
	Oranmore BNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€15,542.28
	Oranmore BNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€20,147.40
	Oranmore BNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€17,096.51
05754G**	SN Chreachmhaoil	Galway	Pre-fab	€15,254.46
	SN Chreachmhaoil	Galway	Pre-fab	€15,254.46
	SN Chreachmhaoil	Galway	Pre-fab	€4,317.30
07551C*	Ballinderreen NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€21,759.19
09833W	Lettergesh NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€2,558.22
10095T	Scoil Naomh Treasa	Galway	Pre-fab	€4,892.94
12954F	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€17,831.19
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€5,194.41
13208V	Convent Primary School	Galway	Pre-fab	€17,844.84
	Convent Primary School	Galway	Pre-fab	€5,535.00
13365O	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€18,804.24
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€18,804.24
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€18,804.24
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
15228O	Corgary NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€2,923.69
16293H	Kilrickle NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€4,374.86
16804G*	SN Chlair na Gaillimhe	Galway	Pre-fab	€16,117.83
	SN Chlair na Gaillimhe	Galway	Pre-fab	€16,117.83
17444H	Scoil Seosaimh NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€4,157.40
	Scoil Seosaimh NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€14,710.19

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
17613E	Scoil Chaitriona Naofa	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,937.16
	Scoil Chaitriona Naofa	Galway	Pre-fab	€8,039.78
17655U	SN Caladh na Muc	Galway	Pre-fab	€7,035.60
17668G**	Scoil na bhForbacha	Galway	Pre-fab	€11,340.11
17759J**	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,204.00
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€11,577.28
17782E	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€29,357.64
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Bhride	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
18089S	Scoil Mhuire an Gharran	Galway	Pre-fab	€3,248.52
18112K	Scoil Eanna	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,663.71
	Scoil Eanna	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	Scoil Eanna	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,663.71
	Scoil Eanna	Galway	Land	€108.90
19567K	St Anne's School	Galway	Building	€30,495.78
19803T*	Scoil Sheamais Naofa	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,204.39
19965W	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Mhuire	Galway	Pre-fab	€9,210.24
19994G	GS Mhic Amhlaigh	Galway	Pre-fab	€26,312.86
	GS Mhic Amhlaigh	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
	GS Mhic Amhlaigh	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
19996K*	St Brendan's NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€21,586.50
19998O**	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,907.68
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,360.97
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,493.38
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,493.39
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€3,338.70
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,634.88
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,634.88
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,634.88
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,634.88
	GS De hIde	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,634.90

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	GS De hÍde	Galway	Building+Land	€62,640.00
	GS De hÍde	Galway	Building	€5,184.00
	GS De hÍde	Galway	Pre-fab	€7,419.36
20000L**	Galway Educate Together	Galway	Pre-fab	€19,336.92
	Galway Educate Together	Galway	Pre-fab	€19,336.92
20042E	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€2,865.90
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€46,051.20
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil an Chroí Naofa Ballinasloe	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
20061I**	GS Iarfhiltha	Galway	Building	€65,000.00
20070J	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€30,286.28
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€43,143.03
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,951.90
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€5,200.84
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,384.13
	Rosedale School	Galway	Pre-fab	€3,033.14
20123E**	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Galway	Pre-fab	€20,466.79
	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Galway	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Galway	Pre-fab	€9,221.95
	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Galway	Pre-fab	€9,752.58
	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Galway	Land	€100,440.00

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20199O**	Oughterard NS	Galway	Pre-fab	€7,308.73
20211B**	Claregalway ETNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Claregalway ETNS	Galway	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Claregalway ETNS	Galway	Building+Land	€43,500.00
20237T**	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€17,173.99
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€11,167.39
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€23,313.42
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€9,037.55
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€9,037.55
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Building	€7,195.50
	Gaelscoil Riada	Galway	Pre-fab	€22,386.00
20264W	GS na bhFili	Galway	Building	€29,276.03
20280U	Newtown National School	Galway	Pre-fab	€10,000.00
20326S	Kilcolgan Educate Together	Galway	Pre-fab	€12,915.00
	Kilcolgan Educate Together	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,150.00
	Kilcolgan Educate Together	Galway	Pre-fab	€6,150.00
	Kilcolgan Educate Together	Galway	Building	€99,630.00
	Kilcolgan Educate Together	Galway	Building	€14,071.20
20328W	St Teresa's Sp School	Galway	Building	€14,071.16
	St Teresa's Sp School	Galway	Building	€39,045.08
20350P	Merlin Woods Primary School	Galway	Land	€13,000.00
20371A	Abalta School	Galway	Building	€45,500.04
03132I*	Sliabh A'Mhadra NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,233.60
07841L	Kilgobnet N S	Kerry	Pre-fab	€4,228.76
13615L*	Scoil Eoin	Kerry	Pre-fab	€3,939.93
15592M	Scoil Cheann Tra	Kerry	Pre-fab	€4,157.40
16898S**	SN Breandan Naofa	Kerry	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
17231N	Kilcummin NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€11,832.60
17915U	Killahan NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€6,396.00
18247K	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	CBS Tralee	Kerry	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
19448C	Scoil Realt na Mara	Kerry	Pre-fab	€3,914.35
19487M	Holy Cross Mercy NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€12,663.71
19512I**	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€14,678.82
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€7,339.41
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€7,339.41
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€16,549.65
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€16,549.65
	St Oliver's NS	Kerry	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
19547E	St Francis Spec School	Kerry	Pre-fab	€25,584.00
19986H	Scoil Naomh Eoin Baiste	Kerry	Building	€2,673.00
20013U	Gaelscoil Lios Tuathail	Kerry	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
20158A	Tralee ETNS	Kerry	Building+Land	€71,235.00
20229U**	Nagle Rice National School	Kerry	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
08099P*	St. Laurences N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€7,483.18
	St. Laurences N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€7,483.18
12747A*	Scoil na Main-istream De La Salle	Kildare	Pre-fab	€25,903.80
15040T	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€31,660.20
	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,038.43
	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€4,692.25

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Mercy Convent Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€7,067.28
15599D*	St. Brigid's Primary School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€14,678.82
16706G**	St Joseph B.N.S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€24,752.48
	St Josephs BNS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs BNS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Joseph B.N.S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€15,254.03
	St Joseph B.N.S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Joseph B.N.S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€23,025.60
	St Joseph B.N.S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
16707I*	St Peter's BNS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,088.56
	St Peter's BNS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€3,454.16
16845U*	St Mochuo's N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€13,296.20
	St Mochuo's N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€8,634.73
	St Mochuo's N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€8,634.73
	St Mochuo's N S	Kildare	Pre-fab	€8,634.74
17254C	St Corbans	Kildare	Pre-fab	€4,029.48
	St Corbans	Kildare	Pre-fab	€22,737.41
	St Corbans	Kildare	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Corbans	Kildare	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
17968S*	Two Mile House NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
	Two Mile House NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€2,686.32
	Two Mile House NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€14,618.25
18288B**	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,210.54
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,210.55
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€17,988.75
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€17,988.75
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€17,988.75
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€17,988.75
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€11,512.84
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€10,649.34
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€10,649.34

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Mhichil Naofa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€8,634.60
18449W	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€18,995.87
	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€18,995.87
	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€10,936.83
	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€11,117.60
	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€5,851.76
	St. Conleth's NS	Kildare	Pre-fab	€11,117.60
18515J	Scoil an Lenbh Iosa	Kildare	Pre-fab	€20,467.20
18988G	St. Raphael's Special School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€14,102.95
	St. Raphael's Special School	Kildare	Pre-fab	€15,254.64
19675N**	Scoil Bhride	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,600.12
	Scoil Bhride	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,792.04
	Scoil Bhride	Kildare	Pre-fab	€12,792.04
	Scoil Bhride	Kildare	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
19796C**	Scoil Phadraig	Kildare	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
	Scoil Phadraig	Kildare	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Phadraig	Kildare	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
20257C**	St Patrick's NS	Kildare	Building	€55,000.00
20376K	Saplings Special School	Kildare	Building	€10,000.00
00788V*	Lisdowney NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€3,454.16
01300Q*	St Michael's NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€2,706.00
16875G*	St Patricks NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€11,544.72
17093E*	St Brendans NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€14,218.19
17108O*	St Johns Junior NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€24,177.12
18660S*	St Nicholas NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€3,573.10
19344N	St Aidans NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€12,663.91
19626A	St Canices Co-Ed NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€11,184.00
	St Canices Co-Ed NS	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€11,184.00
19856R*	Gaelscoil Osraí	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€12,031.13
	Gaelscoil Osraí	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€12,031.13

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Gaelscoil Osraí	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€10,937.17
	Gaelscoil Osraí	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€10,937.17
	Gaelscoil Osraí	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€10,937.17
20132F	High Support Special School	Kilkenny	Building	€540.00
	High Support Special School	Kilkenny	Building	€8,460.00
20255V**	Bunscoil McAuley Rice	Kilkenny	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
20380B	Jonah Special School	Kilkenny	Building	€13,296.00
01556F	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€17,589.00
07183W*	St Josephs GNS	Laois	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Josephs GNS	Laois	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
12231L	Rushall NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€4,812.84
13741Q*	Rath NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€48,033.96
14838N	Maryboro NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
15446B	Gaelscoil Thromaire	Laois	Pre-fab	€14,380.84
17557U	St Abbans NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
	St Abbans NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€3,837.60
18150S	Scoil an Fraoich Mhoir	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,431.60
	Scoil an Fraoich Mhoir	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,431.60
	Scoil an Fraoich Mhoir	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,431.60
18547W	Faolan Naofa NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€4,285.32
	Faolan Naofa NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€6,396.00
18828H	St Pauls Primary	Laois	Pre-fab	€18,068.70
	St Pauls Primary	Laois	Pre-fab	€18,068.70
	St Pauls Primary	Laois	Pre-fab	€18,068.70
	St Pauls Primary	Laois	Pre-fab	€18,068.70
	St Pauls Primary	Laois	Pre-fab	€18,868.20
19747M**	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€13,815.36

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Bhride NS	Laois	Pre-fab	€44,899.92
20224K	Gaelscoil an tSli Dala	Laois	Pre-fab	€12,152.40
	Gaelscoil an tSli Dala	Laois	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
20347D**	Portlaoise Educate Together NS	Laois	Building	€25,000.00
16474L*	St. Mary's NS	Leitrim	Pre-fab	€4,317.30
17233R*	St Clare's NS	Leitrim	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
20212D**	Gaelscoil Liatroma	Leitrim	Land	€14,850.00
20260O	Gaelscoil Chluainin	Leitrim	Building	€69,950.10
02007A	Cronagh National School Rathleale	Limerick	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
06539H*	Knockea NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
07857D	Killinure NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€4,377.08
09296W	Our Ladys Abbey NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
11422N*	Mahoonagh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€15,030.60
16443A*	Scoil Phádraig Naofa Buachaillí	Limerick	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
16712B	Scoil Naomh Iosaf	Limerick	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
17937H	Monaleen NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,896.56
	Monaleen NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€39,015.00
18161A	Castleconnell NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
	Castleconnell NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
18177P	St Annes Primary	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,693.95
	St Annes Primary	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,693.95
	St Annes Primary	Limerick	Pre-fab	€3,655.60
18426K*	Scoil Ide Naofa	Limerick	Pre-fab	€4,477.20
18653V	St Josephs BNS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,700.16
18692I*	Catherine McAuley School. (SS)	Limerick	Pre-fab	€27,183.00
19336O	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€18,164.64
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€18,164.64
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€17,098.42

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€18,236.53
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€10,872.79
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€10,872.80
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€5,436.60
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€7,675.20
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€6,604.35
	St Pauls NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€6,604.35
19475F	St Brigids NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€13,093.35
	St Brigids NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€13,093.35
19956V	Gaelscoil Sairseal	Limerick	Building	€127,000.00
	Gaelscoil Sairseal	Limerick	Building	€46,200.00
	Gaelscoil Sairseal	Limerick	Building	€2,400.00
20148U**	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€4,432.43
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€12,951.90
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€12,767.32
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Pre-fab	€12,767.32
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick	Land	€15,000.00
	Gaelscoil Chalahadh an Treoigh	Limerick		€10,000.00
20175A**	Limerick East Educate Together NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€16,580.00
	Limerick East Educate Together NS	Limerick	Pre-fab	€16,580.00
	Limerick East Educate Together NS	Limerick	Building	€72,650.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Limerick East Educate Together NS	Limerick		€16,580.00
20181S**	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€19,827.60
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€11,193.00
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€25,584.00
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Building+Land	€52,000.00
	Gaelscoil an Raithin	Limerick	Pre-fab	€3,198.00
00860D	Forgney NS	Longford	Land	€11,400.00
19429V**	St. Christopher's Special School	Longford	Building	€24,000.00
20083S**	Gaelscoil Longfoirt	Longford	Land	€20,004.00
20124G**	St Marys NS	Longford	Building	€30,000.00
	St Marys NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Marys NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Marys NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€15,830.10
	St Marys NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€34,480.83
	St Marys NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€33,210.00
20128O**	St Matthews NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€11,832.40
	St Matthews NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
	St Matthews NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
	St Matthews NS	Longford	Pre-fab	€10,553.40
00851C	Presentation Primary School	Louth	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
14651U	Castletown GNS	Louth	Pre-fab	€18,420.48
15259C*	St Malachys Girls Sch	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,472.20
	St Malachys Girls Sch	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,472.20
	St Malachys Girls Sch	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,472.20
16208N	Termonfeckin Mixed NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€13,431.60
	Termonfeckin Mixed NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€13,431.60

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
17059E*	Iosaif na mBraithre	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
17195M**	CBS Primary Dundalk	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,593.55
	CBS Primary Dundalk	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	CBS Primary Dundalk	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
18101F	Rampark NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€13,900.75
18148I*	Scoil Bhride Lann Leire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,006.00
	Scoil Bhride Lann Leire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,005.23
18504E*	St Malachys Boys	Louth	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	St Malachys Boys	Louth	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
18635T	St Buite's NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	St Buite's NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,990.00
19215C	SN Ard Mhuire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,030.60
	SN Ard Mhuire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,030.60
	SN Ard Mhuire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,612.51
	SN Ard Mhuire	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,612.51
19223B*	SN Padraig Naofa	Louth	Pre-fab	€18,203.01
	SN Padraig Naofa	Louth	Pre-fab	€18,203.01
19479N	St. John's NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€32,523.29
	St. John's NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€35,689.72
19673J**	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€103,327.38
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Josephs NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€0.00
19678T	St Pauls Senior NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	St Pauls Senior NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	St Pauls Senior NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	St Pauls Senior NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€17,269.20

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Pauls Senior NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
20171P**	Ardee Educate Together NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€13,500.00
	Ardee Educate Together NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€12,951.90
	Ardee Educate Together NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€15,040.12
	Ardee Educate Together NS	Louth	Building+Land	€15,000.00
20259G**	St Francis NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€8,954.40
	St Francis NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€8,954.40
	St Francis NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	St Francis NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€16,629.60
	St Francis NS	Louth	Pre-fab	€16,629.60
	St Francis NS	Louth	Building	€2,600.00
20339E	Realt na Mara School	Louth	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
20374G	ABA Facility	Louth	Building	€45,000.00
17856H*	Scoil Naomh Mhuire	Louth	Pre-fab	€14,471.60
04796R	Brackloon NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€12,951.90
	Brackloon NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€13,527.54
	Brackloon NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€1,827.30
07054L*	Scoil Naomh Bríd	Mayo	Pre-fab	€10,937.34
	Scoil Naomh Bríd	Mayo	Pre-fab	€10,937.34
	Scoil Naomh Bríd	Mayo	Pre-fab	€11,291.67
	Scoil Naomh Bríd	Mayo	Pre-fab	€11,291.67
11725I*	Behymore NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Behymore NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Behymore NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,878.20
13659I	Bekan NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
13758K	Templemary NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,238.60
13945J	Eskeragh NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€1,842.05
14400S*	Richmond NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€3,166.02
15539I	St Johns NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
16170O	Cloghans NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,187.43
16173U	Kinaffe Ns	Mayo	Pre-fab	€3,741.66
16911H	Lahardane NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,014.56
18070U*	Muire Gan Smal	Mayo	Pre-fab	€25,328.16

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Muire Gan Smal	Mayo	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Muire Gan Smal	Mayo	Pre-fab	€0.00
18145C	St Tiernans NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19375B**	St Brid's Spec NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€3,165.47
	St Brid's Spec NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,302.74
	St Brid's Spec NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€6,907.68
19402B*	Ballyvary Central NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,014.74
	Ballyvary Central NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€2,014.74
19451O	Holy Family NS	Mayo	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
20084U	Scoil na gCeithre Maol	Mayo	Building	€55,800.00
00883P*	St Annes	Meath	Pre-fab	€5,278.59
01309L*	St Patricks NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,806.41
02905J	SN Naomh Padraig	Meath	Pre-fab	€10,937.16
05630L	St Michaels NS Trim	Meath	Pre-fab	€29,421.60
11039O*	Kilbeg NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€5,278.59
15104T*	Scoil Bhride	Meath	Pre-fab	€8,771.02
	Scoil Bhride	Meath	Pre-fab	€8,771.03
17520U*	Robinstown NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€20,910.00
	Robinstown NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€21,771.00
17623H**	O'Growney NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€16,949.40
	O'Growney NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,959.27
	O'Growney NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,959.27
	O'Growney NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
17705J**	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€11,193.00
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,670.20
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,350.40
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,152.40
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,071.20
	Whitecross Primary School	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,071.20

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
17839H**	Duleek BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Duleek BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
	Duleek BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€17,908.80
17840P**	Scoil Bhainin Naofa/Duleek GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
	Scoil Bhainin Naofa/Duleek GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€13,815.36
18448U*	Rathbeggan NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€18,868.20
18762D**	Realt na Mara BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€18,228.60
	Realt na Mara BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,587.96
	Realt na Mara BNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,587.96
18767N**	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,231.25
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,231.25
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,311.05
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,311.05
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,311.05
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,311.05
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,311.05
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,190.50
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,190.50
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,190.50
	Realt na Mara GNS	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,190.50
19560T**	Saint Marys Special School	Meath	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	Saint Marys Special School	Meath	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
19768U	St Marys NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
20051F	Gaelscoil na Boinne	Meath	Building	€162,000.00
20082Q	Gaelscoil Thu-lach na nOg	Meath	Pre-fab	€15,369.59

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Gaelscoil Thu-lach na nOg	Meath	Building	€124,338.24
20164S**	Navan Educate Together NS	Meath	Building	€92,250.00
	Navan Educate Together NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,894.34
	Navan Educate Together NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,894.34
	Navan Educate Together NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,894.34
	Navan Educate Together NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,894.32
20179I**	St. Stephen's National School	Meath	Pre-fab	€38,376.00
	St. Stephen's National School	Meath	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
20191V	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€16,299.96
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,782.16
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,782.16
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,782.16
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,546.00
	St Peters National School, Church Of Ireland	Meath	Pre-fab	€12,546.00
20352T	Ard Ri Community NS	Meath	Building	€64,575.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20379Q	Stepping Stones Special School	Meath	Building	€49,000.00
20382F**	Gaelscoil na Mí	Meath	Building	€24,176.88
	Gaelscoil na Mí	Meath	Land	€16,000.00
19486K	St. Declan's NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€9,281.58
20352T	Ard Ri Community NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€63,960.00
20396Q	Ashbourne Educate Together NS	Meath	Land	€18,000.00
	Ashbourne Educate Together NS	Meath	Pre-fab	€63,320.40
15142E	Donaghmoyné NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€2,878.20
16769H*	Latnamard NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€17,589.00
16923O*	SN iorball Si-onnaigh	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€12,472.20
16954C	St Michaels NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€5,756.40
17099Q	St. Josephs NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€15,730.00
	St. Josephs NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St. Josephs NS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€0.00
17686I*	Scoil Mhuire BNS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€20,296.14
	Scoil Mhuire BNS	Monaghan	Pre-fab	€14,242.26
20055N	GS Eois	Monaghan	Building	€14,400.00
20327U	Gaelscoil Lorgan	Monaghan	Building	€47,327.55
07949I*	Oxmantown NS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
16928B	St. Philomena's NS	Offaly	Building	€1,360.00
17827A**	St Patrick's NS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€16,789.50
	St Patrick's NS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€16,789.50
	St Patrick's NS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€14,678.82
	St Patrick's NS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€0.00
18364O	Scoil Muire Banrion	Offaly	Pre-fab	€17,154.07
18406E	St Francis BNS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€16,705.26
18797W	SN Naomh Iosef	Offaly	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
	SN Naomh Iosef	Offaly	Pre-fab	€9,594.00
20099K	Offaly School of Special Education	Offaly	Building	€33,000.00
20267F**	Scoil Bhríde PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€79,822.08
	Scoil Bhríde PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€32,575.00
	Scoil Bhríde PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€31,993.20

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Scoil Bhride PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€15,788.00
	Scoil Bhride PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€20,137.00
	Scoil Bhride PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€14,525.00
	Scoil Bhride PS	Offaly	Land	€46,946.64
	Scoil Bhride PS	Offaly	Pre-fab	€33,662.20
20332N**	Gaelscoil Eadan Doire	Offaly	Building	€1,440.00
	Gaelscoil Eadan Doire	Offaly	Building	€48,000.00
	Gaelscoil Eadan Doire	Offaly	Building	€34,000.00
	Gaelscoil Eadan Doire	Offaly	Building	€14,000.00
14356S*	Lisaniskey NS	Roscommon	Pre-fab	€3,684.09
16816N	Attyrory NS	Roscommon	Pre-fab	€2,302.56
17266J	St. Mary's NS	Roscommon	Pre-fab	€2,878.20
18395C	Cloonakilla NS	Roscommon	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
19789F	St. Michaels School	Roscommon	Building	€7,849.64
20126K	GS De hIde	Roscommon	Building	€90,840.00
14636B	Scoil Naomh Eanna	Sligo	Pre-fab	€6,907.68
18053U	Sooeey NS	Sligo	Pre-fab	€2,878.20
18298E	Culfadda NS	Sligo	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
18575E*	Scoil Naomh Molaise	Sligo	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Naomh Molaise	Sligo	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
	Scoil Naomh Molaise	Sligo	Pre-fab	€10,361.52
	Scoil Naomh Molaise	Sligo	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
18979F*	Scoil Ursula	Sligo	Pre-fab	€16,405.55
	Scoil Ursula	Sligo	Pre-fab	€16,405.56
20044I	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€33,099.30
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€0.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€15,542.28
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Pre-fab	€12,088.44
	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re	Sligo	Building+Land	€66,099.79
00590A	Borrisoleigh BNS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€3,645.72
01594N*	Scoil Eoin Naofa	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€25,584.00
	Scoil Eoin Naofa	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€0.00
09190G*	Boher NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
10120P**	Our Lady of Mercy NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€6,396.00
	Our Lady of Mercy NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
12540B	Clonmore NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€13,458.56
16077B*	Ardfinnan NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
16211C*	Scoil Mochaomhog Naofa	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€17,077.32
16276H	Carrig NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€22,022.00
	Carrig NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€22,022.00
17779P	Powerstown NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€11,743.06
	Powerstown NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€10,750.97
	Powerstown NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€10,937.12
	Powerstown NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€12,088.44
18062V*	Grange NS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€12,951.90
18716T	Cahir BNS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Cahir BNS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Cahir BNS	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€3,654.66
19230V	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€67,158.00
	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Chormaic	Tipperary	Building	€13,950.00
19615S	Scoil Aonghusa	Tipperary	Building	€35,000.00
20085W	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€13,067.03
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€17,026.15
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€13,013.26
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€6,590.29

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€10,720.17
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Pre-fab	€21,784.31
	GS Charraig Na Siuire	Tipperary	Building	€18,500.00
14686	Jonah Project ABA school	Waterford	Building	€9,360.00
01395H*	Aglish National School	Waterford	Pre-fab	€3,166.48
17159I*	Garranbane NS	Waterford	Pre-fab	€3,165.47
17525H*	Light of Christ School	Waterford	Pre-fab	€11,256.96
18094L*	Scoil Mhuire	Waterford	Pre-fab	€15,542.28
	Scoil Mhuire	Waterford	Pre-fab	€15,542.28
19885B	Gaelscoil Philib Barun	Waterford	Pre-fab	€19,827.60
	Gaelscoil Philib Barun	Waterford	Pre-fab	€5,008.43
	Gaelscoil Philib Barun	Waterford	Pre-fab	€18,132.84
	Gaelscoil Philib Barun	Waterford	Pre-fab	€20,275.32
20050D**	Gaelscoil na nDeise	Waterford	Land	€52,470.00
20143K*	Waterpark National School	Waterford	Pre-fab	€17,268.79
20160K**	Waterford Educate Together NS	Waterford	Building	€64,399.83
	Waterford Educate Together NS	Waterford	Building	€18,150.00
	Waterford Educate Together NS	Waterford	Building	€24,200.00
20170N	Bunscoil Chill Mhic Thomaisin	Waterford	Pre-fab	€4,797.00
	Bunscoil Chill Mhic Thomaisin	Waterford	Pre-fab	€4,797.00
	Bunscoil Chill Mhic Thomaisin	Waterford	Pre-fab	€4,797.00
	Bunscoil Chill Mhic Thomaisin	Waterford	Pre-fab	€4,797.00
05916G*	St Annes Ns Tyrrellspass	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€18,708.26
17025K	The Downs NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€16,871.36
17102C	Cluain Buinne	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€12,611.96

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
17327D**	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€10,809.24
	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€10,809.24
	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€17,930.67
	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,694.46
	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,694.47
	Curraghmore NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€16,377.73
18505G	St Clares NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€18,435.15
	St Clares NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€0.00
18640M**	St Josephs NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	St Josephs NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,095.81
	St Josephs NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,095.81
	St. Josephs NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€11,320.92
19848S**	St Etchens NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€25,171.29
	St Etchens NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€14,646.84
	St Etchens NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€10,553.00
20063M*	Scoil an Chlo-chair	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,239.63
	Scoil an Chlo-chair	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€13,239.63
20073P	St Marys NS	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€7,355.40
20238V	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Building+Land	€45,000.00
	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€11,512.80
	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€14,966.64
	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€14,966.64
	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€42,596.63
	GS an Choillin	Westmeath	Pre-fab	€20,787.00
20373E	ABA School (Saplins)	Westmeath	Building	€42,000.00
03633H	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,757.10
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€5,664.87
	Our Lady of Lourdes NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€5,664.88
05070W*	Scoil Chroi Ro Naofa	Wexford	Pre-fab	€16,693.44
	Scoil Chroi Ro Naofa	Wexford	Pre-fab	€0.00
	Scoil Chroi Ro Naofa	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Scoil Chroi Ro Naofa	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
08221J	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,604.27

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,302.51
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,664.03
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,664.04
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,253.53
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,253.54
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,891.92
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,891.92
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,891.92
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€8,634.60
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€8,634.60
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,045.66
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,045.66
	St Senans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€2,238.64
16605A*	Kilrane NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€10,979.23
	Kilrane NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€10,979.23
16828U*	Oylegate NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€17,269.20
	Oylegate NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,782.90
17450C	Poulfour NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€17,908.80
17610V	Scoil Baile Fada	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,527.50
17768K*	Castletown NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€18,995.57
	Castletown NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,664.08
17800D*	Bree NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
	Bree NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
17841R*	Scoil Mhuire	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,005.44
17913Q	Our Lady of Fatima NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,088.56
	Our Lady of Fatima NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,088.56
	Our Lady of Fatima NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,088.56

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
18280I	St Josephs Boys Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€16,117.92
	St Josephs Boys Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€14,391.00
18336J	Booavogue NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€3,397.68
18558E	Piercestown NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,156.64
18558E*	Piercestown NS	Wexford	Pre-fab	€7,310.62
19240B**	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Building	€47,520.00
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€17,313.75
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€33,956.03
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St. Patrick's Special School	Wexford	Building	€58,500.00
19739N*	Scoil Mhuire	Wexford	Pre-fab	€13,770.65
20003R	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€12,792.00
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,870.56
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,870.56
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,870.56
	St Aidans Primary	Wexford	Pre-fab	€4,870.56
	St. Aidans Primary	Wexford		€16,686.50

Questions - Written Answers

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20333P	Wexford ETNS	Wexford	Building	€83,640.00
	Wexford ETNS	Wexford	Building	€16,686.50
01782O*	SN Padraig	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
11372B*	Scoil Mhuire Realt Na Mara	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,937.34
12529N	St Saviour's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€14,157.00
13932A	St Michaels GNS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€19,571.76
14398L*	Glebe NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€13,111.80
	Glebe NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€8,346.78
	Glebe NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€7,368.18
16573N*	St Brigid's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	St Brigid's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€19,188.00
	St Brigid's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€16,981.38
	St Brigid's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€16,117.92
16874E	St Joseph's GNS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€2,187.90
17181B	St Joseph's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€30,140.52
	St Joseph's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€60,442.18
	St Joseph's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€7,483.28
17826V*	Na Coroine Mhuire Mixed	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€18,228.60
	Na Coroine Mhuire Mixed	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€15,830.10
18365Q*	Kilmacanogue NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,937.16
18502A	Talbotstown NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€4,671.81
	Talbotstown NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€4,671.81
18962L	St Ernan's BNS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€11,224.98
19522L**	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Building	€54,000.00
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€49,136.62
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00
	St Catherine's Spec School	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00
19734D*	St Francis's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€16,988.40
	St Francis's NS	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€0.00

Roll No	School Name	County	Desc. of rental	Annual Rent
20045K**	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€10,863.44
	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€11,512.29
20080M**	GS An Inbhir Mhoir	Wicklow	Building+Land	€37,488.40
	GS An Inbhir Mhoir	Wicklow	Pre-fab	€31,980.00
	GS An Inbhir Mhoir	Wicklow	Land	€5,200.00
20178G**	Wicklow ETNS	Wicklow	Building	€142,200.00
	Wicklow ETNS	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>€23,000.00</b>
<b>20242M</b>	<b>Blessington ETNS</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>€22,871.90</b>
<b>20243O</b>	<b>GS Na Lochanna</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Land</b>	<b>€49,200.00</b>
<b>20346B**</b>	<b>Kilcoole Primary School</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Pre-fab</b>	<b>€11,193.00</b>

### Schools Building Projects Application Numbers

366. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of each school built using off-site construction since 2008, including the name and address of the schools concerned. [32114/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** For the Deputy's information the attached spreadsheet gives details of school buildings (including extensions to existing buildings) delivered using off-site construction from 2008 up to the end of June 2013. In addition a number of schools are currently under construction and due to be handed over as part of the current 2013 Rapid Programme.

List of Off-site Construction Schools 1/7/2013

County	Roll No.	School	Project Description	Sector	Practical\Substantial Completion Date
Carlow	20295K	Carlow Educate Together NS	New school	Primary	2008
Cork	00512D	Midleton Convent NS	New school	Primary	2009
Cork	16746S	Ballygarvan NS	New school	Primary	2012
Cork	19839R	Gaelscoil Uí Riordán, Ballincollog	New school	Primary	2012
Cork	20335T	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Rochestown (PHASE I)	New school	Primary	2009
Dublin City	60450U	Coláiste Mhuire, CID campus, Cabra, Dublin 7	New school	Post-primary	2012
Dublin City	20052H	Gaelscoil Cholmille Coolock, Dublin	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin City	20131D	Dublin 7 Educate Together aka Grangegorman	New school	Primary	2009
Dublin City	20304I	St Francis N.S., Belmayne	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin City	20308Q	Belmayne Educate Together NS	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	15315J	St George's N.S., Balbriggan (PHASE I)	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	15315J	St. George's NS, Naul Road, Balbriggan, Dublin 15	Extension	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	16675V	Mulhuddart National School	New school	Primary	2012
Dublin Fingal	16675V	Mulhuddart National School	Extension (temp)	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroimhe (see also 20145O)	New school	Primary	2011

County	Roll No.	School	Project Description	Sector	Practical\Substantial Completion Date
Dublin Fingal	20145O	Swords Educate Together NS (see also 20095C)	New school	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	20161M	Donabate\Portrane Educate Together	New school	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	20176C	Rush and Lusk Educate Together	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20201V	Tyrrelstown Educate Together	New school	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	20202A	Balbriggan ET	New school	Primary	2010
Dublin Fingal	20241K	Scoil Choilm, Diswellstown, Porterstown	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20247W	Scoil Ghrienne Community N.S., Phibblestown	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20252P	Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín, Castlelands, Balbriggan	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20252P	Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín, Castlelands, Balbriggan (See also 20282B)	Extension	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	20282B	Bracken Educate Together, Castlelands, Balbriggan (See also 20252P)	Extension	Primary	2011
Dublin Fingal	20282B	Bracken Educate Together, Balbriggan	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School, Thornleigh Green, Swords	Extension	Primary	2012
Dublin Fingal	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School, Thornleigh Green, Swords	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20307O	Skerries Educate Together NS, Kelly's Bay	New school	Primary	2008
Dublin Fingal	20307O	Skerries Educate Together NS, Kelly's Bay	Extension	Primary	2013

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County	Roll No.	School	Project Description	Sector	Practical\Substantial Completion Date
Dublin Fingal	20348F	Holywell ET, Swords	New school	Primary	2012
Dublin Fingal	20269J	Scoil Chormaic, Balbriggan	New school	Primary	2012
Dublin Fingal	76129H	Ardgillan Community College, Balbriggan	New school - Phase I	Post-primary	2009
Galway City	19858V	Gaelscoil Dara, Galway City	New school	Primary	2011
Kildare	06209J	Athy Model NS (See also 16705E and 20192A)	Extension to an existing building	Primary	2011
Kildare	16705E	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Athy	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2009
Kildare	16705E	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Athy (See also 06209J and 20192A)	New school	Primary	2011
Kildare	20159C	Gaelscoil Nas Na Riogh - Piper's Hill	New School	Primary	2009
Kildare	20192A	Scoil Áth Í, Athy (See also 06209J and 16705E)	Extension	Primary	2011
Kildare	20257C	Scoil Naomh Padraig, Celbridge	New school	Primary	2008
Kildare	20271T	Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Rickardstown, Newbridge (Phase I)	New school	Primary	2010
Kildare	20271T	Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Rickardstown, Newbridge (Phase II)	Extension	Primary	2011
Kildare	20292E	Maynooth Educate Together	New school	Primary	2008
Laois	15556I	Portarlinton Convent NS	Extension	Primary	2012
Laois	20081O	Gaelscoil Portlaoise	New school	Primary	2008
Louth	20294I	Aston Village Educate Together, Drogheda	Extension	Primary	2011
Louth	20294I	Aston Village Educate Together, Drogheda	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008

County	Roll No.	School	Project Description	Sector	Practical\Substantial Completion Date
Meath	20146Q	Le Cheile ET, Mornington, Drogheda	New school	Primary	2009
Meath	20215J	St. Paul's NS, Rathoath	New school	Primary	2011
Offaly	20189L	Tullamore Educate Together	New school	Primary	2008
South Dublin	17055T	Scoil Mhuire, Saggart	extension	Primary	2008
South Dublin	20223I	Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada, Lucan	New school	Primary	2012
South Dublin	20274C	Esker ET, Adamstown, Lucan	Temporary Accommodation	Primary	2011
South Dublin	20303G	Lucan East Educate Together, Clonburris	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008
South Dublin	20303G	Lucan East Educate Together, Clonburris	Extension	Primary	2011
Westmeath	19848S	St Etchen's, Kinnegad	Extension	Primary	2008
Westmeath	20188J	Mullingar Educate Together	New school	Primary	2008
Wexford	20057R	Gaelscoil Inis Corthaidh, Enniscorthy	New school	Primary	2013
Wexford	20165U	Gaelscoil Mhiosolog, Gorey	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008
Wexford	20165U	Gaelscoil Mhiosolog, Gorey	Extension	Primary	2013
Wexford	20214H	Gorey Educate Together	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008
Wexford	20214H	Gorey Educate Together	Extension	Primary	2009
Wexford	76127D	Gorey Community College	Temporary Accommodation for Sept 2011 to cater for 300 pupils pending the delivery of the permanent PPP project	Post-primary	2011
Wicklow	20300A	Greystones Educate Together NS	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008

County	Roll No.	School	Project Description	Sector	Practical\Substantial Completion Date
Wicklow	20301C	Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Greystones	New school - PHASE I	Primary	2008

### Departmental IT Systems

367. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of work by his Department to improve its IT infrastructure and upgrade IT systems in order to enhance the capacity for ready retrieval of information, including specific progress on a unified data model designed to rationalise, standardise and unify his Department's main data holdings, so as to provide a solid foundation on which to build new systems including details of available financial, human and IT resources. [32115/13]

368. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if work is being progressed by his Department to improve its IT infrastructure and upgrade IT systems in order to enhance the capacity for ready retrieval of information includes the provision for the electronic return and management of data from schools. [32116/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 367 and 368 together.

My Department has implemented a number of IT Infrastructure and IT Systems improvements in recent years. The main highlights are:

1. Bandwidth improvements to the telecommunications infrastructure between the three main offices (Dublin, Athlone and Tullamore) has facilitated improved resilience between these locations. Increased bandwidth has also been rolled out to 31 local/regional offices.

2. Over the last 3 years, network storage has been consolidated, resulting in the reduction of the number of computer servers from 100 to approximately 10. This has resulted in a reduction in the associated maintenance and running costs of the provision of network storage.

3. A major PC upgrade programme is currently underway, in the three main offices, along with an upgrade to Windows 7, Microsoft Office 2013 and rollout of Unified Communications.

4. A major project to upgrade the hardware (servers and Storage Area Network) and database software architecture underlying the department's main datasets will commence shortly.

5. A single, central repository of school and pupil data has been delivered through the Unified Data Model (UDM) project.

6. Building on UDM, the PPOD (Post-Primary Online Data) project which is scheduled to be delivered in October 2013, will provide an online system to facilitate the updating of pupil and school data by Post-Primary schools.

7. There are ongoing enhancements to the Online Claims System, used by schools to input school employee absences and casual/non-casual appointments. There are also online systems to capture aggregate literacy and numeracy data from primary schools and accommodation details from primary and post-primary schools.

8. Business Intelligence solutions have been implemented on a number of existing datasets, for some business areas and work is continuing to broaden its use.

My Department's IT Unit currently has a staffing complement of 54 and a budget of €4.63 Million.

### **School Curriculum**

369. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to fund ICT in primary schools in view of the fact the removal by his Department of the minor repairs grant from which schools were authorised to fund ICT purchases. [32117/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Integrating ICT into teaching and learning in schools remains a priority for this Government. My Department's ICT in Schools programme sets out a clear agenda to be pursued in this regard, focusing on four main priorities: ICT Infrastructure in schools, the Schools Broadband Programme, the development of teacher skills, and the provision of curriculum-relevant digital content. On the infrastructure side, my Department distributed more than €90m in ICT Infrastructure grants to schools nationwide in 2009 and 2010. The priority under this grant scheme was the equipping of all classrooms with a digital projector, teaching computer and wireless keyboard and mouse. This ICT infrastructure grant scheme is now fully disbursed. In view of budgetary pressures there are no plans to introduce a new Infrastructure Grant Scheme. However, my Department continues to fund the various elements of the ICT schools programme. Work has commenced on the development of a new ICT Strategy for schools. The new ICT Strategy will address the new policy challenges and opportunities arising from major developments in curricular reform, digital publishing, portable computing and student devices.

While the works covered under the Minor Works Scheme include the purchase of IT related equipment, I stated when the Minor Works Grant last issued in November 2011 for the school year 2011/2012, that given the need to focus on meeting the demand for additional school places, it was unlikely that funding would be available for the Minor Works Grant in the coming years. This is borne out by the fact that in 2012, 85% of the capital expenditure in the school sector was in respect of large scale projects, additional accommodation and prefab replacement. The balance was expended on site acquisition, emergency works, furniture and equipment provision and commitments arising from earlier years. The capital allocation that is available for the school sector in 2013 is expected to have a similar spend pattern as was the case in 2012 and at this time there are no plans to reinstate the Minor Works Grant. I can inform the Deputy that in the case of new schools, extensions and additional accommodation a sum of €5,000 is allocated by my Department for the provision of ICT in respect of each new classroom delivered.

### **Schools Building Projects Administration**

370. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he has taken any decisions on project progression in the school building programme that did not accord with recommendations made to him by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32118/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Deputy will be aware that the Five Year Construction Plan, that I announced in March 2012, lists the individual school projects that are planned to proceed to construction over the duration of the Plan. The Plan priorities new school building projects as well as major extensions in areas where significant

demographic need has been established so that our school system is in a position to cater for increasing pupil numbers. The Deputy will also be aware that due to additional funding made available for the schools' building programme as part of the Government's "Investing in Infrastructure & Jobs" package announced recently, school projects that were not contained in the 5 Year Plan but have completed extensive architectural planning are now being progressed to tender and construction. The individual school projects to be progressed within the 5 Year Plan and Investment package were recommended by my Department, and I approved these projects in accordance with the recommendations concerned.

### **Teaching Qualifications**

371. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps he will take during the next academic year to ensure that all teaching positions in primary schools whether temporary, permanent or substitute will be filled by a fully qualified teacher. [32119/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department's position is that only qualified and registered teachers should be employed by schools. This is set out most recently to schools in Circular Letter 31/2011. Current recruitment procedures direct schools to ensure that teachers proposed for appointment to publicly paid posts must be registered with the Teaching Council and have qualifications appropriate to the sector and suitable to the post for which they are proposed. The Teaching Council was established under the Teaching Council Act 2001 as the regulator of the teaching profession. The Council promotes professional standards in teaching. The Education (Amendment) Act 2012 was enacted on 23 May 2012. This Act provides for a number of education-related matters, including provision to enable the implementation of Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 which I intend to commence on the 1st November 2013. This will prohibit payment from public funds of people employed as teachers in recognised schools unless they are registered with the Teaching Council except for very limited, exceptional and short-term circumstances which will be set out in Ministerial Regulations. This provision which is outlined in Circular 25/13 reinforces the Department's longstanding position that education in recognised schools funded by the State must be delivered by appropriately qualified teachers.

### **Teaching Qualifications**

372. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction that undertook the SCG during the last academic year. [32120/13]

373. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who passed the SCG during the last academic year. [32121/13]

374. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who have opted for an adaptation period under the terms of Directive 2005/36/EC. [32122/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 372 to 374, inclusive, together.

I understand the question to relate to the Irish language requirement and the adaptation pe-

riod allowed to teachers who were trained in another jurisdiction under the terms of Directive 2005/36/EC. Some general statistics on the matter have been provided to me by the statutory regulator for the teaching profession, the Teaching Council, as follows. 657 primary teachers are currently registered with the condition of completing the Irish Language Requirement. 178 teachers have opted to address the shortfall via an adaptation period (OCG). 430 teachers have opted for the aptitude test (SCG). Some 49 teachers with the registration condition have not indicated the option/route/method that they are taking in addressing the shortfall of the Irish Language Requirement. In the 2012/13 academic year 176 candidates sat the SCG (An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) and 124 (70%) passed the examination. 67 candidates undertook the OCG (Measúnú ar Mhúineadh na Gaeilge) and 39 (58%) passed. Final pass rates will not be known until repeat examination results are available.

### School Management

375. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of section 29 appeals undertaken in each of the past five years, including the outcomes of those appeals. [32123/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in Tables 1 and 2 below.

TABLE 1

Total Number of Appeals lodged	Year 2012	Year 2011	Year 2010	Year 2009	Year 2008
Total	355	367	369	390	385

TABLE 2

#### Details of results of section 29 appeals from 2008 to 2012

Refusal to Enrol	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
resolved before hearing	124	124	119	149	134
upheld at hearing	40	68	27	61	58
not upheld at hearing	80	78	132	108	87
*Referred back to Board of Management			13		
Total	244	270	291	318	279
Expulsions	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
resolved before hearing	15	22	25	20	8
upheld at hearing	16	16	5	9	24

Questions - Written Answers

Refusal to Enrol	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
not upheld at hearing	67	43	37	35	52
*Referred back to Board of Management			2		
Total	98	81	69	64	84
Suspensions	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
resolved before hearing	3	3	0	3	8
upheld at hearing	10	11	3	2	9
not upheld at hearing	0	2	1	3	5
*Referred back to Board of Management			1		
Total	13	16	5	8	22

\* Pre a Supreme Court Judgment this was an option open to committee members, post the judgment it was no longer an option.

### Summer Works Scheme Expenditure

376. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total amount of funding expended on the summer works scheme in primary schools in each of the past five years that the scheme was in existence. [32124/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Expenditure incurred on the Summer Works Scheme in the primary school sector in each of the past five years was as follows: 2012 - €1.350m

2011 - €32.369m

2010 - €77.726m

2009 - €53.198m

2008 - €5.993m In addition the following sums were expended on the Jobs Initiative as follows: 2012 - €2.966m

2011 - €17.062m

### Minor Works Scheme Expenditure

377. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total amount of funding expended on the provision of the minor works grant in primary schools in each of the past five years that the scheme was in existence. [32125/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The funding that issued to primary schools with full recognition under the Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties over the period 2007 to 2011 was as follows:

2011 - €28.233m

2010 - €28.169m

2009 - €29.161m

2008 - €26.696m

2007 - €27.593m

### **Emergency Works Scheme Funding**

378. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total amount of funding from the capital budget expended on the provision of emergency funding to primary schools in each of the past five years and the number of schools that received this funding. [32126/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Expenditure incurred under the Emergency Works Scheme in the primary school sector in the years 2008 to 2012 was as follows: 2012 - €5.561m

2011 - €11.399m

2010 - €40.387m

2009 - €35.109m

2008 - €21.125m The number of schools approved for funding under the Emergency Works Scheme over the same period 2008 to 2012 was as follows: 2012 - 175 schools;

2011 - 159 schools;

2010 - 431 schools;

2009 - 437 schools;

2008 - 187 schools.

### **School Accommodation**

379. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total amount of funding from the capital budget expended on the provision of prefabricated accommodation in primary schools in each of the past five years and the number of schools that received this funding. [32127/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Expenditure on the provision of prefabricated accommodation in the primary school sector in each of the past five years is as follows: 2012 - €3.1m 2011 - €6.9m 2010 - €8.2m 2009 - €9.6m 2008 - €17.4m Approvals for the provision of prefabricated accommodation over the 2008 to 2012 period were as follows: 2012 - 29 2011 - 28 2010 - 50 2009 - 73 2008 - 160

## **Schools Building Projects Expenditure**

380. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total amount of funding from the capital budget expended on the provision of school sites for primary schools in each of the last five years and the number of schools expected to be built on these sites. [32128/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Capital expenditure on the acquisition of sites in the Primary school sector over the last five years is as follows: 2012 - €15.5m

2011 - €15m

2010 - €26m

2009 - €24.5m

2008 - €71m It is expected that 85 schools will be built on these sites.

## **School Curriculum**

381. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on the digital schools award in primary schools; the plans his Department has to enable all schools to achieve this award. [32129/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Digital Schools Award is a worthwhile initiative which recognises excellence in a school's approach to the integration of ICT in learning and teaching. This award aims to build on the progress already made by schools in ICT integration and to encourage them to strive for further progression and improvement. To achieve a Digital Schools Award, each participating school must fulfil identified criteria which are applied as part of the validation process. There are sixty-one criteria in all, sixteen essential and forty-one desirable, organised under five headings: Leadership & Vision; ICT in the Curriculum; School ICT Culture; Professional Development; Resources & Infrastructure. To assist in this process, participating schools use a self-evaluation tool based on the Digital Schools' criteria, to identify areas which may meet the criteria and those that require improvement. Successful schools retain their Digital School status for a period of two school years, at which time they may reapply. The Digital Schools Award has entered a new phase. It is now managed by Dublin West Education Centre working closely with the PDST Technology in Education (formerly the NCTE) and other partners including the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN), Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) and the Computer Education Society of Ireland (CESI). HP Ireland (Hewlett-Packard) and Microsoft Ireland have committed expertise and resources to the new phase of the Digital Schools Award scheme and are providing worthwhile devices for schools that achieve Digital Schools status. Both companies will be involved in a launch of the new phase in the autumn. Dublin West Education Centre will communicate with the 93 schools that have achieved Digital Schools status and a further 179 schools that have registered for the scheme in September. All schools will be contacted after the launch of the new phase. I am keen for this project to develop and arrangements are in place for its promotion and ongoing review.

## **DEIS Schools**

382. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of DEIS 1 primary schools on a county basis; the name and address of each school; the enrolment of each school; the additional funding and support provided to each school under the DEIS scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32130/13]

383. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of DEIS 2 primary schools on a county basis; the name and address of each school; the enrolment of each school; the additional funding and support provided to each school under the DEIS scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32131/13]

384. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of DEIS post-primary schools on a county basis; the name and address of each school; the enrolment of each school; the additional funding and support provided to each school under the DEIS scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32132/13]

385. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of DEIS rural post-primary schools on a county basis; the name and address of each school; the enrolment of each school; and the additional funding and support provided to each school under the DEIS scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32133/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 382 to 385, inclusive, together.

There are currently 860 schools included in DEIS providing education for 165,350 children. The breakdown is as follows:

665 primary DEIS schools with an enrolment of 100,595 including:

- 341 Urban Primary schools (197 DEIS Band 1 and 144 DEIS Band 2) with total enrolment of 76,845

-324 DEIS Rural schools with enrolment of 23,750

195 DEIS Post Primary schools with enrolment of 64,755. Information regarding the number of DEIS schools on a county basis is available on the Social Inclusion section of my Department's website at following link-

*<http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools/>* Information on the full range of supports provided to DEIS schools is also available on the Social Inclusion section of my Departments website at following link-

*<http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools-/DEIS-Supporting-Information/Supports-to-DEIS-Schools.html>*

In 2012, funding of some €94m in additional supports was provided to DEIS schools by my Department.

DEIS Schools are also targeted for supports provided under the Department of Social Protection Schools Meals Programmes (€34m) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs School Completion Programme (€26.4m). The information requested in relation to funding and supports provided to individual schools is not readily available in the format requested by the Deputy. I am not in a position to divert scarce staffing resources within my Department to deal with the level of detailed information requested.

386. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of students in the primary school system for 2012-13; the projected increases for the ten years from 2012/2013 on a yearly basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32134/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The number of students enrolled in the primary school system for the 2012/2013 academic year will be available during the summer months. The most recently available projections of enrolment at Primary level are available on the Department's website at <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Projections-of-full-time-enrolment-Primary-and-Second-Level-2012-2030.pdf>.

### **School Health and Safety Issues**

387. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps taken to advise the boards of management and principals of primary schools on the procedures that they must undertake to ensure schools' full compliance with the statutory health and safety requirements in the workplace; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32135/13]

388. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps taken to advise boards of management in primary schools on the procedures that they must undertake to ensure the health, safety and welfare in the workplace of principal teachers in view of the significant increases in their workload; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32136/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 387 and 388 together.

The body which has statutory responsibility for ensuring that health and safety requirements are met by all employers, including schools, is the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). The Authority also provides information and advice to organisations, including schools, to assist them in ensuring that their responsibilities in respect of health and safety in the workplace are met.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the responsibilities on individual school management authorities to have a safety statement in place in their schools. The Statement should identify potential hazards, assess the risks to health and safety and put appropriate provision in place to safeguard the safety and health of employees and pupils.

The HSA has published resources specifically for schools to support them in managing health and safety in the school environment. It also provides a number of online training courses specifically for the school sector. Further details on the advice, resources and training courses available from the HSA can be obtained from the HSA's website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

### **Emergency Works Scheme Applications**

389. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide additional funding to a school (details supplied) in County Cork in respect of essential works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32145/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department received an application under the emergency works scheme from the school referred to by the Deputy for works relating to a retaining wall. As the scope of the works requested is outside the terms of the emergency works scheme it cannot be considered for funding. The school authority has been informed of this decision.

## School Curriculum

390. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will consider changes and revisions to the SPHE curricula to provide for a greater level of assistance and support for children in relation to the issue of cyberbullying, its impact and consequences; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32146/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Current Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curricula at primary and post-primary levels already provide students with the strategies and related knowledge to deal with bullying in all its forms including cyberbullying. The curricula aim to foster self-worth, self confidence and respectful relationships and place a particular emphasis on developing a sense of personal responsibility for one's own behaviour, feelings and actions.

The Mental Health Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools (2013) also promote the development and implementation of relevant policies including an anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour incorporating positive behaviour management strategies and the promotion of a 'telling' culture in schools.

I also published 'An Action Plan on Bullying' in January 2013. This Action Plan, which arises from the work of the Anti-Bullying Working Group, provides guidance to schools in the area of bullying, including cyber bullying.

The SPHE Support Service provides for whole-staff seminars on bullying prevention and intervention and policy review and development. The Support Service also provides for school-based anti-bullying support to include, for example, administration of a student survey, the provision of a parent evening and the development of strategies for resolving bullying issues.

The new Framework for Junior Cycle that I launched in October 2012 will build on this by placing a focus on the principle of Well Being and key skills such as Managing Myself and Staying Well. It also includes a Statement of Learning that requires that students will be enabled to take action to safeguard and promote their well-being and that of others. The NCCA is currently developing a short course in SPHE which will support schools in meeting this statement of learning.

## School Transport Provision

391. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will consider a free school bus service across the cities of Ireland in the interest of the environment and traffic congestion; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31044/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon):** The purpose of my Department's School Transport Scheme is, having regard to available resources, to support the transport to and from school of children who reside remote from their nearest school.

Children are eligible for school transport where they satisfy the distance criterion and are attending their nearest national school or post primary centre, having regard to ethos and language. School transport is a very significant national operation involving about 42 million journeys and over 82 million kilometres on 6,000 routes every school year. This service is delivered using a mix of Bus Éireann, both school transport and road passenger vehicles, private contractor vehicles including private operator scheduled services, and Dublin Bus, Irish Rail, DART

and LUAS where practical. In the region of 115,000 children avail of school transport services throughout the school year including more than 8,000 children with special educational needs.

The terms of the scheme are applied equitably on a national basis. Children who are eligible for school transport and who hold valid Medical Cards (GMS Scheme) travel free on school transport services.

The 2013 allocation to my Department for the provision of School Transport is almost €170m. Any proposal to reduce the qualifying distance for establishing eligibility or to provide a free school bus service as suggested by the Deputy would significantly increase operating costs. For this reason, it is not intended to change the current eligibility criteria for school transport services.

### **Information and Communications Technology Issues**

392. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his estimate of the number of graduates with communications technology skills that will be required here over the next three years; his views on whether this demand will be met; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [27849/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan, which was published in January 2012, sets out a multi-level approach with an overarching aim of doubling the number of graduates from ICT disciplines to 2,000 by 2018. It contains a comprehensive range of measures to build the domestic supply of ICT graduates, in the short, medium and long term, including through the roll out of the ICT graduate skills conversion programmes.

The targets in the Action Plan were developed on the basis of research and forecasts of industry demand and graduate output carried out in 2011. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs is in the process of updating the expected industry demand and skills supply over the coming years. The results of this research will be available shortly and will form the basis for any updates to the targets and measures outlined in the Action Plan.

As part of the Action Plan almost 1,500 places have been provided for graduate jobseekers under two the rounds of the ICT graduate skills conversion programmes that have issued to date. More than 400 people have already graduated from these programmes and a further 300 are due to graduate before the end of this year. In addition, more than 3,700 people have enrolled on ICT programmes under the first two rounds of the Springboard reskilling initiative and a further 2,000 ICT Springboard places have been made available under the third phase of Springboard which was launched in June 2013.

The Plan has helped to raise awareness of employment opportunities in ICT. Technology courses accounted for 20.5% of all honours degree level first preference applications through the CAO this year. The increase in demand from students for technology courses, including a 50% increase in first preference applications for computing over the past 5 years is very positive in building the future supply of graduates.

### **Student Grant Scheme Administration**

393. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the measures that have been taken to ensure that the delays encountered by students applying for the third level

grant have been rectified; the additional resources that have been allocated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32162/13]

397. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps he is taking to ensure there is not a repeat of the failure by Student Universal Support Ireland to process 2012-13 higher education grant applications in a competent manner; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32178/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 393 and 397 together. The Accenture Report, which reviewed the operations of SUSI, contained a series of recommendations, many of which are already being implemented by SUSI. In line with these recommendations and in preparation for the 2013/14 academic year, both the online application system and the application assessment process have been further developed to enhance their effectiveness and to deal with the difficulties experienced in year one.

A number of new initiatives will make the application process more efficient this year including: direct information sharing between SUSI and Government agencies such as the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Social Protection, the General Register Office and the Central Applications Office. These links should significantly reduce the number of documents required from applicants themselves.

In addition the staff resources recommended by the review have already been sanctioned. The resources include three additional management posts and some 23 (whole time equivalent) additional processing staff. This will help to ensure that qualifying students have their applications assessed as quickly as possible. SUSI has also significantly developed its training programme to meet the training needs of new and existing staff.

In addition, the closing date will be a month earlier to facilitate earlier application and decision on a grant application. Also SUSI is working closely with all third level institutions to improve the payment process for the 2013/14 academic year.

### **Emergency Works Scheme Funding**

394. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will outline in tabular form the monthly cost of emergency works grant aid in 2013 and annual cost in 2012; the number of applicants for the grant in 2012 and 2013; the cost of the minor works grant scheme in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32170/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Expenditure under the Emergency Works Scheme in the first six months of 2013 has been as follows: January - €366,438; February - €616,478; March - €208,150; April - €911,789; May - €630,699; and June - €324,581. The total amount of funding issued under the Emergency Works Scheme in 2012 was €10m. In 2012 620 applications for funding under the Scheme were received by my Department and to date in 2013 419 applications have been received. Expenditure on the Minor Works Grant in 2011 amounted to €28.2m.

### **Teaching Qualifications**

395. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to accommodate qualified teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council but will not be recognised under section 30 of the teaching Act in October; and if he will make a statement on the

matter. [32172/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Circular 0025/2013 issued on 15 May to the managerial authorities of recognised schools and vocational education committees and is on my Department's website. It confirms that Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 will be commenced on 1 November 2013. Subject to very limited exceptions, which will be controlled by Ministerial regulation, Section 30 will prohibit payment by the State of people employed as teachers in recognised schools unless they are registered with the Teaching Council. Therefore persons who are registered with the Teaching Council will not be affected by the commencement of Section 30.

### **School Accommodation**

396. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide an update on an application for additional school accommodation for a school (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32175/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I can confirm for the Deputy that my Department has received an application for additional mainstream accommodation at the school to which he refers. This application is being assessed and a decision on the application will be conveyed to the school authority as soon as the assessment process has been completed.

*Question No. 397 answered with Question No. 393.*

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

398. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the work that is being carried out to provide persons with an intellectual disability with a choice of educational options similar to that which other young persons have at the conclusion of second level education. [32199/13]

399. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will outline the supports that each of the publicly funded third level institutions in the State have to facilitate persons with either physical or intellectual disabilities in continuing education after second level education. [32200/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 398 and 399 together.

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places at reduced points to school leavers with disabilities. Thirteen higher education institutions are participating in the scheme in 2013. An application for a place through this scheme is made to the Central Applications Office ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)). For further information on DARE see also [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).

Core funding for access programmes is allocated each year as part of the overall budget of each designated higher education institution. This funding supports the provision of dedicated staff, services and supports for students with disabilities as well as for mature students and school-leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Every further and higher education institution has at least one member of staff with respon-

sibility for liaising with students with disabilities, as required by the Disability Act 2005. In addition many institutions have a dedicated Disability Support Service with trained disability officers, learning support officers and other specialist staff.

### **Employment Support Services**

400. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if any of the very welcome courses provided under Springboard comprise a rehabilitative training element which would encourage greater inclusion in the workplace by providing opportunities for persons with a disability. [32230/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Springboard programme strategically targets funding of free part-time flexible higher education courses for unemployed and previously self-employed people in areas where there are identified labour market skills shortages or employment opportunities.

More than 10,000 people have been supported under the two rounds of Springboard that issued in 2011 and 2012. An additional 6,000 places are currently being rolled out under a third phase of the programme, which was launched on 21 June 2013. The new places are available on 204 courses in 38 different public and private higher education providers across the country.

All Springboard programmes are selected for funding by an independent panel with industry and educational expertise and must be in area of identified enterprise skills needs based on Expert Group on Future Skills Needs research and industry input. The 2013 courses focus on growth areas such as ICT and International Financial Services as well as on the skills needed for enterprise to trade internationally. Courses that address cross sectoral enterprise skills needs are also available in areas such as lean and quality systems and entrepreneurship.

To be eligible for a place on a Springboard course a person must be unemployed, actively seeking employment, and be in receipt of one of the qualifying Department of Social Protection payments, which includes Disability Allowance, or be signing for credits or be previously self employed. It is open to any person with a disability who meets the eligibility criteria to apply for a place on a Springboard course. Further information on Springboard is available on the dedicated information and applications website: [www.springboardcourses.ie](http://www.springboardcourses.ie). Information and advice is also available to prospective students at the Springboard freephone guidance service on 1800 303 523.

### **State Examinations Issues**

401. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will arrange to have the still life work completed by students as part of their leaving certificate examination in art returned to them, similar to arts and crafts works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32284/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The State Examinations Commission has statutory responsibility for operational matters relating to the certificate examinations. In view of this I have forwarded your query to the State Examinations Commission for direct reply to you.

### **School Staffing**

402. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason teaching hours have been reduced in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32288/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Teacher allocations to all second level schools are approved annually by my Department in accordance with established rules based on recognised pupil enrolment. The staffing arrangements at post primary level for the 2013/14 school year have been published and are available on the Department website. In accordance with these rules each school management authority is required to organise its subject options within the limit of its approved teacher allocation. The deployment of teaching staff in the school, the range of subjects offered and ultimately the quality of teaching and learning are in the first instance a matter for the school management authorities.

### **School Staffing**

403. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the turnover at substitute teachers in primary and secondary level schools are monitored by his Department with respect to each school; the rate of which the number of substitute teachers has increased or decreased since the embargo on recruitment; if there has been analysis carried out by his Department on the impact that this may have on the quality of lessons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32010/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The employment of substitute teachers is a matter for the managerial authority of each individual primary and second level school.

It is outlined in my Department circulars that the managerial authorities of schools should only employ qualified teachers including substitutes to cover all absences and vacancies in their schools.

All teachers, including substitute teachers, are subject to inspection. In line with the annual inspection programme, inspectors engage with all categories of teacher to evaluate teaching and learning, to provide feedback on improvement and to report on quality and standards in schools.

Substitute teachers can only be employed by the managerial authorities of schools to provide cover for teachers absent from their teaching posts on approved leave of absence. The on line claim system determines the approved absences for which substitute teachers may be employed. If an absence is not approved the claim for the substitute teacher cannot be submitted for payment to my Department using the on line claim system.

### **Mental Health Awareness**

404. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps he has taken in order to increase suicide awareness and mental health support in secondary schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32011/13]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I can inform the Deputy that last January I launched the Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, which were developed by my Department in conjunction with the Department of Health. They are informed by consultation with key education partners and by the findings of recent research.

The guidelines provide practical guidance to post-primary schools on how they can promote mental health and well-being in an integrated way and they also provide evidence-based advice on how to support young people who may be at risk of suicidal behaviour.

The Guidelines have been developed to bring coherence to and build upon the multitude of practices that are already in place in schools to promote well-being. They emphasise the need to integrate all elements by using a coordinated whole-school approach in the promotion of positive mental health. This involves building and integrating school self-evaluation processes, implementing the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, developing the whole-school guidance plan, adopting the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) continuum of support, and building effective inter-agency relationships. Support for schools will be integrated into existing CPD work plans for the SPHE support service and will be coordinated nationally in collaboration with NEPS and HSE to ensure a streamlined approach. Copies of the Guidelines have been circulated to schools authorities.

In addition in the same period I had published, along with my colleague, Minister Fitzgerald, an Action Plan on Bullying which sets out twelve actions to help prevent and tackle bullying in primary and second level schools. I have ring-fenced €500,000 to support implementation of these actions this year.

Officials from my Department have already commenced work on the implementation of the actions. In particular, an awareness raising initiative on cyber bullying targeted at young people is already underway and my Department is supporting the Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying in second level schools which took place in March. Work has also commenced on developing new anti-bullying procedures for schools in consultation with the school management bodies, teacher unions and national parents councils. These new procedures are due to issue to schools for the start of the next school year. Preliminary work has commenced on other aspects of the Action Plan on Bullying. Implementation will continue in the coming months.

In addition, the Framework for Junior Cycle, published in October 2012, is underpinned by 8 principles one of which is “Wellbeing”, Through Wellbeing “the student experience will contribute directly to their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience. Learning takes place in a climate focused on collective wellbeing of school, community and society”. The Framework contains 24 Statements of Learning which students should experience. One of these statements aims to ensure that the student “takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others”.

In addition, there are six key skills required for successful learning by students across the curriculum and for learning beyond school. One of the six key skills of Junior Cycle is “Staying Well”. As part of the revised Junior Cycle, short courses are being prepared by the NCCA not only in PE but also in SPHE and will be available for schools from September 2014. These courses may be assessed as a part of the School Certificate in the new Junior Cycle.

### **Flood Prevention Measures**

405. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide a detailed progress report on remedial works carried out to date in Glanmire, County Cork, following the flooding in June 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31602/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** As the Deputy

will be aware, Cork County Council made an application to the Office of Public Works (OPW) under the Minor Works Scheme in 2012 for the cleaning of the Glashaboy River at Glanmire as a result of the flood event in June 2012. The application was approved and the cleaning was undertaken by the Council in October of last year. I also understand that the Council's Local Roads Area Office has carried out a significant number of repairs to damaged roads and drainage infrastructure in the aftermath of that flood event.

Cork County Council also intends to undertake a detailed study on the Glashaboy River Catchment to identify further flood mitigation measures and I understand that a contract to procure engineering consultants will be advertised by the Council during the month of July. The OPW has agreed to fund the cost of the study.

### **Haddington Road Agreement Issues**

406. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the method by which a public servant who is not a member of a trade union can cast a ballot on the Haddington Road agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31493/13]

410. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if public sector workers who are not members of a union will face greater uncertainty and or unequal treatment regarding their future working conditions as a result of not being a member of a union in the context of the Haddington Road Agreement. [31799/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 406 and 410 together.

The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013 was enacted on 5 June 2013. The primary purpose of the legislation is to implement the proposed pay reduction for public servants earning annual salaries of €65,000 or more, and the parallel reduction in public service pensions over €32,500.

Contingency measures that may be deployed to secure the necessary reductions in the public service pay and pensions bill are also included in the legislation, including provision for a universal freeze on pay increments. The Act also affirms that the person, which may be a line Minister or other public service body, that has the power to determine terms and conditions of employment may exercise that power to reduce non-core rates of pay or to increase hours worked. However, under the legislation, a facility is provided for unions and representative associations to conclude collective agreements with their public service employers.

Where a union has signed up to a collective agreement, now called the Haddington Road Agreement, it will avoid the need for those contingency measures to be used. It is a matter for public servants and their representative unions and associations to decide if they wish to conclude a collective agreement with their employers. Non-union members are not included in the balloting process undertaken by unions but the legislation or the public service as an employer does not distinguish between those employees who are members or not members of unions and changes in terms and conditions are applied on a grade basis.

With regard to those grades represented by a union who do not conclude a collective agreement under the Act, as well as the increment freeze that will apply directly under the terms of the Act, the relevant decision maker will have to take the necessary measures to meet their targeted paybill savings in 2013 and following years.

## Departmental Staff Rehiring

407. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public or civil-servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31578/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The number of Temporary Clerical Officers employed by my Department in the last 3 years is as follows:

2011	2012	2013
0	11	37 (includes 11 from 2012)

Temporary Clerical Officers panels are established by the Public Appointments Service and assigned to Departments upon request. I am satisfied that my Department is compliant with the relevant fixed term contract arrangements.

Recruitment to the Civil Service is governed by the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 and by the Civil Service Regulation Acts, 1956-2005. The 2004 Act established the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) and the Public Appointments Service (PAS). The CPSA is the regulator of public service recruitment in Ireland and the PAS provides a centralised recruitment, assessment and selection body for the Civil Service.

The CPSA has developed codes of practice to apply to open recruitment and internal promotion competitions. The codes cover the areas of probity, selection on the basis of merit, equity and fairness, protection of the public interest, implementation of best practice and good governance. Selection processes must focus on the competencies required for a post and there is no provision under the Codes to focus recruitment for posts in the Civil Service on the basis of age. All eligible candidates must be considered on an equal basis.

## National Monuments

408. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will consider an application from Longford County Council to share all reasonable acquisitions costs regarding the purchase of the Granard Motte national monument; if he will ensure that the Office of Public Works uses its statutory powers to safeguard this important national monument, which is a local tourist attraction, and ensure it comes into public ownership; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31589/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Granard motte is a National Monument in State Guardianship and is located on a nine-acre site near the town.

The Monument consists of a huge mound of earth with a flat top and a hollow interior, which dates from before 1199 when it was used by Richard de Tuite during the Norman Conquest. It is the highest structure of its kind in Ireland.

The site is important and attracts both National and International visitors. It is a National Monument in State care which already comes within the statutory remit of the Office of Public Works (OPW) as defined in the various National Monuments Acts and is afforded full protection, notwithstanding that it is in Guardianship rather than full State ownership.

Acquisition of ownership of National Monuments, not already in the ownership of the State, and there are many such, is a matter for the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Consultations with that Department on the possible acquisition of Granard Motte by the State have been initiated.

### **Office of Public Works Properties**

409. **Deputy Brendan Ryan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of vacant Office of Public Works units and properties there are in Fingal, County Dublin; and if he will provide a list of said vacant buildings. [31599/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes):** The following State owned properties in Fingal, Co. Dublin currently vacant are: 17A/17B, Main Street, Blanchardstown, which is surplus to requirements and is on the market for sale; the former Detention Centre, Kildonan Road, Finglas, which has been allocated to other State bodies; and the former Garda Station, Rush, Co. Dublin, for which the OPW is presently reviewing expressions of interest from the community for its future use.

*Question No. 410 answered with Question No. 406.*

### **Proposed Legislation**

411. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the current status of forthcoming whistleblower legislation; when he expects any such Bill will come before Dáil Éireann; the provisions contained within the Bill and the measures contained within the legislation to deal with whistleblowers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31846/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Following its recent approval by Government I expect that the Protected Disclosures Bill 2013, will be published this week. The Bill will provide a single overarching framework protecting whistleblowers in all sectors of the economy by ensuring that safeguards exist where reprisals are taken against them by their employers. The objective is to encourage workers to raise genuine concerns concerning potential wrongdoing in the workplace with a view to ensuring that employers can take ameliorating action at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Bill establishes a broad range of potential wrongdoings to which the disclosure must relate and a number of distinct disclosure channels including to an employer, a prescribed person, the Minister responsible for a public body, a legal adviser or otherwise potentially to the public domain. Special disclosure channels will apply in the case of external disclosures relating to law enforcement, security, intelligence, defence and international relations matters. The Bill will therefore provide a detailed and comprehensive statutory framework for the protection of, and securing redress for workers, who suffer penalisation at the hands of their employer for having made a protected disclosure.

### **Proposed Legislation**

412. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the current status of the Code of Practice for adjudication required under the Construction Contracts Bill as well as the associated conditions of contract which will be needed once it is enacted; and

if he will make a statement on the matter. [31990/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The Programme for Government contains a commitment to introduce new legislation to protect small building subcontractors that have been denied payments from bigger companies. In this regard, Minister of State Brian Hayes is working with Senator Feargal Quinn to develop the Senator's private member's Construction Contracts Bill into a robust piece of legislation. The Bill has passed Committee Stage.

The key objective of the Construction Contracts Bill is to ensure that cash flows down the supply chain on all construction contracts. This issue is addressed in the Bill by providing statutory arrangements in relation to payments under construction contracts, including providing for interim payments. These minimum conditions of contract are provided for in Section 3 and the accompanying schedule to the Bill. The Bill also provides the means for subcontractors to enforce these rights; by suspending their labour and the provision of statutory adjudication.

My officials are developing a Code of Practice for the adjudication process. The Deputy will appreciate that the Bill has not passed all stages in both Houses and therefore further work will be required before such a Code could be finalised. This is a complex area and as such it is essential that these complex issues are properly assessed so as to avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory or cost burdens on parties in dispute, the State or others. In this regard, it is likely that a brief consultation with the relevant stakeholders will be required. This legislation is a priority for Government and whilst every effort is being made to have the legislation and ensuing regulation passed as quickly as possible it is important to put in place, one which is robust and effective.

### **Public Construction Projects**

413. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total number of tendered public construction projects in which the contractor has become insolvent and the project has had to be re-tendered; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31991/13]

414. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total tender value of public construction projects and the total construction cost of construction projects; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31992/13]

415. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will list the public construction projects where there has been a discrepancy between the tender value and the construction cost; if he will list the tender value and the construction cost for each of these projects; if he will provide this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31993/13]

417. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total number of public construction projects which have been tendered but did not proceed to construction; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31995/13]

418. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total number of public construction projects which have been tendered; did not proceed to construction and were then re-tendered; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31996/13]

419. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total number of public construction contracts where novated lease specialists have been used; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31997/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 413 to 415, inclusive, and 417 to 419, inclusive, together.

The information sought by the Deputy in relation to public works contracts tendered is held by the individual contracting authorities concerned. They are not required to pass this information to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

However the Government Contracts Committee for Construction (GCCC) has had a monitoring process in place since 2008, and a sample is taken of significant public works contracts completed. The sample assesses the effectiveness and impact of the Construction Procurement Reform Initiative, focusing on comparing measures such as; contractual fixed price lump sum figures and final outturn costs, contractual delivery periods and actual time for delivery.

To summarise, there were 165 sample projects monitored by the GCCC, which included 91 Building projects and 74 Civil Engineering projects; the initial contract value for the works contracts amounted to €971.8m with a 7.3% deviation from tender price at completion stage (8.9% on Civil Engineering projects and 2.9% on Building projects), which the Deputy should note is based on both actual and projected final account figures. The information is not available on a yearly basis. Change orders accounted for some of the deviation from tender price (3.7% on Civil Engineering projects based on information available on 16 projects from the above sample; and 2.8% on Building projects based on 49 projects). Change orders may be issued for any of the following three reasons: (i) for legitimate and acceptable reasons, (ii) a result of inadequate planning and design before contract award and (iii) scope changes. Contracting authorities were not required to include specific reasons for the deviations where they occurred.

### **Public Construction Projects**

416. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total number of public construction projects which have gone to arbitration; if he will list this information per year since 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31994/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The Arbitration Rules for use with the Public Works and Construction Services Contracts (AR1) requires that each arbitrator appointed to an arbitration case under the Capital Works Management Framework to notify the National Procurement Policy Unit in my Department of their appointment within 14 days after accepting appointment. The arbitrators are also required to submit a copy of the findings of any arbitration in relation to these contracts on a non-confidential basis to the Secretariat of the Government Construction Contracts Committee to facilitate the monitoring and analysis of disputes in relation to these contracts. To date one notification of appointment and one interim recommendation has been received, both in 2012, in my Department.

*Questions Nos. 417 to 419, inclusive, answered with Question No. 413.*

### **Public Procurement Contracts Expenditure**

420. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if Government bodies and agencies are permitted to buy supplies locally in cases where they can be purchased at a lower cost than via the National Procurement Service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32029/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Under EU law, public contracts above a certain values must be advertised EU-wide and awarded to the most competitive tender in an open and objective process. The aim is to promote an open, competitive and non-discriminatory public procurement regime which delivers value for money. It would be a breach of the rules for a public body to favour or discriminate against particular candidates on grounds of location or nationality and there are legal remedies which may be used against any public body infringing these rules.

The National Procurement Service (NPS), which will be transferring into the new Office of Government Procurement (OGP), has put in place a number of national arrangements designed to secure better value for money from leveraging the public service's buying power in relation to a range of goods and services that are commonly purchased across the public service. These national arrangements have a number benefits that include: cash savings; administrative savings from reduced duplication of tendering; greater purchasing expertise; improved consistency; and enhanced service levels.

In some instances the take up of the NPS arrangements has been low. In order to increase the usage of a limited number of NPS framework arrangements and thereby secure best value for money, the Government decided that it should be mandatory for public service bodies to use specified national procurement arrangements. Last year my Department issued Circular 06/12 which implements the Government decision by making it a mandatory requirement that public service bodies avail of specified national arrangements put in place by the NPS. These national arrangements will secure best value for money and facilitate contracting authorities to deliver services within their budgetary constraints.

Where a mandatory framework arrangement exists, any public service body intending to make a purchase other than through the NPS framework arrangement will need to ensure that it can explain the rationale for not using the NPS arrangement by providing a value for money justification that takes account of the full costs including those incurred in managing its own procurement process.

While the key purpose of Circular 6/12 is to enable the State to do more with less by aggregating procurement to secure better value for money, it is worth noting that such aggregation arrangements can be implemented in a manner that achieves value for money with a minimal negative impact, or indeed a positive impact, on SMEs. While a number of the categories of goods and services mandated under the Circular are suited to single supplier national arrangements, these need not be accepted as the norm. The greater use, where appropriate, of multi-supplier frameworks can address local supplier issues while also ensuring on-going cost competitiveness of the framework itself. Such multi-supplier frameworks may also offer SMEs the opportunity to participate in national level contracts, thereby offering valuable reference work when competing for public procurement contracts in other jurisdictions.

In order to encourage greater SME participation the NPS, over the past three years, has conducted a targeted programme of education for suppliers who wish to learn more about doing business with the Irish Public Service. This programme consists of seminars, workshops and large scale 'meet the buyer' events hosted nationwide. To date the NPS has facilitated workshops and presented at seminars to over 4,500 SMEs nationwide. Parallel with these events the NPS also works closely with business representative bodies such as ISME and IBEC to provide

briefings for their members.

To summarise: we in government want better value for money for our substantial procurement spend. To ensure the reform process takes account of the needs of stakeholders, further consultations will be undertaken with industry representative associations, employees and workers' representatives as the new Office of Government Procurement is established. We are committed to ensuring that SMEs are fully engaged in the process and will be encouraged, where necessary, to form alliances and networks to ensure they can tender on a competitive basis for this work.

### **Information and Communications Technology Issues**

421. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if strong consideration might be given to the creation of a standard template on which Government, departmental and local authority websites would be based, because of the way such a measure would facilitate greater ease of access, information search and retrieval functionality and a higher take up of e-service provision as well as providing employment for those skilled in the web-technology section of the ICT sector. [32227/13]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Bill McCluggage, took up his appointment on 10 June and is currently assessing what is required to build on progress in ensuring that ICT-enabled change is delivered across the Public Service. This includes examining all aspects of eGovernment including opportunities to further enhance the provision of digital online services and the take-up of those services. It also includes examining options for the consolidation of web sites and standardisation, where feasible.

### **Export Statistics**

422. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will detail the value of exports of Enterprise Ireland client companies and the value of exports of Industrial Development Agency client companies. [24451/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Enterprise Ireland client companies achieved a record €16.2 billion in exports in 2012, up from €15.2bn in 2011. Sectors such as Engineering, Software, Internationally Traded Services and Medical Devices showed the strongest export performance, with the Software and Public procurement sectors show a 19% in export sales to €1.028 billion. Geographically, markets such as the USA, Asia Pacific and Latin America contributed strongly to export growth, with export to Latin America growing by 24% in 2012 and those to the USA/Canada by 20%.

Exports accounted for 54% of Enterprise Ireland's clients' total sales in 2012 which are now in excess of €30 billion.

The value of exports from IDA assisted companies in 2010 was €110.29 billion and grew 11% to €122.4 billion in 2011. New and established multinationals continue to invest and re-invest in their operations making Ireland one of the global locations of choice for mobile investment projects from the world's leading companies. 2012 export data for IDA Ireland client companies will be available later this year.

Trade missions are a key to winning new export business and building international net-

works and partnerships for our expanding range of exporters. 2013 will see another extensive number of Ministerial-led trade missions with an increased focus on high growth economies in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. These missions are designed to give Irish exporters high level support to reinforce their individual export strategies. In addition, these missions are also designed to establish and build the profile of Irish companies in growth markets where, in the future, they can capitalise on the conclusion of EU Free Trade Agreements that are currently being negotiated. Many of these are underway with Asian economies such as Vietnam, Thailand and Japan.

### **Science Foundation Ireland Appointments**

423. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if his attention has been drawn to any previous academic malpractice in relation to a person (details supplied); and if so, if this was known prior to said person's appointment to the Science Foundation Ireland. [32066/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Sean Sherlock):** I am not aware of any academic malpractice in relation to the individual concerned. I understand that a matter relating to published academic articles was raised publicly recently and was addressed by the individual concerned.

I am aware, however, that over thirty years, the individual has published over 270 papers in various leading scientific journals including Science magazine.

He is a graduate of Queens University of Belfast with degrees in Dentistry (BDS 1st class honours), Anatomy and Embryology (BSc 1st class honours, PhD) and Medical Sciences (DMedSc). He holds Fellowships from the Royal Colleges of Surgeons in Ireland (FFD) and Edinburgh (FDS) and is a Founding Fellow of the UK Academy of Medical Sciences (FMed-Sci).

He is the recipient of numerous international awards, prizes, medals and honours for his research, including a CBE from Queen Elizabeth II.

### **Proposed Legislation**

424. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if a grocery code of conduct will be introduced to ensure fair commercial practices; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31460/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Programme for Government contains a specific commitment to enact legislation to regulate certain practices in the grocery goods sector. I intend to give effect to this commitment by including an enabling provision in the Consumer and Competition Bill. This Bill will also, *inter alia*, merge the National Consumer Agency and the Competition Authority, update and reform competition law on foot of a review of the operation and implementation of the Competition Act 2002 and give effect to the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Media Mergers. Work on drafting the Consumer and Competition Bill is on-going and the Bill is included in the "A list" in the Government's current Legislative Programme.

The Government is strongly of the view that it is important to ensure there is balance in the relationship between the various players in the grocery goods sector and that Ireland continues

to have robust agri food and retail sectors, particularly given the importance of these sectors to the national economy. The introduction of a Code of Practice is intended to achieve such a balance taking into account the interests of all stakeholders in the grocery goods sector including the interests of the consumer and the need to ensure that there is no impediment to the passing-on of lower prices to consumers.

### Departmental Staff Rehiring

425. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the number of temporary clerical officers that have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public/civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31576/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** My Department has not employed any temporary clerical officers in the past three years.

### Company Registration

426. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the number of new companies, of various types, that have been registered with the Companies Registration Office in tabular form on a yearly basis between 2008-2012, and to date in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31797/13]

428. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will outline the number of companies who have been struck off in each year since 1986 due to the failure to file annual returns to the Companies Registration Office; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31978/13]

429. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he intends to review the provision in the Companies Acts which permits the Companies Registration Office to strike off a company which has failed to provide annual returns in order to introduce a wider scale of penalties which are proportionate to the offence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31979/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 426, 428 and 429 together.

The number and type of new companies registered since 2008 are set out in the following table:

Company Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (as at 27 June)
Private limited	13468	12396	13054	13621	13104	7195
Public limited	117	133	164	170	115	68
Unlimited	133	136	220	293	235	69
Guarantee	1005	656	575	531	555	246

Company Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (as at 27 June)
EEIG – European Economic Interest Grouping	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total of all companies	14723	13321	14013	14615	14009	7579

The number of companies that have been struck off in each year since 1986 due to the failure to file annual returns to the Companies Registration Office is as follows:

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Total per decade	Average per decade
1986	1987	1988	1989								
2551	3693	830	14338							21412	5353
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999		
8975	0	5607	13087	4840	13176	10280	3132	10003	28731	97831	9783
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009		
32937	1430	3125	14836	1401	9514	5255	4085	5804	5729	84116	8412
2010	2011	2012	2013 (as at 27 June)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6272	7938	7333	4208	-	-	-	-	-	-	25751	7357

The Companies Acts 1963-2012 set out the requirements in relation to the filing of annual returns by companies.

Section 125 of the Companies Act, 1963, as amended, requires that an annual return be delivered by a company, whether trading or not, to the Companies Registration Office (CRO) once at least in every calendar year. If a company fails to comply with the Section, the company and every officer of the company who is in default shall be guilty of an offence.

A company may be struck off the register for failure to file an annual return. If a company is struck off, the assets of the company become vested in the Minister for Finance, and if the business continues to trade, the members will no longer enjoy the benefit of limited liability and so are personally responsible for any debts incurred as long as the company remains struck off.

Any person, who was a director of a company at the date of sending to that company of a strike off notice due to the non-filing of annual returns, may be disqualified from acting as a director by the High Court, where the company is struck off leaving outstanding liabilities. Such order may be made by the Court on the application of the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement.

The Registrar of Companies may prosecute companies and/or directors in the District Court for failure to file annual returns and accounts on behalf of their companies. In addition, she may also apply to the High Court for an order directing the filing of outstanding annual returns and accounts within the period specified in the order and she may seek to have all the costs of and incidental to that application, borne by the defaulting company or its officers.

There are also other sanctions in relation to the failure to file or the late filing of annual re-

turns. A late filing penalty of €100 becomes due in respect of an annual return on the day after the expiry of the filing deadline, i.e. 28 days after the effective date of the return. A daily penalty amount of €3 accrues thereafter up to a maximum penalty of €1,240 per return. This penalty is in addition to the standard fee for filing the return.

A company with a record of persistent late filing may also be subject to an on-the-spot fine and/or summary prosecution of the company and/or any officer in default. Fines of up to €1,904.61 can be imposed on conviction for breach of the annual return filing requirements. In addition, a company cannot avail of the exemption from the requirement for a statutory audit if its annual return for the current year or the previous year was not filed on time.

In 2011 the Company Law Review Group, the statutory body which advises me on Company Law matters, published its examination of certain aspects of the late filing penalty regime. The Group noted that prior to 2001, only 13% of companies filed their annual returns on time, whereas in 2010 only 12% of companies were late filing their returns. It recommended that no changes should be made to the current system.

I have no plans to expand the range of penalties attaching to the late filing of annual returns.

### **Public Procurement Regulations**

427. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his views on a prerequisite for companies tendering for Government contracts to have a member of a defined pension scheme under the rules; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31952/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** All construction related projects involving public expenditure must conform to Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Procurement Procedures. These procedures have included an obligation that the contractor ensures that the rates of pay and the conditions of employment, including pension contributions, comply with all applicable employment law, including Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) when engaged on public works contracts.

In the judgement delivered on 9 May last in *McGowan and others v The Labour Court, Ireland and the Attorney General*, the Supreme Court held that Part III of the Industrial Relations Act 1946 was invalid having regard to Article 15.2.1 of the Constitution.

That Article provides, in effect, that the exclusive power to make laws is vested in the Oireachtas. The Supreme Court took the view that REAs are instruments having the status of laws made by private individuals. While the Constitution allows for the limited delegation of law making functions, the provisions of the 1946 Act went beyond what is permissible under the Constitution.

The effect of this decision is to invalidate the registration of employment agreements previously registered under Part III of the 1946 Act.

This is an important issue for many employers and their employees, particularly in relation to rates of pay and tendering for contracts.

I intend as soon as possible to put in place legislation that will be fully informed by the Supreme Court judgment, but will introduce a revised framework to deal with these matters.

*Questions Nos. 428 and 429 answered with Question No. 426.*

## Job Creation Issues

430. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the co-operation his Department is providing to Killarney Town Council to develop and attract jobs to the Pretty Polly industrial complex which formerly, in its peak, employed up to 1,000 workers; the possibilities there are to subdivide this vast area of plant space and locate suitable work units for investors; when he envisages that this will commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32161/13]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I am informed by IDA Ireland that the former Pretty Polly building in Ballyspillane was purchased by Killarney County Council from the Pretty Polly Trustees. The building, which is c. 25,000 sq<sup>2</sup> in size, was let for a short while to an indigenous company Beocare who left the premises in 2009. The building has been vacant since.

IDA has indicated that the premises was formally a manufacturing facility and the options for the building in its present format are limited. The Agency understands that Killarney Town Council is assessing what options may be available for the building and, to this end, has commissioned Exodea Consulting to undertake a report on the development of the site and the potential uses for the building. This report has not yet been published

IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland have confirmed that, as soon as the consultant's report is published, they would be available to provide any assistance and/or direction to Killarney Town Council regarding the potential uses for the building in the light of the report.

## After-School Support Services

431. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason Ballymun, Dublin, was not chosen as an area in respect of the new after-school child care scheme; and if it will be included in future plans. [31542/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The after-school child care subsidised scheme commenced its first pilot phase on 29 April, 2013, with up to 500 places made available in seven designated Social Welfare local offices located in King's Inn Street in Dublin city centre, Finglas, Cork city, Dominic Street in Limerick city, Dundalk, Mullingar, and Tralee.

This initial launch phase of the pilot scheme will allow my Department to review the effectiveness of the scheme criteria. This review will inform the scheme's subsequent roll-out at the end of July, 2013, and its nationwide roll-out in September, 2013.

The local offices that will participate in the second pilot phase at the end of July are currently being decided and will be announced in due course.

## Social Welfare Offices

432. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reasons for a delay in delivering new-Intreo offices for the Department of Social Protection; if she will list those completed to date; those on which work has started and the expected completion date; the expected start date and completion date for those not yet started; the work specifications involved and cost per office; if the office is State owned or rented and cost of that rent or lease; and the person who is the landlord-owner. [32081/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The objective of the Intreo Service is to improve service efficiency and effectiveness and to maximise the potential for people to return to work or develop skills to help them back into the work force through the provision of a new integrated employment and income support service. A main element to the process is the delivery of a “one stop shop” service from an integrated office location in line with best international practice. The delivery of over 60 Intreo Offices is a major logistical property project for the Department and the Office of Public Works who are responsible for the provision of the Department’s property requirements, including refurbishment and fit out works.

The Department’s Intreo initiative is being progressively rolled out to its national network of local offices. The new service comprises a number of elements, the main components being: activation measures such as client profiling, early group engagement and one-to-one meetings which focus on customised employment supports and monitoring of each client’s progress; an integrated decision-making process leading to swifter throughput of decisions; and an integrated reception providing a one-stop-shop incorporating all strands of the Department’s employment and income support services are part of the new service.

It is important to note that elements of the service, described above, are proceeding across the Department’s network of offices - before individual offices are fully developed to Intreo specifications. Therefore it is intended to implement the integrated decisions and systematic activation process in all offices during 2013.

In addition, the Intreo roll-out is being supported by a training and development plan for all offices to equip staff and management to deliver this new service.

The most important criteria with the project to deliver Intreo offices nationwide is to ensure that the Department is providing accommodation that is of a quality standard for both customers and for staff, while ensuring that the Department is achieving value for money. While 14 offices were originally scheduled for completion in 2012, 10 offices were completed and works had commenced on a further 2 offices, which since have been completed. Delays to the project included issues concerning: significant IR issues around the removal of glass from the Integrated Reception areas which went to arbitration and required an independent assessment by Health and Safety Consultants; upgrading the broadband connectivity to each office to cater for the delivery of the Intreo service; additional space requirements to improve the service and integrate staff from three separate areas into one location; twelve offices are now providing the full Intreo service; and a list of these offices with a breakdown of costs is shown in the attached table. At present works are underway at Loughrea, Achill and Clifden and these are due for completion by the end of July. Works are due to be completed in the Tullamore and Kilkenny offices by the end of August. The Intreo roll-out operates on a rolling programme and is heavily weighted towards a significant number of offices completed by the end 2013. Preparations are underway in other offices and it is expected that a total of 43 offices will be delivering the Intreo service by the end of 2013.

Some of the Department’s existing buildings require minor structural works, while other buildings, because of their condition, health and safety issues or limited space availability will either need major structural works or replacement offices to be sought. It is not possible to list the work specifications for all offices as each office is different and depending on the individual assessment and briefs, they will have different specifications. However, in relation to work specifications, the works at an Intreo Office typically include: provision of an integrated reception; a Group Engagement Room; public Services Card stations; adequate number of interview rooms; and new external and internal signage.

In addition, provision has to be made for electrical and mechanical works, furniture, fittings,

installation of CCTV and queuing systems, as required. Expenditure on the rollout of Intreo offices to date in 2013 is estimated at almost €2m. The costs for the remainder of 2013 are not yet known and will be contingent on the contract prices finalised with the contractors on each project. These costs are kept under close scrutiny as the Department is committed to securing value for money in implementing the introduction of the various elements of the service.

The Office of Public Works has responsibility for the acquisition of office accommodation for the Department. Matters of leasing and individual rents are managed by that Office.

County	Location	Total *
Donegal	Buncrana	103,484
Dublin	Ballymun	55,904
-	Blanchardstown	336,609
-	Coolock	162,441
-	Finglas	9,175
-	Parnell Street	96,545
-	Tallaght	313,757
Kerry	Killarney	84,160
Limerick	Newcastlewest	381,735
Louth	Dundalk	214,073
Sligo	Sligo	116,077
Wicklow	Arklow	115,940

\*Total costs include building works, mechanical and electrical installations, furniture, fittings, decorating/painting, electronic queuing systems and security, which includes installation/upgrade of CCTV and alert systems.

### Job Initiatives

433. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social Protection when a JobBridge contract will be reinstated to its original finish date in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo in view of the fact that this query has already been submitted to the JobBridge section, the JobBridge team and her office directly; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31458/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Department takes the view that internships in the Education Sector are a special case where interns, who under the terms of the scheme are entitled to receive a high quality real workplace experience, are at risk of missing out on that high quality internship experience during academic holidays. I accept that there may be some circumstances where an education sector internship experience would not be affected by the academic holidays.

However, it would not be feasible to review and examine all placements advertised within the education sector on a case by case basis. Therefore, a clear and transparent operational decision was made that all such placements must coincide with the academic year. Deadlines have been introduced, before which and after which education sector internships will not be approved. These deadlines have been clearly advertised on the home page of the JobBridge website since August 2012. All affected Host Organisations have been written to by the Department and have been requested to further remind their interns of the closing date for these internships.

The Department works with stakeholders to make JobBridge as easy to administer as pos-

sible but the first concern has to be for interns, to ensure that they are not idle or deprived of the high quality real workplace internship experience that they deserve and that is in the interests of the taxpayer as well as the jobseeker in maximizing their future employment opportunities. The Department will however review the position in respect of the internship referred to by the Deputy.

### **Departmental Staff Redeployment**

434. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Social Protection if, in view of the publication of the European Commission's Winter 2012 Review of Ireland's Economic Adjustment Programme in April 2013, her views on its recommendation to double the number of case managers from approximately 300 at the end of 2012 to 600 in 2013 and further increase it in 2014 entirely through redeployment of existing staff; if she will outline the progress she has made in this regard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31489/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The implementation of a more intensive and rigorous case management requires that additional resources be devoted to the activation process. However, the implementation of the new Intreo process and the integration of previously separate functions in FÁS, the Community Welfare Service (CWS) and the Department of Social Protection also generates efficiencies and will enable staff to be freed up for redeployment to activation/case management duties. A target to redeploy three hundred staff in the current year has been set and the Department is currently in the process of planning this redeployment. I expect that the redeployment will be completed on target by the year end.

### **Free Travel Scheme Administration**

435. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Social Protection when she anticipates that the review being undertaken by an interdepartmental working group made up of officials from her Department, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the National Transport Authority will be completed; if the findings of the interdepartmental working group review on freezing of the free travel scheme and the way it is disadvantaging rural areas will be made public; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31510/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** There are currently in excess of 770,000 in receipt of free travel from my Department and when spousal and companion passes are taken into account, there are over 1.1 million customers with some free travel eligibility. Expenditure on this scheme was frozen at 2010 levels by the previous Government. Expenditure for the free travel scheme in 2013 is set at €77 million.

Given the increasing number of recipients and the funding pressures, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and I established a working group with representatives from the two Departments, as well as the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the National Transport Authority to review the free travel scheme. The purpose of this review is to examine and report on the current operation and future development of the free travel scheme including how the scheme is funded. The work of this group is expected to conclude before the autumn, and the findings and publication of the report will then be considered.

### **EU-IMF Programme of Support Issues**

436. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Social Protection her views on the recently published European Commission country specific recommendations for Ireland under the Europe 2020 strategy which recommended that faster progress in implementing certain key policies, including in terms of activation redeployment of staff as case managers, outsourcing certain activation functions to private sector providers and reforming employment support schemes, is needed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31513/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** There are currently no country specific recommendations (CSRs) for Ireland given that we are a programme country subject to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed with the IMF/ECB/European Commission under the Programme for Financial Support. The recommendations referred to by the Deputy are contained in the European Commission's *Economic Adjustment Programme for Ireland – Winter 2012 Review*.

With regards to redeployment of staff, it is true that the implementation of a more intensive and rigorous case management will require additional resources to be devoted to the activation process. However, the implementation of the new Intreo process and the integration of previously separate functions in FÁS, the Community Welfare Service (CWS) and the Department of Social Protection also generates efficiencies and will enable staff to be freed up for redeployment to activation/case management duties. A target to redeploy three hundred staff in the current year has been set and the Department is currently in the process of planning this redeployment. I expect that the redeployment will be completed on target by the year end.

With regards to outsourcing activation functions, the Pathways to Work initiative launched last year signalled the potential of contracting with third party providers to complement the existing capacity of the department to deliver employment services. The potential contribution of such contracting and the design of a contracting approach has since been considered by the Department working with an Interdepartmental group, comprising representatives of this department, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the National Economic and Social Council, the Offices of the Attorney General and the Chief State Solicitor. The Department also availed of expert international advice. Arising from this evaluation, the Cabinet Committee on Pathways to Work approved in principle a proposal to tender for the provision of employment services and agreed to the issue of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) which was published on 28 June. This notice formally notifies the market that the State intends to procure employment services. A PIN is a discretionary and exploratory first step in a procurement process. The publication of a PIN will enable the State to engage with potential vendors and other interested parties to gauge the level of market interest and assist in finalising tender/contract design.

With regards to the reform of employment support schemes, the Department conducted an extensive review of employment support in 2012 which was published by the Minister in January of this year and followed up by a stakeholders' conference in February which the Minister convened. The stakeholder forum canvassed the views of stakeholders on review recommendations and was a very important step in the review process and all inputs were recorded and published in a separate review available on [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie). The Department has now moved to the implementation phase and work will be on going through 2013. The process of re-aligning work schemes into community support and activation focused strands has commenced and will gather momentum later in the year, following a review of existing administrative processes and the roll out of a revised childcare programme. The selection of community employment scheme participants is now the responsibility of DSP case officers and this change will facilitate the implementation of further changes.

437. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of the additional places she allocated for community employment that have been taken; and the number of vacancies on CE in the Dublin area due to the change in rules regarding eligibility. [31520/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The number of additional places allocated to date in the Dublin area is currently 191 as at the 20th June 2013. These places are added to the general Community Employment (CE) allocation for each Division of the Department (3 in Dublin) and are not reported on separately, so it isn't possible to determine the number of these additional places filled at this stage.

Nationally, the total number of CE places approved for 2013 is 23,500 of which 22,624 (incl supervisors) participants are in place as at May 2013. In December 2012 the number of participants was 22,445 (incl supervisors). Additional places are allocated throughout the year and the process will be completed by December, 2013.

There have been no changes in the rules regarding eligibility for CE, other than the recent broadening of the rules to include time spent on Supplementary Welfare Allowance being counted towards the CE-qualifying period, provided the person is currently in receipt of one of the specified eligible payments at the time of application to CE. The current number of CE places in the Dublin area which remain unfilled is 274 places, of these, 251 are awaiting Garda vetting returns. The policy of the DSP has always been that anyone who comes into contact with children or vulnerable adults through their work on Community Employment must be Garda Vetted. This is in-line with international best practice.

### **Community Employment Schemes Eligibility**

438. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if, in view of the rates of youth unemployment and the increase in the numbers of under 18 year olds presenting with addiction, she will consider lowering the age requirement from 25 years to 18 years on the special status community employment programmes; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31521/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The entry age is already set at 18 years of age for these programmes. The Community Employment (CE) Operating Procedures state that CE Drugs Rehabilitation Places (DRP's) are available to persons aged 18 years or over who are in recovery and referred for a rehabilitation place on CE. Application for a drugs rehabilitation place is based on evidence of an appropriate referral following an assessment of the applicant attending a recognised addiction support service within the last year within the context of the National Rehabilitation Framework of care and case management. This includes HSE addiction services and treatment centres, GPs and other relevant statutory, community and voluntary support services.

### **Jobseeker's Allowance Eligibility**

439. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Social Protection when she expects legislation that allows retained firefighters to receive full jobseeker's allowance or benefit payments to be enacted; her policy regarding assessing retained firefighters who apply for those payments now; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31533/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Over 2,000 persons are employed

as retained (part-time) fire-fighters, providing services which are vitally important to their communities. Typically, these workers provide services in rural and less densely populated areas but larger urban centres may also have a cohort of part-time workers. Retained fire-fighters who are otherwise unemployed are entitled to a jobseeker's payment in respect of days that they are engaged in fire-fighting or training. They are, however, required to satisfy the statutory conditions for the receipt of a jobseeker's payment of being available for and genuinely seeking work. Any person who fails to satisfy these conditions is not entitled to a jobseeker's payment. Taking account of the unusual circumstances of retained fire personnel the Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 carried amendments to both jobseekers benefit and jobseekers allowance that put the treatment of retained fire fighters on a legislative basis. The legislation and associated regulations will allow retained fire-fighters a reasonable and fair level of access to the schemes in future. The revised provisions will apply only to claims received on or after enactment of the relevant legislation.

### **Disability Allowance Payments**

440. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the correct level of disability allowance in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Waterford; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31555/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** An application for disability allowance was received from the person concerned on 25 January 2012. The medical evidence submitted with the application was referred to one of the Department's medical assessor who was of the opinion that the person did not satisfy the medical conditions for receipt of the allowance. The deciding officer accepted this opinion and refused the application and the person was notified in writing of this decision on 7 July 2012.

The person submitted further medical evidence which was referred to a second medical assessor who was also of the opinion that the person was not medically suitable for disability allowance. The deciding officer accepted this opinion and there was no change to the decision to refuse disability allowance and the person was notified of this on 19th June 2013.

### **Invalidity Pension Appeals**

441. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for invalidity pension in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31557/13]

**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, has allowed the appeal of the person concerned by way of summary decision. 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 Eligibility**

442. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Social Protection if a decision has

been made on an appeal of a decision on entitlement of a qualified adult payment for the duration of a community employment scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31564/13]

**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 06th June 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.

### Departmental Staff Rehiring

443. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by her Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public or civil servants; her views on whether her Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31579/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** As an exception to the current moratorium on recruitment, my department has limited sanction to recruit temporary clerical officers to cover critical staff absences and to assist with the roll-out of the Public Services Card. Currently two of these temporary staff are retired civil servants. They are on an annual pay scale of €22,016 - €35,515. Abatement of pension applies, if applicable, pending the termination of their temporary contracts.

The recruitment and selection process for temporary clerical officers is carried out by the Public Appointments Service following a competitive process and is open to those aged over 16 years of age. There is no upper age limit. The attached table outlines the number of temporary clerical officers that have been recruited by the Department of Social Protection over each of the past three years.

-	2011	2012	2013 to date
Temporary COs - Not retired Public Servants	482	614	403
Temporary COs - Retired Public Servants	0	3	2
Total	482	617	405

### Citizen Information Services

444. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if her Department has advocated that the Citizens Information Board provide independent prevention advice on gambling addiction especially in young persons in line with the information it provides in relation to alcohol/drugs; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31601/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Citizens Information Board (CIB) under the aegis of my Department is responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice (including money advice and budgeting) and advocacy on a wide range of public

and social services. The Citizens Information Board delivers on this remit through direct provision, by supporting a network of delivery partners and by funding targeted projects.

Information is made available directly to the public through three main channels: the national network of 42 Citizens Information Services (CIS) which provides face- to-face service to the public; the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS), which operates Mon-Fri 9am to 9pm, at 0761 07 4000; and the Citizens Information Website ([www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie))

CIB also publishes advocacy, research and social policy reports highlighting issues of concern to users of social services. My Department does not prescribe content in respect of information provided by Citizens Information on the wider range of public and social services. Currently information and advice is not specifically provided on gambling addiction. However the Citizens Information Board has undertaken to consider publication of material on this issue.

*Question No. 445 withdrawn.*

### **Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals**

446. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an application for jobseeker's allowance now under appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) and if she will expedite same. [31643/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the jobseekers allowance and supplementary welfare allowance appeals from the person concerned were referred to an Appeals Officer who has decided to convene an oral hearing in this case.

Every effort will be made to hear the case as quickly as possible and the appellant will be informed when arrangements for the oral hearing have been made.

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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Departmental Staff Training**

447. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Social Protection the training front-line officials in her Department receive so as to recognise cases where long-term and short-term unemployed persons require access to mental health services; if there are any plans to upscale such training; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31649/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Department's frontline staff cannot and are not expected to be in a position, or have the expertise to, clinically assess the mental health needs of customers. However, the Department has taken initiatives to raise mental health awareness among its staff.

Since 2010, Mental Health Ireland has assisted in the delivery of a one-day training course to staff in the Department to raise awareness of mental health issues. 356 staff members have received this training to date. Local mental health support organisations, such as AWARE, have also been invited to talk to staff where a need is identified.

In addition, following feedback from frontline staff and management, a need was recognised to support staff in dealing with customers who identify themselves as having thoughts of suicide. Over the past year, with assistance from the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP), the Department has provided 'safeTALK' training to 82 frontline staff. This training programme helps prepare participants to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.

Also this year, the NOSP has provided access to the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills) training workshop to the Department's staff. This two-day workshop trains participants to reduce the immediate risk of a suicide and increase the support for a person at risk. A small number of staff has received this training to date.

The Department will continue to provide these mental health training supports to frontline staff and management.

### **Social Welfare Appeals Status**

448. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for a partial capacity benefit in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; when a decision will be made; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31654/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Partial capacity benefit was awarded to the person concerned following an assessment by a Medical Assessor of the Department who expressed the opinion that the restriction on her capacity for work should be assessed as moderate.

An appeal was registered on 14th May 2013 and the Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department has been asked to provide the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an assessment by another Medical Assessor will be carried out.

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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Carer's Allowance Appeals**

449. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Social Protection when a decision will be expedited on a carer's allowance appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31684/13]

**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 08th April 2013. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these have been received from the Department, the case in question 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 appeal 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 in

relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Invalidity Pension Applications**

450. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if and when an invalidity pension application will be approved in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31686/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Invalidity pension is a payment for people who are permanently incapable of work because of illness or incapacity and who satisfy the contribution conditions.

This department received a claim for invalidity pension for the person concerned on 08 August 2011. The medical evidence provided by the claimant in support of her claim was examined by a medical assessor who was of the opinion, based on the evidence provided, that the person concerned was not eligible for invalidity pension as she did not satisfy the medical criteria. The application for invalidity pension was disallowed by a deciding officer. The person in question was notified of this decision and the reason for it on 14 April 2012.

Further medical evidence was subsequently received from the claimant on several separate dates in the period between October 2012 and April 2013 with requests that the decision be reviewed. This additional evidence, along with the original information, was evaluated by a different medical assessor who also expressed the opinion that the person concerned does not satisfy the medical criteria. The deciding officer has confirmed the original decision and notified the claimant of the outcome on 12 June 2013, advising her of her right to appeal the decision to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office.

### **Invalidity Pension Appeals**

451. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for invalidity pension in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31688/13]

**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 09th May 2013. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these have been received from the Department, the case in question 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 appeal 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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Carer's Allowance Appeals**

452. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for carer's allowance in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31691/13]

**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 28th May 2013. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these have been received from the Department, the case in question 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 appeal 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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Mortgage Interest Supplement Payments**

453. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the correct level of mortgage interest relief in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; the history of the amounts payable to the person; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31703/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The person concerned has been in receipt of a mortgage interest supplement from November 2010. As at 01 November 2010 the rate of supplement paid to the person concerned was €895 per month and from 01 January 2011 the rate paid was €886.90. As at the 01 December 2011 the rate paid was €1,170 and from 01 May 2012 the rate paid was €796.50. The person concerned is currently in receipt of a mortgage interest supplement at a rate of €663.26 per calendar month from 01 June 2013 which is the maximum amount payable based on information available to this Department.

### **Carer's Allowance Waiting Times**

454. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of applications that are currently awaiting to be processed for carer's allowance; the timescale it will take in order to process these applications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31750/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The backlog of claims and processing times for carer's allowance were unacceptable in 2012 but significant improvements have been made in the past year by my Department and the backlog of carer's allowance applications has been eliminated. New applications are now being actioned on receipt and applications received in the last 6 months are now decided within 8 weeks.

The total number carer's allowance applications which were awaiting decision at mid-June 2012 were approximately 11,600. At present, the number is approximately 2,900 cases. Most of these applications are already processed and are awaiting further information from customers or are part of the appeals process.

It should be noted that the processing time for individual applications can vary depending on the complexity of the applicant's circumstances and the completeness of the information they provide in support.

### **Carer's Allowance Applications**

455. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Social Protection further to Parliamentary Question No. 237 of 18 June 2013, if a decision on an appeal in respect of a carer's allowance will be expedited; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31761/13]

**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 20th June 2013. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these have been received from the Department, the case in question 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 appeal 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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

### **Social Welfare Benefits Eligibility**

456. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Social Protection her plans to implement a system whereby maintenance orders which are awarded to social welfare recipients would be deducted from their social welfare payments. [31791/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Men and women are required by law to maintain their dependants. Maintenance can be paid voluntarily or as a result of a maintenance order granted by the courts. If someone is in receipt of a social assistance payment they must satisfy a means test. All sources of income, including maintenance, are assessed as part of the means test.

### **Supplementary Welfare Allowance Eligibility**

457. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will provide a detailed breakdown for all applicants for basic supplementary welfare allowance of the way the means test is calculated; if she will make it departmental policy that this would be issued in future to all applicants for basic supplementary welfare allowance in line with other schemes involving a means test administered by her Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31793/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Where a supplementary welfare allowance is awarded at a rate below the maximum rate payable it is the position of the Department that details of the full means assessment is communicated to the customer in writing. This position applies to refusals, withdrawals, suspensions or reductions in the rate of supplementary welfare allowance payable.

If the Deputy has a concern in relation to a specific case, he can forward the details to the Department for follow up.

*Question No. 458 withdrawn.*

### **Community Employment Schemes Funding**

459. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Social Protection the average processing time for the processing of a claim for payment of wages to participants on a community employment scheme by a sponsor to her Department; if there are departmental guidelines in place for a target processing time for these claims; if her attention has been drawn to the fact that there are some schemes that have to use their own resources to pay wages owed to participants owing to delays in processing claims; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31817/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The payment of wage grants to Community Employment (CE) Sponsors is done on a 4-week basis (called a cycle). There are 13 cycles in a 52-week CE project year. Community Employment (CE) Sponsors are required to pay the participants (employees) on a weekly basis (current week). At the end of each 4-week cycle, the Sponsor can claim a grant from the Department towards the cost of wages paid over the previous four weeks. Wage grants are therefore paid in arrears and only on receipt of the correctly completed claim forms.

To assist Sponsors with cash flow prior to the start-up date of the CE project, voluntary sector Sponsors can claim an Initial Grant equivalent to eight weeks advance of employee wages. Public Sector Sponsors can claim an advance equivalent to four weeks wages. This once-off advance is intended to ease any cashflow difficulties that may otherwise be encountered in the first weeks of the project and can be used to cover participant wages, Supervisor wages, materials or training expenses. The advance payment will be recouped or “clawed-back” by DSP in instalments over the remainder of the project (Cycles 3 to 12).

After each cycle, the wage claim is sent in the form of an Application for Wages and Supervision (AWS), signed by the Sponsor to the DSP Officer with responsibility for the project. The Officer signs off electronically on the AWS sheet via the Community Service Management System (CSM) and sends it for approval via the CSM to the local DSP Manager. Once approved by the Manager, it is automatically processed for payment by the Department’s Accounts Section. Claims received on a Wednesday to Tuesday are paid on the next Wednesday, so the delay can be as little as 1 working day for payment to issue (electronically) and is usually no more than 5 working days. Delays may occur if the AWS claim is incomplete or incorrect on submission.

The 13th (final) cycle is held for payment pending the receipt of the audited accounts/final reconciliation for the project to date, as per the CE Operating Procedures. If there are delays in furnishing satisfactory audited accounts by the Sponsor, this can delay the final payment until the matter is resolved. In emergencies, the Department does have flexibility where a Sponsor is having major financial difficulties to facilitate a wage claim payment.

### **Domiciliary Care Allowance Appeals**

460. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for domiciliary care allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and when a decision will issue. [31836/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an Appeals Officer, having fully considered all of the available evidence, has decided to allow the appeal of the person concerned by way of a summary decision. The person concerned has been notified of the Appeals Officer’s 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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

## Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance Scheme

461. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of families and children who will receive the back to school clothing and footwear allowance automatically in 2013; the amount of money her Department has allocated for this scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31999/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The back to school clothing and footwear allowance scheme provides a one-off payment to eligible families to assist with the extra costs when children start school each autumn. The Government has provided €48.8m for the scheme in 2013.

This year, approximately 117,000 eligible families will receive an automatic payment in respect of 211,000 children with no application form required.

## Rent Supplement Scheme Eligibility

462. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Social Protection the options available to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare in relation to rent allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32027/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The purpose of the rent supplement scheme is to provide short-term income support to assist with reasonable accommodation costs of eligible people living in private rented accommodation who are unable to provide for their accommodation costs from their own resources and who do not have accommodation available to them from another source. The overall aim is to provide short term assistance, and not to act as an alternative to the other social housing schemes operated by the Exchequer. There are currently approximately 93,800 persons in receipt of rent supplement, for which the Government has provided €436m in 2012.

The person concerned has been requested to reduce his portion of the rent to €250.00 per month in order to qualify for the entitlement. Regrettably, if this reduction cannot be obtained the person concerned must seek alternative accommodation that falls within the necessary limits.

## Social Insurance Rates

463. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding the different rates of PRSI which apply to those recruited to the public sector prior to 1995; if she has any plans to review this differential and ensure that the same rates apply to all those working in the public sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32034/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Permanent and pensionable employees in the public service, other than those who were recruited after 6 April, 1995, are liable to pay social insurance contributions at a lower modified rate of PRSI. Class B covers civil servants, registered doctors and dentists employed in the civil service and Gardaí. Class C covers commissioned officers of the Defence Forces and members of the Army Nursing Service. Class D covers employees in the public service other than those mentioned in Class B and C.

Subject to having the required number of PRSI contributions, employees who pay modified contributions have access to the following payments:

- (a) widow's/widower's (contributory) pension and surviving civil partner's (contributory) pension;
- (b) guardians payment (contributory);
- (c) bereavement grant, and
- (d) carer's benefit.

Modified rate contributions are not reckonable for establishing entitlement to State Pension (contributory).

Permanent and pensionable employees in the public service recruited after 6 April 1995 are liable to pay social insurance contributions at the Class A rate which gives them access to the full range of short-term and long-term social insurance benefits.

Any plans to review the differential in the rates of PRSI to ensure that the same rates apply to all those working in the public sector would have to take account of providing access to the full range social insurance benefits which would have considerable cost implications and could only be considered in a budgetary context.

### **Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals**

464. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will expedite an appeal for jobseeker's allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32057/13]

**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 21st June 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 in relation to social welfare entitlements.

*Question No. 465 withdrawn.*

### **Live Register Statistics**

466. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of males and females in the following age groups who are on the live register, 18-20, 21-24; 25-39, 40-54, 55-66. [32080/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** At the end of May 2013 there were 421,737 people on the live register of which 266,921 were male and 154,816 were female. A breakdown by age and gender as requested by the Deputy is detailed in the attached tabular statement.

### **Number of people on the Live Register at 31 May 2013 by Age and Gender**

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
18 – 20 Years	6,994	5,139	12,133
21 – 24 Years	33,369	21,784	55,153
25 – 39 Years	113,588	62,018	175,606
40 – 54 Years	76,276	41,627	117,903
55 – 66 Years	36,694	24,248	60,942
Totals	266,921	154,816	421,737

### Social Welfare Benefits Applications

467. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will ensure that one of her Department offices in Portlaoise, County Laois, is used for the safe registration process to facilitate social welfare recipients and to end the practice where thousands of claimants have to travel to Kilkenny to have their photograph taken and fill out forms. [32138/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Department of Social Protection, in conjunction with a number of other Government Departments, has developed a rules based standard for establishing and authenticating an individual's identity for the purposes of access to public services. This programme of work, which is known as the Standard Authentication Framework Environment or SAFE for short, also provided for the introduction of a Public Services Card (PSC) to enable individuals to gain access to public services more efficiently and with a minimum of duplication of effort.

A PSC is currently issued following a "face-to-face" registration process which involves the capture of an individual's photograph and signature, the verification of identity and current address as well as the capture of additional data such as answers to security questions to be used in ensuring the future integrity of customers' data.

To date, 119 SAFE stations have been installed in 51 separate locations countrywide and a further 48 are either planned or in the process of deployment. Planning is underway for the installation of a SAFE registration facility in Portlaoise, and it is expected that this will be rolled out in the coming months. In the meantime, a number of customers at Portlaoise Branch Office are being facilitated at Kilkenny Local Office.

### One-Parent Family Payment Eligibility

468. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of recipients of the one parent family payment who stand to lose or have lost their payment as a result of the changes in eligibility relating to the age of their children that take effect from 4 July 2013. [32204/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, introduced several changes to the one-parent family payment (OFP) scheme – including the phased reduction of the age limit of the youngest child at which a recipient's payment ceases. In July 2014, the age of the youngest child threshold is being reduced to 7 years of age for new entrants and from 2015 for existing recipients. Transitional arrangements will apply during the period between 2013 and 2015 – depending on the date that a recipient first claimed the OFP payment. By 2015, the maximum age limit of the youngest child will be 7 years for all OFP recipients.

In 2013, it is expected that up to 9,300 recipients will exit the OFP scheme – with up to 8,000 of these in July. These numbers reflect the maximum number of cases who may lose entitlement in 2013. Some of these customers may have continued entitlement to OFP, as the relevant saver clauses included in the legislation will apply. These include OFP recipients who are in receipt of domiciliary care allowance (DCA) in respect of one of their children as well as customers who are recently widowed. The Local Offices are reviewing all cases as appropriate.

The reforms to the OFP scheme are predicated on activation and on getting customers who may have experienced recurring poverty and social exclusion traps back into the workforce once their children have reached an appropriate age. They aim to provide the necessary supports to lone parents by assisting them participate in education and training, develop their skills set and ultimately, attain financial independence and social well-being for both themselves and their families by securing employment.

The majority of those who will lose their entitlement to the OFP payment on foot of the reductions to the age threshold of the youngest child are likely to fall into one of the following three categories:

- i. Customers who are in receipt of the family income supplement (FIS) will transition to a re-rated FIS payment that will partly compensate for the loss of the OFP.
- ii. Customers who are in receipt of a half-rate carer's allowance payment will transition to a full-rate carer's allowance payment that will partly compensate for the loss of the OFP.
- iii. The majority of the remaining customers are expected to apply for the jobseeker's allowance (JA). Of this group, customers whose youngest child is aged under 14 years can avail of the JA transition arrangement.

The JA transition arrangement is provided for in the Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2013 and is a specific measure for lone parents transitioning from OFP to JA, whose youngest child is under 14 years of age. Customers who avail of this arrangement will be exempt from the JA conditionality that requires them to be available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work. They will also be exempt from having to prove unemployment and be able to work part-time without restrictions and still receive the JA payment – subject to a means test.

The JA transition arrangement recognises the difficulty of parenting alone and will ease the transition of former OFP recipients with children of primary school age onto the JA scheme. Without it, it is likely that many former OFP recipients would not have qualified for the JA payment as their caring responsibilities may have prevented them from being available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work. Significantly, the JA transition arrangement will still require that this group of customers fully engage with my Department's full activation process. This is the same requirement that applies to all other jobseekers.

The availability of the JA transition payment to this group of customers reduces the need for child care support as parents in these circumstances can remain at home and take care of their children. However, if a lone parent in this situation does wish to avail of an employment opportunity, they are eligible to apply for the after-school child care subsidised scheme.

The after-school child care subsidised scheme will provide 6,000 subsidised after-school child care places for low-income families and social welfare income support payment recipients who enter employment and have children of primary school age. The pilot, which was introduced in seven designated Social Welfare Local Offices, commenced on 29 April, 2013, and will be rolled out nationally by September, 2013.

Lone parents who transition to the JA scheme will qualify for the full range of activation supports that are currently available to all jobseekers. This includes being able to access a wide range of education, training and employment programmes through my Department.

### **Rent Supplement Scheme Payments**

469. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will confirm if her Department can administer the rent supplement payment directly to landlords should the recipient of the payment wish for this to happen and the steps the recipient would be required to take to arrange same. [32229/13]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The purpose of rent supplement is to provide short-term support to eligible people living in private rented accommodation, whose means are insufficient to meet their accommodation costs and who do not have accommodation available to them from any other source. The overall aim is to provide short term assistance, and not to act as an alternative to the other social housing schemes operated by the Exchequer. There are currently approximately 85,000 rent supplement recipients for which the Government has provided over €403 million for 2013.

Under the legislative provisions governing rent supplement, the Department's relationship is with the tenant; the tenant makes the application for rent supplement and payment is made to the tenant. Rent supplement is specifically for the benefit of tenants to assist them with their accommodation needs. There is no direct relationship between the landlord and the Department in the administration of the scheme. However, social welfare legislation provides for the payment of a rent supplement payment to a nominated payee such as a landlord on behalf of the tenant. This arrangement is entered at the tenant's request and subject to the consent of the Department.

Where a tenant wishes to have the rent supplement paid directly to the landlord, the tenant should contact the office responsible for administering their payment. The department official dealing with the request will take into account all the relevant circumstances of the particular case and the tenant's preference will be accommodated where possible.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

470. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public or civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31567/13]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** As the Deputy will be aware, my Department was established on 2 June 2011. No temporary clerical officers were employed by my Department in 2011. I am advised that one temporary clerical officer commenced work in Oifig an Chomisinéir Teanga in late 2012 and that three temporary clerical officers are due to commence work in my Department during the current month. None of these temporary clerical officers are retired civil or public servants

The Deputy will appreciate that all matters relating to the establishment of panels from which temporary clerical officer appointments are made come under the remit of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

## **Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme Payments**

471. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will receive compensation under the cessation of turf cutting scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31804/13]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** The individual referred to in the Deputy's Question has applied for compensation under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme, administered by my Department.

I am advised that a payment has been made to the applicant in respect of 2011. However, issues in relation to legal title over the land in question are being investigated by my Department.

My Department expects to be in contact with the applicant shortly in relation to his application.

## **Arts Council Funding**

472. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Arts; Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will outline on a county basis, in tabular form, the number of venues in receipt of Arts Council funding in 2010, 2011, 2012 and to date in 2013; the grant each venue was awarded; the grant each venue actually drew down; the purpose for which each grant was awarded; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31818/13]

473. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Arts; Heritage and the Gaeltacht the weighting given by the Arts Council to the range and size of an actual arts programme when it make an annual award to an arts institution; the role of the programme in maintaining the viability of local arts venues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31819/13]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 472 and 473 together.

The Arts Council is a Statutory Agency set up under the Arts Act, 2003. Under the Arts Act, 2003, the provision of funding is a matter in the sole remit of the Arts Council. I am precluded by statute from intervening in the Arts Council's decisions on funding.

Details of the Council's successful applicants and the grants awarded are available on the decisions database of the Arts Council's website at [http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/we\\_funded.aspx](http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/we_funded.aspx). For each of its schemes, the Arts Council publishes on its website, the names grantees, the amount awarded, the names of the decision-making panel as well as statistics on the numbers of applications. I understand that the local authority area is also provided. The data are updated throughout the year as funding decisions are made.

The Arts Council's strategic approach is called Developing the Arts in Ireland Arts Council Strategic Overview 2011 – 2013 and it is available on the Arts Council's website. In accordance with this document the Arts Council focuses on supporting artists and arts organisations and aiming to increase public engagement and participation in the arts. Through this the Arts Council's aim is to provide support to artists and arts organisations so as to facilitate their planning and programming.

474. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil plean aige le fáil réidh leis an maolú ar stádas na Gaeilge san Aontas Eorpach i 2016 chun níos mó ná 180 post breise a chruthú do dhaoine le Gaeilge san AE; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [32158/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley):** Is mian liom aird an Teachta a dhíriú ar an bhfreagra a thug mé ar Cheist Dála Uimhir 23 ar 30 Bealtaine 2013 faoin ábhar seo. Mar a thug mé le fios sa fhreagra sin, beidh cinneadh le tógáil faoi dheireadh na bliana 2015 faoi thodhchaí an mhaolaithe atá i bhfeidhm faoi láthair maidir le húsáid na Gaeilge in institiúidí an Aontais Eorpaigh agus beidh an cheist seo le breithniú ag an Rialtas in am trátha.

Idir an dá linn, táthar ag obair leis na hinstitiúidí Eorpacha ar bhonn leanúnach chun a chinntiú go mbeidh dóthain foirne cáilithe fostaithe sna hinstitiúidí chun freastal ar na riachtanais a bhaineann le stádas na Gaeilge san Eoraip. Mar thacaíocht don aidhm seo, tá céimeanna tógtha ag mo Roinn le roinnt blianta anuas chun maoiniú a chur ar fáil do réimse cúrsaí tríú leibhéal ábhartha agus d'fhorbairt na téarmaíochta Gaeilge.

### Hare Coursing

475. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the action that will be taken in relation to the clubs that have breached section 44 (details supplied) and the licence conditions; if he intends to add an additional licence condition that would help protect landowners from persons entering their lands to net hares without permission including a condition that would require the coursing club to get written permission from the landowner and to make this information available along with hare capture return forms at the end of the coursing season; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32186/13]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** My Department issued a licence to the Irish Coursing Club to capture live hares under the Wildlife Acts for the 2012-13 season. The licence states that it does not authorise any person to enter any land without the permission of the owner or occupier of the land. The licence also provides that the Licensee and its members must comply with Section 44 of the Wildlife Acts which relates to unlawful hunting and entry on land.

The conditions of the licence will be reviewed for the 2013-2014 season. In that context, I am mindful of the provisions of Section 44 which already confer considerable powers on the owners or occupiers of land to protect their property from unlawful hunting. While under section 44, it is open to aggrieved owners and occupiers of land to take summary proceedings where persons enter on land without permission for the purpose of hunting, where resources allow, my Department will investigate the allegations identified by the Deputy in relation to the unlawful capturing of hares by coursing clubs during the 2012-13 season.

### Departmental Staff Rehiring

476. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31569/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):**  
My Department did not employ any temporary clerical officers in the past 3 years.

### Energy Conservation

477. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will detail the recent announcement he has made regarding exemplar energy projects; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31604/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):**  
I launched the first tranche of exemplar energy efficiency projects under the Action Plan for Jobs on 19 June last (a full list of participating organisations is provided below). Collectively, the exemplar projects will see investment of up to €55m in energy saving measures, resulting in annual savings of €7m, while supporting over 500 jobs.

Exemplar projects are demonstration projects that are prepared to use, test and provide feedback on the approach, tools and structures provided under the National Energy Services Contracting Framework. Exemplar projects will receive additional supports in the form of training, networking and access to a panel of legal and technical experts to review and comment at key stages of the projects. In return, participating organisations must commit to actively provide feedback on use of the Framework.

The National Energy Services Framework has been developed to stimulate the market for energy efficiency measures in the non-residential sector. A key aim of the Framework is to develop robust projects that are investment-ready for financing entities (such as the Energy Efficiency Fund). This will stimulate the development of an Energy Services Company (ESCO) market, thereby supporting sustainable employment in construction and professional services. The Framework also aims to provide best-practice guidance to public and private sector client organisations when procuring energy services and engaging ESCOs.

Further information on the exemplar projects and the National Energy Services Framework can be found on the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's website [http://www.seai.ie/Your\\_Business/National\\_Energy\\_Services\\_Framework](http://www.seai.ie/Your_Business/National_Energy_Services_Framework)

Table
Participating Organisations
Boliden Tara Mines
Carbery Group
Carton Bros
DIMPCO Ltd.
Dublin City Council
Dublin City University
Fingal County Council
GE Healthcare
Health Service Executive (West) (Project 1& Project 2)
Institute of Technology Tralee
Irish Prison Service
Kerry County Council
Kildare VEC
Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Table
Liffey Meats
Mayo County Council
Radisson Hotel Sligo
Roadstone
St. John of God Hospital
Tesco
The Four Seasons Hotel
University College Cork

### Postcode Implementation

478. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the measures being taken to introduce a postcode system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31724/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The Government is strongly committed to the introduction of a National Postcode System. The procurement process to select a postcode management licence holder to implement a National Postcode System is currently underway. Intensive work has taken place on what is an extremely complex national project. Whilst the details of the procurement process must remain confidential, I can say that a final tender issued very recently and the process is expected to come to a conclusion shortly.

The final decision to proceed with implementation of a National Postcode System will be for decision by Government and will be based on appropriate financial, technical and operational considerations. I cannot give a precise date on when this decision will be made but I intend that it will be no later than the third quarter of this year.

### Broadcasting Charges

479. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will be extending the exemption of the broadcasting charge to those who qualify for the household benefits package; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31743/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** As the Deputy will be aware, responsibility for the Household Benefit Package falls under the remit of my colleague, the Minister for Social Protection, Ms Joan Burton, TD. This includes issues relating to benefits that arise through the Household Benefits Package such as exemptions from the liability to pay the existing TV licence and the consequent right to a free licence.

That said, I would like to emphasise that the proposed public service broadcasting charge would replace the existing TV licence system and it is my expectation that the current exemptions in relation to pensioners and those entitled to the Household Benefit Package will continue to apply

### Alternative Energy Projects

480. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide an update on an application for research funding for a wave energy related project (details supplied) in County Mayo. [31809/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** I understand that the application for research funding to which the Deputy refers has proceeded through the normal decision-making process within the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Unfortunately, the application was not successful.

### **Broadband Services Provision**

481. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will outline the proposals, if any, there are to upgrade broadband connectivity throughout County Cavan with particular reference to the need to extend the national broadband scheme to those electoral divisions in the county where such service is not available at present; the likely timescale for the proposed roll-out of this particular scheme to the remaining electoral divisions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31838/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The objective of the National Broadband Scheme (NBS), which was launched in 2008, following a competitive tendering process, was to provide access to affordable, scalable broadband services to rural areas, where operators had been unable to offer services on a commercial basis.

In designing the Scheme, which was approved under EU State Aid rules, my Department undertook a comprehensive mapping exercise to assess the extent of broadband coverage available in the State in 2008. Following completion of the exercise a separate map based on electoral divisions (EDs), which are the smallest administrative areas used for statistical purposes in the country, was developed. Where an ED was completely or substantially served by existing service providers it was excluded from the NBS. Broadband services under the NBS are available since October 2010 from the NBS service provider, “3”, to persons with a fixed residence or fixed business in all of the designated NBS Electoral Divisions. In Cavan 48 out of the 93 EDs were identified as eligible for inclusion in the NBS, which are shown in the following table.

In July 2011 the Government launched a separate broadband initiative, namely the Rural Broadband Scheme (RBS). The RBS was established to enable a basic broadband service to be provided to individual rural premises, which were not capable of obtaining a broadband service from existing Internet service providers. 45 applicants from County Cavan received offers from service providers participating in this Scheme of which 11 accepted an offer of service.

With basic broadband services widely available across Ireland, the focus is now on accelerating the roll out of high speed services. The Government’s National Broadband Plan, which I published in August last, aims to radically change the broadband landscape in Ireland by ensuring that high speed services of 30Mbps are available to all of our citizens and businesses, well in advance of the EU’s target date of 2020, and that significantly higher speeds are available to as many homes and businesses as possible.

During the preparation of Ireland’s National Broadband Plan, the commercial market operators indicated that they expect to provide 70Mbps to 100Mbps services to 50% of the population by 2015. Since the publication of the Plan, investments by the commercial sector are underway in both fixed line and mobile high speed broadband services.

In tandem with these commercial developments, intensive work is underway in my Department to progress a State-led investment to secure the countrywide introduction of next genera-

tion broadband access.

In order to progress the State-led investment, a full procurement process must be designed and EU State Aids approval must be obtained. A comprehensive mapping exercise of the current and anticipated investment by the commercial sector is being undertaken to identify where the market is expected to succeed and fail in the delivery of high speed broadband services over the coming years.

The results of this mapping exercise will inform the level of Government interaction that may be required and the areas that need to be targeted in the State-led investment so as to deliver on the targets for high speed broadband contained in the National Broadband Plan.

Intensive technical, financial and legal preparations including stakeholder engagement will be ongoing throughout 2013 with a view to the launch of a procurement process in 2014.

Through the implementation of the National Broadband Plan, we are committed to increasing the availability of next generation speeds significantly, with a view to ensuring that all citizens and businesses can participate fully in a digitally enabled society.

### **National Broadband Schemes (NBS)**

#### **Electoral Divisions (ED) covered by the NBS in County Cavan**

ED Name	ED Reference No.
ARDUE	ED 27001
BALLYMACHUGH	ED 27009
BALLYMAGAURAN	ED 27010
BAWNBOY	ED 27011
BENBRACK	ED 27014
BILBERRY	ED 27015
CANNINGSTOWN	ED 27018
CARN	ED 27019
CARRAFIN	ED 27021
CASTLERAHAN	ED 27022
CASTLESAUNDERSON	ED 27023
COOTEHILL RURAL	ED 27027
CORR	ED 27029
CORRANEARY	ED 27030
CROSSBANE	ED 27031
CROSSDONEY	ED 27032
DERRYLAHAN	ED 27037
DERRYNANANTA	ED 27038
DIAMOND	ED 27039
DOOGARY	ED 27040
DRUMANESPICK	ED 27042
DRUMCARN	ED 27044
DRUMLUMMAN	ED 27045
DUNMAKEEVER	ED 27047
KILBRIDE	ED 27052
KILCOGY	ED 27053

ED Name	ED Reference No.
KILGOLAGH	ED 27055

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### Broadband Services Speeds

482. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the level of high-speed broadband available to Tougher Business Park and Layout Business Park with particular reference to Eircom service; if such broadband service will be upgraded in the near future in order to limit additional day to day costs for businesses in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32060/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** Ireland's telecommunications market has been fully liberalised since 1999 in accordance with the requirements of binding EU Directives. Decisions to Invest in network upgrades to provide high-speed broadband services are undertaken by telecommunications network providers operating in the liberalised market. A decision to invest in a particular area by a particular network operator is a commercial decision for the operator concerned without any requirement to consult with my Department. Unfortunately, therefore, I am not in a position at this time to advise on the planned upgrades by network providers in any particular area. However if the Deputy wishes and provides some more detail on users in the Park, I will be glad to underwrite his representations to the operator.

### National Grid

483. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Communications; Energy and Natural Resources the number of persons who have availed of the offers in relation to Gate 3 project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32139/13]

484. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Communications; Energy and Natural Resources if there is a timescale for persons to take up the offers in relation to the Gate 3 project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32141/13]

485. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Communications; Energy and Natural Resources when Gate 4 project offers will occur; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32142/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 483 to 485, inclusive, together.

Supervision of the grid connection process is vested in the Commission for Energy Regulation. The Gate 3 Direction to System Operators (CER/08/260), published in December 2008, sets out the list of projects to receive grid connection offers. As explained in the Direction, Gate 3 was designed to ensure the 40% target for renewable electricity by 2020 could be achieved, and this was based on an assumption that 5,800MWs of renewable generation would be required. Gate 3 followed Gates 1 and 2, and provided for additional grid connection offers totalling almost 4,000MWs.

Due to changes in economic conditions since the publication of the Gate 3 Direction in 2008, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland estimated for the First Progress Report on the National Renewable Energy Action Plan that the amount of MWs needed to meet the 40%

renewable electricity target has fallen to approximately 4,000MWs.

As regards the take up of connection offers under Gate 3 to date, EirGrid, the Transmission System Operator, has informed my Department that 13 entities have taken up transmission offers in Gate 3. They include 2 conventional generators and 11 wind farm projects. In addition, EirGrid inform me that a significant number of Gate 3 transmission connection offers are under consideration at present. ESB Networks, the Distribution System Operator, states that 32 offers have been accepted under Gate 3 for connection to the distribution system.

Under Gate 3 rules, generators must accept a grid connection offer within 50 business days of receipt of the combined connection offer and constraint report. On this basis, Gate 3 acceptances are scheduled to complete in October this year.

A decision on any potential future Gate has not yet been taken. Any definition of a future Gate will take account of the outcome of the Gate 3 process.

### **Broadband Services Speeds**

486. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will review broadband retention figures that were established with 3, 3.6mbps max on a ratio of 48:1; if he sees an opportunity in taking more bandwidth from a satellite company (details supplied); his views on a person's recent test results; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32171/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The broadband service contracted under National Broadband Scheme (NBS) was designed as a basic, affordable, scalable product in keeping with EU State Aid clearance for the Scheme. Under the terms of the contract which my Department has in place with "3", the NBS service provider, the NBS mobile wireless service is required to offer minimum download and upload speeds of 2.3Mbps and 1.4Mbps respectively, subject to a maximum contention ratio of 18:1. The NBS satellite service, which is utilised in a small number of cases for technical reasons associated with the location of the premises, offers minimum download and upload speeds of 3.6Mbps and 384 kbps respectively, subject to a maximum contention ratio of 48:1. The NBS satellite service was upgraded in July 2012 and there are no further upgrades foreseen within the NBS contract.

As regards service quality, my Department has well-established monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that the NBS delivers the minimum specified service or better to all users. The NBS contract guarantees service levels and imposes a service credit regime on "3", with significant financial consequences in the event that minimum specification service levels are not met. The NBS contract also provides that where NBS customers do not receive the minimum guaranteed service, as set out in the terms and conditions of their contract, they are entitled to service rebates.

Should any NBS customer experience problems with the NBS service, they are advised to contact 3's customer care centre, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, by phone at 1913 (free of charge), via email to [nbssupport@three.ie](mailto:nbssupport@three.ie) or by post to 3 Customer Services, Hutchison 3G Ireland Limited, PO Box 333, Dublin 2.

My Department has a role where customers have fully utilised the established complaints process and consider that their complaint has not been resolved. My officials operate a dedicated NBS mailbox, which NBS customers can contact by email at [nationalbroadbandscheme@dce.nrc.gov.ie](mailto:nationalbroadbandscheme@dce.nrc.gov.ie), with any comments or complaints they may have about their NBS service. My

Department will then liaise with “3” personnel at its Head Office in Dublin to remedy any service performance issues. In this instance, the person referred to in the Question contacted my officials on Tuesday, 25th June last and the details of their complaint were forwarded directly to “3”. I understand that they, in turn, contacted the customer and have commenced a thorough investigation of the issues raised. My officials will remain in touch with “3” and the customer until such time as the service issues are resolved.

### **Broadband Services Speeds**

487. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if his attention has been drawn to the quality of broadband services in the EU report carried out for the European Commission by SamKnows Limited, which revealed that Irish broadband users receive only 84.7% of the advertised download speed and 72.5% of the advertised upload speed; if the situation has changed since the report was issued; if not, if he intends to address false advertising of upload and download speeds in the broadband sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32203/13]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The study undertaken as part of the EU Commission report was completed in March 2012. The report was published in June last. It compares marketed headline speeds for broadband services compared to the speeds experienced by users over cable, fibre and fixed lines in the EU 28, Iceland and Norway.

The comparison across the 30 countries surveyed demonstrates, as a general rule, a common practice of marketing a headline speed of “up to X Mbps”, as a maximum speed which customers can expect. The actual speed available varies for a number of reasons, including the amount of traffic online at any time, any consequential network congestion and distance from any individual premises to the nearest exchange. The actual speeds experienced can also vary depending on the manner in which connections are configured within customers’ premises.

The average download speed accessed in Ireland was above the EU average of 19.47 megabits per second (Mbps) or 74% of marketed speeds. The average upload speed available in Ireland was below the EU average of 6.2 Mbps or 88% of the marketed speeds. Since the survey was undertaken, UPC has rolled out download speeds up to 150 Mbps and upload speeds up to 10 Mbps across its network. More recently, eircom has launched broadband services to make download speeds up to 70 Mbps and upload speeds up to 20 Mbps accessible at 1.2 million premises by 2015. The speeds available in Ireland are therefore increasing since the survey was completed.

The marketing of broadband services in Ireland is governed by the law generally applicable to the sale of goods and services. There is no legislation specific to the marketing of broadband services. The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland, following consultations with the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), and the National Consumer Agency, published guidelines in 2008 on the marketing of broadband services which can be accessed online at <http://www.asai.ie/documents/ASAI%20ADVICE%20NOTE%20ON%20BROADBAND.pdf>. In addition, ComReg is concluding a procurement process to launch a Broadband Speed Information Initiative later this year, which will compile data in respect of actual broadband speeds being experienced by users compared to the speed advertised for individual broadband packages.

### **Housing Adaptation Grant Applications**

488. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the position regarding a housing adaption grant in respect of a person (details supplied). [31547/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan):** Under the terms of the suite of Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability, grants are available to assist households to have necessary repairs or improvement works carried out in order to facilitate the continued independent occupancy of their homes. Three separate schemes are available; the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme and the Housing Aid for Older People Scheme.

The detailed administration of these schemes, including the assessment, approval and payment of grants to applicants under the various grant measures, is the responsibility of the relevant local authority, in this instance Dublin City Council.

### **Animal Breeding Regulations**

489. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of illegal puppy farms believed to be operating here; the steps being taken to close them down; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31613/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The regulation of dog breeding establishments around the country is a matter for local authorities, and, since I commenced the Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 on 1 January 2012, a strong regulatory framework now exists for local authorities to undertake this work.

Statistics in relation to the implementation by local authorities since 2012 of these provisions, and in relation to other dog control activities, are published on my Department’s website at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/StatisticsandRegularPublications/DogControl/>.

The Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 provides that all dog breeding establishments are required to register with the relevant local authority, pay a registration fee and meet a minimum set of veterinary, welfare and other standards.

### **Motor Tax Collection**

490. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government regarding changes to the certificate of roadworthiness regulations, if a nine-seat passenger vehicle, eight passengers plus driver (details supplied) which was previously, for purposes of motor tax, designated as a youth community bus and used for charitable purposes, is now subject to an national car test and consequently liable to motor tax at the same rate as private cars used for private and social use; if it is possible for such a vehicle to continue to be classed as a youth community bus for the purposes of motor tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31723/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** In order to qualify for the youth and community bus motor taxation class, a vehicle must fulfil the following criteria:

- it must be owned by a youth or community organisation,

- it must be used exclusively by the organisation solely for the purpose of conveying persons on journeys directly related to the activities of the organisation,
- it must be constructed or adapted for the carriage of more than 8 persons, and
- it must have seating capacity for more than 8 persons.

In calculating the seating capacity for the purpose of determining the appropriate rate of duty, Article 28 of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 1992 provides that the driver's seat should not be counted.

### **Commercial Rates Issues**

491. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if a facility (details supplied) in County Kerry will be exempted from commercial rates because of its location in an unfinished housing estate where remedial works are due to commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31822/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes, in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. Schedules 3 and 4 of that Act set out properties that can, and cannot, be considered for rating purposes. The Commissioner for Valuation has sole responsibility for all valuation matters, including determination under the Act of relevant property for the purposes of rates.

There is no specific exemption from commercial rates in rating law for property located in unfinished housing estates.

### **Foreshore Issues**

492. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the regulations, guidelines or legislation which are in place on the harvesting of seaweed. [31845/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan):** Section 3 of the Foreshore Act 1933 provides that the removal of any beach material from the foreshore is an activity that requires a foreshore licence. The definition of beach material in the Act includes seaweed, whether the seaweed is rooted on the foreshore or washed up by tidal action.

### **RAPID Programme**

493. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his future plans for RAPID schemes in the context of his realignment proposals under his local government reform agenda; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31462/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) programme

aims to ensure that priority attention is given to tackling the spatial concentration of poverty and social exclusion in RAPID areas nationally. The programme has made substantial progress in identifying the needs of disadvantaged communities and in bringing forward appropriate local projects in response to those needs.

I have provided funding of €2 million for RAPID in 2013, this will be used to meet the Department's existing contractual commitments on RAPID projects throughout the country, mainly Sports Capital top-ups and CCTV systems, jointly funded with the Departments of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Justice and Equality respectively.

I am keen that a focus is continued on the RAPID areas, through the range of local and community development interventions that are available on an area basis. Enhanced alignment between local government and local development is intended to improve the targeting of such local development spend. In that context, there will be an opportunity for a stronger, collaborative focus to be put on support for RAPID areas.

In implementing local government reform decisions, my Department will continue to consult as necessary with relevant stakeholders.

### **Local Authority Services**

494. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide the necessary funding to upgrade the windows, doors and roof of Killarney library, Killarney, County Kerry and if he will arrange for immediate improvements to disability access to enable the library to comply with regulations of the Barcelona agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31497/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Under Section 78 of the Local Government Act 2001, the provision of premises and facilities in the public library service is a matter for each local authority in its capacity as a library authority.

My Department provided funding towards the capital costs of approved new libraries, the refurbishment of existing libraries, and mobile libraries and delivery vans. In this regard, in 2008 my Department requested Library Authorities to provide details of priorities for library development within their area. In its response, Kerry County Council placed Killarney branch library as its third ranked priority. My Department has not received an application for funding in relation to the refurbishment of Killarney library and the 2013 allocation is fully committed.

In 2005, the multi-annual Disability Services programme to assist delivery of the National Disability Strategy by the Department, local authorities and bodies under the aegis of the Department was commenced. Funding was allocated annually to local authorities on the basis of priority areas identified by them in implementation plans. The programme was completed in 2009 with one year's extra funding provided by the Department in 2010. Over €77 million was provided to local authorities between 2005 and 2010. The programme has now ceased and there are no plans for a further scheme.

### **Fire Service Issues**

495. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will indicate the way the authors of the Keeping Communities Safe document

arrived at the manning levels for Dublin as outlined in Appendix One of the document; and his views on whether the levels indicated in the document will have an effect on the standards of operations in the Dublin Fire Service. [31499/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The provision of fire services in a local authority area is a statutory function of the local authority. Under Section 10 of the Fire Services Act 1981, a fire authority is required to make provision for the delivery of fire services in its functional area, including the assessment of fire cover needs and the provision of premises. Under section 159 of the Local Government Act 2001, each county and city manager is responsible for the staffing and organisational arrangements necessary for carrying out the functions of the local authority for which he or she is responsible.

My Department supports fire authorities through setting of general policy, training support and issue of guidance on operational and other related matters, and the provision of capital funding.

I recently adopted and published the policy document Keeping Communities Safe (KCS), which sets the future direction of fire services in Ireland. This is intended to ensure that Ireland continues to manage its fire risk effectively and that our success in reducing fire fatalities, at their lowest level for four decades in 2012, continues.

The KCS policy document was prepared by my Department's National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management through a collaborative approach between central and local government. The national standards that are contained in KCS are in keeping with international good practice and are crucial to a consistent approach across fire services in Ireland. The fire service response is based on the particular incident type at the location given. The PDA (Pre-Determined Attendance) is the initial automatic turnout, but can be varied by the officer in charge. The PDAs are set down by the Chief Fire Officer for each fire authority. However, there is now detailed, at Appendix A to the KCS policy document, a set of nationally determined PDAs which relate to different categories of incident types. It is expected that each fire service, Dublin Fire Brigade included, will review their PDAs in the light of Appendix A and make any necessary adjustments.

### **Water Services Provision**

496. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the working relationship that exists between the group water scheme sector and local authorities will remain in place following the establishment of Irish Water; if capital and subsidy supports to the GWS sector will be protected; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31507/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Under the Water Sector Reform Programme the primary focus of Irish Water will be on the delivery of services to customers on the public water and wastewater networks. My Department will remain responsible for the overall policy, and funding where appropriate, of the non-public sector, including the group water sector.

In order to facilitate the establishment of a new public water utility to take over responsibility for the delivery of water services, a number of work-streams have been set up under the Water Sector Reform Programme to assist with the transition of services to Irish Water. One such work-stream is dealing specifically with issues relating to the Group Water Sector. The

objectives of this work-stream are to ensure that there is clarity of roles and responsibility for the group water sector and other components of the Rural Water Programme and to develop a medium term strategy for the sector.

I expect that this work will be completed shortly and that the issues that are identified in the question will be resolved satisfactorily. Furthermore, it is anticipated that local authorities will continue to have a strong working relationship with the group water sector.

### **Commercial Rates Issues**

497. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to introduce exemptions or waivers from commercial rates for start up businesses. [31522/13]

498. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to introduce exemptions or waivers from commercial rates for the arts and culture sector. [31523/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 497 and 498 together.

Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. Schedules 3 and 4 of that Act set out properties that can, and cannot, be considered for rating purposes. The Commissioner for Valuation has sole responsibility for all valuation matters, including determination under the Act of relevant property for the purposes of rates.

Under the provisions of the Local Government (Rates) Act 1970, a rating authority may make and carry out a scheme, providing for the waiver by the authority of all or a portion of commercial rates due by ratepayers in respect of a specified class or classes of property. The making of such a scheme is subject to my consent as Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. No rate waiver schemes have been consented to in respect of commercial property.

While matters relating to rates are kept under regular consideration in my Department, the operation of the Valuation Act 2001 is a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

### **Commercial Rates Issues**

499. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if new businesses are liable for unpaid commercial rates from previous tenants. [31524/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes, in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority.

Under the legislation, the person liable for payment of rates is the person in occupation of

a rateable property on the date of the making of the rate by the relevant local authority. The owner, rather than the occupier, may be liable for commercial rates if the property in question is unoccupied on the date of the making of the rate. Should a person's occupancy commence after the date of the making of the rate, then that person is not primarily liable for rates for that year. However, as a subsequent occupier, that person can be held liable for up to two years' arrears of rates if they cannot be recovered from the person with whom the primary liability lies.

### **Commercial Rates Write-Offs**

500. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to expand the criteria for the writing off of commercial rates. [31525/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes, in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority. As with all local charges, the invoicing and collection of due amounts is a matter for the local authority concerned to manage in the light of prevailing local circumstances and in accordance with normal accountancy procedures.

Commercial rates are legally payable in two moieties, the first moiety and arrears are payable on the date of the making of the rate, and the second moiety is payable on 1 July. In practice, most local authorities promote the use of direct debit payment facilities and work with businesses to put in place flexible payment options that reflect capacity to pay.

In accordance with the Local Authority Accounting in Ireland Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, issued by my Department under section 107 of the Local Government Act 2001, local authorities are required to make provision for doubtful debts and to write off known uncollectable debts.

### **Fire Service Issues**

501. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the revenue that was received from call out charges for the fire service from 2011 and 2012. [31526/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** My Department does not collect this information. It is a matter for the individual fire authorities concerned.

### **Commercial Rates Valuation Process**

502. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if rates are payable on the old health centre and old swimming pool in Ballymun, Dublin. [31529/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes, in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by

the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The Commissioner for Valuation has sole responsibility for all valuation matters, including determination under the Act of relevant property for the purposes of rates.

The Valuation Act 2001 comes under the aegis of my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

### **Swimming Pool Projects**

503. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the status and future plans for the old swimming pool in Ballymun, Dublin. [31530/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The status and future plans for the swimming pool in question are matters for Dublin City Council. My Department has no direct function or responsibility in the matter.

### **Planning Issues**

504. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the cost of devolving planning back to local authorities; and if he will provide a breakdown of same. [31549/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan):** Local authorities have had statutory responsibility for the operation of the Irish planning system since the introduction of modern planning arrangements under the Local Government (Planning) Act 1963.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

505. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of temporary clerical officers that have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public/civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31572/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** In the three years covering 2011 to 2013, my Department has not engaged any temporary clerical officers.

### **Septic Tank Inspections**

506. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the period of time he envisages it will take to inspect all of the approximately 12,000 septic tanks in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31596/13]

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

**gan):** The Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012 assigns responsibility to the Environmental Protection Agency to make a National Inspection Plan for domestic wastewater treatment systems. The National Inspection Plan 2013: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems was adopted and published by the EPA in February 2013. The Plan has been drawn up to best international standards and will underpin the risk-based inspection of septic tanks and other on-site treatment systems. It also has regard to the European Parliament and Council's recommendations regarding the minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States.

The Plan requires that a minimum of 1,000 inspections nationally are carried out by the Water Services Authorities over the twelve-month period commencing in July 2013 and the EPA will review the Plan at that stage. The numbers of inspections for each county are included in the Plan. The number of inspections in subsequent years will be a matter for the EPA and I have no direct role in these matters.

### **European Parliament Elections**

507. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when the boundaries for the forthcoming European elections will be confirmed following the accession of Croatia; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31620/13]

533. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 60 of 12 June 2012, if in view of a decision taken at European level to reduce Ireland's number of MEPs from 12 to 11 at the next European Parliament elections in 2014, the implications it has on the report; if he is considering forming a new Commission to report on electoral boundaries for next year's European Parliament elections in view of the number of constituencies needing to be revised; if the new report will be taking submissions from the public in a suitable timeframe as per all previous Constituency Commission reports on Dáil and European Parliament boundaries; when submissions will be taken from the public regarding the boundaries; when the Commission will be reporting to Dáil Éireann; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32184/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 507 and 533 together.

On 28 June 2013, the European Council adopted a decision on the composition of the European Parliament for the 2014-2019 parliamentary term. This provides for 11 members to be elected in Ireland, a reduction from the present 12 members.

The Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013, published on 27 June 2013, makes provision for the establishment of a committee to review European Parliament constituencies in the context of a change in the number of MEPs to be elected in Ireland. The provisions generally mirror those in place for a Constituency Commission including the membership but with shorter timelines for receipt of submissions and for presentation of a report to the Chairman of the Dáil.

I intend to establish a committee to review European Parliament constituencies as soon as practicable after enactment of the Bill.

### **Planning Issues**

508. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local

Government the reasons for the establishment of an independent planning enquiry into six local authorities; the estimated cost of such enquiries; the previous estimated cost of such enquiries in 2011; when they were discontinued; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31629/13]

509. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his Department will use the original panel of planning consultants in place in January 2011 for the upcoming independent enquiry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31630/13]

510. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the total cost of the internal review of the planning irregularities conducted by his Department following the discontinuation of the original independent planning inquiry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31631/13]

511. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the timeframe for the new independent inquiry and the safeguards he is putting in place to protect its independence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31632/13]

512. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on the accuracy of the internal departmental review on planning irregularities in six local authorities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31633/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 508 to 512, inclusive, together.

The Planning Review Report I published, on 12 June 2012, was prepared internally by my Department. The only costs therefore were the salary and relevant travel costs of the officials engaged in preparing the report. I committed to having the Report assessed by an independent planning expert and, on 8 March 2013, I published the Independent Evaluation of the Planning Review Report June 2012 prepared by Mr. Hendrik van der Kamp at a cost of €12,096.00. The Planning Review Report produced strong recommendations which have stood up to independent assessment. Both reports are available on my Department’s website *www.environ.ie*.

On 14 June, 2013, the High Court made an Order quashing that part of the Planning Review Report relating to Donegal following a settlement between my Department and another party who had brought judicial review proceedings in respect of that part of the Report. The matter has now been disposed of to the satisfaction of both sides.

I am continuing my efforts to restore public confidence in the planning system by opening up the review process and the system to maximum scrutiny. Accordingly, and for the avoidance of any doubt over the validity of the process to date, I have decided to appoint independent consultants, following a new tendering process to be commenced shortly by my Department, to conduct an independent review of the application of planning practices and procedures in the other six local authorities included in the Planning Review Report in light of the settlement of the judicial review proceedings. I have also sought the Attorney General’s advice on how best to proceed in the case of Donegal County Council.

### **Local Authority Housing Repossessions**

513. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the arrangements that are in place in each local authority to assist those that have fallen into arrears with their mortgage or other loans; if interest only or deferred payments

or other options are offered to borrowers; the number of repossessions obtained or being considered by local authorities in the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31646/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan):** The Government is acutely conscious of the difficulties many households are facing in terms of mortgage arrears. Where any borrower, either from a local authority or from a private financial institution, is facing difficulties in meeting mortgage repayments, they should engage proactively and constructively with the lender to seek to achieve an agreed solution. The services of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service are also available to such borrowers and support is available through the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. Local authorities have long been the lenders of last resort servicing the housing loans needs of less affluent members of society. In the present economic circumstances it is to be anticipated that the ability of some borrowers to service housing loans may become restricted and that a number of loans may fall into arrears. Section 34 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides local authorities with powers to deal flexibly with distressed borrowers, and they have demonstrated sensitivity over the years in dealing with such cases. In March 2010 my Department issued guidelines to local authorities, based upon the Central Bank’s first Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, which continued the tradition of handling arrears in a manner that is sympathetic to the needs of the particular household, while also protecting the position of the local authority concerned. To reflect the content of the Central Bank’s revised Code of Conduct – which replaced the previous code from 1 January 2011 and was informed by the deliberations of the Expert Group on Mortgage Arrears and Personal Debt – my Department issued updated guidance in June 2012 to local authorities in consultation with the County and City Managers Association. This will further enable local authorities to provide a range of flexible repayment options for households in difficulty. In particular, the introduction of a Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), which closely mirrors the suite of options available in the commercial sector, presents borrowers in difficulty with a range of alternative payment agreements, including those referred to, which can be accessed to ease the particular circumstances of each case. This process features a standard set of options including, in cases of certain unsustainable mortgages, the facility of mortgage-to-rent. Local authorities have been restructuring loans for some time using their own internal practices. The introduction of these revised guidelines standardises the approach across the whole sector, introduces a systematic structure to this area and provides borrowers with a transparent and accessible model for arrears resolution.

The total number of forced and voluntary repossessions obtained by local authorities in 2010, 2011 and 2012 are set out in the table:

Table	-	-	-
Repossessions	2010	2011	2012
Forced	16	54	73
Voluntary	73	49	64

### Local Authority Housing Waiting Lists

514. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide in tabular form for each respective year the number of persons from Ratoath, Ashbourne, Dunboyne and Dunshaughlin, County Meath that were taken off the local authority housing list and provided with housing in the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31666/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan):** The information requested is not available in my Department but may be available from Meath County Council, which discharges the statutory function of allocating local authority housing in the county in accordance with the allocation scheme made by the elected members under section 22 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009.

### **Local Government Reform Expenditure**

515. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the amount that has been set aside by local authorities from 2007 to date in 2013 in order to cover the lump sums payable to members of local authorities who retire or fail to retain their seats at the local elections set to take place in 2014; the advice he and his Department have given or will give to local authorities on this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31699/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 and the subsequent Local Authority Members (Gratuity) Regulations 2002 -2006 provide that , subject to certain conditions, a councillor who ceases to be a member of a local authority is entitled to receive a gratuity at, or after, the age of 50.

Where a person ceases to be a member before reaching the age of 50, whether voluntarily or as a result of failure to be re-elected, the gratuity will be paid when the person reaches 50 and will be based on the representational payment applicable at that point. The Local Authority Members (Gratuity) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 allows the gratuity to be paid before age 50 , where retirement is due to permanent infirmity or where the member dies in office.

There is an overall limit of 40 years’ service for the gratuity and *ex gratia* payment combined, with the service reckoned for the purposes of a gratuity calculated first and the residual number of years being used to calculate any *ex gratia* payment. Severance payments, of a type provided for in the ministerial and Parliamentary Offices Act 1938 (as amended), are not paid to any person who ceases to be an elected member of a local authority.

Having regard to the democratic process, it is not possible for local authorities to forecast the number of current elected members who will retire or fail to retain their seats following the forthcoming local elections. In this context, local authorities are expected to be prudent in making a provision for potential gratuity payments in their annual budgets as part of the normal budgetary process.

### **Non-Principal Private Residence Charge Administration**

516. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when legislation to provide for the abolition of the non-principal private residence charge will be completed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31700/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The Local Government (Charges) Act 2009 broadened the revenue base of local authorities by introducing a charge on non-principal private residences. The self-assessed charge is set at €200 and liability for it falls, in the main, on owners of rental, holiday and vacant properties.

2013 is the last year of operation of the Charge; I intend that draft legislation will be introduced following the summer recess to give effect to the cessation of the Charge.

It should be noted, however, that unmet 2009 to 2013 liabilities, and any associated late payment fees, will remain and will be pursued.

### **Housing Assistance Payments Expenditure**

517. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will consider providing extra funding for the housing aid for older people scheme to Limerick City Council in view of the fact that the backlog of applications is such that they are only now dealing with persons who applied in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31716/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan):** On 22 February 2013, I announced capital allocations to local authorities under the suite of Grants for Older People and People with a Disability amounting to €42.750 million. This year I allocated local authorities the full amount of their contractual commitments, which in the case of Limerick City Council amounted to €149,046. The balance of the available funding was allocated on the basis of each authority’s share of the new applications on hand in January 2013. This brought Limerick City Council’s overall allocation to €1,010,885.

A small capital reserve was set aside to deal with any acute or particular difficulty which might arise in the operation of the schemes over the course of the year. Limerick City Council applied for additional funding from this reserve and was notified of a supplementary allocation of €101,990 on 22 April 2013, bringing the Council’s overall allocation for 2013 to € 1,112,875. My Department is closely monitoring expenditure across all the measures under the housing programme. I will consider requests from local authorities for further funds to be allocated to the grants measure in the event of savings arising elsewhere.

### **Leader Programmes Funding**

518. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 165 of 20 June 2013, the date on which his Department decided that childcare facilities were ineligible for Leader funding; the date on which this information was communicated to County Kildare Leader Company; if his Department has had any correspondence from County Kildare Leader Company in relation to this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31720/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** In line with the ‘bottom-up’ approach to rural development under the Leader elements of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, the Local Development Companies (LDCs) are the principal decision-makers in relation to the allocation of project funding. Such decisions are made in the context of the local development strategy of the individual groups and in line with Programme’s Operating Rules and EU regulations. The Operating Rules which issued to all LDCs in March 2009 clearly stated that childcare was ineligible under the Programme.

The project referred to was submitted to my Department in May 2013 for sanction to exceed grant-aid of €150,000. It was at this stage that my Department notified County Kildare Leader Company that it considered the project ineligible as it related to childcare. My Department has

received additional correspondence from County Kildare Leader Company on this project and is awaiting further information from the company.

### **Local Development Companies**

519. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in view of the budget reduction for some of the local development companies and the implications for staff employed by these companies; if it is his intention to put in place funds to allow for redundancy payments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31753/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** There are 51 Local Development Companies (LDCs) contracted, on my Department's behalf to deliver the Local Community Development Programme (LCDP) and the Leader elements of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP) throughout the country. The Local Development Companies (LDCs) are independent companies with their own board of management and memoranda and articles of association. My Department has no role in the internal operations of LDCs and, therefore, does not have a role in relation to staff or employment matters, which are for the Board of the company, as the employer, to manage.

The objective of the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) is to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government, and its agencies, and people in disadvantaged communities. It is a key tool of Government in providing supports for the 'harder to reach' in the most disadvantaged areas and communities. The funding provided under the LCDP may, however, be used towards statutory redundancy costs in certain circumstances. Also, the Department has made a separate Technical Assistance Budget available on two previous occasions, in 2009 and 2011, to fund statutory redundancy costs arising within the Local and Community Development Programme.

In the context of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) each Local Development Company is permitted to spend 20% of its total Programme expenditure on administration and overhead costs including any employment related overheads. There is no additional funding allocation outside of this to cover administration costs and in the context of the RDP there are no plans to introduce any further funds at this time.

However the Government recognises that like all other sectors of our economy, the community and voluntary sector has had to deal with reduced funding and financial shortages in recent years. Issues have arisen around the capacity of the sector to pay redundancy payments. The Government is considering a cash limited scheme to address this issue. Discussions between my Department and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are on-going in that regard and an appropriate memorandum will be brought to Government in due course. Pending a Government decision, provision for a redundancy support scheme for the sector has been made in the Revised Estimates for 2013.

### **Water Meters Installation**

520. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a timeline for the rolling out of water meters and the implementation of water charges on households here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31755/13]

523. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if water calibration and verification of water meters will be part of the installation of water meters by Irish Water and the three companies who will be awarded contracts next month for the installation of water meters throughout the country; if it will be done at household, residential, district and commercial levels as they go about installing over one million meters at a pace of 27,000 per month; if he will outline the measures he is taking to ensure the metering of potable water will be compliant with EU regulations and directives; if he is satisfied that calibration will meet international standards; if he will outline the measures he will take to ensure the international standards will be met as water meters get older; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31936/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 520 and 523 together.

I refer to the reply to Question Nos. 6, 7, 17 and 30 of 12 June 2013 which sets out the time-frame for the rollout of water metering. Water meters used for domestic billing must comply with the EU Measuring Instrument Directive which sets standards of accuracy. This Directive is implemented in Ireland by the Legal Metrology (European Conformity Assessment of Measuring Instruments) Regulations 2007. The Legal Metrology Service of the National Standards Authority of Ireland is the statutory body responsible for regulating and supervising weights and measures, including meters, in Ireland.

### **Social and Affordable Housing Provision**

521. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a further update on the review of the shared ownership scheme operated by local authorities; in particular the annual increases of 4.5% on the rental portion, which is causing considerable financial stress to owners who are trying to manage repayments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31805/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan):** The Government's 2011 housing policy statement announced the standing down of all affordable housing schemes, including the shared ownership scheme, in the context of a full review of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The review of the shared ownership scheme is nearing completion and I expect to publish the review report and recommendations in the coming weeks. In advance of this, I have asked local authorities to refrain from applying the rental portion indexation due on 1 July pending publication of the review report and recommendations.

### **Waste Management Issues**

522. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to a Parliamentary Question of 18 December 2012 regarding charges for plastic bags for segregating waste, when his Department will complete the report he referred to in his reply; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31815/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Charges applied by waste management companies are a matter between those companies and their customers, subject to compliance with all applicable environmental and other relevant legislation, particularly the conditions attached to each waste collection permit issued under the

Waste Management (Collection Permit) Regulations 2007 as amended.

An interdepartmental working group was established under A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management Policy in Ireland, which I published in July 2012, to report to Government with options to minimise the impact of waste charges on low income households. The working group, which comprises representatives of my Department and the Departments of Social Protection, Public Expenditure and Reform, Finance and the Tánaiste's Office, submitted its first report to Government on 11 December 2012. Government considered the report and the working group is continuing to examine the design and implementation of measures to address the issue with a view to submitting a second report to Government shortly.

*Question No. 523 answered with Question No. 520.*

### **Homeless Persons Supports**

524. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will support young persons trapped in homeless accommodation as a matter of priority. [31976/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan):** I recently published a Homelessness Policy Statement in which I outlined the Government's aim to end long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. The statement emphasises a housing-led approach which is about accessing permanent housing as the primary response to all forms of homelessness. The availability and supply of secure, affordable and adequate housing is essential in ensuring sustainable tenancies and ending long-term homelessness.

When I published the statement I announced a set of indicators which will be used to demonstrate the dynamics of homelessness as it is addressed. These indicators will give a clearer picture of homelessness in Ireland and, in quantifying its on-going extent, will support the bringing forward of realistic and practical solutions.

While it is clear that a proportion of funding must be used to provide sufficient bed capacity to accommodate those in need of emergency accommodation, it is equally important that resources are channelled to deliver more permanent responses in a more focused and strategic way. The arrangements for devolving homelessness funding to the lead housing authority in each of the 9 regions in 2013 seek to ensure that the measures being pursued by housing authorities reflect the housing-led approach, that actions are in place towards achieving the target of ending long-term homelessness by the end of 2016 and that evidence to support progress will be presented through the reports on the indicators.

While I acknowledge that the approach to all forms of homelessness, including child, youth and adult homelessness should be fully integrated, my colleague, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is currently overseeing a review of the Youth Homelessness Strategy.

### **Leader Programmes Administration**

525. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding the Leader programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31998/13]

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

**gan):** The new local development governance arrangements contained in Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective local Government reflect a balanced consideration by an expert Steering Group established to consider options for a more integrated and coherent approach to local and community development programming, both at local and national levels. Contrary to the view put forward in the correspondence referred to in the Question, the new arrangements will not have a detrimental effect on local development services or constrain the delivery of those services. Rather the establishment of Socio-Economic Committees in each local authority area will facilitate a more strategic, joined-up approach to local and community development locally. Socio-Economic Committees will bring key local and community development actors together in partnership, with a focus on outcomes rather than organisational boundaries, thus enabling collaborative leadership at local level and, ultimately, improving services for citizens and communities.

Putting People First envisages an enhanced role for local government in local and community development. There is no intention to divert resources from local development to local authorities. Instead, the aim is to facilitate a joint consideration locally as to how those resources might be deployed through more collaborative and co-ordinated approaches, supported by a reformed and enhanced local government sector.

Similarly, there is no intention to undermine the expertise and staffing of local development companies. As key partners on the Socio-Economic Committees, local development companies will continue to have an important role in the delivery of programmes for which they are contracted by my Department and others. Independent of alignment reforms, however, the level of funding for local development programmes is a key issue for implementing bodies, and this remains to be decided as part of the Government's estimates process and in the context of EU budgets.

With regard to Leader, the attempt to draw a distinction between community-led arrangements and local authority-led arrangements is unhelpful and misleading. The Leader or community-led local development methodology, under which an element of Rural Development Programme funding is delivered, envisages 'bottom-up' implementation of local development programming through a partnership of public and private sector socio-economic interests. Local authorities are considered essential partners to such an approach. All Leader implementation arrangements across EU Member States must and do have a significant local authority involvement. Indeed, in other Member States, local authorities are key enablers and drivers of the Leader approach.

At this stage, management and implementation arrangements for future Leader programmes in Ireland are being considered by an Alignment Working Group, comprising local government and local development representatives. While the Group has to complete its work, any new implementation arrangements for Leader and other community-led local development initiatives will be entirely consistent with EU requirements and will seek to secure optimum outcomes for citizens and communities. Any interpretation to the contrary is a misunderstanding of what we are seeking to achieve.

### **Motor Tax Collection**

526. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the proposals he has to ensure that motor tax renewals will be made available throughout the post office network here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32050/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Under existing arrangements, motor tax is payable in person or by post via motor tax offices in twenty nine local authorities. It is also payable online at any time, with some 50% of all vehicle owners now availing of this option.

My Department has asked the local government sector's Programme Management Office, which is developing shared services initiatives in the sector in the context of public service reform, to include an assessment of the implications of a similar approach in the provision of motor tax services. This includes examining options for delivery via commercial outlets, of which there are a number of possible providers. The added value of providing an additional payment path for motor tax will be assessed in the context of maximising the efficiency of the provision of a high quality service to the public.

### **Leader Programmes Applications**

527. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of LEADER project applications, listed on a county basis, that exceed €150,000 in cost and that are currently awaiting approval from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32092/13]

528. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number and percentage of LEADER projects, on a county basis, that were submitted to his Department in the past six months for approval that have been deemed incomplete and sent back to local LEADER groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32093/13]

529. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the timeframe in which full approval can be expected for completed Leader project applications that were submitted to his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32094/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 527 to 529, inclusive, together.

In the context of processing of Axis 3 and 4 (LEADER) applications under the Rural Development Programme (RDP), and in line with the community led nature of the LEADER elements of the programme, my Department only becomes involved in a project once the Board of the Local Development Company (LDC) has approved it and the Board minutes are submitted to my Department for a review of eligibility.

However, for projects that request funding of €150,000 or more, LDCs are required to seek final approval from my Department after Board approval. There has been a significant increase in the number of these types of projects over the last 12 to 18 months and there are currently 42 projects in the Department at various stages of assessment. The assessment of these higher value projects usually involves detailed consultations between my Department and the relevant LDC. Many of these projects have been submitted with insufficient documentation or with documentation that requires some level of clarification.

Projects submitted with incomplete documentation are now immediately returned to the LDC for completion and are categorised as rejected until full documentation is submitted. Prior to this change, my Department worked closely but informally with LDCs to assist them in ensuring that projects submitted were ready for assessment. As many of the consultations with regard to required documentation were informal and primarily within the context of providing

assistance to the LDC, a precise percentage of the number of projects over €150,000 that would have been considered incomplete is not available.

It is estimated, however, that up to 80% of the projects that have been submitted to my Department for final approval to date have required some level of consultation with the LDC regarding the provision of additional information in order to facilitate a full assessment.

It is difficult to give a specific timeframe for completion of the approvals process as it varies on a case by case basis, but generally, once full documentation has been received and all queries on an individual project have been addressed, the assessment process proceeds quickly. My Department is committed to ensuring that the assessment process for these high value projects is as efficient, effective and timely as possible.

The table details the projects awaiting approvals from my Department.

Local Development Company	Date Received	Grant Aid Requested	Stage
Clare Local Development Company Ltd.	18-Jan-13	200,000	Under Assessment
Cavan-Monaghan LEADER	05-Jun-13	177,518	Awaiting Assessment
Comhar na nOileán	30-May-13	182,599	Under Assessment
Comhar na nOileán	07-Jun-13	200,000	Under Assessment
Donegal Local Development Company	18-Apr-13	200,000	Under Assessment
FORUM Connemara Ltd	23-Aug-12	431,888	Under Assessment
FORUM Connemara Ltd.	11-Feb-13	324,766	Under Assessment
Kildare LEADER Partnership	01-Mar-13	200,000	Under Assessment
Kildare LEADER Partnership	03-May-13	356,450	Awaiting information from LDC
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	04-Dec-12	300,000	Awaiting information from LDC
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	05-Nov-12	428,869	Under Assessment
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	16-Jan-13	268,125	Awaiting information from LDC
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	16-Jan-13	497,213	Awaiting information from LDC
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	03-Apr-13	205,867	Under Assessment
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	16-Jan-13	225,000	Awaiting information from LDC
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	16-Jan-13	255,384	Under Assessment
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment

Local Development Company	Date Received	Grant Aid Requested	Stage
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	03-May-13	169,238	Under Assessment
Louth LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	188,055	Awaiting Assessment
Louth LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Louth LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Louth LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Louth LEADER Partnership	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Mayo North East LEADER Partnership	03-Oct-12	194,726	Under Assessment
Mayo North East LEADER Partnership	15-Jul-11	196,387	Under Assessment
North Tipperary LEADER Partnership	16-Jul-12	407,675	Awaiting information from LDC
North Tipperary LEADER Partnership	18-Jan-13	199,994	Under Assessment
Roscommon Integrated Development	27-Feb-13	196,925	Under Assessment
Roscommon Integrated Development	13-May-13	172,093	Under Assessment
Roscommon Integrated Development	28-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
South and East Cork Area Dev Ltd.	13-Mar-13	330,000	Under Assessment
South and East Cork Area Dev Ltd.	28-Nov-12	500,000	Under Assessment
South Kerry Development Ltd.	25-Jan-13	168,393	Awaiting information from LDC
South West Mayo Development	21-Dec-12	200,000	Under Assessment
South West Mayo Development	19-Jun-13	195,115	Under Assessment
South West Mayo Development	26-Jun-13	200,000	Awaiting Assessment
Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd.	12-Mar-13	198,624	Under Assessment

Local Development Company	Date Received	Grant Aid Requested	Stage
Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd.	10-Apr-13	200,000	Awaiting information from LDC
West Cork Development Partnership	11-Mar-13	194,400	Under Assessment
West Limerick Resources Ltd	26-Feb-13	200,000	Under Assessment
Wexford Local Development	31-May-13	193,384	Under Assessment

### Leader Programmes Administration

530. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide on a county basis, the administrative costs of existing Leader Groups for 2013-14 in terms of a percentage of the overall cost of Leader programmes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32095/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** It is not possible to provide precise administration costs in relation to the Axes 3 and 4 (LEADER) elements of the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 (RDP) for 2013/2014 at this time as this will be based on the actual expenditure of the Local Development Companies (LDCs) during the 2013/2014 period.

The Regulations under which the LEADER elements of the RDP operate allow for up to 20% of the total RDP expenditure per LDC to be spent on administration. This is the maximum allowable and all LDCs have been notified that in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness they should aim to come well below this.

The table details the revised allocation per LDC and the maximum administration allowable under the Programme for its operational years i.e. 2009-2014. If the revised allocations change in the future the maximum administration allocation allowable under the Programme will also be amended.

LAG	Revised RDP Allocation	Max 20% Admin based on revised allocation
Avondhu/ Blackwater Partnership Limited	€7,251,112	€1,450,222
Ballyhoura Development Limited	€18,502,053	€3,700,411
Carlow County Development Partnership Limited	€7,444,015	€1,488,803
Cavan Partnership Ltd. & County Monaghan Area Partnership	€9,923,866	€1,984,773
Clare Local Development Company Limited	€16,175,841	€3,235,168
Comhar na nOileán Teoranta	€6,825,171	€1,365,034
Donegal Local Development Company Limited	€12,775,727	€2,555,145

LAG	Revised RDP Allocation	Max 20% Admin based on revised allocation
Fingal LEADER Partnership	€6,217,667	€1,243,533
FORUM Connemara	€7,734,929	€1,546,986
Galway Rural Development Company Limited	€12,211,887	€2,442,377
Inishowen Development Partnership	€7,410,663	€1,482,133
I.R.D. Duhallow	€12,839,050	€2,567,810
Kildare (Cill Dara ar Aghaidh Teoranta)	€10,642,073	€2,128,415
County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Limited	€13,319,465	€2,663,893
Laois Community & Enterprise Development Company	€9,465,731	€1,893,146
Leitrim Integrated Development Company	€10,257,659	€2,051,532
Longford Community Resources Limited	€7,026,574	€1,405,315
Louth LEADER Partnership	€7,075,178	€1,415,036
Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Company Teoranta	€9,535,062	€1,907,012
Meath Partnership	€15,051,583	€3,010,317
North & East Kerry LEADER Partnership Teoranta	€8,937,452	€1,787,490
North Tipperary LEADER Partnership Company	€12,917,884	€2,583,577
Offaly Integrated Local Development Company	€10,828,856	€2,165,771
Roscommon Integrated Development Company	€11,230,957	€2,246,191
County Sligo LEADER Partnership Company	€9,788,645	€1,957,729
South East Cork Area Development Limited	€10,532,187	€2,106,437
South Kerry Development Partnership Limited	€9,998,740	€1,999,748
South Tipperary Local Development Company Limited	€12,405,282	€2,481,056
South West Mayo Development Company Limited	€10,361,827	€2,072,365
Waterford LEADER Partnership Limited	€11,177,988	€2,235,598
West Cork Development Partnership	€12,465,076	€2,493,015

LAG	Revised RDP Allocation	Max 20% Admin based on revised allocation
West Limerick Resources	€9,007,256	€1,801,451
Westmeath Community Development	€8,798,346	€1,759,669
Wexford Local Development	€11,583,749	€2,316,750
Wicklow Partnership	€8,908,698	€1,781,740

### Proposed Legislation

531. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will outline the key measures contained within the Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32167/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013, which was published on 27 June 2013, provides for –

- the transposition of Council Directive 2013/1/EU which amends the nomination requirements in Directive 93/109/EC for EU citizens standing for election to the European Parliament in a member State of which they are not nationals,

- the amendment of the Electoral Act 1992 to provide for the preparation and publication of one register of electors for the 2014/2015 period in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, in which areas members of single new local authorities will be elected at the local elections in 2014,

- the amendment of the Electoral Act 1992 to provide for an improvement in the time allowed for the receipt of applications for inclusion in the supplement to the postal and specials voters' lists on the electoral register in advance of presidential, European and local elections and referendums,

- the repeal of the requirement, in the Referendum Act 1994, for An Post to make copies of Referendum Bills available for inspection and purchase by members of the public, at post offices, in the run up to referendums,

- the amendment of the Electoral Act 1997 to provide for the establishment of a committee to report on European Parliament constituencies in the context of a change in the number of MEP's to be elected in Ireland where a Constituency Commission has presented its report and another is not due to present a report before the date of the next European election,

- the amendment of the Electoral Act 1997 to address an omission in the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 to provide for the application to political parties of the same information requirements in respect of the disclosure of donations that apply to elected representatives and election candidates,

- the amendment of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide, for those planning authorities that are proposed to be amalgamated or abolished under the local government reform programme, discretionary powers to extend the lifetime of the existing development plan and to cease any development plan reviews already commenced. It also provides for those planning authorities that are proposed to be amalgamated, a mandatory obligation to commence a development plan review within 1 year of the making of regional planning guidelines which

affect the area of the development plan, and

- the amendment of the Local Government Act 2001 to provide for the appointment of a dual manager in Waterford County and Waterford City in the context of the decision to amalgamate the local authorities there with effect from the 2014 local elections, matching arrangements already provided for in Limerick and Tipperary.

Further details of these provisions are set out in the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum that was published with the Bill and which are available on the Oireachtas website [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie).

### **Electoral Reform**

532. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 199 of 15 May 2013 and No. 465 of 28 May 2013, the flexibility and restrictions that will be included for postal voters; if the measures will be contained in the Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2013 that will amend the Electoral Act 1992 or the recently initiated Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013; if postal and supplementary voter lists extension date will include Dáil, European, presidential and local elections, as well as referenda; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32179/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The Government legislation programme included the Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2013 which was published on 27 June 2013 with the amended short title of Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013. The Bill provides for the amendment of the Electoral Act 1992 to allow more time for the receipt of applications for inclusion in the supplement to the postal and specials voters' lists on the electoral register in advance of presidential, European and local elections and referendums.

The changes proposed, which are set out in Part 4 of the Bill, will mean that applications for inclusion in the supplement to the postal and special voters lists that are made in advance of the twenty-first day (disregarding any excluded day) before polling day at a presidential, European, or local election, or a referendum will be considered by registration authorities for inclusion in the supplement to the postal and special voters lists for those elections or referendums. No change is proposed to existing provisions for general elections or Dáil bye-elections.

*Question No. 533 answered with Question No. 507.*

### **Local and Community Development Programme Expenditure**

534. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his attention has been drawn to the contents of the value for money report carried out independently on behalf of the Irish Local Development Network which shows a net financial gain to the State arising from the activities of local development companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32197/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** My Department has been in contact with the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) and understands that the report referred to in the Question is still in draft format and has yet to be approved by its Executive Committee. ILDN envisage that this process should be completed

shortly and the report will then be submitted to my Department's Alignment Working Group for consideration.

### **Proposed Legislation**

535. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to annul or withdraw the Local Government (Boundaries) (Town Elections) Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 114/1994); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32202/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Provision will be made in the Local Government Bill 2013, which is currently being drafted, to revoke the Local Government (Boundaries) (Town Elections) Regulations 1994.

### **Community Development Initiatives**

536. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if local authorities are obliged to adopt voluntary sector plans which would facilitate the creation of the best environment for community, voluntary and non-Governmental organisations in each city and county; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32228/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Community and Voluntary Fora exist in each city and county. The 34 Fora were established in association (in the majority of cases) with the establishment of the County/City Development Boards (CDBs) in 2000. One of their key roles is to facilitate the community in making an input to the CDB and local authorities in particular. My Department provides funding to support the Fora in organising meetings, communicating information and providing capacity building/training for Forum members, particularly those representing the socially excluded. The future of the Fora will now be taken forward in the context of alignment of Local Government and Local Development as part of the Local Government Reform Programme Putting People First. Local Authorities are not obliged to adopt voluntary sector plans by the Fora or any other group within the sector.

### **Commercial Rates Impact**

537. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the progress made in addressing the difficulties which small to medium sized businesses located in town and village centres are experiencing in meeting the cost of commercial rates; and if central Government can provide incentives to local authorities to adopt a more flexible job friendly rate mechanism. [32285/13]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes, in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority.

The annual rate on valuation (ARV), which is applied to the valuation for each property determined by the Valuation Office to obtain the amount payable in rates, is decided by the elected members of each local authority in the annual budget and its determination is a reserved

function.

However, I am acutely aware of the pressures on small and medium sized businesses at the present time. Local authorities have been asked by my Department to exercise restraint or, where possible, to reduce commercial rates and local charges for 2013 and have responded well to such requests in recent years. In 2013, 87 out of the 88 rating authorities either reduced their ARV or kept it the same as in 2012.

Local authorities have a leading role in creating a pro-enterprise supportive environment to generate new jobs and sustain existing ones. They are committed to local economic development, and are best placed to meet many of the needs of businesses, in terms of infrastructure, local promotion and other key enabling measures. Under the Action Plan for Jobs, the local government sector has developed a sectoral strategy, Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally, to promote employment and support local enterprise, including measures in the area of business charges, local enterprise and business support arrangements, procurement support, local development and community-based initiatives, the Green Economy and participation in employment support schemes.

The implementation of the Action Programme for Effective Local Government - Putting People First provides an opportunity to achieve a more coherent approach to rates and charges on a county-wide basis, having regard to funding requirements and the need to support employment and business competitiveness.

I will continue to keep the approach to rates by local authorities under active review, and am determined that every avenue will be pursued to optimise efficiency and contain costs in the local government sector.

### **Departmental Bodies**

538. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when the cross-Departmental group on migrant integration was established; if he will provide details of its membership and the number of times it has met to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31983/13]

539. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of times the Ministerial Council on Integration has met; the dates of same and future meetings; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31984/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 538 and 539 together.

The Cross-Departmental Group on Migrant Integration was established in June 2008 and met three times. In addition to my own Department, the membership would include representatives of the Departments of the Taoiseach, Public Expenditure and Reform, Education and Skills, the Environment, Community and Local Government, Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Health, Children and Youth Affairs, Social Protection, Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Central Statistics Office.

The Ministerial Council on Integration was established during the previous administration in the form of regional forums, each of which met once on the following dates: Connacht/Ulster 7 October 2010; Dublin 14 October 2010; Rest of Leinster 1 November 2010; and Munster 11 November 2010.

In this context I am currently giving consideration to what structures may be needed in order to promote migrant integration going forward.

### **Visa Applications**

540. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will outline the current pilot visa scheme that was awarded to Marketing English in Ireland; if he will detail the circumstances and decisions regarding the awarding of the pilot visa scheme to MEI and if public procurement was followed; the date on which this scheme came into effect, the date on which it will end; if and when the scheme will be reviewed by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32153/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** References to these pilot programmes being “awarded” are not correct. These programmes were not awarded to Marketing English in Ireland (MEI) and in that regard there are no public procurement issues arising.

It is Government policy to develop Ireland’s international education services industry, of which the English language tuition sector is an important component. The strategy is overseen by the High Level Group on International Education on which my Department is represented, as indeed is MEI, in its capacity as the largest umbrella body for the language schools. My officials will also regularly meet representative bodies and indeed individual institutions.

At different points MEI highlighted the need to develop the Turkish market for language courses of which Ireland had a negligible share and also to see what might be done in terms of creating a fresh impetus in the very large Chinese market. My Department was supportive of these developments. In 2011 and 2012 pilot programmes in respect of English Language were developed jointly between the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) and MEI for the Turkish and Chinese markets respectively.

Extensive reform of student immigration had taken place in recent years aimed at tackling the abuse of this channel as a facilitator for economic migration. A key element of the pilot programmes therefore was the focus not on numbers but on quality. They sought to target high quality, motivated English language students and aimed to develop the markets in a sustainable way. The programmes focus on a particular student profile, i.e. students with a clearly defined study plan to attend university, university graduates and executive level employees in firms where the candidate’s position would benefit from strong English language skills. The programmes are designed to significantly contribute to the development of Ireland’s reputation as a premier destination for Chinese and Turkish students to achieve a high standard in English language education. Special administrative arrangements were put in place for the programmes with MEI, including monitoring student progress.

These programmes represent additional student immigration offerings but all of the normal student immigration channels for language and other courses remain open also. My Department is also open to similar pilot programmes from non-MEI schools or consortia who can come forward with credible programmes focussed on the same or equivalent student profile and with a commitment to quality service provision.

The programmes are at an early stage and it is important that they be given sufficient time to grow and develop before a final review is undertaken. However, progress under these programmes is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

## **Criminal Prosecutions**

541. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when he expects the book of evidence of those who were involved in illegal trading in Irish banks before the State bank guarantee to be finished; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32154/13]

572. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he has received reports from An Garda Síochána or the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement in relation to the investigation into the banking collapse; if he is satisfied with the progress of the investigations; if there are sufficient resources to progress the investigations; if the investigation teams have in their possession tapes of telephone conversations seized from banks other than Anglo and Irish Bank Resolution Corporation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31987/13]

578. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if the tape recordings of conversations between senior officials of the former Anglo Bank, leaked to journalist Paul Williams emanated from An Garda Síochána; if he intends to conduct an investigation into the circumstances that led to the leak; if this leak could negatively impact on any potential criminal prosecutions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32177/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 541, 572 and 578 together.

As I have stated previously in this House I share the widespread concern that the criminal investigations into the former Anglo-Irish Bank be resolved as soon as possible. However, what is most important now is that nothing be said which would in any way risk the possibility of prejudicing any criminal proceedings.

The Deputies will be aware that a number of Garda investigation files have been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions as have several files from the parallel investigation taking place under the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement. Three persons are currently charged with offences under the Companies Acts and a number of files remain with the DPP awaiting her independent directions.

I am informed by the Garda Commissioner that the investigation into the former Anglo-Irish Bank has been one of the most complex investigations of its kind ever undertaken in the State, and as part of which the Garda have obtained an enormous range of documents and recordings. Immediately upon taking up office I sought and was given assurances that there were sufficient resources available to these investigations and have made it clear to the Commissioner that if at any stage he believed that additional resources were required I would respond immediately. Furthermore, shortly after taking up office I moved to introduce additional powers contained in the Criminal Justice Act 2011, to assist the Garda in obtaining information in complex investigations such as these.

Insofar as the details of the management of the investigations, and of any current or future prosecutions are concerned, including matters relating to the preparation of books of evidence, the Deputies will appreciate that I have no role in this regard, nor would it be appropriate to disclose what evidence the Garda have in their possession in relation to any criminal investigations which they are conducting. I have no function in relation to determining the origin of the tapes referred to and cannot comment on this, other than to say I have no grounds for believing that the material emanated from An Garda Síochána.

## **Garda Vetting Applications**

542. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding Garda vetting in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 13; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31498/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Garda authorities that a vetting application on behalf of the individual referred to by the Deputy was received by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) on 26 February 2013.

The application was processed and returned to the registered organisation concerned on 9 May 2013.

### **Proposed Legislation**

543. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the timeframe within which the Criminal Justice (Prevention of Corruption) Bill 2012 will be introduced into Irish law; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31506/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Corruption) Bill 2012 has been published and is with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. I am informed that this Office has a considerable volume of work on hand, so I am not in a position to give a definitive response as to when drafting of this measure, which is complex and innovative in nature, will be completed.

### **Asylum Support Services**

544. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if a review of the direct provision system for asylum seekers will take place in order to ensure that international human rights standards are adhered to; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31519/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am satisfied that the system of direct provision and dispersal, which was established in 1999, is in compliance with human rights obligations placed on the State by domestic and international law.

The Government policy of Direct Provision for asylum seekers ensures that a suitable standard of accommodation, food, medical and other services is maintained. This is a fair system for meeting the needs of asylum seekers in a cost-effective manner. It is line with asylum seeker reception arrangements in other EU countries and indeed, in some cases, it is of a much higher standard.

Over the years, the direct provision system has been open to scrutiny by many international bodies. Centres have been visited by various UN bodies, including the UNHCR, I appeared before the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva in connection with its scrutiny of Ireland under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Process In October, 2011. No recommendation was made in relation to the Direct Provision system in the Committee's subsequent UPR report on Ireland.

All accommodation centres under contract to the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) of my Department are obliged to ensure that their premises comply with and operate in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements of local authorities in relation to planning, building, bye-laws, bedroom capacity, food, food hygiene, water supply, sewage disposal, fire precautions, and general safety.

More broadly, the rights of residents in RIA centres are, put simply, protected in three ways:

(a) RIA's House Rules and Procedures which set out the type and standard of service that an asylum seeker should expect whilst residing in direct provision accommodation. The Rules set out the entitlements and obligations placed on centre management and on residents and, in the event that these aren't being met, a complaints procedure to be invoked by either party. This complaints system is considered by RIA to be broadly in line with the guidelines set out by the Office of the Ombudsman for 'internal complaints systems'.

(b) Over and above the House Rules themselves, the interests of asylum seekers are protected through regular 'clinics' in centres where residents can speak directly to RIA headquarters staff without local centre management being present.

(c) Inspections take place in centres, by RIA staff and by QTS, to ensure that centres are adhering to their contractual obligations. It cannot be emphasised enough that all inspections are unannounced. Inspections are not to be confused with ordinary day-to-day visits to centres by RIA staff in connection with operational, health or educational matters where management would know of their arrival in advance.

### **Family Reunification Applications**

545. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31550/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to by the Deputy, made a Family Reunification application in March 2012. The application was forwarded to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) for investigation as required under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996. The investigation was completed by ORAC on 5th June 2012 and a report was forwarded to INIS. As a result of matters arising from the ORAC report, the application was returned by INIS to ORAC for further investigation and an addendum to the ORAC report was received by INIS on 31st May 2013. The application is currently under consideration by INIS and the decision reached will be communicated to the person in question in due course.

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.

### **Citizenship Applications**

546. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of application for citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31551/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to by the Deputy was received in the Citizenship

Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in January, 2010 and I decided to refuse the application. The person concerned was informed of this and the reasons for it in a letter issued on 7 August, 2012.

The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. One such condition is that I must be satisfied that the applicant is of good character.

There is no record of a new application having been submitted by the person concerned.

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### **Residency Permits**

547. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 2; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31552/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned is the subject of a Deportation Order, made on 15th July, 2011, following a comprehensive and thorough examination of his asylum claim and his application for subsidiary protection and the detailed examination of the representations he submitted for consideration under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended). Subsequently, in March, 2012, the person concerned sought a right of residency in the State, accompanied by a right to work, based on the principles set out in the Zambrano Judgment. This request is under consideration at present. Once a decision has been made, this decision, and the consequences of the decision, will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned. In the mean-time, as a person subject of a valid Deportation Order, the person concerned is legally obliged to comply with any reporting requirements placed on him by the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

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.

### **Residency Permits**

548. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin who is requesting that divorce documentation from Nigeria be recognised; the additional information that is required to bring the matter to a conclusion; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31553/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned was granted temporary permission to remain in the State under stamp 4 conditions on 24 March, 2005 for an initial two year period, under the revised arrangements applicable to the non-EEA national parents of Irish born children born in the State before 1 January, 2005, more commonly known as the IBC/05 Scheme. In 2007 the permission was renewed for three years. The Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) renewed her permission to remain subsequently in 2010. She was registered by GNIB on 28 February 2013, with the latest renewal period expiring on 10 March, 2015.

I should add that I am not aware of any issues relating to the divorce documentation of the person concerned with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). With regard to naturalisation, I can inform the Deputy that the application for naturalisation of the person concerned has entered the final stage of processing and I intend to grant citizenship. The person concerned has been invited to attend a citizenship ceremony on 4 July 2013, at which she will make a declaration of fidelity to the Irish Nation and loyalty to the State and receive her certificate of naturalisation.

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.

### Residency Permits

549. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow who arrived in 2004 and whose passport was seized by immigration in 2004 and who has a spouse and two children in this jurisdiction; when the passport will be returned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31554/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to is the subject of a Deportation Order. The person concerned has no application for residency pending and there is no evidence that the person's passport was seized by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. The person concerned has had his case considered under Section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended and under Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996, as amended. Refoulement was not found to be an issue in this case. In addition, no issue arises under Section 4 of the Criminal Justice (UN Convention against Torture) Act, 2000. Consideration was also given to private and family rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Deportation Order was signed on 3 May 2012. One of the requirements of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must present to the Garda National Immigration Bureau on an appointed date, to date the person concerned has not presented and is therefore classed as an evader. The person concerned remains in the State illegally. The effect of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must leave the State and remain thereafter out of the State. The enforcement of the Deportation Order is an operational matter for the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

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.

### **Naturalisation Applications**

550. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of residency/eligibility for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31556/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned is a sibling of an Irish born child of non-EEA parents born in the State prior to 1 January, 2005. The person concerned was granted temporary permission to remain in the State on stamp 4 conditions on 27 March, 2013 for an initial three year period.

It is open to any individual to lodge an application for citizenship if and when they are in a position to meet the statutory requirements as prescribed in the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 as amended.

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.

### **Naturalisation Applications**

551. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31558/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned has been granted permission to remain in the State for the period to 7th December, 2014. This decision was conveyed in writing to the person concerned by letter dated 7th December, 2012.

It will be open to the person concerned to apply to the Citizenship Division of my Department for a Certificate of Naturalisation when she is in a position to meet the lawful residency criteria applicable to the lodgement of such applications. Details on the criteria to be met by persons lodging such applications are available from my Department's Website ([www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)).

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.

### **Citizenship Applications**

552. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31560/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned currently has permission to remain in the State until 11th April, 2014. This decision was conveyed to him by letter dated 24th April, 2012.

I am advised by the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that no application for a Certificate of Naturalisation has been received from the person concerned. However, it will be open to the person concerned to apply for a Certificate of Naturalisation when he is in a position to meet the lawful residency criteria applicable to the lodgement of such applications. Details on the criteria to be met by persons lodging such applications are available from the INIS Website ([www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)).

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 the INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

### **Citizenship Applications**

553. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of an application for citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare. [31561/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that a valid application for a certificate of naturalisation was received from the person referred to by the Deputy in May, 2012.

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.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

554. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality to outline the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department in each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public or civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31577/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** A small number of Temporary Clerical Officers have been recruited over the last three years to provide cover for priority vacancies, or, additional resources for priority short term projects that could not be managed within existing resources. Officers were appointed from the open competition run by the Public Appointment Service (PAS) for temporary clerical positions in the Public Service. Appointments were for periods ranging from 9 to 12 weeks.

The competition runs in compliance with the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. It is broadly confined to Citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) States. Some exclusions apply, for example those who availed of the incentivised scheme for early retirement are precluded under that scheme from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Civil/Public Servants in receipt of pensions other than from the above incentivised scheme pensions are not precluded from participating, however, pension abatement rules would apply.

Thirty eight appointments were made in 2013, twenty six in 2012 and twenty eight in 2011. Information on whether any of the officers appointed in 2011/ 2012 were retired Civil/Public Servants is not readily to hand. I can, however, say that only one of those appointed in 2013 is currently in receipt of a Civil/Public Service pension. Two others have preserved pensions in respect of previous service.

Pension policy is a matter for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. It is worth noting, however, that the age profile of the thirty eight appointed in 2013 showed a broad range of ages with fourteen aged 18 to 25, thirteen aged 26 to 35, five aged 36 to 45 and six aged 46 or over. I am advised by the Human Resources Division in my Department that this would be broadly consistent with previous years.

### **Court Accommodation Provision**

555. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will confirm that there will be no change to the status of Clones District Court, County Monaghan, as the court building has modern facilities and the court services a large part of County Monaghan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31582/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I wish to inform the Deputy that under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998, management of the courts is the responsibility of the Courts Service which is independent in exercising its functions, which includes the provision of accommodation for court sittings.

However, in order to be of assistance to the Deputy, I have had enquiries made and have been informed that the Courts Service has been reviewing all aspects of its organisational and operational structures throughout the country with the specific objective of ensuring that the Service can continue to maintain the delivery of front line court services and an appropriate level of service to court users. I understand that no court venue has been singled out for or indeed exempted from the review.

In the context of that review, Clones courthouse was identified as a venue that should be

considered for closure subject to a detailed assessment and the preparation of a business case. Through this process the Service has established a general framework within which such venues are being assessed taking into account a range of criteria such as caseload, proximity to an alternative venue, physical condition of the building, availability of cells etc. The likely impact on other Justice agencies, such as An Garda Síochána and the Irish Prison Service, is also taken into account.

A consultation process in relation to the future of Clones courthouse, which included consultation with the judiciary, the Legal Aid Board, the Monaghan Solicitors Bar Association, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service and Clones Town Council was completed. The Minister has been informed that following the consultation process the Building Committee of the Courts Service Board decided to recommend closure of Clones Court to the Board. As part of the consultation process all those who had been consulted previously were informed of the recommendation of the Building Committee and were invited to make further submissions which would be placed before the Board for consideration. In addition, a senior official from the Courts Service met a delegation from Clones Town Council on 28 June 2013. I am informed that additional submissions have been received from local interests and these together with all previous submissions will be taken into account in the decision making process in which, as the Deputy is aware, I have no role as it is a matter for the Courts Service Board under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998.

I am informed that the matter of Clones Court was due to be considered at a meeting of the Board which was to be held yesterday and in that context I have asked the Courts Service to advise the Deputy of the outcome as soon as possible.

### **Asylum Applications**

556. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality to outline the position regarding an application for subsidiary protection in the case of persons (details supplied) in Dublin 15 dating back to 2002; the reason for the delay; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31644/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** Following the failure of their asylum claims, the persons concerned proceeded to submit applications for subsidiary protection. These applications were approved with the consequence that the persons concerned have been granted permission to remain in the State for the period to 30th April, 2016. These decisions were conveyed in writing to the persons concerned by letters dated 30th April, 2013.

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.

### **Compensation Awards**

557. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will receive payment under the criminal injuries compensation; the reason for the delay in issuing this payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31648/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The Deputy should note that under the terms of the Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal is entirely independent in the matter of individual applications under the Scheme. However, in order to be of assistance in the matter I have had enquiries made with the Tribunal on his behalf.

I understand that the application referred to by the Deputy is being actively processed by the Tribunal at present and that the file will be ready for submission to a Tribunal member for decision shortly. At this stage of the process, I understand that it is not possible for the Tribunal to estimate a time-frame for the actual payment of any award.

### Private Security Authority Remit

558. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when regulations will come into place in respect of regulation and licensing for the event security sector which would cover companies and their staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31693/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** As the Deputy may be aware, the Private Security Authority (PSA) is the statutory body responsible for the licensing and regulation of the private security industry. The PSA has adopted a phased approach to licensing and it proposes to commence the licensing of event security contractors in the first instance, with the licensing of employees to follow.

I can inform the Deputy that the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel is currently working on the draft Private Security (Licensing and Standards) (Event Security) Regulations. As soon as that process is complete, the relevant Statutory Instrument will be finalised, hopefully in the coming months. The Regulation will *inter alia* set minimum standards for contractors working in the event security sector and will, I believe, be of great benefit to both the industry and the public in general.

### Visa Applications

559. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if persons (details supplied) will be granted a holiday visa to attend a wedding here in the coming weeks. [31695/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am pleased to inform the Deputy that the visa applications referred to have been approved.

Queries in relation to general immigration matters 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.

### Missing Persons Hotline

560. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality to detail the organisations or persons that are being funded from Government sources to provide a missing

persons helpline and the amount received by each; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31710/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** Missing in Ireland Support Services (MISS) is a non-profit organisation which provides support to families and friends of Missing Persons. They have been receiving funding from the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime since 2007. The funding is used to pay the salary and other costs of their Helpline Co-Ordinator who co-ordinates support activities and builds awareness among the public of their service and provides administrative support to the organisation. The MISS helpline, catering to families and friends of all missing people is a different service to the 116000 number.

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime has allocated €26,200 in funding to MISS since 2011 as outlined in the table and my Department also provides accommodation for MISS.

Year	Amount granted
2013	€8,600
2012	€8,600
2011	€9,000

### Missing Persons Issues

561. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality to set out the number of cases of missing persons that remain unresolved for five years and more; the action being taken to solve these cases; his views on establishing a special missing persons unit; if he will or is funding ongoing collaboration with other specialist units outside of Ireland to assist in the investigation of these cases; if there is a joint approach in place by the Garda and Health Service Executive to give ongoing assistance to those families traumatised by such an event; the actions taken to date by the Garda in the Jo Jo Dollard case; if he will confirm that the line of communication is ongoing with the family; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31722/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Garda authorities that the total number of persons recorded missing for over five years, and who remain untraced, up to and including 28 June, 2013 is 603. It should be noted that this figure is provisional, operational and liable to change.

As I have previously advised the Deputy, all incidents where persons have been reported missing remain under investigation until such time as the person is located. An Garda Síochána reviews missing persons cases on a regular basis. The District Officer (Superintendent) in the area where a person has gone missing takes direct responsibility for all investigations and searches carried out. Local investigation teams are appointed by the District Officer, and all means necessary, including the services of specialist units, are deployed to assist in these investigations, as considered appropriate. The services of Interpol and Europol can also be availed of during such investigations, if necessary.

The Deputy will also be aware that the Garda Missing Persons Bureau, which is responsible for all data relating to missing persons, provides expert assistance and advice to District Officers in all high risk missing person cases. The Garda authorities are satisfied that adequate resources, including staff and technology, are in place to deal with this issue and investigations are carried out in line with international best practice.

A joint protocol is in place with the Health Service Executive (HSE) providing a strategic and uniform approach to the issue of children who are reported as missing from care, with the overall objective of reducing such incidents, preventing such children from suffering harm and returning them to safety as soon as possible.

I am informed that the case referred to by the Deputy remains under active investigation. I am, of course, conscious of the continuing distressing impact on family and friends when a person goes missing and am assured that Garda liaison is being maintained with the family concerned.

### Prison Committals

562. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the cost to the State of imprisoning persons who fail to pay fines imposed by the courts; the number of such cases in the past three years; if an easy payment system will be put in place to accommodate those that simply cannot pay; if consideration has been given to this matter; if so, if he will outline the action he intends to take; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31726/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I refer the Deputy to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 541 on Tuesday, 28th May, 2013 a copy of which follows. By way of update, the legislation for payment and recovery of fines now known as the Fines Payment and Recovery Bill will be published shortly.

*I can inform the Deputy that the number of committals to prison for non-payment of a court order fine in 2012 was 8,304. The corresponding figures for 2011 and 2010 were 7,514 and 6,683 respectively. Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide the cost for each case as this would necessitate a manual search of each record and would require a disproportionate and inordinate amount of staff time and effort which could not be justified where there are other significant demands on resources.*

*It should be noted that the number of persons imprisoned at any time for non-payment of fines constitutes an extremely small part of the prisoner population. To illustrate this point, there were 16 persons in custody on 27 May, 2013 for non-payment of a fine out of a total prison population of 4,245.*

*I am committed to pursuing alternatives to custody. I am strongly of the view that we need to keep the numbers of people committed to prison for the non-payment of fines to the absolute minimum.*

*I have already legislated to require judges to take a person's financial circumstances into account when setting a fine. Work is now well underway on further major reforms to the fine payment and recovery system in Ireland. The Fines (Amendment) Bill, which I expect to publish this term will, when enacted, make it easier for people to pay a fine and where they fail to do so, there will be sufficient options available to the courts in the form of, for example, attachment of earnings, community service, or recovery orders. I believe these measures, taken together, will substantially reduce the incidence of committal to prison for the non-payment of fines.*

### Road Safety Statistics

563. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of motor vehicles accidents in 2012, fatal and non-fatal, that occurred when learner drivers were

unaccompanied on a learner's permit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31729/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I have requested a report from the Garda authorities in relation to the matter referred to by the Deputy. I will contact the Deputy directly as soon as the report is to hand.

### **Peace Commissioners**

564. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the actions that are required to be taken by a Peace Commissioner who wishes to update records with new contact details and address; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31731/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I can inform the Deputy that any Peace Commissioner who wishes to update their records can contact the Peace Commissioner Unit in my Department who will be happy to assist.

### **Crime Prevention**

565. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will confirm recent reports that the Garda Síochána community text alert scheme will be set up in the Garda R district; if so the details of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31739/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Garda authorities that a Text Alert crime prevention initiative is being developed under the auspices of An Garda Síochána, Muintir na Tíre, Neighbourhood Watch, the Irish Farmers Association and related stakeholders. I am further informed that the initiative is being piloted in a number of locations so as to inform the development of an overall text alert policy and that this process is an advanced stage. I expect that further details in this regard will be available from the Garda authorities in due course.

### **Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission Issues**

566. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 169, the legislative basis upon which he feels he is not in a position to comment on the specific property, a braille reader, which is subject to a complaint to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission. [31788/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission is an independent body which was established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to receive complaints made by members of the public concerning the conduct of members of the Garda Síochána. Complaints fall to be examined in accordance with the provisions of the 2005 Act and any related protocols or agreements.

The Ombudsman Commission is independent of the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to the operation of its functions. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on any matter which is being examined by the Ombudsman Commission.

### **Court Orders**

567. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the steps he will take to ensure that maintenance orders are enforced and the moneys awarded to families are paid up as requested by the courts; and if he has any plans to improve this situation. [31790/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The law contains a number of provisions to ensure that payments are made by spouses in support of their dependent spouses and children. These include enabling powers for the courts to order attachment of the earnings of a debtor spouse, to order the securing of payments to the maintenance creditor, to order the payment of lump sums and to order arrears of maintenance to be paid by instalments.

As the Deputy may be aware, following my appointment I introduced amending legislation in Section 31 of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 which provided for the amendment of the Family Law (Maintenance of Spouses and Children) Act 1976. The amendment, which came into effect on 2 August, 2011, provides for the insertion of two new sections into the 1976 Act which set out procedures to be followed in the District court regarding arrears of maintenance payments and confers power on the District Court to regard as contempt of court a failure by a maintenance debtor to comply with a previous court order and to deal with such a breach accordingly, including by means of imprisonment.

In addition, the enforcement of maintenance orders from abroad is provided for in the Maintenance Act 1994, which enabled Ireland to ratify the UN Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance Payments (the New York Convention), which came into effect for Ireland in November 1995. EU countries are covered specifically by Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009 on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and cooperation in matters relating to maintenance obligations. Under both instruments, a Central Authority has been established in my Department to facilitate the transmitting and receiving of maintenance claims to the relevant authorities for enforcement.

### **Proposed Legislation**

568. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will ensure that legislation is urgently implemented to regulate the admission of counselling notes in sexual abuse cases. [31792/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** It is my intention that this issue will be addressed in the forthcoming Sexual Offences Bill, which is at an advanced stage of preparation in my Department.

### **Magdalen Laundries Issues**

569. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the redress scheme in place for the survivors of the Magdalen laundries, following on from the Dr. Martin McAleese report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31953/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The publication of the Quirke report and the Government's acceptance in full of all of the recommendations contained in it marks the culmination of a process I initiated in March 2011 following my taking office as Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence. It reflects my promise to the women who resided and worked in the Laundries to see justice done.

The process I initiated resulted in an unprecedented trawl of papers and records held by the

State and State agencies to assist in establishing the facts about the Magdalen laundries and gave everyone a unique opportunity to detail what they knew. The work of the Inter-departmental Committee chaired by Dr. McAleese provided the platform for the apology made by the Taoiseach on 19 February 2013 and for the Government decision to ask Judge Quirke to devise a scheme.

It is clear that Judge Quirke focused on the needs of the women he met during the examination he was asked to conduct by the Government. The recommendations contained in his report, which the Government approved in full, centre around the provision of payments and benefits best suited to meeting these individual needs.

His most immediately significant recommendation in the report is that the women in question should all receive cash payments in the range €11,500 (duration of stay 3 months or less) to €100,000 (duration of stay of 10 years or more). If the cash payment due is above €50,000, Justice Quirke recommends that it should be paid in the form of a lump sum of €50,000 plus an annual payment related to the notional remaining lump sum to be paid weekly. The amount to be paid depends on the duration of stay of a resident in a Magdalen home.

The traditional approach in this jurisdiction has been for the payment of a once off lump sum. Judge Quirke in his report took a different approach and recommended a lump sum payment combined with a series of ongoing benefits and payments. As regards income payments in particular he stated:

*“The Commission is concerned to protect, for the benefit of those vulnerable women, the resources which they will acquire when they receive monetary payments arising out of the proposed Scheme. It has been necessary for the Commission to seek to balance the needs and interests of those elderly vulnerable women with the needs and interests of the many other Magdalen women who are younger, healthier, more energetic and more independent. In order to achieve that balance the Commission has taken the view that the needs and interests of the Magdalen women would be best addressed by making any ex gratia payments in excess of €50,000 payable to the women as tax free weekly income for the remainder of their lives.”*

His other recommendations cover a range of issues including:

- the provision of an extensive range of community based health and social services to each individual woman;
- all Magdalen women who have reached pensionable age should have an income equivalent to the State contributory pension;
- all Magdalen women who have not reached pensionable age should have an income of at least €100 per week;
- cash payments should be exempt from income and other taxes and should not be taken into account for the purposes of means testing.

Mr Justice Quirke is to be thanked for taking on this task. The report itself is very thorough and impressive. I know that he consulted widely on the issue. He and the people who assisted him did an excellent job in devising a scheme that meets the particular needs of the women in question and which the Government had no hesitation in approving Judge Quirke's recommendations are interconnected.

570. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will rectify the situation where a garda can issue fines for offences against a person (details supplied) without any prior confrontation. [31956/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Garda authorities that, based on the information supplied by the Deputy, they cannot provide material for an accurate response to the matter in question.

If the Deputy wishes to supply material to clarify the matter I will request a further report from the Garda authorities and contact him again when the report is to hand.

### **Citizenship Applications**

571. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he considers it just or fair that a person (details supplied) should be advised of the postponement of his citizenship ceremony one week prior to it occurring, having been previously advised that all was in order having been scheduled for 4 July next; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31961/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** A letter issued to the person referred to by the Deputy on 25 March, 2013 informing him it was intended to grant his application for a certificate of naturalisation. The applicant submitted the requested documents and an invitation issued to him to attend a citizenship ceremony on the 4 July, 2013.

In the interim and before the formal certificate of naturalisation was prepared further information came to light which requires to be considered before a final decision is made in this case. I do not want to pre-empt the outcome of these considerations except to say that officials in my Department will be in contact with the person as soon as possible regarding his application status.

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.

*Question No. 572 answered with Question No. 541.*

### **Legislative Programme**

573. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the date on which the Immigration, Residency and Protection Bill will be introduced. [32054/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** Subject to having to deal with the competing legislative demands of our EU/IMF/ECB Programme commitments, I hope to be in a position to bring a revised Bill to Government for approval and publication before the end of the year.

## Judicial Council Legislation

574. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will respond to a query from a person (details supplied) regarding the proposed judicial council Bill. [32076/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am happy to be able to inform the Deputy that this personal inquiry has been responded to directly through my Private Office. The reply reiterated the Programme for Government commitment to “*legislate to establish a Judicial Council, with lay representation, to provide an effective mechanism for dealing with complaints against judges*” and that this commitment is being given expression in the form of the proposed Judicial Council Bill. As well as providing for the establishment of a Judicial Council and Board that will promote excellence and high standards of conduct by judges, the proposed Bill is aimed at providing a means of investigating allegations of judicial misconduct supported by the establishment of a Judicial Conduct Committee which will have lay representation. Having considered the Bill in light of the considered views of the judiciary and in relation to current Government policy, I am happy to confirm that work on the drafting of the new Bill continues in conjunction with the Offices of the Attorney General and of Parliamentary Counsel. Under the Government’s Legislation Programme publication of the Bill is expected later this year.

## Garda Vetting of Personnel

575. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will reduce the timeframe it takes to secure Garda vetting for employment; if he will make this clearance transferable between different employers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32097/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Garda authorities that the current average processing time for applications is approximately 14 weeks from date of receipt. However, seasonal fluctuations and the necessity to seek additional information on particular applications can result in this processing time being exceeded on occasion. All organisations registered for Garda Vetting are aware of the processing time-frames for the receipt of Garda vetting and have been advised to factor this into their recruitment and selection process.

A vetting disclosure is made in response to a written request and with the permission of the person who is the subject of that request. Garda vetting disclosures are issued to specified organisations registered with GCVU for that purpose in respect of a particular post or employment. The Unit processed approximately 328,000 vetting applications on behalf of these organisations in 2012.

The disclosure is made to the requesting, registered organisation of the position at the time when it is issued. Each time a new vetting application is received, a full vetting check is conducted to ensure that the most recent data available is taken into account. The non-transferability and contemporaneous nature of the certificate protects against the risk of fraud or forgery and is a guarantee of the integrity of the vetting service. It also affords the registered organisation the facility to assess suitability based on the most up to date information available on the applicant.

I remain in ongoing contact with the Garda Commissioner as to how best the service can continue to be delivered and improved upon, while at all times protecting the integrity of the

process. Clearly, the protection of children and vulnerable adults is the primary objective of the Garda Central Vetting Unit and this must remain the case.

The possibility of introducing an e-vetting system has been assessed and the Garda authorities are now in the process of developing a system which will enable vetting applications to be submitted electronically through a secure web service. In addition, the system will facilitate the checking and monitoring of applications. The relevant work is being pursued on a priority basis and it will be completed as quickly as possible.

The Garda Commissioner has informed me that there are currently 1 Superintendent, 3 Sergeants and approximately 136 civilian personnel assigned to the Garda Central Vetting Unit. This civilian complement includes 23 staff recently transferred from Department of Agriculture. In addition, a further 31 have been assigned to the Vetting Service from various other locations in the public service. These staff members are currently undergoing training with the first cohort due to have completed their training by 15 July and the last by mid-September.

When these staff have been fully trained on the vetting process I expect there will be a positive effect on vetting times. My Department is also examining the scope for the redeployment of additional personnel from within the public service to the Unit.

### **Student Visas Applications**

576. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current waiting time for the processing of student visa applications for the purposes of studying here; his views on whether this waiting time is comparable and competitive with other nations competing for international students to come to study; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32151/13]

577. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the waiting period for the processing of student visa applications for the purposes of studying here in each month for the years 2009 to 2012 and to date in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32152/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 576 and 577 together.

I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that dedicated overseas visa offices staffed by persons seconded from INIS to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade process the bulk of study visa applications. For example, in Turkey and Abu Dhabi the average waiting period is 1 to 2 weeks with a success rate of 93% and 88% respectively. Applications made in Beijing and London take on average 20 days to process with a success rate of 88% in Beijing.

I am advised that these processing times compare favourably with international standards. The issue here of course is balancing the need to maintain sensible immigration controls with the requirement to facilitate as quickly as possible bona fide applications. In the circumstances, a turn around time on decision making on these cases within a few weeks is not excessive and should be weighed against the fact that individual decisions are often life changing events for very many applicants.

The Deputy may wish to note that not all international students are visa required, many originating from within the EU. Visa applicants are advised to apply eight weeks before the intended date of travel, however, this advice is mainly precautionary. Although the processing

time for dealing with visa applications can vary depending on the particular circumstances of each individual case and the level of investigation required, it would be quite rare for a straight-forward visa application to take eight weeks to process. The timescales for study visas as outlined above demonstrates this.

Regarding the Deputy's request for the monthly breakdown of the processing times, I am advised by my officials in the Visa Division of my Department that compilation of the detailed information requested by the Deputy would involve a disproportionate amount of staff time and resources which could not be justified in the circumstances.

*Question No. 578 answered with Question No. 541.*

### **Garda Vetting Applications**

579. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 449 of 25 June 2013, if he will commence an investigation into the way two convictions in two different districts were incorrectly applied to the persons in question; if these convictions as issued to the potential employer taken off the PULSE system; the Garda officer that inputted them; and the reason for same. [32185/13]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** As previously stated, on receipt of correspondence questioning the veracity of this information, further enquiries were conducted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit. It was established that due to an administrative error on the Garda PULSE System, two court outcomes were incorrectly attributed to the person concerned. Following the discovery of this error an amended Garda Vetting Disclosure was issued to the Registered Organisation in question on the 15 May 2013 containing the correct details.

I am informed by the Garda Authorities that further enquiries into the matter are ongoing, and it would therefore not be appropriate for me to make any further comment on the issue at this time.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

580. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Defence the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public or civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31570/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** My Department has not employed any temporary clerical officers in the past three years.

### **Official Engagements**

581. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Defence if he will outline the details of his address to the 30th International Workshop on Global Security in Paris, France on 24 June 2013; if he will detail the bilateral meetings and other engagements he had at the conference; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31640/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The theme of the 30th International Workshop on Global Security, held in Paris on 24 June 2013, was Peace and Security — The Challenges Ahead. In my address, I focused on the key security challenges facing the European Union. Noting that the international security environment has changed profoundly in recent decades, I stated that active and positive engagement is required by all in order to safeguard the security of individual Member States and that of the Union. I stated that threats like terrorism, uncontrolled migration, cyber attacks and people and drug trafficking are not purely military and, therefore, an overarching or comprehensive approach is required to tackle security issues. I stated that, throughout Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the issues of security challenges and threats facing the Union were discussed, in particular in relation to Maritime Security and Cyber Security. In relation to Maritime Security, I highlighted the importance of building EU-wide consensus and cooperation in relation to security and surveillance in the maritime domain. I noted that the many threats and challenges to the maritime domain have the potential to impact adversely on the security and safety of the Union as a whole and on our citizens and economies. To understand the risks, challenges and vulnerabilities that we face in this regard, it is necessary to have a full picture of what is happening at sea – an integrated maritime picture.

In relation to Cyber Security, I stated that this is an area that imposes existential and internal threats with regard to terrorism, protecting industry and essential utilities and Government information that is of a confidential nature. Cyber security is a complex issue that requires co-operation across all sectors to ensure the safety of our networks and infrastructures. I referred to the dramatic increase in cyber crimes/incidents. I stated that in relation to cyber security, it is appropriate to say that the challenge is how Ministers, policy makers and the private sector can collectively develop a multilateral and multi-dimensional approach to address the challenges that we face in cyber security from a technical, operational and policy perspective.

I welcomed the recent publication of the European Commission's Cyber Security Strategy entitled "An Open, Safe and Secure Cyber-space". I noted that it is incumbent upon everyone to fully support implementation of these strategies and agreements. To fail to co-operate in the area of Cyber would be to undermine our collective security and to fail to understand the escalating threat that we face. We are stronger together and safer together. To successfully counter this emerging cyber threat, cooperation between national law enforcement, defence, and technical incident response organisations, within and between Member States, needs to be encouraged. I concluded that it is incumbent on us all to take both personal and collective responsibility to address this crucial and critical issue.

En marge of the Conference, I took the opportunity to meet informally with some of my Ministerial colleagues from other Member States. I also received a briefing from Ireland's Ambassador to France on Defence and other issues.

### **Defence Forces Personnel**

582. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Defence the different ranks of all members in the Irish Defence Forces including the Permanent Defence Force, the Reserve Defence Force, the Irish Naval Service, the Naval Service Reserve, the Irish Air Corps and any other associated part of the Defence Forces; the comparisons that can be made in the ranks between the different sections of the Defence Forces; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31694/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The detailed information the deputy sought in respect of ranks in the Defence Forces is contained in the table.

Army Ranks	Air Corps Ranks	Naval Service Ranks	Army Reserve Ranks	Naval Reserve Ranks
Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	-	-
Major General	Major General	Major General	-	-
Brigadier General	Brigadier General	Commodore	-	-
Colonel	Colonel	Captain	-	-
Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander
Commandant	Commandant	Lieutenant Commander	Commandant	Lieutenant Commander
Captain	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain	Lieutenant
Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Sub Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Sub Lieutenant
Second Lieutenant	Second Lieutenant	Ensign	Second Lieutenant	Ensign
Battalion Sergeant Major	Regimental Sergeant Major	Warrant Officer	Battalion Sergeant Major	Warrant Officer
Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant	Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant	Senior Chief Petty Officer	Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant	Senior Chief Petty Officer
Company Sergeant	Flight Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	Company Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer
Company Quartermaster Sergeant	Flight Quartermaster Sergeant	Senior Petty Officer	Company Quartermaster Sergeant	Senior Petty Officer
Sergeant	Sergeant	Petty Officer	Sergeant	Petty Officer
Corporal	Corporal	Leading Seaman	Corporal	Leading Seaman
Private 3 Star	Airman 3 Star	Able Seaman	Private 3 Star	Able Seaman
Private 2 Star	Airman 2 Star	Ordinary Seaman	Private 2 Star	Ordinary Seaman

### Defence Forces Personnel

583. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Defence if he will provide the number of female personnel at each rank in the Air Corps and Naval Service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31742/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The table sets out the number of women serving in the Army, Navy and Air Corps at 31 May 2013. For ease of comparison the equivalent Army Rank has been used in the Naval Service Table. In terms of the current position, the number of women serving in the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) on 31 May 2013, the latest date for which figures are available, was 562, of which 467 were serving in the Army, 28 in the Air Corps and 67 in the Naval Service. This represents 6.15% of the overall strength of the Defence Forces.

The Government is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for men and women throughout the Defence Forces and to the full participation by women in all aspects of Defence Forces

activities. Unlike many other national armed forces, the Defence Forces have no restrictions as regards the assignment of men or women to the full range of operational and administrative duties. All promotions and career courses are open to both genders on merit.

The Defence Forces prides itself on providing a gender neutral working environment. Policies on equality are being constantly communicated to all ranks. The military authorities are alert and vigilant to this issue and are committed to addressing this matter in a continuing and proactive manner.

Female Strength in Army at 31 May 2013

LT-GEN	MAJ-GEN	BRIG-GEN	COL	LT-COL	COM-DT	CAPT	LT	SM	BQ MS	CS	CQMS	SGT	CPL	PTE	CA-DET	TO-TAL
-	-	-	-	2	26	40	43	-	-	2	1	42	109	198	4	467

Female Strength in Air Corps at 31 May 2013

LT-GEN	MAJ-GEN	BRIG-GEN	COL	LT-COL	COM-DT	CAPT	LT	SM	BQ MS	CS	CQ MS	SGT	CPL	PTE	CA-DET	TO-TAL
-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	6	10	7	-	28

Female Strength in Naval Service at 31 May 2013

LT-GEN	MAJ-GEN	BRIG-GEN	COL	LT-COL	COM-DT	CAPT	LT	SM	BQ MS	CS	CQMS	SGT	CPL	PTE	CA-DET	TO-TAL
-	-	-	-	-	6	12	10	-	-	-	-	2	10	26	1	67

### Overseas Missions

584. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Defence if the Irish Defence Forces will be deployed to Mali from 1 July as per the United Nations Security Council resolution of 25 June 2013 regarding a UN peacekeeping force made up of 12,600 troops; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31847/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** On 25 April 2013, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2100 (2013) establishing a Peacekeeping Force in the West African nation of Mali. Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, for an initial period of twelve (12) months. The new mission replaced the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), on 1 July 2013, when African personnel originally deployed to AFISMA were rehatted to MINUSMA.

The UN initiated a force generation process for MINUSMA in May 2013. It is understood that the UN has since received offers for all units required with the exception of some enablers e.g. air and medical assets and staff officers for the mission headquarters. It is anticipated that the UN will invite Member States to meet this shortfall. While no formal request has yet been received by Ireland in this regard, my Department in concert with the military authorities is considering potential options for a Defence Forces contribution to the mission and is consulting partners and other EU Member States in this regard.

On 26 February 2013, the Government approved the deployment of approximately eight (8) members of the Permanent Defence Force for service with the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali). Three (3) Officers and five (5) Non-commissioned Officers were deployed to EUTM Mali on 23 March 2013, for a tour of duty of approximately five months. The purpose of the mission is to provide military training and advice to the Malian Armed Forces in order to improve their capacity to maintain security, and restore the authority of the Malian Government

and the territorial integrity of the Malian State.

### **Defence Forces Medicinal Products**

585. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence if he will confirm figures provided to RTE that there have been 11 suicides or self-inflicted deaths among soldiers who had deployed between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2012 and had previously been prescribed lariam, of which nine occurred within five years of their final deployment; and that there have been four suicides or self-inflicted deaths among soldiers who had deployed overseas between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2012 and who had not previously been prescribed lariam, of which all occurred within five years of their final deployment. [32085/13]

586. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence without divulging names or other personal information, if he will confirm for each of the 15 suicides or self-inflicted deaths among soldiers who had deployed overseas between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2012, the date of the soldiers' last overseas deployment; if they had previously been prescribed Lariam; the date of the suicide or self-inflicted death, with the understanding that the families of each of the 15 soldiers have already provided this information to RTÉ to aid in the previously broadcast RTÉ investigation. [32086/13]

587. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence if he will confirm figures provided to or cited by RTE that the total number of soldiers who deployed overseas between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2012 to areas where lariam was the prescribed anti-malarial comprised 4,293 individuals, and that the total number of soldiers who deployed overseas between 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2012 only to areas where lariam would not have been prescribed comprised 6,444 individuals. [32087/13]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 585 to 587, inclusive, together.

In May 2013 RTÉ asked the Defence Organisation for statistical information but used different figures when it broadcast the programme which forms the basis of your questions.

The information that was provided to them in relation to deaths from self-inflicted injuries is as follows:

“The Defence Forces Personal Management System does not capture data on the number of suicides. A review by the Defence Forces into 156 non-service related deaths among members of the Defence Forces in the period January 2000 to December 2010 shows that 25 were apparently of self-inflicted injuries. Of these, only one is recorded by a coroner as being “suicide”. Of these 25 deaths by self-inflicted injury, 9 had previously been prescribed Lariam. There is no evidence in any coroners' inquests, nor any other evidence whatsoever, linking these deaths to Lariam. Moreover, according to expert advice, given the limited period of time during which Lariam remains in the bloodstream after a person stops taking it, it is extremely unlikely that Lariam could have been a contributory factor in practically all of these cases. Of the 25 deaths by self-inflicted injury, 16 were not prescribed Lariam and 4 of these had not served overseas.”

I am not in a position to disclose any information about individual deaths due to the relatively small number of individuals involved because it could lead to potential identification (or misidentification) of deceased service members.

RTÉ were informed that at least some of the information they sought is not easily accessible and has to be drawn from multiple databases. They were also told that it is not possible

without manual checking to eliminate accurately multiple tours of duty. This would involve significant resources which are not available. Subject to that reservation, they were informed that for the period 1st January 2000 to 31st December 2012 approximately 6,498 tours of duty involving 4,293 individuals deployed to malarious areas where Lariam would have been the malaria chemoprophylaxis. For the same period, approximately 9,754 tours of duty deployed to areas where Lariam was not prescribed. No figure was given for the number of individuals involved on these tours.

### **Agrifood Sector Issues**

588. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will ensure that any deal reached on the Common Agricultural Policy will ensure a sustainable supply of raw materials at a competitive price for processors; that competitiveness within the agri-food sector is improved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31459/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Last week under the Irish Presidency of the EU, we achieved political agreement in the CAP Reform negotiations with the European Parliament and the Commission in Brussels. The agreement represents a package of measures that will set the framework for the development of the EU agri-food sector up to 2020. I believe this is a well balanced package, that will maintain sustainable and competitive farming in the EU, and is a very good outcome for Irish farmers. Direct payments are maintained providing stability to farmers against market uncertainties and 30% of a farmer's payment is made conditional on meeting greening criteria thus contributing to environmental sustainability. More targeted support is provided for under Rural Development and market management mechanisms are also retained to support the market, particularly in time of crisis.

Overall I am satisfied that the reformed policy will secure strong and sustainable growth in the agriculture and food sectors into the future delivering sustainable intensification of production, environmental stewardship and the maintenance of a vibrant rural economy.

### **Departmental Bodies**

589. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of fisheries officers employed currently in the country that are working on land and not at sea; the number of fisheries officers employed in County Kerry; the number in north and south Kerry respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31503/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Operational issues in relation to sea fisheries control are a matter for the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA). I have asked the SFPA to respond directly to the Deputy.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

590. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of temporary clerical officers that have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31566/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** In response to the Deputy's question, I have detailed all Temporary Clerical Officers employed in my Department over the past three years. Two retired staff were re-employed in 2012. Temporary Clerical Officers are recruited by Public Appointments Service with sanction from The Department of Expenditure & Public Reform.

-	2011	2012	2013
Temporary Clerical Officers:	27	25	10

### Suckler Welfare Scheme Payments

591. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will receive their cow suckler payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31588/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The person named registered ten beef breed animals for the 2012 Suckler Welfare Scheme. Payment issued in respect of six animals on 20 December 2012. Issues identified with the remaining four animals have recently been resolved and payment will issue in the near future.

### Animal Identification Scheme

592. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason the law regarding micro-chipping of horses only applies to horses born after 2009; his plans to apply it to horses born prior to 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31605/13]

606. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the consideration he has given to dealing with horses that were registered late, for example, later than six months after birth, but that are micro chipped and have passports; and if he will put in place a scheme for culling these animals. [32137/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 592 and 606 together.

The identification and registration of equidae is governed by EU Council Directives 90/426/EEC and 90/427/EEC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 504/2008 of 6 June 2008. The EU legislation has been transposed into national legislation via S.I. No. 357 of 2011 - European Communities (Equine) Regulations 2011 (as amended). Regulation 504/2008, which came into effect on 1 July 2009, provides that if an equine animal has not been identified within six months of the date of its birth, or by the 31st of December in the year of its birth, whichever date occurs later, it cannot be admitted to the food chain. It also provides that all equine animals registered from 1 July 2009 must be identified with a passport and a microchip. However, equines identified prior to this date were not required by previous EU legislation to be micro-chipped and it is not open to me to impose such a requirement. The exemption of equines registered prior to 1 July 2009 from the microchip requirement is in line with normal practice in relation to EU legislation that animals which have been correctly identified in accordance with existing legislation are not obliged to be re-identified under new legislation.

With regard to horses which were registered late but are micro chipped and have passports, the position is that, as stated above, these horses are ineligible for the human food chain. I have

no plans to introduce a cull scheme for these horses. It is the responsibility of horse owners to ensure the welfare of horses in their care and to provide for their disposal. The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) has recommended the option of humane disposal of an equine where an owner can no longer adequately provide for it or where the equine can no longer fulfil the purpose for which it was bred as such action will help prevent the emergence of long-term animal welfare problems. My Department supports this advice as the most appropriate means of dealing with unwanted horses and I would ask owners of unwanted horses to avail of this option.

### **Horse Slaughter Statistics**

593. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the minimum time required for a local authority to keep a horse before putting it down; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31606/13]

598. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of abandoned horses that have been put down in each of the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; the cost of putting down a horse; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31658/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 593 and 598 together.

Matters relating to stray or abandoned horses in urban and rural areas come within the scope of the Control of Horses Act, 1996 under which Local Authorities have been given extensive powers. These powers include the making of bye-laws for the control and welfare of horses in the local authorities' functional area, together with provisions on licensing of horses within control areas and seizure and detention of stray or abandoned horses.

My Department agreed a protocol with Local Authorities in 2012 which outlined the need for greater uniformity in how Local Authorities apply the Control of Horses Act in their respective areas with a view to achieving savings and efficiencies in implementation of the Act. The protocol recommended that all local authorities amend their bye-laws to allow persons five days to reclaim their horse(s) and, if not reclaimed within that period, the Local Authority should be permitted to re-home or euthanize the animal. The reasoning behind the five day retention was to reduce costs but also to emphasise to individuals who abandon or allow their horses to stray that animal welfare depends on frequent human attention and animals should be inspected frequently to avoid suffering. In my view, responsibility for ensuring that horses do not stray rests with their owners and owners who do not reclaim their horses within 5 days cannot be considered to be responsible owners.

My Department provides extensive funding to assist Local Authorities in control of horses operations. Some Local Authorities operate their own Pounds and others engage private contractors to carry out control of horse activities which sometimes involves humane disposal of horses. In view of this, it is not possible to determine an exact cost for euthanizing per horse, as veterinary expenses, transport etc differ between local authorities.

The table, which is based on the information provided to me by local authorities – shows the number of horses seized and euthanized under the Control of Horses Act in the period 2008 – 2012.

Year	Horses Seized	Horses Euthanazed
2008	1069	284
2009	1467	104
2010	2418	659
2011	2936	1592
2012	2969	2123

### Farm Improvement Scheme Payments

594. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a payment will be made to a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny. [31612/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The person concerned is an applicant for grant-aid under both the Farm Improvement Scheme (FIS) and the Dairy Equipment Scheme (DES). The grant-aid under the FIS was paid to the applicant on 15 May 2013. To date, my Department has no record of having received a payment claim from the applicant under the DES.

### Animal Welfare Issues

595. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when legislation on the compulsory neutering-spaying of cats and dogs will be introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31614/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** There is no legislation planned on compulsory neutering/spaying of cats and dogs. However, my Department provides in excess of €1million annually to animal welfare organisations involved in the provision of animal care. In the context of the allocation of these funds, I have put in place a code of practice for welfare organisations with the aim of assisting them achieve high standards of animal welfare. All recipients of funding involved in the re-homing of dogs and cats must demonstrate that they are participating in a neutering programme in order to assist in controlling numbers of animals and minimise cases of animal distress.

### Harbour Authorities Expenditure

596. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 786 of 11 June 2013, the reasons the audit of financial statements of the fishery harbour centres are not up to date; his views on whether it is acceptable that these accounts have not been completed since 2007; if he will provide the unaudited amounts for the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31635/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The following table sets out the provisional figures for income earned in each of the six Fishery Harbour Centres in the years 2008 to 2012:

Harbour	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Castletown-bere	608,478	564,124	588,554	663,366	788,568

Harbour	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
An Daingean	412,208	398,698	444,911	397,585	431,330
Dunmore East	235,103	248,123	231,710	222,068	238,633
Howth	727,939	658,520	639,779	673,389	928,761
Killybegs	2,175,876	1,844,946	2,015,094	1,809,362	2,219,069
Ros an Mhíl	490,760	546,113	406,470	415,205	301,064
Total	4,650,364	4,260,524	4,326,518	4,180,976	*4,907,425

(\* Please note that the 2012 figures do not include accruals adjustments)

There were issues identified with the billing of fees in some of the Fishery Harbours in 2007 and 2008, following handover of responsibility from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to my Department in 2007. Resolution of these issues delayed both the production and the audit of these and subsequent years' annual accounts. Officials in my Department are actively engaged with officials of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General to complete all outstanding accounts this year.

### Aquaculture Development

597. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 798 of 11 June 2013, if he will provide in tabular form the 91 bays-estuaries subject to appropriate assessment under EU rules; the current stage of the assessment for each bay-estuary; the likely time frame for the completion of the assessment in each case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31636/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The table lists the ninety one bays/estuaries subject to the Appropriate Assessment process under the EU Birds/Habitats Directives. In excess of 200 marine sites have been designated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EU Birds Directive ('Natura 2000' sites). Multiple 'Natura 2000' sites are located in some bays and some sites are located offshore and not associated with any particular bay.

The European Court of Justice declared in case C418/04 that, by failing to take all the measures necessary to comply with Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 (Habitats Directive) in respect of authorisation of aquaculture programmes, Ireland had failed to fulfil its obligations under that Directive.

In the negotiations to address the judgment a process was agreed with the European Commission which would lead to full compliance by Ireland with the relevant EU Directives. This process includes the following steps:

- a detailed data collection in 91 Bays/Estuaries
- detailed analysis of raw data collected
- setting of Conservation Objectives by NPWS in respect of each 'Natura 2000' site
- carrying out Appropriate Assessments (by the Marine Institute, on behalf of the Department) on each licence application/fishery plan against the detailed Conservation Objectives set, and

- determination of Licences/Fisheries on the basis of the Appropriate Assessment and other relevant factors.

The data collection programme is substantially complete. Analysis of the data, together with the setting of appropriate conservation objectives by the NPWS, enables all new, renewal and review applications to be appropriately assessed for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. This work represents a significant financial, administrative and scientific investment by the State in resolving this issue.

Conservation Objectives had been set for over forty 'Natura 2000' sites and Appropriate Assessments are being progressed taking account of the need to facilitate the use of scientific and other resources on a flexible basis across the full range of bays. At present, Appropriate Assessments have been carried on four bays (Castlemaine Harbour, Dundalk Bay, Roaringwater Bay and Lough Swilly). The first aquaculture licence determinations in respect of 'Natura 2000' sites have recently been made with over 40 licence determinations being made in respect of applications located in Castlemaine Harbour SAC/SPA.

In parallel with the work done in relation to 'Natura 2000' sites significant progress was made in 2012 on licensing in non-Natura areas. 115 licence determinations were made in 2012 and depending on the availability of Appropriate Assessments and other measures it is expected that overall determinations well in excess of this figure will be possible in 2013.

Addressing the issue of aquaculture licensing in Natura 2000 areas is a key priority for my Department and the Deputy can be assured that every effort is being made to expedite the completion of the overall process having regard to all the complexities involved.

Aquaculture licensing		
Castlemaine Harbour	Tralee Bay	North Dublin Bay
Roaringwater Bay	Ballysadare Bay	Carlingford Lough
Blacksod/Broadhaven	Blaskets	Glengarriff Harbour
Lough Swilly	Boyne Estuary	Duvillaun Islands
Clew Bay	Carnsore Point	River Nanny Estuary
Kenmare River	Cumeen Strand	Inishboffin and Inishark
Dungarvan Harbour	Drumcliff Bay	Inishkea Islands
Wexford Harbour	Gweedore Bay and Islands	Horn Head and Rinclevan
Dundalk Bay	Hook Head	Achill
Wicklow Reef	Kerry Head	Baldoyle Bay
Wicklow Head	Kilkieran Bay and Islands	Ballymacoda
Waterford Estuary	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary	Ballyness Bay
Tramore Backstrand	Malahide Estuary	Ballyteigue Burrow
Long Bank	Shannon Estuary	Barleycove
Bannow Bay	Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary	Blackhead
Blackwater Estuary	Mulroy Bay	Bunduff Lough
Donegal Bay	Rutland Island and Sound	Carrowmore
Galway Bay	Saltee Islands	Clonakilty Bay
Inner Galway Bay	Slyne Head and Islands	Courtmacsherry

Aquaculture licensing		
Trawbreaga Bay	Valencia Harbour/Portmagee Channel	Connemara Bog Complex
North Inishowen	Bull Island	Great Island Channel
Cork Harbour	Inisheer Island	Inishmaan Island
Kilkee	Ladys Island	Lambay Island
Lough Hyne	Rathlin O' Birne Island	Rogerstown Estuary
Sheephaven	Slieve League	Slieve Tooy
South Dublin Bay	St. Johns Point	Streedagh Point
Tory Island	Tranarossan & Melmore Lough	West of Ardara/Maas Road
Ballycotton Bay	Ballycotton Bay	Lough Foyle
Mid Clare Coast	Ballinskelligs Bay and Inny Estuary	Mannin Bay
Slaney R. Valley	The Raven Spa	Raven Point Nature Reserve
River Barrow and River Nore		

*Question No. 598 answered with Question No. 593.*

### Single Payment Scheme Payments

599. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment will issue under the 2012 single payment scheme and the 2012 disadvantaged area based scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; the reason for the delay in issuing this payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31702/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** As the person named holds no Single Payment entitlements, no payment is due under this Scheme.

As regards the 2012 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme, the person named is one of a number of applicants whose cases were impacted by the requirement to have achieved a minimum stocking density on their holding in 2011 of 0.3 livestock units per forage hectare and who applied for and were refused derogation in this regard. However, a subsequent appeal was received, which is currently under consideration; once this review is finalised, the person named will be notified in writing of the outcome.

### Agri-Environment Options Scheme Conditions

600. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a Department official will call to a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; if he will expedite a decision. [31751/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** In the particular circumstances, my Department will shortly make contact with the person named to arrange for a further farm visit to verify the area of the plot of land claimed under AEOS 1.

### Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments

601. **Deputy Paul J. Connaughton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment of agri-environment option scheme 2, 2012 will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31795/13]

**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 1st 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 person named was selected for a ground inspection which took place on 3rd May 2012. During this inspection, areas of non-compliance with the terms and condition of the scheme were noted in relation to the Alternative Water Source for Bovine action which resulted in this action being ineligible for payment and furthermore a penalty of 10% will be imposed. On 20th June 2012, a letter issued to the person named informing her of this and outlining her appeal option. To date, there is no record of an appeal having been received by officials in my Department. The application is being finalised on the basis of the inspection findings and payment will issue shortly.

Payments in respect of the 2012 Scheme year are subject to a similar administrative checking process which includes verification of capital investments through checks on receipts. These checks have now been completed and following the payment for 2011, the payment in respect of 2012 will be finalised.

### **Parking Charges**

602. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a full cost benefit analysis of the proposals to introduce paid parking at Howth Harbour, County Dublin, has been carried out yet; the factors it took into account; if it will be published; the current position regarding his Department's controversial proposal to introduce such charges; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31825/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I have been considering introducing a charge for parking facilities within Howth Fishery Harbour Centre for some time,

- to assist in operating Howth Fishery Harbour Centre on a financially-sound basis,
- to provide a source of revenue for further investment in Fishery Harbour Centre facilities,
- as part of an overall traffic management plan, and
- in order to maximise the return on this significant State asset.

A broad range of factors are being considered and will influence my decision in this matter. Firstly, Howth Fishery Harbour Centre is first and foremost a working fishery harbour, one of 6 operated by the State, each of whose primary purpose is to provide facilities and services for the fishing industry and fisheries-related activities. Funding for operating, management and development costs in the fishery harbours is ring-fenced in the Fishery Harbour Centres Fund, which is the only source of revenue available for that purpose.

Capital investment in the Fishery Harbour Centres in recent years has underpinned both fisheries activities and their expanding use for leisure and marine tourism and other maritime

enterprises. In the current economic climate, the State must be fully committed to maximising the return on that investment.

Moreover, my Department is required to ensure that the Fishery Harbour Centres are run on a financially-sound basis. The 500+ parking spaces within the boundaries of the Harbour would assist in balancing the books, and in providing funding for re-investment that would not otherwise be available.

A wide range of groups use the parking facilities of Howth Fishery Harbour – harbour business customers, yacht club members, sport fishermen, Dart users, tourists, walkers and many others.

This combination of uses and the range of users of the Harbour brings its own inherent dangers and safety must be a paramount consideration. A consequence of the large volume of cars using the Fishery Harbour Centre has been huge pressure on parking, and that pressure has on a number of occasions led to a situation where emergency access to the Harbour area has been seriously compromised. The Harbour authorities have in the past received specific complaints from elements of the emergency services in that regard - fortunately no serious incident has arisen yet.

There was widespread public consultation when pay parking at Howth Fishery Harbour Centre was originally examined in detail in 2007 in conjunction with Fingal County Council. All of the various views that were expressed and submissions and analyses that were made then are still available and I am well aware of and acknowledge their concerns. I have received new correspondence on this matter from a wide range of harbour users. My officials have consulted with officials of Fingal Council, and with An Garda Síochána, about this and related matters, and my Department's engineers have met some of the Harbour's business tenants individually about new traffic management and road markings etc. My officials also attended the Harbour Users Forum in February where pay parking was on the agenda and heard the views of the harbour users at first hand.

I am examining all aspects of the matter at present. I can assure the Deputy that the views of the various harbour users, the potential earnings, the possible impact on the harbour businesses and on recreational users, the impact on the local economy and local jobs, and the impact on overall traffic management within the Fishery Harbour, are all matters that I will take into account in coming to a decision. I can also assure the Harbour users in Howth that I am committed to continuing investment in and development of Howth for the future.

### **Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments**

**603. Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a person (details supplied) in County Wexford may expect to receive their agri-environment option scheme payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32036/13]

**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 1st September 2011.

Under the EU Regulations governing the Scheme, a comprehensive administrative check of all applications, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System, must be completed before any payment can issue. The person named was also selected for a ground inspection which took place on 11th May 2012. During this inspection, areas of non-compliance with the terms and condition of the scheme were noted in relation to the Planting of New

Hedgerow and Tree Planting – Standard options which resulted in a penalty of 20% being imposed. The application has been processed on this basis and full entitlements totalling €655.62 issued in respect of 2011 – 75% payment issued on 5th June 2013 and the balancing 25% payment issued on 11th June 2013.

Payments in respect of the 2012 Scheme year are subject to a similar administrative checking process. These checks have now been completed and 75% payment totalling €1,834.56 issued on 28th June 2013. The balancing 25% payment will issue shortly.

### **Dairy Sector**

604. **Deputy Áine Collins** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the steps and opportunities-grants that there are available for a beef farmer who wants to switch to dairy farming when milk quotas are abolished. [32061/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** As the Deputy is aware my Department will no longer have any direct involvement in milk supply management after 31 March 2015 when the Milk Quota regime ends. At that point supply will be a matter between the producer and the purchaser and, subject to contractual arrangements with milk purchasers, beef farmers or others who wish to switch to dairying, will be unconstrained by the quota system.

My Department has in recent years operated a number of support measures to facilitate beef and other farmers who wish to change to dairying.

These include the allocation to new entrants of 14 million litres of milk quota per annum, that is one quarter of the 1% quota increase allocated to Ireland under the Commission's Milk Quota transition arrangements. To date 56 million litres have been allocated to just over 300 new entrants and a further 14 million litres will be allocated to about 75 applicants this autumn.

In addition, at the beginning of the year my Department introduced a new Development Programme for Dairying, which was aimed at new entrants to dairying among others, to encourage them to join local Dairy Discussion Groups. Earlier Department support for such groups under the Dairy Efficiency Programmes has shown these gatherings to be a very effective method of information transfer. My Department also operates a Dairy Equipment Grant Scheme, which has among its objectives the encouragement of new entrants in dairying by providing them with support to meet capital costs associated with establishment of their enterprise. New entrants must have a minimum number of production units in order to be eligible. In addition Teagasc run a series of courses aimed specifically for new entrants to dairying.

As milk quotas and the current phase of the CAP come to a close, my Department is at present engaged in a consultation and evaluation process to determine the measures that might be co-financed under the new Rural Development Programme (RDP) that will run to 2020. While this exercise is still ongoing, I expect that support for new entrants to dairying after April 2015 will be among the items that will be discussed.

### **Rural Environment Protection Scheme Contracts**

605. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will introduce supports for farmers who will have a serious reduction in their incomes when they have completed their REP scheme contracts; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[32071/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Agri-Environment Schemes, namely the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) and the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) and the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) are delivered through the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, as approved by the European Commission. Future supports and policies will be determined in the context of the agreement on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the introduction of the EU regulatory framework governing the next programming period 2014-2020. I expect that environmental sustainability will continue to play a key role in any future agri-environment scheme.

*Question No. 606 answered with Question No. 592.*

### **Disadvantaged Areas Scheme Appeals**

607. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a decision has been made on further evidence provided on an application for derogation of a disadvantaged area scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32180/13]

**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 case was impacted by the requirement to have had a minimum stocking density on their holding in 2011 of 0.3 livestock units per forage hectare and who applied for and was refused derogation in this regard. The person named subsequently appealed unsuccessfully to the independently chaired DAS Appeals Committee and was notified accordingly by letter dated 14 March 2013. As advised in that letter, there remains the option to pursue the matter with the Office of the Ombudsman.

### **Single Payment Scheme Payments**

608. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the further single farm payments that are due to a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny. [32287/13]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** My Department has now completed the review of the 2006 to 2010 applications of the person named, specifically, with regard to the eligibility under the Single Payment Scheme of two land parcels owned by him.

My Department has advised the applicant of a positive outcome in regard to the two land parcels in question. Monies due on foot of this review have already issued.

### **Departmental Funding**

609. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if a phone service (details supplied) is funded by the Government and if so, if she will confirm the amount granted in the past three years; the extent of the marketing campaign to promote the phone service number and the way that campaign is funded; the number of calls received by the phone service since it was established; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

[31710/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The 116000 Missing Children Hotline is operated by the ISPCC in liaison with a cross-sectoral Project Team, chaired by the DCYA.

The ISPCC has been successful in securing EU Daphne funding of €141,422 to support the establishment of the line. The ISPCC also submitted an application for funding to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to cover the establishment and running of the Hotline. This application has been approved for 2012 (€50,240) and 2013 (€87,631). Future applications for running costs will be considered in the context of the annual budget estimates process.

The funding received from both the EU Daphne fund and from DCYA includes the establishment costs and the national promotion and advertisement of this Hotline service.

The promotion of the Hotline has been ongoing since the service opened in 2012. There have been numerous press releases issued by the DCYA and the ISPCC, the 116 000 Missing Children Hotline has been covered in the print (9 articles) and broadcast (6 radio stations) media since opening in May 2012. There has also been an ongoing website and social media presence utilising ISPCC, Facebook and Twitter to highlight the service as well as information on missing children. The 116000 Missing Children Hotline website ([www.missingchildren-hotline.ie](http://www.missingchildren-hotline.ie)) was launched on the 5th of June 2013, the day of the official launch of the service.

ISPCC staff and volunteers have worked to disseminate posters in local areas and posters have been distributed nationally to Garda stations.

The ISPCC will now escalate the promotion of this service, which will include promotion in schools. The Project Team will be kept informed on an on-going basis of the ISPCC's plans and activities related to awareness raising.

The Missing Children Hotline has been operating on a full-time basis since end April, 2013. Reliable data on calls is not available prior to this point. The ISPCC will submit quarterly activity data to my Department, which will include information on the number of calls received by the service. It is expected that data on calls to the service since its establishment on a full-time basis will be available in the next quarter, and henceforth on a quarterly basis.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

610. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by her Department during each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; her views on whether her Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31568/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Since its establishment in June 2011, my Department has not employed temporary clerical officers. Youth employment is a pressing challenge at present, domestically and across European Member States. My Department, through its focus on youth policy and youth work, is contributing to addressing this challenge on a range of levels. Through the Action Plan for Jobs 2013, my Department has met all targets in relation to actions outlined and is firmly committed to maximising the role the youth sector can play in this area. On a European level, we have ensured that the theme of youth work and its contribution to youth employment is central to our Presidency Programme. This has been a keynote of all our Presidency events (EU Youth Conference, Structured Dia-

logue Process, Ministerial Council etc) and has resulted in the adoption of Council Conclusions and, in the last two weeks, has informed a Dublin Declaration on the contribution of youth work to youth employment.

### **Early Child Care Education Issues**

611. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the estimated cost of implementing the workforce development plan for the early child care sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31616/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Workforce Development Plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education sector set out the key areas that emerged from an extensive programme of research and consultation. These key areas are:

- The necessity for clearly articulated professional pathways into and across professional domains of practice related to the care and education of children. These include occupational role descriptors with associated qualification levels.

- The establishment of an agreed set of national standards for all awards in early childhood care and education (incorporating core knowledge, skills, competencies and work experience) across all relevant levels of the National Framework of Qualifications in Ireland. These were published by FETAC in 2011.

- Access to flexible, affordable and nationally accredited learning opportunities at all levels of qualification for pre-service and in-service professional development.

- The necessity to ensure consistent quality of ECCE courses nationally across a range of variables including content, delivery and work placement.

It was envisaged that the cost of delivering on the key objectives could be accommodated within existing resources.

### **Inter-Country Adoptions**

612. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the progress to date regarding inter country adoption; the progress that the adoption authority has made in relation to establishing administrative arrangements with the Hague countries regarding inter country adoptions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31642/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Under section 72 of the Adoption Act 2010, the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) may enter into administrative arrangements with another contracting State to the Hague Convention. An administrative arrangement is not mandatory for intercountry adoption between countries that are both signatories to Hague. However some contracting states, including Ireland, may determine that in some instances co-operation in the field of intercountry adoption is best served by the development of such arrangements.

The Adoption Authority is continuing its work to establish administrative arrangements with a number of Hague countries in relation to intercountry adoptions, as provided for under section 72 of the Adoption Act 2010. The Authority has travelled to a number of jurisdictions in order to make contact with the Central Authorities, advise of our processes and procedures, assess the need for additional administrative arrangements or agreements; and to glean as much

information as possible of relevance to prospective adopters from those countries. The visits also provide opportunities to streamline processes on both sides and obtain up-to-date information for prospective adopters on developments in these countries.

In relation to intercountry adoption with Bulgaria the AAI has advised me that referrals for the adoption of Bulgarian children by Irish applicants have commenced. In September 2012 the Adoption Authority and the Vietnamese Central Authority for Adoption signed an administrative arrangement for intercountry adoption. The administrative arrangement is the first international arrangement for intercountry adoption entered into by the AAI and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam since both countries ratified the Hague Convention. The Adoption Authority accredited Helping Hands for activities in relation to facilitating adoptions from Vietnam and Helping Hands has recently received confirmation from the Vietnamese authorities of its approval to operate there. I met recently with representatives of Helping Hands who informed me that they expect adoptions to commence shortly.

A delegation from the Adoption Authority made an official visit to the US State Department in Washington in 2012. Following this visit administrative arrangements in relation to intercountry adoption between the United States of America and Ireland were drafted by the AAI. The AAI and US State Department have recently finalised these administrative arrangements. The AAI has information on its website ([www.aai.gov.ie](http://www.aai.gov.ie)) in relation to intercountry adoption from the USA, including information in relation to the arrangements and the criteria which must be met before the adoption process can proceed. These criteria will apply to all adoptions taking place between Ireland and the United States of America with immediate effect.

In March I lead a delegation to India which included the Chair of the Adoption Authority of Ireland and a departmental official. The visit, which was in conjunction with representing the Irish Government at official functions in India for St Patrick's Day, afforded me the opportunity to assess the position in relation to intercountry adoption in India and to clarify issues in relation to the requirements of the Indian authorities in that regard. I was advised that registration is now open with CARA (the Indian Central Authority) only for special needs cases; this includes children with intellectual or physical disabilities, siblings including twins, and children over 5 years of age. It was explained that India currently operates intercountry adoption with other Hague countries without the need for any specific administrative arrangements of the type in place with Vietnam. In order for adoptions, other than special needs cases to reopen, an Irish accredited agency will need to be approved by CARA to work in India.

Work has also been undertaken in terms of agreements on adoption from non-Hague countries. Russia and Ethiopia are not signatories of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. As such, future adoptions from Russia and Ethiopia would require a bilateral agreement between Ireland and these countries. I travelled to Moscow, accompanied by Dr Geoffrey Shannon, Chair of the Adoption Authority, in order to discuss at a diplomatic level issues in relation to the potential for a bilateral agreement with Russia. My officials are in active discussions with officials in the Office of the Attorney General and in the Department of Foreign Affairs on advancing a draft agreement for consideration by the Russian authorities. I have invited the Russian authorities to visit Ireland in September in order to finalise consideration of this aspect of the draft bilateral agreement.

The Adoption Authority delegation visit to Ethiopia in April last year was an initial part of the Authority's deliberations on the feasibility and suitability of entering into discussions with Ethiopia on a bilateral adoption agreement. The Authority is examining the compatibility of the Irish and Ethiopian adoption legislation. As intercountry adoption is a constantly changing landscape, the most up to date information on individual countries can be found on the Adoption Authority website ([www.aai.gov.ie](http://www.aai.gov.ie)).

## **Children in Care**

613. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children born to female children in the care of his Department or its agencies for each of the past ten years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31653/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I have requested the information from the HSE and I will revert to the Deputy when this information is to hand.

## **Departmental Budgets**

614. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide a report on her Department's capital programme for 2013; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31668/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** A sum of €25.760 million has been made available to my Department in 2013 to support capital developments. This includes:

### National Children Detention Facilities (Subhead A.7)

Just over **€20 million** is being made available in 2013 to undertake the National Children Detention Facility Project at Oberstown. My officials in the Irish Youth Justice Service continue to work closely to progress this project with the Office of Public Works (OPW) which is providing the relevant project management services for my Department. The tender process for the award of a contract for the project is currently ongoing and the current projected timeline estimate from the OPW indicates that the first new residential units, to provide sufficient capacity to end the practice of sending 17 year old boys to St. Patrick's Institution, will be available for use by mid 2014. The overall project for the campus, which will also replace some existing outdated buildings and deliver education, visiting and other ancillary facilities, is currently scheduled for completion by mid 2015.

### 2013 Childcare Capital Programme (Subhead B.4)

A sum of **€3.25 million** is being made available to support the ongoing improvement of the childcare sector. The 2013 funding programme, which is being implemented by Pobal on behalf of my Department, covers four strands as follows:

Strand 1: small grants to purchase equipment or carry out small maintenance work;

Strand 2: grants to improve accessibility of services for children with disabilities;

Strand 3: grants to provide natural outdoor spaces that promote active outdoor play; and

Strand 4: grants towards critical works to ensure that buildings are fit for purpose under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No.2) Regulations (open to community/not-for-profit services only).

Community/not-for-profit and commercial childcare providers/childminders that are currently providing services under one or more of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' funding programmes - the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme, the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme - were eligible to apply and the closing date for applications was 30th April. The appraisal process is almost completed and it is expected that all applicants will be

advised of the outcome this week.

#### Youth Programmes and Services (Subhead B.5)

A sum of **€1.75 million** is being made available under a capital programme that will include the allocation of €1 million to support the provision of new Youth Cafés. The programme is being administered on behalf of my Department by Pobal and the funds will include support for fit-out, refurbishment works or building enhancement projects for the startup of new Youth Cafés. In addition, resources amounting to **€500,000** will be made available to youth projects for small refurbishment works or the purchase of equipment and a further **€250,000** towards play and recreation facilities.

### Child Protection Services

615. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide an update on the reforms that are underway in child protection services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31669/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The establishment of the Child and Family Agency is at the heart of the Government's reform of child and family services. The Government decided that it was essential and appropriate that child welfare and protection services transfer from the Health Service Executive to a new, dedicated Agency. From its establishment the Agency will have service responsibility for:

- Child welfare and protection services currently operated by the HSE including family support and alternative care services;
- Child and family-related services for which the HSE currently has responsibility including pre-school inspections and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services;
- The Family Support Agency which currently operates as a separate body under the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and will be merged into the new Agency;
- The National Educational Welfare Board which also currently operates as a separate body under the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and will be merged into the new Agency;
- Community-based psychology services (this does not encompass psychologists operating within acute, disability, mental health or other specialist settings).

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Health are working jointly on an impact analysis of proposed future arrangements for this service as they relate to children and family services covered by the Child and Family Agency and to services provided by the HSE.

The establishment of a single agency incorporating key children's services will provide a focus for the major reforms already underway within Children and Family Services. These reforms include:

- the continued and urgent implementation of a comprehensive change programme to improve the quality and consistency of child welfare and protection services. This change programme is addressing the quality and consistency of child welfare and protection services, and is being led by the Chief Executive designate of the Child and Family Agency. This change process will continue into the new Agency;

- the separation of children and family services within the HSE from other health and personal social services, with discrete management responsibilities and budgets, providing transparency and accountability for the use of resources to meet national priorities;

- the development of dedicated children and families responsibility and accountability at area, regional and national management team levels;

- commencement of external inspection by HIQA of the child welfare and protection services.

Extensive work is ongoing in the Departments of Children and Youth Affairs and Health, and in the HSE to prepare for the establishment of the Child and Family Agency. The preparations are designed to allow for the Agency to assume full statutory responsibility for services for children and families upon establishment.

Drafting of the Child and Family Agency Bill is at an advanced stage. This legislation will be published and debated by the Oireachtas at the earliest opportunity. A precise target date will be set when consideration of the legislation is advanced.

In addition to this large scale structural reform programme, the HSE Child and Family Directorate is also implementing a significant programme of ongoing reforms. These reforms at operational level respond in detail to many identified gaps and changes needed to ensure a more consistent, effective and quality service delivery. They include, for example:

- Development of a National Child Care Information System to comprehensively address issues of record keeping and data management;

- Improvements in respect of social worker assignment and care planning;

- The preparation of a business case for a National Out of Hours Social Work Service;

- The recruitment of 260 additional social workers proposed in the Ryan Report Implementation Plan.

Over 1,400 social workers are employed in Children and Family Support Services and the introduction of 260 additional social workers represents a significant strengthening of the work force. Arrangements for the induction, training and supervision of these staff have been put in place. Support for all staff includes the introduction of national guidance, such as Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, and supervision of the implementation of this guidance.

The development of the legislation to establish the Child and Family Agency is part of a suite of legislative developments to strengthen child protection in accordance with the Programme for Government. Another significant piece of legislation relates to the Children First guidance. Following publication of the Draft Heads and General Scheme for the Children First Bill, 2012, consideration by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health and Children of the Bill and related submissions, my Department has further considered a range of policy and operational issues, and the preparation of revised policy proposals is currently under way.

My Department has a range of other legislation also in train in the area of adoption and is also reviewing scoping further legislative requirements as may arise from the Children's Referendum. Together with the programme of reform of structural governance and the operational change programme, I believe this represents one of the most challenging agendas of reform of any sector across the public services.

## Early Child Care Education Standards

616. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her plans for independent oversight and monitoring of compliance with set standards in the provision of childcare and early childhood education services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31670/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Pre-school services are subject to the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006, as provided for under Part VII of the Child Care Act 1991. Under the Regulations the HSE has responsibility for the inspection of pre-school services. While pre-school inspections are necessary to ensure compliance with the regulations, it is important to realise that inspections alone are not the answer to improving quality. What is required is a multifaceted approach, and since this Government came to office we have been working to ensure issues relating to child protection and welfare are put front and centre. The establishment of a Department of Children and Youth Affairs was recognition of the huge body of work which needs to be done in this area.

As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, driving the early childhood care and education quality agenda is one of my key objectives. I believe we can achieve this objective by taking a number of steps in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills, including the adaptation of the existing pre-school inspection system to provide a more comprehensive and broader-based inspection regime for preschools, moving to a greater focus on outcomes for children.

The Government has approved the Heads of the Child and Family Agency Bill and has also agreed to the priority drafting of this Bill. The necessary legislative and organisational preparations are being prioritised so that the Agency can be established as soon as possible. The Agency, upon establishment, will assume full statutory responsibility for a range of child and family services currently provided by three separate agencies; namely the HSE which will include the services provided by the Childcare Inspectorate, the Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board.

The majority of preschools in this country are participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and providing a free pre-school year to almost 68,000 pre-school children each year. The programme is subject to terms and conditions which are strictly implemented to ensure that quality pre-school care and education services are provided to qualifying children. To ensure compliance by participating services, Pobal who assist my Department with the implementation of the programme, carry out annual compliance visits and will also engage further with services when required.

## Youth Cafés Expenditure

617. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the support she has provided for the development of youth cafes; if she will provide details of applications for the recent round of funding; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31671/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Some €2.2m has been made available in funding to date to support the provision of Youth Cafés. One of the core functions of a youth café is that it offers support to young people, ranging from practical support through to advice and participation in activities of interest to them that are varied and on offer at times that suit their normal activities. It is estimated that there are now over 100 Youth Cafés in existence. Funding of up to €1 million is available in 2013 from my Department for fit-

out, refurbishment works or building enhancement projects for the startup of new Youth Cafés. Pobal is assisting my Department in managing the Youth Café scheme 2013. The criteria for the Scheme place a clear focus on both long term sustainability and service planning.

Some 95 applications have been received for the 2013 Youth Café scheme. The initial appraisal process of the applications received is in the final stages. It is expected that applications that are successful in the initial appraisal process will go through to the second phase of the process and will be notified in the coming weeks. These applications will be further evaluated over the period July to October 2013. It is anticipated that the draw-down of funding by the successful applications that emerge from the second phase and are considered suitable for contracts will commence in November, 2013.

### **Proposed Legislation**

618. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will confirm the date of publication for the Child and Family Support Agency Bill; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31679/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Following a Government decision on the Heads of Bill in November last, work on the drafting of the Child and Family Agency Bill has been progressing in conjunction with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and is at an advanced stage. As set out in the General Scheme, the Bill will largely focus on the technical task of bringing together the functions of the three “source” agencies (the HSE, the Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board). Particular care is required in respect of the disaggregation of the functions from the HSE to ensure that there are no unintended consequences (for either the Agency or the Directorates remaining within the HSE framework) in the separation of functions, either in legal terms, or in terms of the practical operation of day-to-day services for children and their families or HSE clients across the life cycle.

A key task in drafting the legislation will be to ensure that the Agency operates within a strong framework of public accountability. Other important features of the legislation relate to the need to create the correct platform for interagency arrangements, shared service arrangements and a robust process for the commissioning of services from a range of providers. In addition to creating a framework for the future, the Bill also has to take account of the transitional arrangements which will inevitably have to be prescribed. These are potentially complex against the backdrop of changing governance and structural arrangements in the context of the wider Health Reform programme. It is my intention to introduce the Child and Family Agency Bill to the Houses of the Oireachtas in this session.

### **Cross-Border Co-operation**

619. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the mechanisms that are in place for North-South Co-operation in the areas of child care and child protection; her plans to develop such co-operation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31725/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The ongoing North South work of my Department takes place under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council. The North South Ministerial Council meets in Sectoral Format to oversee co-operation in agreed areas/sectors. At these Sectoral meetings the Irish Government is rep-

resented by the Minister or the Minister of State responsible for that Sector, and the Northern Ireland Executive is represented by two Ministers nominated by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on a cross-community basis.

Following a North South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting in February 2008, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety [DHSSPS] and the then Office of the Minister for Children (now DCYA) established a Cross Border Group on Child Protection, comprising officials from relevant departments to intensify cooperation on Child Protection including:

- early progress on an all-island Child Protection awareness campaign;
- the identification of other medium/long term measures to improve Child Protection, including an examination of an all-island approach to child protection, focusing in particular on vetting and exchange of information;
- any areas for co-operation on children's services emerging from the North South Feasibility Study on health and social services.

The cross border group is co-chaired by DCYA and DHSSPS. In June, 2008, it was agreed to take forward **5 initiatives** through a sub-group structure, in areas where co-operation, shared learning and best practice could be of benefit to both jurisdictions, and to meet every six months to review progress. The first five sub-groups were:

**(i) Vetting and Barring Protocol**

**(ii) Research and Knowledge Transfer in Child Protection**

**(iii) Internet Safety**

**(iv) All-Ireland Media Awareness**

(v) Inter-Jurisdictional Protocol for the Transfer of Child Care cases between Northern Ireland and Ireland

The Steering Group agreed that since the work of the first five sub-groups had largely been completed, they were accordingly stood down and a new work programme developed. The group, in July 2012, explored a number of areas of potential co-operation and recommended that a future programme of work be taken forward through five specific work streams focussing on: **Work Stream 1 - Knowledge Exchange Forum**, designed to promote continued learning through use of research and evidence based practice.

**Work Stream 2 - Quality and Effectiveness**, to build work-force capacity and improve the quality and effectiveness of social work and social care work interventions and practice.

**Work Stream 3 - Deaths of Children in Care**, contribute to learning in relation to deaths of children in care by developing an overview and analysis of the features of deaths of children in care in both jurisdictions.

**Work Stream 4 - Cultural Competence in Safeguarding**, to assist the development of common guidance for practitioners working with other cultures and to develop a publication of Good Practice Notes for work with new communities.

**Work Stream 5 - Specialist Services**, to assess the opportunities to develop specialist services on a cross-border basis to assist in meeting the needs of those children and families where there is a requirement for a high volume of expertise.

## Children in Care

620. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the position as of this month of the number of high support and or special care secure accommodation unit residential places in total here; if she will confirm the location of the facilities; if she will further confirm the up-to-date position as of this month regarding the number of children currently awaiting such a placement on the direction and or recommendation of a judge; the current average waiting time for a child to be provided with such a placement after the direction and or recommendation of a judge; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31732/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I have requested the information from the HSE and I will revert to the Deputy when this information is to hand.

## Departmental Correspondence

621. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs when a reply will issue to correspondence (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31813/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am advised that a response to the Deputy's queries has now issued.

## Child Protection Issues

622. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if it is common practice for a supervision order to be taken out without the prior consultation or knowledge of the relevant parent or guardian; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31849/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Once a child protection referral is received and screened by the HSE, a decision will be taken as to whether an Initial Assessment is required. Following Initial Assessment decisions will be made on the type of intervention required, including the drawing up of a child protection plan, family support interventions, as well as decisions regarding supervision orders or whether a child may need to be taken into care for a short term or longer period. The Child Protection Plan will have identified the key risk factors in the case such as: - the risk itself; how it will be reduced, including specific actions; and how the agencies working with the family will measure the reduced risk within a specific timescale. A supervision order is sought from the Court if the family do not cooperate with the Child Protection Plan.

The Child Care Act, 1991 provides that the HSE may apply to the Court for a supervision order. Section 19 (1) provides:

*Where, on the application the Health Service Executive, with respect to a child, the court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that—*

*(a) the child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or*

*(b) the child's health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected, or*

*(c) the child's health, development or welfare is likely to be avoidably impaired or neglected, and it is desirable that the child be visited periodically by or on behalf of the Health Service*

*Executive, the court may make an order (in this Act referred to as a “supervision order”) in respect of the child.”*

A supervision order gives the HSE the authority to visit and monitor the health and welfare of the child and to give the parents any necessary advice. It also allows the Judge to give directions as to the care of the child directly to the parent. The order is for up to a maximum of 12 months but may be renewed. A supervision order is often the first step in proceedings where the HSE believes that while further action is required, it is not necessary to apply to the Court to take the child into care. Supervision orders may also be used when a child who has been in care is returning to its family. The HSE has informed me that it is not common practice to apply for a supervision order without informing the parent(s) or guardian(s) as supervision orders are generally aimed at outlining, in specific terms the areas of action for a parent(s) in implementing a child protection plan.

### **Inter-Country Adoptions**

623. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs when funding will be made available to Irish adoption agencies working with adoption agencies in the USA; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [31954/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Work is ongoing in my Department in relation to the issue of funding of agencies accredited for intercountry adoption in order to ensure the sustainability of the agencies and continuity of service. Officials from my Department are in discussion with the agencies, the Adoption Authority and the HSE in relation to examining the future funding arrangements for accredited bodies in intercountry adoption. This includes a review of the immediate sustainability of a number of individual agencies in the context of current demands as well as a longer term review of the most appropriate structuring, financing and charging arrangements of adoption mediation services in order to provide a sustainable high quality and efficient model of future service delivery.

### **Preschool Services**

624. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number and percentage of eligible children not availing of the free preschool year; the outcome of any investigation known to her Department on the reason not all parents are availing of this free service; and the steps that are being taken to improve the take up. [32055/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme was introduced in January 2010 and provides a free pre-school year to all eligible children in the year before commencing primary school. In line with the Programme for Government, my Department has made a significant commitment to maintaining this universal programme. The ECCE programme has been extremely successful to date with the number of children availing of the free pre-school provision consistently high each year since the programme was introduced in 2010. In the current pre-school year, 2012/2013, approximately 68,000 children, or an estimated 95% of the eligible cohort, are participating in the free pre-school year. Access to quality and affordable childcare has a major impact on the lives of children, and this programme has been particularly important for those children who may be socially or economically disadvantaged and would not otherwise be in a position to avail of quality pre-school care and education.

In each year some 3 to 4 thousand eligible children do not participate in the pre-school year

and we are aware of some of the reasons for this. For example, over 1,500 children within the age cohort participate in the Early Start Programme run by the Department of Education and Skills and I am aware that some children with disabilities attend special preschools funded by the HSE. To date no research has been carried out on the factors impacting on decisions made by parents in relation to participation.

### **Child Detention Centres**

625. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in view of the recent annual report from the Ombudsman for Children, the current capacity, work and accommodation conditions at Trinity House, Oberstown boys and Oberstown girls schools; the implementation of the new working roster and the implications of same for staff and for children; the date on which the investigation (details supplied) will be published; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32181/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I note that the Ombudsman for Children's Annual Report 2012 refers to two main areas in relation to the detention of children. First of all, the Ombudsman outlines issues experienced by her office in dealing with complaints relating to St Patrick's Institution. The points made in relation to the procedure for handling complaints from children in St Patrick's Institution are a matter for the Irish Prison Service in the first instance.

The second issue mentioned by the Ombudsman's annual report relates to her concern that progress is made with the Oberstown capital project, which is to expand the detention places and facilities on the Oberstown campus. This project is required in order to give effect to the Programme for Government commitment to end the practice of detaining children in adult prison facilities. I have outlined my commitment to this project on many different occasions and it remains at the top of my agenda.

To date, I have put in place the required funding package for the project and my officials have, in conjunction with the Office of Public Works, completed the design process and secured planning permission for the proposed development. The tender process is ongoing at present and this is being overseen by a steering group of officials from my Department and the Office of Public Works. A further announcement on the outcome of the tendering process will be made shortly.

There is legal provision under the Children Act 2001 for 24 male bed spaces in Trinity House School, 8 female bed spaces in Oberstown Girls School, and 20 male bed spaces in Oberstown Boys School. However, only 16 of the certified 24 male bed spaces in Trinity House School are currently available for use due to staffing shortages. The Irish Youth Justice Service, which is based in my Department, is currently in discussions with management and staff on the Oberstown campus on an initiative to reorganise the detention capacity for males and female bed places, in order to meet the increased demand for male bed places from the courts. This is being progressed at present.

Work and accommodation conditions on the Oberstown campus are governed by a range of criteria, legislation and operational policies. The campus is subject to inspection by the Health Information and Quality Authority. The campus is also under the remit of the Ombudsman for Children and is periodically reviewed by international organisations such as the Council of Europe. The campus is subject to a range of care policies which are communicated to staff and management and published on the website of the Irish Youth Justice Service.

The new campus staffing roster was implemented on 25 February 2013 following protracted negotiation and agreement between staff and management at the Labour Relations Commission. The operation of the campus roster is currently the subject of discussions between management and staff representatives, in line with the provisions of the LRC agreement. An independent review of the operation of the roster is to commence shortly. This is the first time all care staff on the campus are operating under a set of harmonised conditions for hours worked, taking of breaks and flexibility of staff deployment between each of the three children detention schools. I wish to acknowledge the cooperation of staff with the implementation of the LRC agreement to date.

A number of issues have been the subject of consideration in conjunction with implementation of the campus wide roster, such as the need to ensure that all certified bed capacity is available for use, training needs, harmonisation of care procedures, clarification of procedures for the taking of breaks and the interpretation of the agreement provisions on flexibility of deployment. These are being addressed as part of the ongoing industrial relations process on the campus. Further discussions are also likely on the issue of how the Haddington Road Agreement provisions for working hours will be incorporated into the campus roster.

### **Preschool Services**

626. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children availing of the preschool year in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 who availed of the special needs arrangement to split the allocation over two years on a pro rata basis; the number who applied for same in each of those years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32232/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The free Preschool Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides a free preschool year to all eligible children in the year before commencing primary school. In line with the Programme for Government, my Department has made a significant commitment to maintaining this universal programme.

The programme includes a number of additional provisions to take account of children with special needs. These include an exemption from the upper age limit for qualification under the programme where a child is developmentally delayed and would benefit from starting primary school at a later age. In addition, children with special needs can apply to have the preschool year split over two years on a pro-rata basis, for example availing of the programme for 2 days a week in the first year and for 3 days a week in the second year. Application for these exemptions must be made prior to the child commencing the programme.

The free preschool provision was introduced in January 2010 and in the 18-month period to June 2011 a total of 98 children were approved to avail of the programme on a pro-rata basis. In the periods September 2011 to June 2012, and September 2012 to June 2013, 191 and 264 children respectively were approved for the special provision.

All qualifying children that applied to my Department to avail of the free preschool year on a pro-rata basis and who provided the required medical evidence to support their application were approved for the provision.

### **Preschool Services**

627. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children availing of the preschool year in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 who availed of grants from the Health Service Executive to support the employment of special needs assistants; the number who applied for same in each of those years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32233/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Child Care Services Provision**

628. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide in tabular form the number of children under six availing of registered child care facilities; the number of children in each different age group in same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32236/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Pobal, which administers the childcare support programmes on behalf of my Department, compiles an Annual Survey of the Early Years Sector. For the 2012 Annual Survey, approximately 3,137 of these services responded and provided information on the enrolment levels in the different age categories in these services.

The survey shows that the total enrolment in the 3,137 childcare services was 99,220. This figure includes 3,144 children age 0-1, 14,135 aged 1-3 and 65,854 aged 3-5. The remaining 16,087 were availing of after-school care.

My Department currently provides funding to support three childcare programmes - the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme and the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme - which provide a range of supports to parents of preschool children and also after-school care for children older than 6 years.

The ECCE programme provides for a free preschool year to all eligible children in the year before they commence primary school. Almost every preschool service (more than 4,300) in the State is participating with over 68,000 children, which is estimated to be almost 95% of the eligible age cohort, availing of free preschool this year.

The CCS programme provides funding to community-based childcare services to enable them to provide childcare at reduced rates to parents in receipt of social welfare payments or on low or relatively modest incomes. These supports are available to both preschool and after school children and it is estimated that in the region of 25,000 children are supported under the CCS each year.

The CETS programme provides €145 towards the weekly cost of full time childcare places to participating childcare services in both the community and commercial sectors for qualifying FÁS and VEC trainees and students with students on part-time courses funded on a pro rata basis. It is estimated that the number of children supported under the CETS programme is in the region of 5,500 annually.

A new After-school Childcare Programme was announced in Budget 2013 and will be fully rolled out in September 2013. This programme represents a full year investment of €14 million, and will provide important support to parents in low income families wishing to take up

employment, by ensuring that some 6,000 quality after-school care places are provided to support children's development. It is anticipated that a small number of the places available will be utilised by children in the age cohort referred to by the Deputy.

### **Child Care Qualifications**

629. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide, in tabular form, the total number of personnel employed in registered child care facilities; the detail of the formal accredited qualifications of personnel, that is, FETAC and HETAC level in same; the numbers without formal accredited qualifications in same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32237/13]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Pobal, which administers the childcare support programmes on behalf of my Department, compiles an Annual Survey of the Early Years Sector. For 2012 approximately 3,137 of these services responded and provided information on the level of training/qualifications of 12,838 staff working directly with children.

The survey established that the level of staff qualifications for those services who responded can be categorised as follows: Level 4 - 2.1%, Level 5 - 39.4%, Level 6 - 34.8%, Level 7 - 4.9%, Level 8 - 6.3%, Level 9/10 - 0.7%, Primary Teaching Qualification - 0.5%.

Up to 86.6% of staff working directly with children have qualifications equal to or higher than FETAC Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ). This shows an increase on a similar survey in 2011 and represents substantial progress in the further upskilling of child care workers in recent years.

### **Public Sector Staff Career Breaks**

630. **Deputy Paschal Donohoe** asked the Minister for Health the numbers of persons who have been accepted for the Health Service Executive's incentivised career break; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31486/13]

634. **Deputy Paschal Donohoe** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons within the Health Service Executive who have applied for the incentivised career break; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31485/13]

637. **Deputy Robert Dowds** asked the Minister for Health if it is the case that staff who have worked for the Health Service Executive for at least two years may apply for paid leave of absence for a period of up to three years at a rate of €12,000 per year, and, if this is the case, the reason for same. [31501/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 630, 634 and 637 together.

On 1 May last my Department issued a Circular letter to the HSE, authorising the introduction of an incentivised career break scheme in the HSE and in organisations funded by the HSE under Section 38 of the Health Act 2004. The scheme was intended as a tool to assist managers to achieve the numbers reduction required under the 2013 Employment Control Framework, as well as the corresponding reduction in expenditure, while delivering the agreed level of service.

Under the terms of the scheme, staff who had completed their probationary period, were of-

ferred a 3 year career break with an incentive payment of one third of gross basic pay to a maximum of €12,000; this amount is subject to tax and other statutory deductions. Any vacancy which arises under the scheme will not as a general rule be filled; a vacancy may only be filled by redeployment.

A total of 2,732 applications were received by the closing date 31 May, of which 2,521 were deemed to be valid applications. These applications have been considered and to date 366 have been approved while 82 applications have yet to be determined.

### **Health Services Provision**

631. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will review the case of a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath. [31857/13]

**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.

### **Mobility Allowance Applications**

632. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health if he will review the refusal of a mobility aid to a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31481/13]

**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.

### **Regulatory and Poverty Impact Assessments**

633. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide the regulatory impact analysis for the Health (Amendment) Bill 2013, and, if no such regulatory impact analysis has been conducted, the reason for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31484/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Under Cabinet Procedures, Departments are not required to conduct a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) in respect of a Bill which gives effect to decisions taken by the Government as part of the Budget. Some of the provisions in the Health (Amendment) Bill 2013 fall into this category while others do not. As the Health (Amendment) Bill is a combination of budgetary, charging and general policy matters, the position regarding RIAs is different, depending on the issue concerned.

Of the three main areas covered by the Bill the position in relation to RIAs is as follows: Amendment of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009 - RIA undertaken. Arrangements are being made to have this RIA placed on my Department's website; Charges for public in-patient and long-term residential care services - Summary explanatory RIA undertaken for sole purpose of Government Memorandum; Charges for private in-patient services - No RIA undertaken.

With regard to private in-patient charges, the Government decided as part of Budget 2013 that all private patients using public hospital facilities and resources would be charged the eco-

conomic cost of providing those services. The Government believes that the charge for private care in public hospitals should cover the hospitals' costs of providing the service, including the non-consultant hospital doctors, nursing staff, medical and surgical supplies, diagnostics, operating theatres, administration and support staff. Given that a private patient is using resources that cost, on average, in excess of €1,000 per day, it is clear that the current situation represents a significant loss of income to the public hospital system and an indirect subsidy of about €200 million to private insurance companies. This is equivalent to the cost of running a medium-sized public hospital. Budget 2013 provided for an additional €120 million to be raised in a full year in 2014 from applying charges to all private patients in public hospitals. The charges set out in the schedules to the Bill have been calculated with a view to raising this amount in a full year.

*Question No. 634 answered with Question No. 630.*

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

635. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when an appointment for cataract surgery will be approved in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31494/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2013*, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has recently been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to this particular query raised by the Deputy, I have asked the Health Service Executive to investigate the situation and respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

### **Medical Card Eligibility**

636. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health if a medical card issued to a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny is still listed as valid up to March 2014 [31496/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

*Question No. 637 answered with Question No. 630.*

### **Medicinal Products Availability**

638. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Health the steps taken by his Department in conjunction with the pharmaceutical health care sector to allow for new and innovative medicines to be funded and for timely access to new medicines; if he acknowledges the strong

link between innovation and better health outcomes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31509/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** A focus on innovation in health care is key to the development of new medicines to meet the needs of patients. From a policy perspective it is important to have a regulatory framework in place to support the development of new medicines. Clinical trials are essential for the development of new medicines and the Clinical Trials Proposal currently being negotiated at EU level, which was a key priority for my Department during the Irish Presidency of the EU Council, is designed to make Europe a more attractive place to carry out clinical trials on new and innovative therapies.

The first step for a medicine to be placed on the Irish market involves the manufacturer seeking an authorisation from the Irish Medicines Board (IMB) or in the case of certain medicinal products, the European Medicines Agency (EMA). A determination on the application for authorisation is based on a rigorous scientific assessment of the application against legal and regulatory requirements.

Once authorised, applications for the inclusion of new medicines in the GMS and community drugs schemes are considered in line with procedures and timescales agreed in 2012 between the Department of Health, the HSE and the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA). In accordance with these procedures, the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) conducts a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) which provides detailed information on the potential budget impact of the medicine. It also assesses whether the medicine is cost effective at the price quoted by the company in question.

In October 2012 a new deal on drug costs was agreed between the IPHA, the HSE and my Department resulting in major savings on the cost of drugs. The gross savings arising from this deal will be in excess of €400 million over 3 years. €210 million from the gross savings will be used to fund new drugs to patients over this period.

### **Tobacco Control Measures**

639. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to ensure that the illicit tobacco trade does not benefit from any measures introduced to support a decrease in tobacco consumption; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31511/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** All tobacco products, whether legally produced or illicit are injurious to health and are therefore a threat to public health. I am concerned about the level of smoking in Ireland and it remains my objective that Ireland moves towards being a tobacco free society. The tobacco control measures which have already been introduced and future planned measures will, in my view, make a significant contribution to the reduction in the numbers of people smoking in Ireland, in particular the numbers of children and young people who start to smoke.

In parallel with these tobacco control measures the Revenue Commissioners are responsible for tackling the illicit trade in cigarettes and tobacco products. They attach a high priority to tackling this trade because of the threat that it poses to society. Revenue's "Strategy on Combating the Illicit Tobacco Trade (2011-2013)" includes a range of measures designed to complement each other in targeting the supply and demand sides of the market for illicit cigarettes and other tobacco products. My Department and the HSE strongly support this Strategy. I understand from the Revenue Commissioners that the intention is to put a further strategy in place, when the current one comes to an end, to act as the strategic focus for the ongoing extensive

work against the smuggling and sale of illicit products.

### **Health Insurance Cover**

640. **Deputy Dara Murphy** asked the Minister for Health with regard to existing Government inpatient levy on private health insurers, if the new charge on private health insurance for the full cost of a public hospital bed is a double tax on private health insurance; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31517/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** At present, private in-patients in public hospitals are subject to maintenance charges that generally range from €586 to €1,046 per day when they are accommodated in a private designated bed. However, in an emergency admission if a private designated bed is not available and a private in-patient is accommodated in a public bed, the maintenance charge is currently not levied, although the private in-patient continues to pay the fees of his/her hospital consultant.

The Comptroller and Auditor General has reported that 45% of in-patients treated privately by their consultants were not charged for their maintenance costs because they were not occupying private-designated beds. This situation represents a significant loss of income to the public hospital system and an indirect subsidy to private insurance companies, who cover most private patients. I believe that this situation cannot continue and that the new charge makes sense. Up to now insurers have enjoyed a significant subsidy, where these private patients have only paid a standard €75 charge per day to the hospital even though they have seen and paid their consultant privately.

The gap between the cost of providing this service to private in-patients and the amount that public hospitals are currently allowed to raise from those private patients is estimated to be about €200m per year. The subsidy is equivalent to the cost of treating over 30,000 public patients every year or operating a medium size public hospital. While everyone is entitled to use a public hospital, some people choose to be treated privately, in which case they have chosen to pay the consultant and the hospital. The Government believes that users of private services should pay for the costs of providing these services even when they are provided by a public hospital.

As part of Budget 2013, the Government announced that it would raise €60m in 2013 under this heading, and €115m in a full year. This represents a modest phasing in of the charge – as called for by the insurers themselves - and is a relatively modest extra cost on an industry that pays out some €2 billion in claims costs every year.

The Health (Amendment) Bill 2013 is presently before the Dáil and provides for charges to be levied on all in-patients who are treated privately by their consultant, irrespective of where the patient is accommodated in the hospital and regardless of whether they are admitted directly or through emergency departments.

### **Medicinal Products Prices**

641. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Health the measures he has taken to address the cost of medication here; if pharmacists are obliged to publish dispensing details and other fees; if greater price transparency could be achieved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31518/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** In recent years, a number of changes to the pricing and reimbursement system have been successfully introduced in Ireland. These have resulted in reductions in the prices of thousands of medicines.

Following intensive negotiations involving the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA), the HSE and the Department of Health, a major new deal on the cost of drugs in the State was concluded in October last. It will deliver a number of important benefits, including significant reductions for patients in the cost of drugs, a lowering of the drugs bill to the State, timely access for patients to new cutting-edge drugs for certain conditions, and reducing the cost base of the health system into the future.

The IPHA agreement provides that prices are referenced to the currency adjusted average price to wholesaler in the nominated EU member states in which the medicine is then available. The prices of a range of medicines were reduced on 1 November 2012 and further price reductions were implemented on 1 January 2013 in accordance with the agreement.

The gross savings arising from this deal will be in excess of €400m over 3 years. €210 million from the gross savings will make available new drugs to patients over 3 years. Thus, the deal will result in a net reduction in the HSE expenditure on drugs of about €190m.

The Department and the HSE also finalised discussions with the Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Ireland (APMI), which represents the generic industry, on a new agreement to deliver further savings in the cost of generic drugs. Under this Agreement, from 1 November 2012, the HSE will only reimburse generic products which have been priced at 50% or less of the initial price of an originator medicine. In the event that an originator medicine is priced at less than 50% of its initial price the HSE will require a generic price to be priced below the originator price. This represents a significant structural change in generic drug pricing and should lead to an increase in the generic prescribing rate.

It is estimated that the combined gross savings from the IPHA and APMI deals will be in excess of €120 million in 2013.

The Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, which was commenced on the 24 of June, provides for the introduction of a system of generic substitution and reference pricing. The Act provides that when the HSE is setting a reference price for, or reviewing a reference price set for, a relevant group of interchangeable medicinal products it shall take into account the following criteria: the ability of suppliers to meet patient demand for the relevant item; the value for money afforded by the relevant item; the equivalent prices of the relevant item in all other Member States where the product is marketed; the prices of therapeutically similar items; and the resources available to the HSE.

It is important to balance achieving best value for money for the taxpayer with assuring continuity of supply for critical medical products, particularly in a small market like Ireland. Consequently, the Act aims to achieve value for money while avoiding disruption in the availability of medicines on the Irish market. This legislation will promote price competition among suppliers and ensure that lower prices are paid for these medicines resulting in further savings for both taxpayers and patients.

At present, pharmacists are not required to publish their dispensing and other fees. However, under the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland's (PSI) Code of Conduct, pharmacists are required to provide honest, relevant, accurate, current and appropriate information to patients regarding the nature, cost, value and benefit of medicines provided by them. Every pharmacist has an obligation to comply in full with the statutory Code of Conduct.

The PSI advises patients that their pharmacist should be in a position to provide them with whatever information or clarification they require about prescribed medicines, including information about the pricing of those medicines. The Department of Health has asked the PSI to examine how greater price transparency can be achieved. It should also be noted that the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013 provides patients with an incentive to seek products priced at or below the reference price.

It is the view of the HSE and the Department of Health that there should be total transparency provided when any pharmaceutical service is accessed by a member of the public.

### **Medical Card Applications**

642. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if he will review the recent refusal of a medical card in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31532/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Medical Card Appeals**

643. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health if an application for a medical card can now under appeal will be expedited and approved in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow. [31538/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Medical Card Appeals**

644. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if a decision has been made on a medical card appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31545/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which in-

cludes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Medical Card Applications**

645. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) was refused a medical card. [31548/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

646. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31575/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** My Department has not employed any temporary Clerical Officers in the last three years.

### **General Medical Services Scheme Administration**

647. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the reason an arbitrary decision was made in 2007 by the Health Service Executive to stop all new medical stoma appliances supplied through the GMS, the reason this embargo continues to date; if there was a review process in the interim and if patient representative associations have been consulted in keeping with the HSE partnership approach; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31583/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** A range of stoma products is on the List of Reimbursable Items under the GMS Scheme. Furthermore, where a product that is not on the List is required, application can be made by a medical card holder for the product to be made available through discretionary hardship arrangements.

The HSE is reviewing on a sequential basis, all non drug items on the List. Clinical nutritional products have been completed, significant work on dressings has been conducted and the HSE hopes to proceed to the Ostomy/Colostomy area later this year, as resources allow.

### **Generic Drugs Substitution**

648. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will list the twenty priority drugs, in order of priority, that the Irish Medicines Board will be reviewing with regard to generic substitution of medication; when this process will be taking place; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31584/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013 was commenced on Monday, 24 June 2013. This Act provides for the introduction of a system of generic substitution and reference pricing. It also sets out statutory procedures governing the supply, reimbursement and pricing of medicines and other items to patients under the GMS and community drug schemes.

The key aim of the legislation is to ensure value for money in the supply of medicines; therefore, the medicines that will be reviewed first by the Irish Medicines Board are most costly to patients and the Exchequer. The IMB will review an initial 20 active substances, which equates to approximately 1,500 individual medicines. They include statins, proton pump inhibitors, angiotensin-converting-enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor blockers. The drugs involved are:-

Atorvastatin  
Anastrozole  
Candesartan  
Clopidogrel  
Esomeprazole  
Lansoprazole  
Lercanidipine  
Losartan  
Olanzapine  
Omeprazole  
Pantoprazole  
Perindopril  
Pravastatin  
Quetiapine  
Rabeprazole  
Ramipril  
Risperidone  
Rosuvastatin  
Simvastatin  
Valsartan

It is expected that the first List of Interchangeable Medicines, containing groups of atorv-

astatin products, will be published in mid-August. The IMB will publish subsequent lists for other groups of medicines on an ongoing basis. From the end of the year onwards, hundreds of thousands of prescriptions will be subject to generic substitution, which will offer choice and reduced prices to patients.

### **Ambulance Service Provision**

649. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will review the new centralisation of ambulance control centres following a series of incidents in response to calls for patients with serious medical conditions; if mistaken addresses and communication difficulties from the new centralised control system in Tallaght need will be immediately reviewed to eliminate these failures; if he will re-introduce the local control systems and staff at least on a temporary basis to back up the centralised control centre to ensure that all emergency ambulance responses are effective, efficient and timely; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31590/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** A tragic event occurred in Kerry last week which was widely reported. Firstly, I wish to extend my deepest sympathies to the family of the child involved. The loss of a loved one is hard for family and friends at any time, but the sudden and unexpected death of a young child is particularly difficult.

In relation to this incident, the facts are that, at 1.16 am on 18 June 2013, an emergency call was received for a baby who was reported as not breathing. The National Ambulance Service (NAS) was initially unable to obtain sufficient details of where help was needed, which led to a delay in reaching the incident. The first emergency resource arrived at the scene 30 minutes after the initial 999 call. The patient was subsequently pronounced dead.

The incident has been the subject of a systems analysis, as is routine in cases where a death occurs, to ascertain whether call-taking protocols were followed. Following an examination of the facts, the HSE is satisfied that systems and processes operated correctly and there are no plans to carry out any further review. However, interrogation has been strengthened to try and mitigate the impact of a call where the incident location cannot be identified. In addition, HSE Communications has been requested to run a publicity campaign to improve public awareness of the need to communicate precisely the locations of incidents. In the interest of respecting the dignity and grief of the family, I wish to make no further comment on the specific incident.

A significant reform programme has been underway to totally reconfigure the way the HSE manages and delivers pre-hospital care services, to ensure a clinically driven, nationally co-ordinated system, supported by improved technology. The National Control Centre Reconfiguration Project, which is endorsed by HIQA and which represents international best practice, will reduce the number of ambulance control centres to a single national control system, with significant investment in new voice, data and mapping technologies. The project is also a key element of Future Health: A Strategic Framework for Health Reform in Ireland 2012-2015.

Both HIQA and the NAS have had concerns over control and dispatch structures at some control centres leading up to the development of the national control system. Accordingly, the NAS moved the Cork and Tralee centres to its Townsend Street centre on an interim basis in May, to mitigate such concerns pending completion of the national centre. Detailed preparations took place to ensure the safety of services during the move of the Cork and Kerry operations. The NAS provided additional staff, training, technology and equipment to assist this process. 112/999 calls from those areas are now answered in Dublin using improved technology. The NAS is satisfied that Townsend St, while not appropriate to the needs of the overall

reconfiguration project, is nevertheless suitable and infrastructurally sound for the interim accommodation of these centres.

### **Services for People with Disabilities**

650. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a placement in a training centre in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5. [31594/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Although the 2013 allocation for disability services has been reduced by 1.2%, the Health Service Executive (HSE) National Service Plan includes an additional €4m to provide training places and day services for school-leavers and Rehabilitative / Lifeskills Training (RT) graduates in 2013. This funding is being allocated to each HSE Region based on its percentage of population. Both the voluntary sector and the HSE are committed to the best use of the funding in a creative and flexible manner so as to secure as many places as possible for this cohort.

The demand for services for school-leavers continues to grow. Information on the final numbers of young people who require training places or day supports is being collated and plans to meet their requirements finalised. Final figures are expected from the HSE shortly, but are likely to exceed last year's total of 700. Providing the level of services required within the additional funding provided will continue to be a challenge. Work in this area will be progressed largely in line with the HSE guidance document developed in 2012, which led to the successful placement of 99% of RT graduates and 96% of school leavers last year.

In respect of the specific question asked by the Deputy, as it relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Housing Grant Applications**

651. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if there is any funding or Health Service Executive scheme for a couple in their 90s who need a bath to shower conversion in view of the fact that the local council has no funds; if he will advise the couple on their options in receiving support in adapting their home to their current needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31598/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The scheme referred to by the Deputy is a matter for the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and as such the Minister for Health Dr. James Reilly has no function in this matter.

### **Special Educational Needs Services Provision**

652. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if detailed consideration has been given to the 2010 Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Education Settings in determining the future of specialist preschools in County Donegal; if he is satisfied that the decision to close St. Agnes' preschool and his lack of commitment to retain the specialist preschool in Ballaghderg is consistent with the policy recommendations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31627/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The Government is fully committed to protecting frontline services, including services for children with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible. The inclusion of young children with disabilities in mainstream pre-school settings is an integral part of the Government's policy on mainstreaming which advocates that mainstream public services should serve people with disabilities alongside other citizens. It is with this in mind that the HSE's Intellectual Disability Services in Co. Donegal have embarked on a project to facilitate the inclusion, where appropriate, of children with an intellectual disability in mainstream pre-schools.

A Project Team has been established to determine the supports that will be required in mainstream pre-schools to accommodate these children. The overall aim of the Project is to ensure that these children can be educated in their own communities and with their own peers, rather than being segregated in specialist disability services, unless a child is assessed as requiring specialist care. I am advised no more than 5% of cases of children with a disability should require specialised pre-school provision to the extent that integration in a mainstream pre-school setting is not feasible.

There are currently two specialised pre-schools in Co. Donegal: St. Agnes pre-school in Donegal town and Ballaghderg pre-school in Letterkenny. The HSE has assured me that it has no immediate plans to close Ballaghderg pre-school and this pre-school will continue to deliver services until 2015. The position in respect of St. Agnes pre-school in Donegal town is that it will close at the end of 2014. The HSE arrived at this decision very recently and it was made following consultation with the parents concerned. There are currently four children at the pre-school. One of these children is due to commence school in September 2013 and the remaining three children will continue to avail of specialist pre-school services at St. Agnes until they are due to commence school in September 2014.

The HSE has given assurances that it will continue to engage with parents as this Project develops with a view to ensuring the children in question receive the best possible support in the most appropriate setting. The Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Education Settings was developed as a research project by Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, having been commissioned by the Department of Education and Skills. In that context, I have been advised that the framework is used primarily as a teaching tool by those delivering courses on the inclusion of children with special needs.

### **National Lottery Funding Disbursement**

653. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Health the criteria used to assess an application to the Department of Health national lottery fund during 2012 by an organisation (details supplied) in County Mayo; the grounds for failure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31634/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** National Lottery applications are received by my Department from a range of community and voluntary organisations involved in various health related activities. The relevant Unit in my Department liaises with the appropriate personnel in the Health Service Executive to assess each individual application and consider whether the application should be recommended for funding. When the assessment has been completed and a recommendation has been made, I review each application and prioritise them according to their merits before awarding National Lottery funding.

My Department receives a large number of applications for National Lottery Funding each year and it is not possible to fund each one. If the organisation wishes to make an application

for National Lottery Funding for 2013 they should send in a formal application. The closing date for completed applications is 12 noon on Friday 30th August 2013. Detailed procedures, along with the application form are set out on my Department's website - [www.doh.ie](http://www.doh.ie)

### **Medical Card Appeals**

654. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an explanation for the refusal of a medical card appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway in view of the fact that the applicant has a long-term medical need; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31652/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Primary Care Centres Provision**

655. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question Nos. 541 of 30 April 2013 and 531 of 12 February 2013, if he will now consider allocating the proposed grant for primary health care centre in Dungloe under the PPP programme to the capital programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31674/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** PPPs are arrangements between the public and private sectors for the delivery of public infrastructure and/or public services by the private sector that would otherwise have been provided through traditional public sector procurement. The procurement of infrastructure projects via PPP involves a tendering process, whereby consortia are invited to Design, Build, Finance, Maintain and Operate a particular piece of public infrastructure. The consortium, which must be in a position to secure private debt financing and private equity to support its bid, is also subject to an extensive financial due diligence process by the private funding providers prior to loan approval.

As a consequence of this financial structure, the impact of the infrastructure investment on the General Government Balance is gradual rather than up-front, thereby allowing the Government cost of financing infrastructure to be spread over the lifetime of the asset. The Public Private Partnership (PPP) process involves a large element of up-front funding by the private sector. The €115m referred to in the July 2012 Stimulus Package announcement is the public sector's best estimate of what it could cost the private sector to deliver the PPP bundles. This indented €115m is not public funding which can be allocated to the direct-build capital programme.

The delivery of primary care infrastructure is a dynamic process and must take account of changing circumstances including the feasibility of implementing the delivery of the centres by means of lease, direct-build or PPP. GP engagement and agreement to deliver primary care services from primary care centres is central to delivery of the necessary infrastructure. Regardless of the method of delivery or deprivation ranking, locations cannot be progressed unless there is committed GP engagement.

### **Medical Card Applications**

656. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding an application for a medical card in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; if same will be expedited; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31681/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Medical Card Applications**

657. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a medical card application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; if he will expedite same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31682/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Primary Medical Certificates Applications**

658. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if a primary medical certificate will be provided to a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31683/13]

**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.

### **Medical Card Eligibility**

659. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will review the recent decision to downgrade the full medical cards of persons (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31704/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to

medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### **Hospital Services**

660. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Health when the psychiatric unit of Beaumont Hospital will open; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31705/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The particular issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Health Services Expenditure**

661. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide in tabular form a breakdown of the expenditure on Autism; the total amount of money available; the amount that has been spent on a county basis for the period since the latest round of funding for Autism was announced to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31706/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As the Deputy will be aware, accountability for the management of services is a matter for the HSE to address within the ambit of its Vote (Vote 39). The level of health services to be delivered within the available funding for 2013 has been set out in the HSE National Service Plan for 2013, which I approved in January. I have made enquires of the HSE in relation to the Deputy's specific queries regarding the current expenditure on autism across the country. However, the HSE has advised it is not in a position to provide a breakdown of the funding currently being spent on autism services in Ireland. This is due to the manner in which funding is allocated between broad categories such as services for older people, primary care and disabilities in general. Disability services are provided based on the needs of the individual, rather than by the actual type of disability. The Executive also explained that people with autism may attend autism-specific services, or may obtain services from a service provider who provides services for a wide range of intellectual disabilities, including autism. The HSE will provide in the order of €1.5 billion in 2013 to fund health services for children and adults with disabilities, including autism. This represents approximately 11.5% of the €13.3 billion health budget for 2013. It should also be noted that while the HSE provides a range of services to adults and children with disabilities, the majority of this funding is distributed through non-statutory agencies who deliver over 80% of all disability services.

The HSE National Review of Autism Services: Past, Present and Way Forward Report (2012) and the Progressing Disabilities Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme set out the policy context for the provision of autism services to children and young people. The objective of the Progressing Disabilities Programme is to achieve a national, unified approach to delivering disability health services so that there is a clear pathway to the services for all children, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of their disability. This Programme aims to remedy the variations in service provision that currently persist around the country.

To assist in addressing some of these variations, I announced the allocation of €1m in funding for autism and early intervention services in 2012. Based on a report prepared by the HSE, I approved €300,000 of this funding, which equates to five therapists posts, for Beechpark services in Dublin, north of the Liffey, to address the pressing needs of its catchment area, with

a particular emphasis on reducing waiting times. The report also proposed an allocation for Beechpark in the Dublin Mid-Leinster region which was to be rolled out in year two (i.e. Dublin south of the Liffey, Kildare and Wicklow).

I also established an Independent Review Group in 2012, to look at the Beechpark model of services and how resources could be used in the best and most effective way, in light of the HSE Review of Autism Services and the re-organisation of services underway in line with the 0-18's Programme. Further funding in relation to Beechpark and other regions of the country, was put on hold, pending the outcome of this Review. I understand that this Review is expected to be concluded shortly.

Following ongoing discussions on the best way forward in relation to Beechpark Autism Services, the HSE has confirmed that the funding approved will be allocated to HSE Dublin North East in 2013 for Beechpark in order to address the waiting list for services in Dublin North East. This will provide, in the first instance, for the recruitment of the necessary five therapy staff. I am very aware, however, that addressing the significant pressures in Dublin North East is only a starting point. The balance of funding for autism and early intervention services nationally will be made available. The issue of the allocation of these further resources will be required to be looked at, in light of the findings of the Independent Review.

### **Graduate Nursing Scheme Issues**

662. **Deputy Seán Ó Feargháil** asked the Minister for Health if he will address the concerns raised in correspondence (details supplied) regarding a public health nursing course; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31713/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The 2012 sponsored Student Public Health Nurse Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma recruitment campaign, which was advertised by the HSE with a closing date of 1st June 2012, advised candidates that, on successful completion of the training programme, they would be required to accept an initial assignment as a full-time Public Health Nurse, for a period of not less than two years, in the sponsoring Local Health Office/Integrated Service Area.

Candidates were subsequently advised that the terms and conditions of the Sponsorship Programme had changed and this change meant that there would be no guarantee of immediate PHN positions for candidates on successful completion of the programme. The programme commenced on 8th October 2012. Discussions involving HSE management and the INMO on the change to the terms and conditions have recently been held in the Labour Relations Commission. These discussions are continuing.

### **Medical Card Eligibility**

663. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if he will consider the introduction of a minimum period of one year without further review for medical card holders who have had successful medical card appeals; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31728/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive operates under the legislative framework of the Health Act of 1970, as subsequently amended. In the interest of probity, the HSE is obliged to ensure that a person's eligibility is correctly recorded in line with the eligibility legislation and the national guidelines. The HSE aims to ensure that every person who is entitled to the medical card schemes is given the opportunity

to avail of their entitlement.

The standard procedure for the review of medical cards, including those granted following appeal, for persons aged 66 years or older is that their medical card will be reviewed every 4 years. For persons under the age of 66 years, the length of validity of a medical card is 3 years. Depending on the individual's circumstances, it may be issued for a shorter period. Medical cards awarded on a discretionary basis are valid for two to three years, in line with general medical cards/GP Visit Cards.

If an individual's circumstances change, he/she must inform the HSE, as he/she may no longer be eligible. In addition to the standard assessment and review processes, random audits of eligibility will also be undertaken by the HSE on an on-going basis. If selected for review under this process, the Medical Card holder will be informed and requested to submit up to date income details.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

664. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 727 of 29 January 2013, when a person (details supplied) in County Kerry will receive a scan for a disc assessment at the physio led musculoskeletal clinic in Waterford Regional Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31734/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2013*, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has recently been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists. In relation to this particular query raised by the Deputy, I have asked the Health Service Executive to investigate the situation and respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

### **Medical Aids and Appliances Provision**

665. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Health if a scheme or mechanism is in place by either his Department or the Health Service Executive so that used foldable walkers, walking sticks and crutches from previous patients are made available for new patients, with sterilisation to ensure that their reuse is to the proper standard; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that such a scheme or mechanism would allow for significant saving for the Exchequer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31735/13]

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

### **Hospital Services**

666. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details on the way a person who believes that the care that they received in a public hospital was below standard and led to a deterioration in their quality of life and a longer than normal stay as an inpatient in hospital may attain compensation and redress for their situation. [31752/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 provides for the making of complaints. The Health Service Executive (HSE) has published a “National Healthcare Charter, You and Your Health Service” which outlines what service users can expect and what their responsibilities are whenever and wherever they use health services and the mediation and facilitation provided for the handling of complaints. This document is available at *www.hse.ie*.

### **Hospital Services**

667. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health the reason Mallow Hospital will not take children under six years of age given that the South Doc facility only has one night doctor and in the event of a day doctor being late on the shift, potentially has no staff available to deal with medical emergencies; and the steps he intends to take to ensure that children in medical emergencies have access to timely treatment. [31787/13]

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

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme Applications**

668. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if a decision has been made on an application for the nursing home support scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31827/13]

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

### **Respite Care Services**

669. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) in County Cork was refused respite care; if he will confirm that male patients are at a disadvantage compared to female patients seeking respite care; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31830/13]

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

### **Hospital Procedures**

670. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if he will list the number of hip replacement operations carried out on public patients at a hospital (details supplied) in County Donegal for the past three years; the number of operations that have been carried out to date in 2013; the number planned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31832/13]

671. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if he will list the number of hip replacement operations carried out on private patients at a hospital (details supplied) in County Donegal for the past three years, the number of operations that have been carried out to date in 2013; the number planned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31833/13]

672. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details in tabular form on the number of operations carried out by a hospital (details supplied) in County Donegal per department on public patients for 2011, 2012 and to date in 2013 [31834/13]

673. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details in tabular form on the number of operations carried out by a hospital (details supplied) in County Donegal per department on private patients for 2011, 2012 and to date in 2013. [31835/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 670 to 673, inclusive, together.

In relation to the particular queries raised by the Deputy, as these are service issues, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy in these matters.

### **Home Help Service Provision**

674. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding home help in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9. [31840/13]

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

### **National Dementia Strategy Implementation**

675. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the progress of the National Dementia Strategy, which will seek to increase awareness, ensure early diagnosis and intervention, and enhance community based services for persons living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; when he expects the report to be finalised and published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31848/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** It is estimated that there are currently 41,000 people with dementia in Ireland and Alzheimer's Disease accounts for the majority of cases.

Given that the number of people with dementia is expected to rise to between 141,000 and 147,000 by 2041, the Programme for Government contains a commitment to develop a National Alzheimer's and other Dementias' Strategy by 2013 to;

- increase awareness
- ensure early diagnosis and intervention and
- ensure development of enhanced community based services.

A significant amount of preparatory work has already been completed. A research review funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies to lay the foundations for the Strategy, titled *Creating Excellence in Dementia Care, A Research Review for Ireland's National Dementia Strategy* was published in January 2012. A public consultation process to inform the development of the Strategy was conducted in 2012 and a report of same published on the Department's website in February 2013.

A Working Group, representative of key stakeholders from the Department, the HSE, the medical profession and the community and voluntary sector has been established, meetings of

which are on-going.

While the development of the Strategy will have to have due regard to the constraints imposed by the budgetary situation, it is intended that it will be a transformative Strategy. It will have a very practical focus, will be action oriented and will focus on what can be done to make a difference to the lives of people with dementia. It is intended that a draft of the Strategy will be completed by the end of 2013.

### Hospital Appointments Administration

676. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny will receive a hospital appointment and if he will expedite a response. [31942/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Improving access to outpatient services is a key priority for the Government. Collaborating with individual hospitals, the SDU, together with the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) and the HSE, has developed the outpatient waiting list minimum dataset. This allows data to be submitted to the NTPF from hospitals on a weekly basis and, for the first time, outpatient data is available on *www.ntpf.ie*. For 2013, a maximum waiting time target has been set of 12 months for a first time consultant-led outpatient appointment and this is reflected in the HSE service plan. The SDU and the NTPF will work closely with hospitals towards achievement of the maximum waiting time.

Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she would be in the best position to take the matter up with the consultant and hospital involved. In relation to the specific hospital appointment query raised by the Deputy, as this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

### Long-Term Illness Scheme Issues

677. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) in County Meath is charged for medications despite being in receipt of a long-term illness card; if it is the case that these medications are covered by the long-term illness scheme; if he will acknowledge that this person is therefore disadvantaged by also having a medical card; if he will immediately review this anomaly; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31943/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** Persons suffering from prescribed conditions, who are not already medical card holders, can get free drugs, medicines and medical and surgical appliances for the treatment of that condition under the Long Term Illness (LTI) Scheme.

Medical card holders are required to pay prescription charges. Prescription charges are not payable in respect of items supplied under the LTI Scheme.

In the case of persons who have both the medical card and LTI, the HSE policy is that they should use their medical card to access medicines. The main reason for this is that the supply of medicines under the LTI costs the HSE considerably more than under the GMS Scheme. A retail mark-up of 20% is payable to pharmacists for items supplied under the LTI Scheme but there is no retail mark-up for items supplied under the GMS Scheme.

The decision by the previous Government not to extend prescription charges to the Long

Term Illness Scheme has given rise to the anomaly identified by the Deputy. This matter is under review.

### **Speech and Language Therapy**

678. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Health when speech and language therapy be provided to a child with autism (details supplied) in County Kildare. [31951/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The Government is fully committed to protecting frontline services, including services for children with disabilities and autism, to the greatest extent possible, notwithstanding the financial constraints within which the health sector must operate. The HSE aims to ensure that therapy resources, such as Speech and Language Therapy services, are used to best effect. There has been significant investment in the area of speech and language therapists in recent years and a range of new approaches have been developed and used in many Speech and Language Therapy services across the country. These include providing structures and training to parents or carers so that they can work with the individual child to improve their speech and language. Therapy is also delivered in group settings, where appropriate.

The policy context for the provision of autism services to children and young people is set out in the HSE National Review of Autism Services: Past, Present and Way Forward Report (2012) and the Progressing Disabilities Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme. The objective of the Progressing Disabilities Programme is to achieve a national, unified approach to delivering disability health services so that there is a clear pathway to the services for all children, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of their disability. This Programme aims to remedy the variations in service provision that currently persist around the country.

As the particular issue raised by the Deputy relates to an individual case, this is a service matter for the HSE. Accordingly, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Cancer Screening Programmes**

679. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health his plans to roll out a screening programme to detect the presence of genetic mutations BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes which bring a higher risk of breast cancer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31959/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The communication of information on cancer risk and carrier probability is not straightforward. There is a degree of uncertainty with respect to the probability of inheriting a predisposing genetic mutation, of gene penetrance and hence of developing cancer. People who are concerned about a family history of breast cancer may require information to help them deal with the complex medical and social choices linked with different levels of breast cancer risk management options, and support to cope with the associated uncertainty and anxiety. It is therefore not appropriate to develop a general population based screening programme for the presence of genetic mutations.

Breast cancer is the most common invasive cancer diagnosed in women in Ireland. A comprehensive symptomatic breast service is available for women in the eight designated cancer centres. Most cases of breast cancer arise in women with no apparent close family history. The majority of people with a family history of breast cancer will not be at substantially increased

risk.

However, five to ten per cent of all breast cancers are explained by the presence of BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations. The lifetime risk of breast cancer in these women may be as high as 80%. However, not all familial clusters can be explained by known breast cancer susceptibility genes such as BRCA1 or BRCA2.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) established a National Hereditary Cancer Programme in 2011 with the National Centre for Medical Genetics in Crumlin Hospital. Additional genetic testing clinics have been established in St James's and the Mater Hospitals in Dublin - with a similar service due to be opened in Cork University Hospital in the coming months. In 2012 the new clinics in the Mater and St James's Hospitals assessed and tested almost 200 women (with breast or ovarian cancer) for the BRCA gene mutation. This represents more than a 100% increase in the numbers of women tested nationally compared with 2011.

There are two groups of women involved – those who have been diagnosed with cancer and those who have a family member who has been found to carry a gene mutation. Testing is undertaken on the basis of agreed medical criteria and is always preceded by genetic counselling. The NCCP and National Centre for Medical Genetics are continuing to work to ensure that the service is expanded to meet national needs.

Accurate predictive breast cancer genetic testing on a healthy woman with a family history of breast cancer is not clinically useful, unless a specific gene alteration has been identified in an affected family member. Well women without a personal history of breast cancer who are concerned about their family history should in the first instance discuss their concerns with their family doctor. The GP will want to know details of the family history and any information available in relation to genetic testing of relatives. The GP may then refer the patient to a specialist secondary care service such as a Symptomatic Breast Disease Unit, if there are features highly suggestive of familial disease, for more detailed assessment.

### Preventative Medicine

680. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health his plans to offer tamoxifen or raloxifene to all women aged over 35 years old with a family history of breast and related cancers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31960/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Breast cancer is the most common invasive cancer diagnosed in women in Ireland. A comprehensive symptomatic breast service is available for women in the eight designated cancer centres. Most cases of breast cancer arise in women with no apparent close family history. The majority of people with a family history of breast cancer will not be at substantially increased risk.

Women at increased risk of breast cancer due to their family history have a specific range of strategies currently available to reduce their risk. For those for whom risk-reducing surgery is unsuitable or unacceptable, chemoprevention using drugs such as tamoxifen and raloxifene may represent a more acceptable means of risk reduction.

Tamoxifen and raloxifene reduce the risk of breast cancer for women without a personal history but who have an increased risk of the disease. As they are not currently licensed for chemoprevention in well women with a family history of breast cancer in Ireland, they can only be prescribed by a doctor following professional guidance, taking full responsibility for the decision and documenting informed consent from the patient. It is not appropriate to offer them to all women aged over 35 years with a family history of breast and related cancers. Drug

licensing in Ireland is the responsibility of the Irish Medicines Board.

All drugs have side effects and risks which are particularly important when they are being used to prevent other diseases. Discussion and information should include the side effects of drugs, the extent of risk reduction, and the risks and benefits of alternative approaches, such as risk-reducing surgery and surveillance. Discussion in relation to risk of cancer of the lining of the womb, or blood clotting and in relation to bone health are of particular importance for tamoxifen and raloxifene.

The communication of information on cancer risk and carrier probability is complex. There is a degree of uncertainty with respect to the probability of inheriting a predisposing genetic mutation, of gene penetrance and hence of developing cancer. People who are concerned about a family history of breast cancer may require information to help them deal with the complex medical and social choices linked with different levels of breast cancer risk management options, and support to cope with the associated uncertainty and anxiety.

The National Cancer Control Programme will be examining the most recent guidance, published this month, on Familial Breast Cancer from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in the UK in relation to the management of chemoprevention and other aspects of the care of patients with a family history of breast cancer.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

681. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health if a person (details supplied) in County Waterford is on the waiting list for a gastric bypass; the steps being taken to progress their health situation; the length of time they will be expected to wait for this procedure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31969/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2013*, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has recently been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to this particular query raised by the Deputy, I have asked the Health Service Executive to investigate the situation and respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

### **Health Services Issues**

682. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if he has studied recent submissions from the Vasculitis Ireland Awareness foundation with particular reference to the need for early diagnosis for those suffering from the medical complaint and the need to ensure awareness of the condition in view of the fact it is a rare disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31971/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** I am aware of the literature circulated by the Vasculitis Ireland Awareness foundation.

There is no set treatment regime for vasculitis. Treatment depends on the type of vasculitis that a person has, the organs affected and the severity or otherwise of the condition. Treatment may involve taking over the counter medication and/or prescription medication or, in certain

cases, surgery. A patient's General Practitioner or Consultant is in the best position to advise on the particular treatment options in each individual case.

### **Nursing Home Services**

683. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients currently on the placement list for long-term nursing home care in the State; if he will indicate the average cost of maintaining a patient in an acute hospital who would otherwise be accommodated in nursing home; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31980/13]

684. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of the number of beds in private nursing homes which the Health Service Executive has reserved for use under the fair deal scheme and where they are located; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31981/13]

685. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health if he will detail the number of public nursing home beds available under the fair deal scheme by location; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31982/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 683 to 685, inclusive, together.

The latest information available to the Department indicates that there were 873 people on the national placement list for the Nursing Homes Support Scheme at end-April and that the average time spent awaiting funding was 49 days. However, not all of these people would have been in acute hospitals. Between January and April 2013, about 43% of all applications for the Scheme were from people in acute hospitals.

The HSE does not reserve beds in private nursing homes for use under the Scheme. Individuals who have been approved for funding under the Scheme can choose the nursing home in which they wish to reside, subject to the nursing home:

- being an 'approved nursing home' for the purposes of the Scheme,
- having an available bed, and,
- being able to meet the individual's particular needs.

A list of all 'approved nursing homes' is available on the HSE's website.

The average cost of maintaining a person in an acute hospital and the number of public nursing home beds available under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme are services matters and, as such, have been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme Applications**

686. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health when a decision will be made on an application for the fair deal scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan. [31988/13]

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

### Medical Aids and Appliances Provision

687. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health if he will instruct the Health Service Executive to consider providing through the GMS a newer generation of ileostomy pouches which are longer lasting and hence more cost effective; his views on whether the current ileostomy product range available from the HSE is out-dated and that a better selection should be made available to those who have need to use such due to illnesses such as inflammatory bowel disease and cancer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32020/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** This is a service matter, therefore, it has been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

### Medical Card Applications

688. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a medical card in respect of persons (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32035/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently reissued to Oireachtas members.

### Proposed Legislation

689. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Health if legislation will be implemented to regulate the use of sunbeds to assist in reducing the number of persons developing skin cancer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32065/13]

693. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to introduce legislation regarding the regulation of sunbeds here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32140/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 689 and 693 together.

I can confirm that legislation will be implemented to regulate the use of sunbeds. This Bill has priority drafting and Officials of the Department are working closely with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to complete the drafting of this legislation.

This legislation will prohibit the use of sunbeds on a sunbed premises by persons under 18 years of age and will also set out a comprehensive range of measures to promote a greater public awareness across all age groups of the dangers of developing skin cancer, premature ageing and eye damage from exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR). Key provisions in the Bill will include:-

- (i) a prohibition on anyone under 18 years of age using a sunbed on a sunbed premises;

- (ii) a prohibition on the sale to or hire of sunbeds to anyone under 18 years of age;
- (iii) a prohibition on the unsupervised use of sunbeds in a sunbed premises;
- (iv) an exemption for medical purposes;
- (v) control on the remote sale or hire of sunbeds (internet transactions);
- (vi) sunbed operators, sellers and hirers will be required to notify the HSE;
- (vii) a requirement that sunbed operators provide training for staff;
- (viii) an enforcement regime and the imposition of penalties for non-compliance;
- (ix) an obligation on all sunbed operators to provide protective eyewear to users;
- (x) a requirement that warning signs be displayed in all sunbed premises;
- (xi) a prohibition on certain promotional marketing practices;
- (xii) a requirement on operators to ensure that sunbed users are made fully aware of the potential dangers of sunbed use; and a related provision whereby sunbed users are required to sign to confirm that they have been made so aware.

It is important to bear in mind that the Bill, when finalised, must be notified to the EU Commission under the EU Transparency Directive prior to the publication and introduction of the Bill in the Oireachtas. This EU notification requirement will necessitate a minimum of three months to complete.

### **National Treatment Purchase Fund**

690. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Health the arrangements in place to cover travel expenses of patients availing of treatment abroad facilitated by the Health Service Executive and in particular in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32074/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

691. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Cork who is on an urgent orthopaedic outpatient waiting list since 6 December 2012 will be treated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32077/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Improving access to outpatient services is a key priority for the Government. Collaborating with individual hospitals, the SDU, together with the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) and the HSE, has developed the outpatient waiting list minimum dataset. This allows data to be submitted to the NTPF from hospitals on a weekly basis and, for the first time, outpatient data is available on [www.ntpf.ie](http://www.ntpf.ie). For 2013, a maximum waiting time target has been set of 12 months for a first time consultant-led outpatient appointment and this is reflected in the HSE service plan. The SDU and the NTPF will work closely with hospitals towards achievement of the maximum waiting time.

Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she would be in the best position to take the matter up with the consultant and hospital involved. In relation to the specific hospital appointment query raised by the Deputy, as this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

### **Palliative Care Services**

692. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Health if he will ensure that patients in all regions of the country will have access to comprehensive hospice inpatient and home care services; if he will acknowledge the significant savings the provision of an adequate number of hospice beds could make by reducing admissions rates and length of stay in expensive acute hospitals; if 450 beds will be made available in the country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32084/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** Palliative care services are experiencing increasing demands due to the changing demographics of our ageing population and increasing patient and public expectations, particularly for support for chronic non-malignant diseases.

Government policy on Palliative Care is contained in the Report of the National Advisory Committee on Palliative Care (2001) and the HSE Medium Term Framework for Palliative Care Services (2009 – 2013) and (for children) Palliative Care for Children with Life-limiting Conditions in Ireland - A National Policy.

Palliative care is delivered in a variety of settings from specialist palliative units, to acute hospitals, and in the community. Input is sought from multidisciplinary teams of health care professionals at the level that is most appropriate for the needs of the patient at any particular time. The objective always is to respond to the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and to achieve the highest possible quality of life for the patient and family

Although funding pressures have intensified across all service areas in recent years, the HSE continues to work with voluntary and local groups to deliver the best possible service for those who need palliative care. In 2012, approx 35,738 people received specialist home care palliative services and 4,274 people received specialist in-patient care.

The HSE National Service Plan 2013 provides funding of €72m for Palliative Care, exclusive of the palliative care that is provided in acute hospitals, on approximately 170 palliative care support beds or on palliative home care packages.

The HSE has committed to the following access targets for 2013:

- 92% of specialist inpatient beds provided within 7 days
- 98% of specialist inpatient beds provided within one month

The most recent HSE Performance Report for 2013 indicates that to March, this target was exceeded with 94% of those seeking specialist palliative inpatient beds receiving this service within 7 days, and 99% receiving the service within one month.

My Department and the HSE will continue to work to ensure that available resources are used in the most effective way possible to give those who need hospice or other palliative care the services that they need and deserve.

*Question No. 693 answered with Question No. 689.*

## **General Medical Services Scheme Payments**

694. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health the changes that have been made to the fees payable to general practitioners under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act and the percentage reductions involved; if he foresees any changes to the contract, including a reduction of the capitation fee, a fee based on actual work done and a mechanism that includes the non-payment or recoup of fees paid for those who have emigrated or plan to do so; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32147/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** The current General Medical Services (GMS) General Practitioner (GP) Capitation Contract was introduced in 1989 and is based on a diagnosis and treatment model. Under the GMS contract, GPs receive a range of fees and allowances, including an annual capitation payment in respect of each medical card and GP visit card patient on their GMS list.

Under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Act 2009, an 8% reduction in a range of GP fees and allowances was introduced in 2009, which effected full year savings in the region of €34 million. Further reductions to a range of fees and allowances were introduced in 2010, which effected full year savings in the region of €44 million. This equates to an approximate additional reduction of 9%.

Following a further review and having due regard to Section 9 of the FEMPI Act 2009, the Minister for Health has decided to apply further reductions to the fees and allowances payable to GPs which equate to an overall reduction of 7.5%. This will amount to a saving of some €38 million in a full year. Regulations are being prepared to give effect to the Minister's decision.

The Programme for Government provides for the introduction of a new GMS GP contract with an increased emphasis on the management of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and cardiovascular conditions. It is envisaged that the new contract, when finalised, will focus on prevention and will include a requirement for GPs to provide care as part of integrated multi-disciplinary Primary Care Teams. The appropriate payment arrangements will be considered as part of the new GMS contract.

Capitation fees are paid to General Practitioners where a person has eligibility for a Medical/GP Visit Card. Fees are not paid where eligibility no longer exists e.g. following an assessment of their means, emigration or death. Under the Health Act 1970, there is an obligation on all card holders to notify the HSE of any change in their circumstances, which would put them above the Medical Card/GP Visit Card income guidelines.

In addition to the normal three-yearly review of eligibility on expiration of a medical card, targeted reviews of eligibility were introduced during 2012, in relation to medical cards which had been inactive for more than 12 months. In such cases, medical card holders were formally contacted to confirm that they were still resident in the State. In cases where no response was received, eligibility was removed and the payment of capitation fees ceased. A person whose eligibility is under review who appeals a decision regarding their eligibility retains their original eligibility until an Appeal decision is reached.

## **Health Services Issues**

695. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 276 and 278 of 30 May 2013, if he will outline the number of psychiatric nursing staff officially appointed or allocated to each unit; the number of involuntary patients resident in

each unit; the number of long-term involuntary or forensic patients, those deemed suitable for accommodation in a intensive care rehabilitation unit in each unit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32168/13]

**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.

### **Mental Health Services**

696. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health the number of long-term involuntary or forensic patients, the number of those deemed suitable for accommodation in a intensive care rehabilitation unit accommodated outside the Central Mental Hospital and appropriate long-term accommodation; the numbers in the Central Mental Hospital due for release this year and in each of the next three years; the timeline for the completion of regional intensive care rehabilitation units and the capacity of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32169/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The particular issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Generic Drugs Substitution**

697. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the measures that are planned to increase the use of generic drugs here; the legislative and regulatory measures to ensure same; the expected savings from same in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32182/13]

698. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the measures planned to decrease the cost of generic drugs here; the legislative and regulatory measures to ensure same; the expected savings from same in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32183/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 697 and 698 together.

The prices of drugs vary between countries for a number of reasons, including different prices set by manufacturers, different wholesale and pharmacy mark-ups, different dispensing fees and different rates of VAT. In recent years, a number of changes to the pricing and reimbursement system have been successfully introduced in Ireland. These have resulted in reductions in the prices of thousands of medicines.

Following intensive negotiations involving the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA), the HSE and the Department of Health, a major new deal on the cost of drugs in the State was concluded in October last. It will deliver a number of important benefits, including

- significant reductions for patients in the cost of drugs,
- a lowering of the drugs bill to the State,
- timely access for patients to new cutting-edge drugs for certain conditions, and

- reducing the cost base of the health system into the future.

The IPHA agreement provides that prices are referenced to the currency adjusted average price to wholesaler in the nominated EU member states in which the medicine is then available. The prices of a range of medicines were reduced on 1 November 2012 and further price reductions were implemented on 1 January 2013 in accordance with the agreement.

The gross savings arising from this deal will be in excess of €400m over 3 years. €210 million from the gross savings will make available new drugs to patients over 3 years. Thus, the deal will result in a net reduction in the HSE expenditure on drugs of about €190m.

The Department and the HSE have successfully finalised discussions with the Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Ireland (APMI), which represents the generic industry, on a new agreement to deliver further savings in the cost of generic drugs. Under this Agreement, from 1 November 2012, the HSE will only reimburse generic products which have been priced at 50% or less of the initial price of an originator medicine. In the event that an originator medicine is priced at less than 50% of its initial price the HSE will require a generic price to be priced below the originator price. This represents a significant structural change in generic drug pricing and should lead to an increase in the generic prescribing rate.

It is estimated that the combined gross savings from the IPHA and APMI deals will be in excess of €120 million in 2013.

The Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, which was commenced on the 24th of June, provides for the introduction of a system of generic substitution and reference pricing. The key aim of the legislation is to ensure value for money in the supply of medicines; therefore, the medicines that will be reviewed first are most costly to patients and the Exchequer. The consultation process for the first List of Interchangeable Medicines, containing groups of atorvastatin products, started on the 26th of June. It is expected that this list will be published in mid-August at which time generic prices will fall by 20%.

It is important to balance achieving best value for money for the taxpayer with assuring continuity of supply for critical medical products, particularly in a small market like Ireland. Consequently, the Act aims to achieve value for money while avoiding disruption in the availability of medicines on the Irish market. This legislation will promote price competition among suppliers and ensure that lower prices are paid for these medicines resulting in further savings for both taxpayers and patients.

It is not possible, at this juncture, to provide accurate figures regarding potential savings resulting from the introduction of generic substitution and reference pricing, as these depend on various factors including prevailing prices, number of competitors, availability of substitute products, and market dynamics.

The Department is committed to establishing high-level annual targets by the end of September for the share of generic penetration over the medium-term. These targets will be informed by the ESRI report *Pharmaceutical Prices, Prescribing Practices and Usage of Generics in a Comparative Context*, which was published on the 27th of June.

### **Hazardous Waste Disposal**

699. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health if he will outline the procedures in place to ensure the safe disposal of hazardous waste, including radioactive material, from public and private hospitals here; and the steps open to citizens should they harbour concerns

regarding the safety of such waste disposal. [32195/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I would like to advise the Deputy that I have no function in relation to the matter raised. Matters relating to hazardous waste are the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Matters relating to radiological safety come within the ambit of the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII). Both of these public authorities come under the auspices of the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

### **Services for People with Disabilities**

700. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health if the system for providing support services, educational, vocational or otherwise, can be urgently assessed so that a permanent, more effective framework can be implemented which would provide certainty as well as options for persons with disabilities graduating from second level education. [32198/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The HSE, through its Occupational Guidance Service, works with schools, service providers, service users and families to identify the needs of young people with disabilities who are due to complete their second level education. The aim is to address the needs of individuals in the following ways, through:

- Health-funded rehabilitative or life-skills training;
- Health-funded day services;
- FÁS-funded vocational training, or;
- Extension to education placement for a specified time.

Vocational training which prepares people, including young people with disabilities, for employment in the open labour market is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills and FÁS. Rehabilitative training, which has no connection with the open labour market, is the responsibility of the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive (HSE). The purpose of rehabilitative training is to develop the individual's life skills, social skills and basic work skills. Approximately 3,000 people with disabilities avail of rehabilitative training each year, some of whom then progress to vocational training, other training or employment. Some young people with disabilities, depending on their individual needs and abilities, require continuing supports from the HSE.

The HSE report *New Directions: the report of the National Working Group for the Review of HSE-funded Adult Day Services*, which was published in 2012, is guiding the reconfiguration and modernization of day services and will underpin the flexible and innovative approach required when addressing the future requirements of school leavers with disabilities who require continuing support. The *New Directions* report recommends the development of alternative models of day service based on the provision of individualised supports, rather than centre-based set programmes. The new model will enable young people with disabilities to lead self-directed lives through a range of personal supports.

A Working Group was established under the auspices of the National Consultative Forum to ensure the *New Directions* implementation plan is progressed through a collaborative approach. One of the work-packages currently being progressed by the Working Group is the development of draft standards for day services, in association with National Disability Authority. The

draft standards will form part of a consultation process with service providers, service users and parents due to take place in September 2013. A revised Implementation Plan for *New Directions* will also form part of the consultation. Following the consultation process, the Interim Standards will be made available to service providers along with an audit tool. The Interim Standards are seen as essential in order to ensure a consistent and measurable approach to the reconfiguration and modernization of HSE-funded day services and supports.

The demand for services for young people with disabilities completing their education or life-skills training continues to grow. The HSE are currently finalising their figures for 2013 but expects that over 700 new places will be required. Service providers and the HSE are working closely together to identify how these needs can be met within available resources. This year, despite a 1.2% cut in the disability budget, an additional €4m has been ring-fenced in the HSE's National Service Plan for new places. This funding is being allocated to each HSE Region based on its percentage of population. Both the voluntary sector and the HSE are committed to the best use of the available resources in a creative and flexible manner, so as to be as responsive as possible to the needs of this cohort.

I have asked to be kept informed of progress in finding appropriate training places and day services for this year's school-leavers on an ongoing basis and I have recently met with the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies and the HSE on this issue. I have also asked the HSE to ensure that a plan is put in place immediately to communicate with families and give them some certainty as to the placements or supports which will be available to their children in September.

### **Health Services Staff Recruitment**

701. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Health the reasons the post of the second neurologist in the north west cannot be taken up as soon as possible (details supplied); the impact this appointment is expected to make on waiting lists in the north-west region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32239/13]

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

### **Health Services Issues**

702. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide the necessary funding and resources for the Cherryfield facility in Killarney, County Kerry, to ensure the required upgrading of the facility can proceed at an early date. [32283/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The particular issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Drugs Payment Scheme Threshold**

703. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health if the drugs payment scheme threshold will be protected, or preferably reduced, in recognition of the many citizens with long-term but manageable illnesses who are ineligible for medical cards and rely on the drugs payment

scheme to help meet the costs associated with health care. [32286/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White):** Under the Drug Payment Scheme, no individual or family pays more than €144 per calendar month towards the cost of approved prescribed medicines. The scheme significantly reduces the cost burden for families and individuals incurring ongoing expenditure on medicines.

In addition, people who cannot, without undue hardship, arrange for the provision of medical services for themselves and their dependants may be entitled to a medical card. In the assessment process, the Health Service Executive can take into account medical costs incurred by an individual or a family. Those who are not eligible for a medical card may still be able to avail of a GP visit card, which covers the cost of GP consultations.

There are no plans to alter the Drug Payment Scheme threshold.

### **Ambulance Service Provision**

704. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the provision and availability of ambulance services throughout County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32289/13]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** A significant reform programme is underway in the HSE to reconfigure the management and delivery of pre-hospital emergency care services. Under Future Health: A Strategic Framework for Health Reform in Ireland 2012-2015, this will ensure a clinically driven, nationally coordinated system to support all pre-hospital emergency care activity in the State.

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) is taking steps to improve response times where possible, by addressing challenges such as reliance on on-call rostering, geography, resourcing and the use of emergency ambulances for routine patient transport.

The NAS is moving its emergency ambulance services from on-call to on-duty rostering. This means highly trained paramedic crews are in their stations or vehicles to respond immediately to 112/999 dispatches, and they can move to optimal locations at any time during a shift.

The national control centre reconfiguration project will produce one national control and dispatching system. With improved technology, this will allow the NAS to deploy emergency resources more effectively and efficiently, on a regional and national basis rather than within small geographic areas. The project, endorsed by HIQA, is a key element of Future Health.

In relation to the particular query raised by the Deputy regarding provision of ambulance services in County Meath, as this is a service issue, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

### **Road Traffic Legislation**

705. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the current legal position of sulkie racing on public highways; if a ban on this activity is proposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31608/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** There are no specific legal provisions relating to the operation of sulkies on public roads. Under current road

traffic legislation, I, as Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, have power to make general regulations for the control of traffic, including the parking of vehicles in public places and, while the Gardaí have been successful in bringing prosecutions for the racing of sulkies, I believe that the law in this area requires further examination. I have asked my Department, in consultation with the Gardaí, to review the current legislation governing the use of animals on public roads, to determine if tighter controls are necessary.

### **Traffic Calming Measures**

706. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the need for traffic calming or other measures to slow traffic will be considered at a location (details supplied) as four children have been knocked down there in recent months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31546/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of each local authority, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from local authorities own resources supplemented by State road grants. My Department has allocated over €400 million for works on regional and local roads in 2013. From this allocation, Dublin City Council has been allocated over €7.7 million. However, the initial selection and prioritisation of works to be funded from these grants is also a matter for the local authority.

On behalf of the Department, the National Roads Authority (NRA) will shortly invite applications for funding in 2014 under the Low Cost Safety Improvement Grants Scheme. The criteria for grant approval under this grants scheme are based on accident data, inspection of sites, locations showing demonstrable hazard and discussions between the local authority and the NRA. It is open to the Council to prioritise works at Marewood Crescent and include them among its proposals for funding. Alternatively, the Council may fund these works through its own resources or to seek to use some of the monies recently allocated to Dublin City Council in June 2013 for such works.

### **Rail Services**

707. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the intended start date for construction of a rail stop at Crusheen on the Ennis to Galway line; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31562/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** My Department's capital funding for rail infrastructure was reduced last year in order to support the emergency funding required for the CIE Group. As a result of the reduced capital funding Irish Rail have had to re-evaluate their planned capital programme to 2016 with the priority being to protect existing assets and to maintain safety standards. In the context of this, I have asked Irish Rail to revisit their current proposals for Crusheen rail stop which have a construction cost of in the order of €2 million and see if a lower cost alternative is feasible. It is my intention to provide for a rail stop at Crusheen.

### **Departmental Staff Rehiring**

708. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of temporary clerical officers who have been employed by his Department over each of the past three years; the number of those who have been retired public-civil servants; his views on whether his Department should employ retired staff in these positions in view of the level of youth unemployment here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31581/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** My Department has employed one temporary clerical officer (TCO) in the last 3 years. The TCO was appointed to cover a Shorter Working Year absence in the Department's public office in Cork in the period July to October 2010. The cover was required due to the fact that it is a small office and it would not have been possible to maintain service delivery commitments without the assistance of the recruitment of the TCO. This TCO was recruited through the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and was not a retired member of staff. The Department has not otherwise temporarily filled clerical officer posts vacated over the summer holiday period.

### Road Safety Issues

709. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport further to Parliamentary Question No. 757 of 14 May 2013, if he will provide the National Roads Authority's response to same in respect of the blackspot bend on the Miltown/Castlemaine road at Cloonmore-Rathpook, County Kerry; his views on the response regarding urgent provision of funding to address ongoing hazards to the public on this highly trafficked road; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31603/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** As Minister for Transport, Tourism and 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. Within its capital budget it is a matter for the NRA to assess projects and determine priorities. I have, therefore, forwarded the Deputy's Question to the NRA for further reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

### Rail Network

710. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will outline the details regarding the slippage of land near a rail line (details supplied) in County Wicklow; to outline when the events occurred and the measures Iarnród Éireann-Irish Rail are taking on the matter; if a permanent solution will be put in place by them to ensure the long-term use of rail services along that line; if it has met with the local authority to discuss this matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31641/13]

**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. Matters relating to ongoing maintenance of rail lines including maintenance required arising from slippage of land between Bray and Greystones Stations in County Wicklow is a day-to-day operational issue for Iarnród Éireann in the first instance and I have no function in such matters.

Noting this I have referred the Deputy's question to the Chief Executive of Iarnród Éireann for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10

working days. For the Deputy's information I should also advise that this year €90 million is being provided by my Department to Iarnród Éireann under the Railway Safety Programme to cover essential safety related works including embankment strengthening. The identification and prioritisation of such works is a matter for Iarnród Éireann.

### **Rail Network**

711. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will request the chief executive officer of Iarnród Éireann to carry out works at locations (details supplied) as soon as possible; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31740/13]

**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. Matters relating to improvements at individual railway stations, including maintenance works at Howth Junction and Donaghmede stations, are day-to-day operational issues for Iarnród Éireann in the first instance and I have no function in such matters. Noting this I have referred the Deputy's question to the Chief Executive of Iarnród Éireann for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

### **Road Safety Strategy**

712. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide an update on the implementation of Action 94 of the Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020; and if he will provide a date for publication of the report. [31779/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Action 94 of the Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020 provides that a feasibility report will be completed on the establishment of independent post-collision engineering assessment to review fatal and serious injury cases including on-site engineering inspections. My Department is identified, in the Strategy, as the lead Department for implementing the Action by Quarter 3 of 2013. A consultation process with the identified support agencies will begin shortly and the report will be completed in due course.

### **Driving Instruction Regulation**

713. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the regulations governing the courses provided by driving schools for those wishing to become driving instructors in the context of the huge surplus of such people and the amount of money it is costing them to take the courses. [31800/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Road Traffic (Driving Instructor Licensing) (No. 2) Regulations 2009 sets out the requirements for a person wishing to be registered as an approved driving instructor. The Road Safety Authority (RSA) regulates driving instruction, and maintains a register of Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs). In order to be registered as an ADI, a person must pass three tests, or receive exemption from one or more of those tests on grounds of verifiable qualifications. The tests are set by the RSA in accordance with the above Regulations.

Action 32 of the Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020 commits the RSA to 'Develop and Implement a programme for the compulsory initial and periodic training for driving instructors.'

This should bring greater clarity for both prospective driving instructors and their trainers. There is no limit on the number of people who may be registered as ADIs at any given time, and likewise no limit on the number of people who may choose to train as driving instructors. I do not believe that it would be appropriate to limit either by regulation.

### **Roads Maintenance**

714. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to provide funding to Donegal County Council to allow it make a provision for funding or resources to citizens whose roads are not maintained by Donegal County Council; if his attention has been drawn to the number of roads in the county that are not maintained by the council; the serious condition of these roads and if he has discussed this issue with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31803/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of each local authority, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from local authorities own resources supplemented by State road grants. Donegal County Council has been allocated over €22.4 million from my Department to supplement its own input for 2013.

My Department recently launched a pilot Community Involvement Scheme for works on regional and local roads. This scheme is aimed at works on local roads which would only be considered for funding towards the end of a Council's road programme after more heavily trafficked routes had been dealt with. This is a voluntary scheme and is available to give local communities the opportunity to have these works completed where they would not normally be considered for funding. Applications closed earlier this year and allocations have been made. Its uptake will be examined later this year and assessed for its potential to continue beyond 2013.

With regard to private roads, the improvement and maintenance of these roads are in the first instance a matter for the landowner. Local authorities may however provide assistance to the public for these private roads under the Local Improvements Schemes. Local authorities may use up to 7% of their Discretionary Grant towards such schemes should they wish. It is important to reiterate that the role of Exchequer grants for regional and local roads is to supplement Councils like Donegal County Council in their spending in this area. I have regular discussions with my colleagues in Government in relation to the road network and road grants and this has included both the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, as well as the Minister of State at that Department.

### **Roads Maintenance**

715. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the National Roads Authority has received a submission from a local authority regarding the provision of funding to amend a stretch of road (details supplied) in County Wicklow; if funding will be made available for the making the particular section safer for motorists; when he envisages any such funding being made available; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31814/13]

**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. Within its capital budget, the assessment and prioritisation of individual projects is a matter in the first instance for the NRA in accordance with Section 19 of the Roads Act. Noting the above position, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NRA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

### **Light Rail Projects Provision**

716. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will consider expanding the planned extension of the Luas line Broombridge railway station, Dublin, by a further tram stop in order that it will include the Ashtown area, Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31823/13]

**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 Luas Light rail projects, 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 don't receive a reply within 10 working days. The Deputy will be aware that there is a direct rail connection between Broombridge Station and Ashtown Station.

### **National Transport Authority**

717. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide an update on funding to complete an unfinished footpath on the Cockhill Road, Stamullen, County Meath. [31826/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, in its area, is a statutory function of each road authority in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993. Works on such roads are a matter for the relevant local authority to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants. My Department has allocated over €400 million in regional and local road grants to local authorities this year. From this allocation, Meath County Council is being provided with over €13.5 million. It is open to Meath County Council to fund these works either from its Discretionary Grant allocation or alternatively from its own resources should it so wish.

### **Free Travel on Aer Lingus**

718. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will confirm that a person (details supplied) still enjoys free travel on Aer Lingus. [31975/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Aer Lingus is a publicly listed company. The question relates to an operational matter for the company in which the Minister has no function.

## **Air Accident Investigations**

719. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will clarify the process of selection as regards air accident inspectors as it pertains to the report regarding the crash of IAC PC9 aircraft in which a person (details supplied) lost his life, as it has been brought to the attention of this Deputy that one of the inspectors was in fact the safety officer who had assessed the aircraft prior to the crash; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31986/13]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** As the Deputy will recall, as Minister for Defence at the time of the accident he and the then Minister for Transport agreed jointly that the investigation into the Air Corps PC 9 accident would be conducted by the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) of my Department, pursuant to Regulation 27 (1) of S.I. No. 205 of 1997 Air Navigation (Notification and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Regulations, 1997.

Investigations by the AAIU are carried out strictly in accordance with international and European provisions. This includes seeking the assistance of relevant expertise from the aircraft operator, manufacturer or other interested parties as required. These experts come under the control of the AAIU Investigator-in-Charge as provided for in the regulation. Regulations provide for investigations to be held in private and are confidential. The sole purpose of such Investigations is the prevention of future accidents and incidents and not to apportion blame or liability. As the AAIU is independent in the conduct of its investigations, I do not propose to become involved in individual investigations.

## **Taxi Regulations**

720. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will outline the legislative or regulatory basis where it specifies that a vehicle over 15 years of age can not be a taxi. [32030/13]

721. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reasons the age of a vehicle is being pushed as a defining criteria in suitability of taxi vehicles against the backdrop of national car testing and other standards which must be adhered to. [32031/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 720 and 721 together.

The regulation of the taxi industry, including issues pertaining to vehicle age limit, is a matter for the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the Taxi Regulation Act, 2003. The NTA is also the lead agency with responsibility for implementation of the recommendations of the Taxi Regulation Review Report 2011.

The NTA carried out a consultation on vehicle standards as part of the Taxi Regulation Review in 2011 which recommends strengthening vehicle standards. Action 10 of the Review Report recommended that the 9 year vehicle age limit should apply at licence issue or renewal for all new taxi or hackney vehicles entering the fleet. Vehicle licences issued since January 2009 have been on the basis of a 9-year age limit on the vehicle. Existing vehicles in the fleet licensed prior to 1 January 2009 can operate up to 14 years of age subject to 6-monthly NCT testing and NTA licence renewal assessment.

The aim of these measures is to promote vehicle standards so as to improve passenger and

road safety. It is envisaged that, over time, all vehicles older than nine years will be removed from the taxi and hackney fleet. The NTA made revised vehicle standards regulations in this regard under Statutory Instrument No. 48 of 2013.

### **Leader Programmes Funding**

722. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the position regarding Leader funding and approval in respect of a running track (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32051/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring):** The Department of Transport Tourism and Sport does not allocate LEADER funding, though it is consulted before grants are awarded to organisations where there is a sporting element involved. My Department has not received any documentation on the application referred to by the Deputy.

### **Public Transport Initiatives**

723. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to introduce a pilot scheme for electrical or hybrid transport system for the State transport companies here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32160/13]

**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) on 1st December 2009, the implementation and development of infrastructure projects in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), comes under the remit of the NTA.

Among the general objectives of the Authority in accordance with Section 10 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 is the development of an integrated transport system which contributes to environmental sustainability and social cohesion, and promotes economic progress. In this context the Authority also provides funding for the procurement of Public Services Obligation (PSO) vehicles by Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann. In the light of the NTA's responsibility in this area I have referred the Deputy's question to the Authority for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

### **Rural Transport Programme Issues**

724. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport not to make the proposed changes to the rural transport scheme in County Longford. [32190/13]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly):** My aim is to strengthen the RTP by ensuring a more efficient delivery structure by maximising integration with other state transport services and by making the programme a sustainable part of the public transport system. This is in line with the Programme for Government commitment to maintain and extend the RTP with other local transport services.

To this end national responsibility for local and rural transport services integration, including the RTP, was assigned to the National Transport Authority (NTA) with effect from 1st April 2012, putting such services in a broader transport context.

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I am well aware of the very valuable work done by RTP Groups in identifying and delivering the transport needs of their local community. However, given that resources are limited and the Value for Money and Policy Review of the RTP, published last year recommended organisational restructuring to achieve efficiencies and the better alignment of the 35 RTP groups with local authorities, it is necessary that the current delivery mechanisms and structures are examined and revised. Current structures are not sustainable if the required efficiencies and savings are to be achieved. If these are not achieved then with the limited resources available services will decline.

Work has been underway over the last six months to determine the optimal structure for the delivery of rural transport from an efficiency and service perspective. This has involved consultations with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the County and City Managers Association and the Rural Transport Network.

The NTA have made recommendations to me for a new structure which will allow for the maximising of spend on services and the reduction of administration costs. I will announce my decision in the next couple of weeks.

I am ensuring that any future structure for the RTP will be based on community input, local flexibility and involving the voluntary sector. Decisions surrounding matters such as door-to-door transport will continue to be made at local level and with the input of the voluntary and community sector. Rural Transport by its nature is community-based and this will remain under any new structure.