

Written Answers.

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

Questions Nos. 1 to 10, inclusive, answered orally.

Defence Forces Personnel Data

11. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Defence the amount of money spent on an annual basis on maintaining family quarters in the Curragh Camp; the amount of rent collected from these properties; and the number of any such units in any other location. [52902/13]

17. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Defence in relation to the Curragh Camp, the number of accommodation units occupied by serving members of the Defence Forces and their families; the number of units occupied by ex-servicemen and or their families; the number of empty units previously occupied by families. [52910/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 11 and 17 together.

Overall there are 75 properties occupied as Married Quarters across the Defence Forces. Fifty four (54) of the properties are located at the Curragh Camp. The properties located at the Curragh Camp include 25 occupied by serving personnel and their families and 29 occupied by overholders. Presently, it is understood from the military authorities that there are a further 47 vacant properties at the Camp which were formerly occupied as married quarters. However none of these are habitable.

The general upkeep and maintenance of occupied properties is a matter for the occupant. Routine repairs of an emergency nature are, however, undertaken by the military authorities from time to time as required. In respect of the properties located at the Curragh Camp, it is understood from the military authorities that the cost of these repairs to date in 2013 amounted to €28,500 and the corresponding amount spent in 2012 was €32,000. These figures include both military personnel time and materials and the use of external contractors where necessary. The requirement for more extensive remedial works to properties is overseen by the Department. It has been found that over time the properties in general would require a significant and disproportionate investment in order to ensure compliance with regulations regarding rental properties. In light of this it was decided to withdraw the properties from use as Married Quarters due to Health and Safety concerns.

The total rent collected in respect of those occupying married quarters at the Curragh Camp was €150,729.36 for 2012, and a total of €144,772.54 has been collected to the end of November 2013.

Defence Forces Deployment

12. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Defence the basis upon which members of the Defence Forces, a declared neutral country under the rules of the Hague Convention, can participate in military alliances such as the NATO Partnership for Peace and EU battle groups. [52909/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): Ireland is not a party to the Hague Convention (V) respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land, and there are no plans for it to become one. Ireland's policy of military neutrality is characterised by non-participation in military alliances. This policy has been underpinned by a set of complementary values which include, inter alia, the protection of human rights; support for development, participation in international peacekeeping operations under UN mandates; and the promotion of disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for co-operation. Participation in PfP is entirely voluntary and is based on the principle of self-differentiation, that is, a State selects for itself the nature and scope of its participation in PfP activities. The PfP programme focuses on defence related cooperation and is designed to help increased stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships. The principal benefit of our participation is that it has allowed us to enhance the capabilities of Ireland's Defence Forces for peacekeeping, preventative and crisis management operations under UN mandates. It should be noted that a number of like minded, militarily neutral countries also participate in NATO/PfP such as Switzerland, Finland and Austria.

In relation to EU Battlegroups, again these are not military alliances. They are a fundamental aspect of the EU's capability to react rapidly to developing crises around the globe. Battlegroups are made available by Member States to the EU Council and there must be unanimity for their deployment. Within the EU Battlegroup concept, the purpose of the Battlegroup, as a rapid response capability, includes the role of acting as an initial entry force to stabilise a situation pending the deployment of a follow-on force, to support an established peace support operation which is running into difficulties, similar to the deployment of EU forces in the UN operation in the Congo; and to respond to humanitarian crises. It should be stressed that any deployment of an Irish contingent in a Battlegroup context would be subject to the requirements of the "triple-lock".

In 1999, Dáil Éireann approved Ireland's participation in Partnership for Peace. In 2007 Dáil Éireann approved the Memorandum of Understanding to participate in the Nordic Battlegroup 2008 and again, in 2012, approved the Memorandum of Understanding for the Austro-German Battlegroup 2012.

EU Battlegroups

13. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Defence if the Government has approved Defence Forces participation in any future battle groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52903/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Government has not yet approved Ireland's proposed participation in the Nordic Battlegroup in 2015 and the German led Battlegroup in 2016. The Nordic Battlegroup will comprise Sweden, acting as Framework Nation,

Finland, Norway, Estonia and possibly Lithuania and Latvia. The German led Battlegroup will comprise Germany, acting as Framework Nation, Luxembourg, Austria, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. The proposed Defence Forces contribution to each Battlegroup will be a Reconnaissance Company and related combat support elements. It is proposed that Ireland will also take command of a multinational Reconnaissance Group Headquarters, providing Ireland with a more significant role within these battlegroups.

Ireland has previously participated in the Nordic Battlegroup in 2008 and 2011 and in a German led EU Battlegroup in 2012. The other members of the Nordic Battlegroup were Sweden, acting as Framework Nation, Finland, Norway and Estonia and Croatia (2011 only). The members of the German led EU Battlegroup were Germany, acting as Framework Nation, Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Macedonia.

Discussions have been ongoing with the Framework Nations and participating States to finalise details on the configuration of the Battlegroups along with operational and training details and standby arrangements. As this work has now been completed I expect to bring the matter to Government shortly.

Gender Balance Issues

14. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Defence if the Defence Forces have a target for gender balance among members; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52906/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): 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. Significant progress has been made by the Military Authorities in addressing gaps between male and female participation in the Defence Forces, with an increase of 23% of female participation in the PDF since 2002. However, it is recognised that more work needs to be done to meet the gender target for recruitment of females of 20% which was set by the Military Authorities in 2007.

As of 31 October 2013, there are currently 558 women out of a total strength of 9,222 serving in the Permanent Defence Force (PDF). This represents 6% of the overall strength of the Defence Forces and a 23 % increase of female representation in the PDF since 2002. A key impediment in achieving the target gender balance is the lack of female applicants relative to males. A number of specific initiatives have been implemented to increase female participation in the Defence Forces including:

- the introduction of best practices in recruitment, such as the adjustment of physical standards for female applicants,
- special consideration is paid to women as a target group for recruitment,
- there is balanced composition between men and women on recruitment and selection boards.
- all promotions and career courses are open to both genders on merit,
- a Gender Advisor has been appointed to promote gender equality policies and training within the Defence Forces.

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. Women, therefore, play a full and meaningful role in all aspects of Defence Forces operations at home and overseas. The Defence Forces also 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 when it arises.

While Defence Forces policies have been developed to support greater female participation, a key issue in recruiting and retaining female personnel lies in societal perception and attitudes to female soldiers and officers, how such careers are presented through the education and career guidance systems in our schools and colleges, and how society views the role of women in a fully inclusive and equal workplace where all soldiers and officers, irrespective of gender, are required to be available for duties on a 24/7 basis and are required to serve overseas. To a large extent, the solution to these societal issues lies outside the Defence Forces. That said, I believe that there is a need to continue to develop and promote strategies to increase female participation in the Defence Forces. To this end, I have requested the Chief of Staff to establish a Working Group to examine levels of participation of women in the organisation at all levels. The data gathered as part of this review will inform current recruitment policies aimed at increasing participation by women in the Defence Forces.

European Council Meetings

15. **Deputy Seán Ó Feargháil** asked the Minister for Defence if he will provide a report on the most recent meeting of the European Foreign Affairs Council of defence Ministers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52907/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I attended the Foreign Affairs Council in Defence Ministers format on the 18 and 19 November in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Baroness Catherine Ashton. NATO Secretary General Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen joined the meeting for some working sessions. On Monday evening, during the first working session, Defence and Foreign Ministers discussed the High Representative's Report on Common Security and Defence Policy and had an exchange of views. The focus was on agreeing Council Conclusions, which will feed into conclusions on Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which will be considered by Heads of State and Government at the European Council meeting on 19th and 20th December.

There was general support for the HR's Report and the associated Council Conclusions, in particular, the emphasis that was placed on a strong and effective Common Security and Defence Policy for the Union. Ministers agreed that CSDP needs to be reinvigorated and that it is timely for the European Council to engage on CSDP and provide political direction. On Tuesday morning, Defence Ministers continued their discussion on the upcoming European Council on Defence, in particular, capability development and the defence industry aspects of the Council Conclusions. Ministers discussed the growing importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and in this regard, stressed the need for a level playing field to avoid market distortions combined with security of supply. Other issues discussed included research and innovation, specifically dual use technologies. There was also broad agreement on the need for increased flexibility, including the modular approach, on the use of EU Battlegroups (EUBGs). The need for cooperation and non-duplication with NATO, in the area of capability development, was underlined by HR Ashton, SG Rasmussen and by several Member States.

In my intervention I welcomed the intention to have security and defence on European Council agenda regularly. I outlined four issues, which I believe warrant more detailed discussion and endorsement at the European Council meeting. These include, the use of EU Battlegroups, the reinvigoration of CSDP, the need for the European Council to fully support the ongoing development and maintenance of capabilities, both civil and military, and the need for an efficient and effective defence industry where SMEs can play a full role and which can deliver

capabilities, jobs, growth and innovation.

Two military operations currently being conducted by the European Union under the Common Security and Defence Policy were also discussed. These were Operation Atalanta, which is a naval counter-piracy mission off the Horn of Africa, and EU Training Mission Mali, which is training Malian Defence Forces.

I also attended the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board meeting. The Chief Executive of the EDA briefed Ministers on the EDA's Work Programme for 2014. This programme identifies many projects and initiatives in areas such as, Communications and Information Systems; Cyber Defence; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear detection; Counter Improvised Explosive Devices; Maritime Surveillance; Naval Training. The EDA agreed that they would cooperate closely with the European Commission on research and innovation, particularly in the area of dual use technological developments. It was also agreed that the EDA would cooperate with the European Commission in areas such as Maritime and Cyber security and energy efficiency.

UN Missions

16. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence if, in the wake of the recent violent attack on Irish troops serving in the Golan Heights, he believes that Irish troops are now being viewed as a legitimate target for anti-government rebel attacks; if the attack has changed any security procedures on the ground; and if he will now review his decision to send troops to serve on this mission. [52775/13]

21. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Defence if he has considered withdrawing Irish troops from Syria following the recent firefight in which they were caught up; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52912/13]

24. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Defence if he has received a report on the investigation carried out by the Defence Forces into the recent firefight involving Irish troops in Syria; if his attention has been drawn to any casualties as a result of the incident; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52908/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 16, 21 and 24 together.

Following Government and Dáil approval, the deployment of the 43rd Infantry Group to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights was successfully completed on 28 September 2013. The 43rd Infantry Group, comprising 115 personnel, consists of a Force Reserve Company and support elements. Their role includes the provision of a Quick Reaction Force which is on standby to assist with on-going operations within the UNDOF Area of Responsibility. The Irish Infantry Group is also tasked with carrying out patrols and convoy escorts as necessary. I addressed the question of the incident which occurred on 28 November 2013 involving Defence Forces personnel serving with UNDOF in Syria, in answering a priority PQ earlier.

Irish troops are deployed to the Golan Heights at a time of increased instability in that region. That was the situation pertaining in the region when Dáil Éireann considered this issue last July, when it decided to deploy the contingent to UNDOF. It was never the case that this deployment was going to be easy. Both the political and the security situation in the region is volatile; that is why we are there. Clearly, when we deploy troops to these types of operations, we must also understand and accept that we are putting them in harm's way and that situations,

such as the recent attack, can and will happen. My responsibility, as Minister for Defence, is to ensure that our personnel have the resources, equipment and training necessary to deal with such incidents. I am glad to say that the personnel of the Irish Force Mobile Reserve are fully trained and equipped with appropriate force protection assets to undertake their important duties on behalf of the United Nations and that they remain fully committed to this task. The performance of the equipment and personnel in this most recent incident is testament to the standard and quality of the equipment which the Defence Forces have at their disposal and of the commitment and professionalism of our personnel.

There are no indications at this time to suggest that the Anti Government Armed Elements see Irish troops as a target. Given the evolving security situation, the UNDOF mission has continued to reconfigure its operations with a view to ensuring the safety of personnel while continuing to implement the mission's mandate. All necessary Force Protection measures on the ground continue to be implemented by the Irish contingent. In addition, ongoing threat assessments are carried out in the mission area and the Chief of Staff continually reviews both personal equipment and force assets, to ensure that those Defence Forces personnel deployed to the mission are appropriately equipped to fulfil their roles.

Question No. 17 answered with Question No. 11.

Question No. 18 answered with Question No. 10.

Defence Forces Recruitment

19. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence if and when further recruitment to the Defence Forces might be contemplated; the degree to which the strength of each sector continues to be monitored with a view to ensuring optimum strength at all times; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52881/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The agreed stabilised strength of the Permanent Defence Force is 9,500 comprising of 7,520 Army, 886 Air Corps and 1,094 Naval Service. I am advised by the Military Authorities that the strength of the Permanent Defence Force, at 31 October 2013, the latest date for which details are available, was 9,222 comprising 7,422 Army, 778 Air Corps and 1,022 Naval Service personnel.

Recruitment of personnel to the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps is determined in line with the operational requirements of each of the three services. As a rule there is significant turnover of personnel in the Permanent Defence Force. Targeted recruitment has been and is currently taking place so as to deliver an ongoing aggregate level of 9,500 trained personnel and to maximise the deployable capacity of the Defence Forces on operations. It is planned to run a new General Service recruitment competition in the first half of 2014. Details will be made available on the Defence Forces website www.military.ie when the competition commences.

With the support of the Chief of Staff and within the resources available, I intend to retain the capacity of the Defence Forces to operate effectively across all roles and to undertake the tasks laid down by Government both at home and overseas.

Emergency Planning

20. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Defence when the next meeting of the national emergency co-ordination committee will take place; and if he will make a statement

on the matter. [52904/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Government Task Force on Emergency Planning, which I chair, includes senior officials of Government Departments, senior officers of An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces and officials of other key public authorities, which have a lead or support role in Government emergency planning. The Task Force meets on a regular basis. So far this year there have been five meetings of the Task Force and the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 16 December 2013. While details of matters discussed at meetings of the Task Force are confidential, I can confirm that the Task Force examines current risks and supports coordination arrangements for emergency planning across the whole of Government.

The Task Force is regularly briefed on such matters as the current security threat, which is provided by An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces. It also receives regular updates specifically from the lead Government Departments. An example is the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, which chairs the National Steering Group under the Framework for Major Emergency Management, and is the lead Government Department in eleven of the forty two emergency scenarios identified in the Lead, Principal and Other Support roles. The Task Force regularly addresses other emergency planning issues ranging from risk assessment to training and exercises as well as receiving regular briefings on current issues from the various lead Government Departments on their specific roles and responsibilities and their associated work programmes.

The Task Force establishes Subgroups from time to time to specifically look at particular areas of emergency planning that may need to be addressed.

Question No. 21 answered with Question No. 16.

Air Ambulance Service Provision

22. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Defence his plans to expand the role of the emergency aeromedical support service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52681/13]

27. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Defence the number of missions performed by the emergency aeromedical support service to date in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52682/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 22 and 27 together.

There are no plans to expand the role of the Air Corps in the provision of Air Ambulance services. As the Deputy will be aware, a twelve-month pilot Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) service, supported by the Air Corps, commenced operating out of Custume Barracks, Athlone on 4 June last year. This pilot service was established by agreement between my Department and the Department of Health in order to assess the level and type, if any, of dedicated emergency aeromedical support needed to assist the National Ambulance Service, primarily in the west of Ireland. The assessment focussed on certain types of patient, particularly on the requirements of the HSE Clinical Care Programmes, such as for Acute Coronary Syndrome and Stroke.

A full evaluation of the Service was undertaken by an inter-service Audit and Evaluation Group, and in June 2013, a Report was submitted to the Minister for Health for his consideration. The Minister for Health has accepted the Report's recommendations including for the

establishment of a permanent service. The Minister has asked that his Department establish a Working Group to examine options for the provision of an EAS service into the future. While the 12 month pilot period expired on 3 June 2013, I have agreed to extend the Air Corps' participation in order for the Evaluation Report to be considered and for the Working Group to complete its work.

There have been 490 missions completed by the EAS service up to the end of November 2013.

Defence Forces Deployment

23. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence if his attention has been drawn to the recent violent attack by Malian Government soldiers on protesters in the rebel held north east of the country; that Turaeg rebels have ended their ceasefire agreement with the Malian Government as a result; and if he has any plans to withdraw Irish troops serving in the country. [52776/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I assume the Deputy is referring to reports of clashes between protestors and security forces in Kidal, a town in the northern part of Mali, on 28 November 2013. I understand the violence broke out ahead of the planned arrival of the Malian Prime Minister to Kidal. However, I have been informed that the circumstances and details of the incident have yet to be established. I strongly condemn the violence and would urge all parties to exercise restraint, and stand by their commitments contained in the Ouagadougou Agreement. This Agreement, which was signed on 18 June 2013 between the transitional Government and the armed groups in the northern regions of Mali, is a preliminary agreement to hold the Presidential election and inclusive peace talks in Mali. The Presidential elections and recent Parliamentary elections were significant milestones in the restoration of constitutional order in Mali, and signs that Mali is making positive political progress and returning to democratic Government. I hope the final round of Parliamentary elections due to take place next week can proceed in a peaceful environment and give the Malian people the opportunity to decide their political leadership.

The recent violence in northern Mali only serves to highlight the need for international support to help Mali overcome the current crisis. The Defence Forces continue to monitor the security situation in Mali closely. There are no plans at this time to withdraw the eight (8) Irish personnel currently serving with EU Training Mission in southern Mali.

Question No. 24 answered with Question No. 16.

Air Corps Equipment

25. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Defence his plans to upgrade the range of aircraft available to the Defence Forces Air Corps. [52778/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): There are no plans for the acquisition of new aircraft for the Air Corps at the present time. There has been significant expenditure on the Air Corps fleet in recent years. The comprehensive investment programme included the delivery of Pilatus training aircraft at a total cost of €60m, the acquisition of two light utility EC 135 helicopters at a cost of €12.8m, the acquisition of six utility AW 139 helicopters at a cost of €75m and a major mid life upgrade on the two CASA maritime patrol aircraft. The provision for the Air Corps in 2013 mainly relates to the maintenance and Power by the Hour contracts

set up to keep the Air Corps fleet fully operational with specific maintenance work being carried out on the CASA Maritime Patrol Aircraft over the next two years, mainly related to the overhaul of engines on the aircraft.

I am satisfied that the equipment, aircraft and technology available to the Air Corps are of a high standard and commensurate with the tasks assigned by Government.

Defence Forces Representative Organisations

26. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Defence the reason he did not attend this year's biennial RACO conference; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [52905/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): Recently, I accepted the invitation extended to me by RACO's National Executive to attend their Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC), held this year in Wicklow, on 3 December 2013. While I had attended the PDFORRA Annual Delegate Conference earlier this year, unfortunately, I was unable to attend the RACO BDC on this occasion as I needed to attend to other urgent business, i.e. the publication of the Smithwick Tribunal Report. I was very disappointed that I was unable to join RACO at their Conference. At very short notice I requested the Minister of State at the Department of Defence, Mr. Paul Kehoe, T.D., to deputise for me at the BDC.

Minister of State Kehoe very kindly obliged and conveyed apologies to RACO on my behalf. Regarding the RACO Biennial Delegate Conference, Minister of State Kehoe addressed delegates on a wide range of issues including the preparation of the new White Paper on Defence; the significant reorganisational reforms over the last twelve months; the participation of RACO in the Haddington Road Agreement negotiations and the broader international context in which Ireland's Defence policy sits. I am given to understand that the Delegates responded positively to Minister of State Kehoe's address and extended to him and my officials every courtesy while in attendance at Conference. The Minister of State also heard the issues and concerns of RACO, as expressed by their General Secretary in his address to Conference and these will be given careful consideration.

Question No. 27 answered with Question No. 22.

Middle East Issues

28. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on the current situation in Gaza following comments made by the UN humanitarian co-ordinator on 1 November 2013 regarding the need for urgent action to address the looming humanitarian crisis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53172/13]

29. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the action that he will take to help avert the looming humanitarian crisis in Gaza due to the closure of its only power point and increased tightening of the blockade of Gaza, making the area as described by UNRWA as quickly becoming uninhabitable; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53210/13]

32. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his attention has been drawn to the recent Amnesty International report on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that outlines the impact of the Israeli blockade on the health, sanitation and power supply of the people of Gaza; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53269/13]

33. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the representations that he has made to the Israeli authorities regarding the blockade on Gaza. [53270/13]

34. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the representations that he has made to the Egyptian authorities regarding the closing of crossings from Egypt to Gaza. [53271/13]

35. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on whether the Israeli blockade of Gaza amounts to collective punishment. [53272/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): I propose to take Questions Nos. 28, 29 and 32 to 35, inclusive, together.

I remain seriously concerned about the situation in Gaza, both the long term situation and the recent deterioration caused by a reduction in the power supply. My Department monitors the situation in Gaza closely, including through regular contact with UNRWA and UNOCHA, the main UN agencies active there, as well as relevant Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, some of whom are supported in their work by Irish Aid. My colleague, Minister of State Joe Costello T.D., witnessed at first hand the very difficult conditions on the ground in Gaza during his recent visit to the occupied Palestinian territory to see the impact of Ireland's aid programme. He met directly with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. James Rawley, and others.

While Israeli restrictions have eased marginally in recent years, the overall situation in Gaza has worsened in recent months as Egypt has taken action against smuggling into Gaza, in response to its own security concerns. The existing fuel shortfall and shortage of supply of building materials, accentuated by the closure of tunnels, is affecting the daily lives of residents, their electricity supply and water and sewage facilities. In addition, delivery of construction materials through the crossings from Israel, which had been gradually increased, was suspended again in October following the discovery of a reinforced tunnel dug into Israel from Gaza, with the apparent purpose of facilitating an attack into Israel, perhaps on the soldiers manning the border.

The power situation is a complex one. Both Israel and Egypt supply electricity to Gaza through the grid system, at commercial rates. In addition, the Gaza Power Plant supplied about one third of the total available power, using fuel supplied by the Palestinian Authority via Israel, and cheaper fuel smuggled in from Egypt. Both of these sources have been cut recently, partly because of a dispute in which Hamas has refused to pay for the fuel supplied to Gaza by the Palestinian Authority. The loss of one third of what was already a marginal power supply has led to increased outages, including to vital water and sewage facilities.

The loss of construction materials and of power has led to major lay-offs in the construction sector, one of Gaza's few large employers, and thus increased the level of food dependency, which is the principal cause of concern. More than 800,000 of the over 1.2 million Palestine refugees in Gaza receive food assistance from UNRWA, which also provides basic education, health, relief and social services.

Ireland has responded to the current crisis by providing additional funding of €500,000 to UNRWA to support the food assistance element of their Gaza Emergency Appeal. This brings Ireland's total contribution to UNRWA's appeals for Gaza to €4.64 million since 2006. UNRWA's food assistance provides a lifeline for thousands of refugee families in Gaza and helps to prevent a potentially large scale crisis in a context where an estimated 57% of households are classified as food insecure. This funding support is in addition to Ireland's broader programme of assistance to the Palestinian people and brings our total funding support to date

in 2013 to €8.3 million. This includes support to UNRWA's general fund, the Palestinian Authority, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and civil society organisations working to promote human rights and democratisation.

It is clear, however, that humanitarian aid can only seek to ameliorate the difficulties, which will persist until there is a solution at political level. Ireland has therefore continued to draw attention to the urgent need for an end to the overall blockade of Gaza. We have sought to maintain a focus on this issue, as have organisations such as Amnesty International in their recent report, despite the many other crises in the Middle East at present. We argue this position consistently in our regular contacts with the Israeli authorities, both in Israel and with the Embassy here in Dublin. I have raised the matter repeatedly at EU level, to push for the EU to do more to press Israel to end the blockade. I have made clear before my view that the international community is not doing enough on this issue. Ireland has also raised Gaza at multilateral level, including in recent weeks interventions at the UN General Assembly in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In the case of Egypt, the sole crossing point at Rafah is not closed, although it is operating at a more restricted level, as a result of the turmoil in Egypt itself. The main impact has been from Egypt's effective action against the smuggling tunnels, which we cannot take issue with. However, the loss of the extra supplies formerly obtained through smuggling has highlighted the shortages caused by the overall Israeli blockade regime. Their interdiction now only underscores the urgent need for the opening to normal traffic of the main crossings from Israel. I have urged Egypt to allow the widest possible use of Rafah for normal commercial, human and humanitarian traffic.

Israel is entitled to take measures for the security of its people and borders from attacks which have come from Gaza over a number of years. Nevertheless, it is clear to me that some measures taken, and the overall regime enforced on Gaza, have a negative impact on the entire civilian population and cannot be justified by security needs. Whether a particular measure amounts to a prohibited act, such as collective punishment, under international humanitarian law is, however, ultimately a matter for legal determination.

Diplomatic Representation

30. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the proposals he has to extend the embassy and consulate network; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53218/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): Ireland's diplomatic and consular network is comparatively modest in size and includes 56 Embassies, 7 multilateral Missions and 10 Consulates General and other offices. In addition to their country of primary accreditation, many Ambassadors are also accredited to additional countries on a non-resident basis which enhances the cost-effectiveness of our external representation. Our missions abroad work very closely with the state agencies in the promotion of exports, tourism and inward investment. They perform also a wide range of functions in support of Ireland's foreign policy interests. These include representing and advancing government policies with other states and in international organisations; economic and cultural promotion; frontline consular and passport services to citizens overseas; engaging with and supporting Irish communities and with programme management, particularly in Irish Aid priority countries.

The size and deployment of the State's network of missions abroad is kept under ongoing review and any possible reconfiguration would have regard to national priorities and available

resources. Those priorities include the State's strategic economic and political interests, including trade and inward investment, support for Irish exporters, and the promotion of our values as regards human rights, international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes within and among states.

Departmental Websites

31. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will indicate in tabular form any expenditure by his Department since January 2012 on the Department's website; the expenditure since January 2012 on any other websites related to his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53243/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): My Department recently invested in upgrading our online services to the public for the first time since 2005. This essential upgrade of our ICT infrastructure allows my Department to support Irish citizens at home and abroad through a suite of bespoke services including the Passport Tracking Service and a Passport Application Guide. In addition, the Citizen Registration service allows Irish citizens travelling or living overseas to register their contact details with our Department. This service means we can contact citizens who are travelling abroad and provide assistance where possible in the event of an unforeseen crisis such as a natural disaster or civil unrest, or a family emergency. The website also has a database of international legal treaties to which Ireland is a signatory.

The Irish Aid website provides information on Ireland's overseas development programme and volunteering opportunities.

The contract to build the Department's websites encompasses a range of activities including website design and development, a Content Management System, annual support, licensing and training.

The Emigrant Support Programme's website is an on-line grant system for organisations which provide support for Irish communities abroad. The Global Irish Forum website provides information on the Global Irish Network and the Global Irish Economic Forum. During the Forum in October many of the sessions were live-streamed around the world.

The following table provides a breakdown of website expenditure in 2012 and 2013.

Website Costs	2012 €	2013 €
Development of Department's websites - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (including four custom built applications); Irish Aid and template for Embassy sites	222,231	63,261
DFAT and Embassy web domain renewals	4,130	5,167
Hosting Costs DFAT, Irish Aid & Embassy sites	38,250	42,957
Support and Maintenance D/FAT, Irish Aid and Embassy Sites	52,350	15,011
Emigrant Support Programme Grants	2,545	829
Global Irish Forum Website	121	3,189
Certificate of Irish Heritage Domain renewal	48	298
Total	€319,675	€130,712

Questions Nos. 32 to 35, inclusive, answered with Question No. 28.

EU Directives

36. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53353/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): No EU directive relating to the policy remit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is awaiting transposition into Irish law.

Money Laundering

37. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide a list of the actions Ireland must take, whether through his Department, the Oireachtas or the Central Bank, to comply with the EU anti-money laundering directive; the body responsible for each measure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53155/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The proposed 4th EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive, currently being negotiated at the Council of the EU, will update and replace the 3rd EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive and reflect the views of Member States on the operation of the existing system. The Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 transposes the 3rd EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive into Irish Law. This Act provides for a number of competent authorities for the different classes of designated persons as set out in the Act. The Central Bank of Ireland is specified in the Act as the State competent authority for credit and financial institutions.

The Commission's proposal for a Directive inter alia:

- Extends existing provisions for casinos to all gambling;
- Reduces the transaction threshold at which traders in high value goods are required to identify customers from €15,000 to €7,500;
- Sets out a framework for minimum administrative sanctions to apply across Member States;
- Requires all companies to hold information on their beneficial owners;
- Clarifies the application of AML Rules to cross-border subsidiaries between home and host supervisors;
- Strengthens the powers of Financial Intelligence Units (receivers of suspicious transactions reports (STRs));
- Extends provisions applying to foreign Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) to domestic PEPs on a risk-sensitive basis.

However, as negotiations are continuing on this directive at the Council of the EU, I am not in a position to confirm what actions Ireland will be required to take until final agreement on the package of measures in the Directive has been reached.

Tax Reliefs Eligibility

38. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 73 of 17 October 2013, if the consultation process with the Department of Health in connection with this request has concluded and a decision been reached; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53170/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As stated in my reply to the Deputy on 17 October 2013, in accordance with the consultation requirements of section 469 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, officials from my Department commenced a consultation process with the Department of Health in connection with this request. The process may take up to twelve weeks to conclude and my officials will contact the Deputy once a decision has been reached.

Tax Code

39. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Finance if interest paid to persons in respect of the lump sum agreed with them by a State body following the acquisition of their land by compulsory purchase order for motorway purposes is subject to capital gains tax or income tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53195/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that compensation paid by an authority exercising its compulsory purchase powers to acquire land is consideration in the hands of the disponent of the lands. Any chargeable gain arising on such a disposal is subject to capital gains tax, calculated in accordance with the Capital Gains Tax Acts. Where, in addition to compensation for the acquisition of the land, interest is paid to the landowner, that interest is income for tax purposes. The interest is paid subject to deduction of tax at source at the standard rate of 20% by the authority by virtue of section 246(2) Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. The interest is taxable in the hands of the landowner under Case IV of Schedule D (with a credit given for the tax deducted at source) in the year in which it is paid by the authority.

If the taxpayer were only liable to income tax at the standard rate on his total income in the year in which the interest is paid, the income tax deducted by the authority would be his or her full liability on that interest. However, if the taxpayer's level of total income were to exceed the standard rate threshold for that year additional tax at the marginal rate of tax would be payable. Universal Social charge would also be payable on the taxpayer's income - details of the rates of income tax and universal social charge are available in Leaflet IT1 on the Revenue Commissioners website, www.revenue.ie.

Property Taxation Assessments

40. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide clarification on a local property tax valuation received by a family (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53207/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by Revenue that a key aspect of the work undertaken in regard to Local Property Tax (LPT) was the development of a comprehensive register of residential properties in the State. During the compiling of the Property Register matching difficulties were encountered when consolidating the various Government and non-Government data sources used, and as a consequence some properties were associated with persons on the basis of outdated address information. As part of its comprehensive LPT communications strategy, Revenue clearly stated that errors in the compilation of the Property Register were inevitable given the scale of the task and requested anybody who

received incorrect information on their properties to contact the LPT Helpline immediately to have their records amended.

In the case raised by the Deputy, Revenue issued an LPT 1 Return for 2013 to an address previously used to correspond with the person in question in respect of other taxes. The person subsequently filed his 2013 LPT Return via the online system without using a Property ID and PIN and in doing so created a second property record. This resulted in the computer system incorrectly categorising the person as a multiple property owner for LPT purposes and assessing him on that basis for both 2013 and 2014.

Revenue has confirmed that the “duplicate” property has been removed from the Property Register and the address details of the person have been correctly updated. Revenue has made direct contact with the person to confirm his details and has also provided him with a new Property ID and PIN to facilitate future access to his LPT records.

Tax Reliefs Cost

41. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide in tabular form the costs of tax and PRSI relief for private pension provision for the years 2006 to date in 2013. [53234/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The following tables provide a breakdown of the estimated cost of tax and PRSI reliefs relating to private pension contributions for 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, the latest year for which the most up-to-date data is available. Figures of the numbers availing of the tax reliefs are also provided, where available. Tax relief on employee or individual contributions is allowed at the taxpayer’s marginal rate of tax subject to limits based on annual earnings and age. Figures have been rounded where appropriate. I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that while corresponding updates of the figures are not yet available for the tax year 2011 the necessary work of assembling the basic data to enable this to be done is ongoing. No data is yet available for 2012 or 2013.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the information imparted by the costing of tax and other reliefs in the pensions area is inherently limited. It may suggest a significant notional loss in terms of tax foregone as compared with the savings that might be expected if the tax relief was not available. However, where tax relief arrangements are of such significance, as in this instance, the removal of the reliefs would represent a fundamental adjustment to the current balance of the tax system and would have very significant implications in terms, among other things, of the economic and behavioural impacts which would ensue. These impacts would be difficult to model in advance. For these reasons, the real informational content of the costings of tax reliefs is limited and should be treated with some caution.

2006

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers
-	€ million	-
Employees’ Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	540	693,100
Employers’ Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	120	363,100

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers
-	€ million	-
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	510	363,100
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	435	125,900
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	55	45,200
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee contributions	220	Not available

2007

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Employees' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	590	708,500
Employers' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	150	364,700
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	540	364,700
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	408	121,300
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	61	46,600
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee contributions	240	Not available

2008

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Employees' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	655	792,600
Employers' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	165	362,700

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	595	362,700
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	353	116,000
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	74	53,900
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee contributions	255	Not available

2009

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Employees' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	730	713,600
Employers' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	155	342,200
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	560	342,200
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	237	101,300
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	77	56,200
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee contributions	230	Not available

2010

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Employees' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	599	625,100
Employers' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	141	302,900

Estimate of the cost of certain tax reliefs for private pension provision	Estimated costs	Numbers availing
-	€ million	-
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	515	302,900
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	180	82,200
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	73	52,300
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee contributions	231	Not available

Tax Reliefs Cost

42. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Finance if he will estimate the cost of tax and PRSI relief for approved retirement funds from 2006 to date in 2013. [53235/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Approved Retirement Funds (ARFs) form part of the regime of flexible options on retirement first introduced in 1999. ARFs are not pension schemes per se. They are investment options into which the proceeds of certain pension arrangements can be invested on retirement. Under the "ARF option", individuals are entitled to take their retirement lump sum and, with the balance of their pension fund, purchase an annuity, invest in an ARF or take the balance in cash subject to tax. Where the ARF route is chosen, beneficial ownership of the assets in the ARF vests in the individual.

Electing to invest in an ARF or to receive the balance of a pension fund in cash are subject to conditions. The conditions include the requirements that the individual be over 75 years of age or, if younger, that the individual has a guaranteed level of pension income ("specified income") actually in payment for life at the time the option is exercised. The Finance Act 2013 provided for a specified income limit of €12,700 per annum. This was a reduction from the limit provided for in Finance Act 2011 of 1.5 times the maximum annual rate of the State Pension (Contributory), which had been a limit of €18,000.

While any investment income or capital gains arising are exempt from tax while the funds are invested in the ARF, I should point out that sums withdrawn or deemed to be withdrawn from an ARF are subject to tax at the individual ARF-owner's marginal income tax rate. The 2006 Budget and Finance Act introduced an imputed or notional distribution of 3% of the value of the assets in an ARF on 31 December each year, which notional amount is taxed at the ARF owner's marginal income tax rate. This measure was introduced because the internal review of tax relief for pensions provision undertaken by the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners in 2005 found that the ARF option was largely not being used, as intended, to fund an income stream in retirement but, in certain cases, was being used to build up substantial funds in a tax-free environment over the long-term. The imputed distribution measure is designed to encourage the use of ARFs, as intended, in the way of actual draw downs being made which are subject to tax.

The annual imputed distribution of ARF assets was increased from 3% to 5% in Budget and Finance Act 2011 in respect of asset values as at 31 December 2010 and future years. It was further increased from 5% to 6% for ARFs with asset values in excess of €2 million at 31

December 2012 and future years. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that, based on returns made by Qualifying Fund Managers, the yield from the taxation of the annual imputed distribution of ARF assets for the years 2007 to 2012 is as follows.

Yield from the taxation of the annual imputed distribution of ARF assets 2007 – 2012

Year	Yield (€ million)
2007 (earliest available)	2.75
2008	6.5
2009	7.9
2010	10.3
2011	11.6
2012	11.5

Property Taxation Administration

43. **Deputy Lucinda Creighton** asked the Minister for Finance in the absence of local property tax registered property details being provided, if persons will be subjected to a penalty for delay in payment for failing to register in advance of 27 November; if he will specifically consider the properties (details supplied) which were recently acquired and where the owner has attempted to pay the tax in advance of the deadline as well as register, but their e-mails and telephone calls have been allegedly ignored despite their efforts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53247/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by Revenue that a key aspect of the work undertaken on the Local Property Tax (LPT) was the development of a comprehensive register of residential properties in the State, which included the consolidation of various Government and non-Government data sources. Part of the development also included a link with Revenue's e-Stamping system, which facilitates a direct update of "stamped" property transactions to the Register. I am also informed by Revenue that the introduction of Local Property Tax (LPT), which amounts to the largest extension of the self-assessment system in its history, continues to represent a very great administrative challenge in maintaining normal customer service contact standards. For example, Revenue has answered in excess of 900,000 phone calls and replied to approximately 220,000 letters or emails since March 2013. In particular, Revenue has experienced unprecedented demand for customer support in recent weeks following the issue of payment reminder notifications in respect of 2014 LPT obligations.

In the specific case raised by the Deputy, the person concerned acquired four properties between July and September of this year and the details of these transactions were correctly entered to Revenue's e-Stamping system. However, due to technical difficulties the transactions did not correctly transfer across to the Property Register. The person made direct contact with Revenue on 30 October requesting that the properties in question be linked to him and Revenue responded on 31 October requesting his PPSN and the relevant Property ID numbers, which he should have received from his solicitor as part of the conveyance process. The person responded to Revenue on 4 November and provided his PPSN and the addresses of three of the properties but did not provide the Property ID numbers. Revenue subsequently tried to link the properties to the person from the information supplied but unfortunately this proved to be a difficult matching exercise without the Property IDs. The linkages were further delayed because the person was involved in a fourth property transaction while the correspondence of 4 November only confirmed three transactions.

Revenue has acknowledged that the person made a number of contacts over the following weeks in an effort to clarify the situation, but because of the volume of correspondence during that period he did not receive a timely reply. However, Revenue has confirmed that the properties in question have now been identified and correctly linked to the person in question. Revenue has assured me that a member of the LPT team will contact the person in the coming days to confirm all the details and will assist him in completing his LPT obligations as necessary.

Revenue has confirmed that the person is considered LPT compliant because his queries were received in advance of the filing deadline and he will not be subject to any penalties providing he meets the outstanding obligations in a timely manner after he receives contact from the LPT team.

Tax Code

44. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding gift tax. [53252/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the material supplied by the Deputy does not contain all of the details required in order to provide a reply to the queries raised. At the very least, it would be necessary to examine the terms of the person's mother's will as well as the terms of the Agreement in relation to the sale of the house and the giving of a 1/5th share in the house in return for not contesting the will. Should the person concerned wish to discuss the matters with a Revenue official, she may contact Ms Sheila O'Brien, Dublin Capital Acquisitions Tax, Aras Brugha, 9 - 15 O'Connell St., Dublin 1, telephone 01- 8655719 who will assist her in this matter.

Tax Code

45. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Finance the provisions within the taxation code which provide preferential tax treatment to non-residents over Irish residents; the reason for any such provision and the cost to the Exchequer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53282/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that there are no provisions within our tax code that provide preferential income tax, universal social charge (USC), domicile levy, capital gains tax (CGT) or capital acquisitions tax (CAT) treatment to non-residents. The tax treatment of non-residents in Ireland is in line with the position prevailing in many other jurisdictions. The general treatment under the various taxes can be summarised as follows.

Income Tax and Universal Social Charge

- Individuals who are resident in the State for a tax year are liable to Irish income tax and the USC on their worldwide income for that tax year, and

- Individuals who are not resident here for tax purposes are liable to Irish income tax and the USC on their Irish source income and on income attributable to duties of an employment exercised here.

Capital Gains Tax

- Persons who are either resident and domiciled or ordinarily resident and domiciled in the

State for a tax year are liable to Irish CGT on their worldwide chargeable gains.

- Individuals who are resident or ordinarily resident in the State but are not domiciled in the State are liable to Irish income tax and CGT on income or chargeable gains arising outside the State where the income or chargeable gains are received in the State.

- Persons who are neither resident nor ordinarily resident in the State for a tax year are liable to Irish CGT on chargeable gains made on the disposal of certain Irish assets, as follows:

- assets of a business carried on by such a person in the State,
- interests in land, buildings or minerals situated in the State,
- exploration or exploitation of rights in the Continental Shelf, and
- unquoted shares which derive their value, or the greater part of their value, from any of these assets.

Capital Acquisitions Tax

- Beneficiaries who take a gift or inheritance are within the charge to CAT if the assets, the subject of the gift or inheritance, are situated in the State. This charge applies equally to both Irish resident beneficiaries of those assets and also to non-Irish resident beneficiaries of those assets.

- Beneficiaries who take a gift or inheritance are also within the charge to CAT if the assets, the subject of the gift or inheritance, are situated abroad but the individual who provides a gift or inheritance is resident in Ireland, irrespective of whether that beneficiary is Irish resident or non-Irish resident.

Domicile Levy

- The Domicile Levy applies to an individual:

- who is domiciled in the State in a tax year,
- whose world-wide income for the tax year exceeds €1m,
- whose liability to Irish income tax for the tax year is less than €200,000, and
- the market value of whose Irish property on the valuation date (i.e. 31 December) is in excess of €5m.

- The Domicile Levy applies irrespective of whether or not the individual is resident in the State.

In circumstances where double taxation would otherwise arise there are provisions for relief in accordance with the terms of relevant double taxation treaties.

Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

46. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the current status of the AIB defined benefit pension scheme; the annual cost savings associated with changing the scheme from defined benefit to defined contribution; the number of staff impacted by the change; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53326/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I have been informed that the AIB Defined Benefit Pension Scheme will close to future accrual as planned on 31 December 2013 in

line with the recommendation of the Labour Court. Relevant details in respect of the closure of AIB's Defined Benefit schemes will be reflected in AIB's 2013 Annual Financial Report which is likely to be available in Q1 2014. This change affects c. 11,000 AIB staff based in the Republic of Ireland and the UK who were members of the AIB Defined Benefit Pension Schemes. AIB staff will accrue future pension benefits on a defined contribution basis from 1 January 2014. The individual effect on each staff member will depend on their previous benefit structure and period to retirement.

As the Deputy will be aware AIB has previously announced that it intends to make cost savings of €350m by the end of 2014 and the closure of the pension scheme forms a significant proportion of this proposed saving.

Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

47. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the current status of the Permanent TSB defined benefit pension scheme; the annual cost savings associated with changing the scheme from defined benefit to defined contribution; the number of staff impacted by the change; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53327/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I have been informed by Permanent TSB that its three defined benefit pension schemes are currently being wound up by the Trustees to each scheme. The wind up of the schemes impacts c 3,800 members of the schemes, of which c 1,400 are current employees. Detailed information on the schemes is included in Note 20 of the 2013 interim report and Note 30 of the 2012 annual report, both of which are available on the company's website at <http://www.permanenttsbgroup.ie/investor-relations.aspx>.

Consultancy Contracts Expenditure

48. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the total cost of consultancy services and external advice engaged by his Department in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53329/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The total cost of consultancy service and external advice engaged by the Department of Finance in 2013 is 3,244,676 euro (as of today - 6 December). This includes 1,985,984 euro for legal fees and advice.

Banking Sector Remuneration

49. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the total number of requests the board of AIB made for former directors to surrender part of their pension voluntarily; the total number of replies received; the total values of pensions voluntarily foregone by former directors of AIB; if he expects any further developments in respect of pensions paid to former AIB directors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53330/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I have been informed by AIB that, as previously indicated, the bank has written to former senior executives requesting a voluntary reduction in their pension levels. In excess of 30 letters have been issued to date. As AIB indicated when before the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform quite a few responses have been received and the process remains ongoing. It should be noted that for reasons of confidentiality AIB cannot disclose information in respect of individuals or the levels

of reductions agreed.

EU Directives

50. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Finance the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53352/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): There is currently one outstanding Directive relating to the Department of Finance which is yet to be transposed despite the deadline date being passed. The Financial Conglomerates Directive 2002/87/EC (FICOD) came into effect in 2005 and it applies supplementary prudential supervision to mixed financial groups that carry out both banking/investment firm activities and insurance activities of a significant size. On 16 November 2011, the European Parliament and Council adopted the amending Directive 2011/89/EU, which revised amongst other things the existing Financial Conglomerates Directive (2002/87/EC). The Transposition date was 10 June 2013 for this Directive.

Work is ongoing on a draft Statutory Instrument with the Office of Parliamentary Council, the Department of Finance and with the Central Bank of Ireland. This transposition is late due to the resource implications of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the prioritisation of the transposition of the Capital Requirements Directive. In addition, the subject matter contains a number of references to entities supervised under the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRD) 575/2013 and Directive 2013/36/EU and because of this it is envisaged that this will be completed alongside the CRD IV transposition later this month or in early January.

It is also worth noting that the deadline of 30 June 2013 for the transposition of Directive 2009/138/EC (Solvency II) has been extended to 31 March 2015 with the implementation date extended to 1 January 2016.

Tax Exemptions

51. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to sanction a similar exemption from income tax to the annual allowance of €1,000 paid to volunteer members of the Garda Reserve to other volunteer members of the emergency services such as the Coast Guard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53360/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Finance (No. 2) Bill 2013 proposes an amendment to the Taxes Consolidation Act to provide for the exemption from taxation of the annual allowance paid to volunteer members of the Garda Reserve. This allowance - "in respect of expenses incurred in performing their functions" - is provided for in the Garda Síochána (Reserve Members) Regulations 2006. I accepted the proposal of the Minister for Justice and Equality that members of the Garda Reserve should not be disqualified from receiving state benefits solely as a result of the payment of a contribution towards their expenses incurred in volunteer work for the State.

It is important to note that implementation of the proposal will be Exchequer neutral. At present, any tax and PRSI liabilities on the allowances of Reserve members are reimbursed. Such reimbursements will be unnecessary in the context of tax exemption. I have no plans or proposals to extend the measure in the manner suggested by the Deputy.

Departmental Legal Costs

52. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Finance the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53654/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The cost incurred by the Department of Finance as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts for each of the past five years are as follows: zero in 2009; zero in 2010; zero in 2011; zero in 2012; and €92,296 in 2013.

Bus Éireann Investigations

53. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason the names of members of the public who make complaints to his Department regarding corruption within Bus Éireann in the administration of the school transport contract are being circulated among Bus Éireann's staff and to the general public; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53193/13]

54. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the name and contact details of the garda who is dealing with the current investigation regarding corruption within Bus Éireann in the administration of the school transport contract, as it is the stated policy of Bus Éireann, as recently confirmed by the Minister, to inform the Garda Síochána of incidents of corruption within the school transport contract. [53194/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon): I propose to take Questions Nos. 53 and 54 together.

Bus Éireann has assured my Department that their investigation into matters of alleged corruption in the administration of school transport is treated with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. Details are very closely restricted and there is no question of names being circulated to staff generally or to the wider public. Bus Éireann has further advised that, in relation to the current investigation by the Company into allegations of corruption by individual employees, no evidence of criminality or wrongdoing has been furnished by those making these allegations despite being encouraged to do so. If evidence of criminal behaviour is disclosed during the course of the investigation, such evidence will be notified to the Garda Síochána by Bus Éireann in accordance with their procedures.

Public Sector Staff Issues

55. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will issue a circular to all the boards of management of schools to ensure that all special needs assistant contracts are correct and properly worded and abide by the National Council for Special Education and his Department guidelines detailing the 32-hour week; and if any are in error, if he will instruct the boards of management to rectify such contracts immediately. [53219/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) does not have a role in setting the contractual hours of work of SNAs. The contractual position in respect of SNAs is outlined in their contract of employment. Links to the SNA Contracts of Employment are as follows: Department of Education and Skills Circular SNA 12/05 (Post-Primary) - <http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/>

Active-Circulars/sna12_05.pdf; and Department of Education and Skills Circular SNA 15/05 (Primary) - <http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Popular-forms/SNA-15-05-Contract-Form.pdf>. This contract of employment is augmented by all of the relevant Departmental Circulars governing Special Needs Assistants which detail the standardised terms and conditions of employment for SNAs. These Circulars are amended and new Circulars are issued by the Minister for Education and Skills from time to time. The position regarding the working hours of full-time SNAs is as outlined in the standard SNA contract of employment, which was agreed by this Department, the Trade Unions (IMPACT and SIPTU) representing SNAs and the Management Bodies in 2005. In that context, the standard SNA contract has been designed to be flexible to cater for the different spectrum of working hours across all the various schools including primary, post-primary and special schools. No set hours were agreed but instead full-time SNAs are expected to work for the normal school hours in the school that they are working in, and in addition to be available for a period of time before and after school in order to help with reception and dispersal of children and preparation and tidying up of classrooms etc. These times are set locally by the school management and will vary from school to school depending on the requirements of the school. In addition, all SNAs were required to be available for a number of days at the start and finish of each school term not exceeding 12 in total. Under the Croke Park Agreement it was agreed to introduce greater flexibility to the use of these 12 days. These 12 days now equate to 72 hours (pro-rata for part-time SNAs) to be used by schools as an additional bank of hours to be utilised and delivered outside of normal school opening hours and/or the normal school year. SNAs who are employed in a part-time capacity are paid a pro-rata amount dependent upon their level of hours of employment. Part-time SNAs are paid on the agreed divisor rate for pay purposes for part-time SNAs which is 32 hours. Furthermore, the issue of appropriate working hours for all public servants was one of the key aspects of the set of proposals for a public service agreement which were put forward by the Labour Relations Commission and which now form the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 (the Haddington Road Agreement).

The specific text of the Haddington Road Agreement relating to working hours for SNAs is as follows:

”SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS Hours

Under the terms of the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, discussions took place that led to agreement on changed attendance arrangements for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) that give schools the option of an additional two hours working time per week from each Special Needs Assistant. Under the terms of this Agreement on increased working hours in the Public Service, the available requirements in schools for additional hours for SNAs is quite limited. Given issues such as the duration of the school day and operation hours, and the specific availability of individual SNAs the details of the utilisation of any additional requirements should be the subject of further discussions. These new attendance arrangements, allied to the provisions outlined in the above paragraph should be the subject of a review by the LRC in advance of the 2013/2014 school year, involving the Department of Education and Skills and IMPACT/SIPTU, in order to assess if the additional hours are being utilised in the most effective and appropriate manner and in order to achieve agreement on any changes deemed necessary in terms of the arrangement agreed for teachers. This will constitute the liability on Special Needs Assistants in respect of working hours for the purposes of this extension to the Public Service Agreement.”

Student Grant Scheme Appeals

56. **Deputy Eric Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on correspon-

dence (details supplied) regarding a Student Universal Support Ireland grant appeal. [53246/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The independent Student Grants Appeals Board has received an appeal from the student referred to by the Deputy. The Appeals Board aims to issue appeal determinations as promptly as possible and within the time-frame specified in the Student Support Act, 2011. The student will be notified directly of the outcome by the Appeals Board.

Student Grant Scheme Delays

57. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify a query that Student Universal Support Ireland referred to him a number of months ago regarding two student grant applications (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will address the delay in processing these two applications. [53248/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): Officials in my Department have been informed by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the applications referred to by the Deputy are being reviewed as a result of a change in circumstances and the students will be notified of the outcome shortly.

Book Rental Scheme

58. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the role his Department plays in book rental schemes; if he has provided any funding for same in 2013; if any public moneys have been allocated for same; the criteria or guidelines in place for awarding any such funding; if there is an applications process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53249/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): As the Deputy may be aware I launched new "Guidelines for Developing Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools" on the 28th January last. These Guidelines provide practical advice to primary and post-primary schools on how rental schemes can be established and operated. The aim of the Guidelines is to help as many schools as possible to start such book rental programmes. The publication of these Guidelines follows a survey of schools by the Department, and which I published in May 2012. This had a 99% response rate at primary level, and showed that 76% of primary schools operate a book rental scheme. At second level, the response rate was lower, at 44%. Of those which did respond, 88% of those in the VEC sector and 73% of those in the Community & Comprehensive sector operated a book rental scheme. I believe these results show that we have a good foundation to build on across the country. I hope that schools that are not yet operating book rental schemes will be encouraged to use the Guidelines to introduce them. If they do, it will result in substantial savings for parents. Schools which already have rental schemes can save parents up to 80% of the cost of buying new books. A special "Guide for Parents" was also published, to inform them of how the schemes operate and how parents can help schools to establish and run them. I have been very clear in my support for book rental schemes. All of us who are parents know how expensive textbooks can be and what a burden it places on already hard pressed families at the start of every school year. I am pleased to see the high level of book rental schemes in operation at primary level and I believe that these Guidelines will encourage this practice across all schools in our education landscape. The Department provided approximately €15m in total to first and second level schools by way of book grants in 2012 and the same level of funding was provided in 2013. The per capita funding provided to recognised primary and

post-primary schools within the Free Education Scheme is set out in Circular 46/2013. This grant can be utilised for the purposes of a school's book rental scheme. The Deputy will also be aware from Budget 2014 that additional funding has been provided which will involve an investment of €15m to support the establishment of book rental schemes in primary schools that do not currently operate them. The Department will provide €5m in seed capital per annum over a three year period to such schools. I want to achieve a position where every primary schools has a book rental schemes in operation in the 2014/2015 school year. The Department will be contacting primary schools that do not currently operate a book rental scheme early in the New Year to advise them of the application process. To qualify for seed capital funding, schools will have to undertake to establish a book rental scheme from September 2014 and in return the Department will commit to the provision of such funding in 2014, 2015 and 2016. This scheme will be confined to primary schools that do not currently operate such a scheme.

School Accommodation

59. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the schedule of accommodation for a school (details supplied) in Galway is being designed with a view to replace all existing prefabs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53277/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Deputy will be aware, that the school to which he refers was invited to participate in the Prefab Replacement Scheme II and I understand that the school authorities accepted this offer. This acceptance, involving the construction of a number of classrooms, including the replacement of some prefabs, represents the first Phase of development works at the school. In that regard, it is envisaged that schedules of accommodation will issue to the school authorities shortly, along with detailed instructions as to the next steps for progressing this project.

School Transport Provision

60. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 76 of 9 October 2013, if he will address the additional queries on the issue of school transport in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53342/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon): The Deputy will be aware that the service operating to Gael Choláiste Chill Dara from the Kilkullen/Calverstown area is operating to capacity this school year and to provide a larger bus would incur additional cost. The child in question has been issued with a ticket for the 2013/14 school year on a newly established service with a pick up/set down point in Kildare Town, which is 2.5 kms from the family home. This is considered to be a reasonable level of service and is within the guidelines set out in the scheme. However, Bus Éireann has advised that the child in question can meet this service at the junction of Grey Abbey Road and Nurney Road which is 1.4 kms from his home address. In this regard, the family should liaise with their local Bus Éireann office.

EU Directives

61. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the

deadline date having passed; when is it proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53350/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): One Directive related to my Department falls into the category to which the Deputy refers. The transposition of this Directive (Council Directive 2013/25/EU of 13 May 2013, adapting certain directives in the field of right of establishment and freedom to provide services, by reason of the accession of the Republic of Croatia) requires the amendment of at least 8 pieces of legislation, only one of which falls under the remit of my Department, although my Department is responsible for the overall coordination of the transposition. My Department has notified the relevant Departments of the requirement to transpose the Directive, and it is hoped that overall transposition will be completed before the end of the year.

Departmental Legal Costs

62. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53652/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Department of Education and Skills has not incurred any costs as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts during the past five years.

Departmental Legal Costs

63. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53153/13]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): In response to the Deputy's question the following table outlines the costs incurred by my Department, and those bodies under my remit, since the formation of this Government.

Department	Oireachtas Member	Plaintiff	Cost
Ombudsman	Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill	Standards in public Office Commission	€97,772.70
Public Expenditure and Reform	Deputy Joan Collins	Minister for Finance and Others	€588.08
Total	-	-	€98,360.78

EU Directives

64. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53357/13]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): In response to the Deputy's question I can confirm that there are no EU directives relating to my Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law with a deadline date having passed.

Foreign Direct Investment

65. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount of foreign direct investment that has taken place in a county (details supplied) over the past five years, broken down by year; the companies that have made such investments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53187/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Details of the amount of grants paid in Co. Carlow and Co. Wicklow from 2007 to 2012 are set out in the following tabular statement.

As Ireland competes for high quality investments, the concept of scale is crucial. Leading global corporations require a significant population pool, access to qualified talent, world standard physical and digital infrastructure coupled with the availability of sophisticated professional and business support services. In order to achieve economic regional development, IDA prioritises the marketing of Gateway locations within each Region as the locations of critical mass (i.e. sufficient scale of population, skills, infrastructure, companies, business services etc.) and highlights the opportunities provided by Hub locations which are within commuting distances of these Gateways. With improvements in infrastructure and investment in one town in a region it has a positive effect on other towns in the region.

The East Region, which includes Wicklow, has been particularly successful in recent years in terms of attracting inward investment from FDI companies and employing 67,860 people. At present, there are 17 IDA supported companies in Co. Wicklow employing 2,267 people.

IDA Ireland's Strategy for County Carlow within the South East Region is to progress the development of a knowledge economy so that the county, and particularly the county town of Carlow, can compete both nationally and internationally for foreign direct investment. Carlow has traditionally been a centre of manufacturing with a strong engineering tradition in both the indigenous and overseas sectors. At the end of 2012, there were 7 IDA Ireland supported companies in Co. Carlow employing 576 people.

IDA Ireland has strong relationships with all these companies and works closely with them to ensure their long term sustainability and to encourage their growth, development and continuing re-investment in their sites. Among the companies who announced job creation plans or fresh investment plans in recent years for Co. Carlow were: Merck Sharp & Dohme Biologics (Ireland) Ltd, Unum and Merck & Co Inc. Similarly, for Co. Wicklow were: Nypro and Oriflame.

Work in winning new investments has been continuing steadily in the second half of 2013 and, on the basis of the trends so far, I am confident that the targets set out for IDA Ireland in the Action Plan for Jobs 2013, of winning more than 130 new investments, securing €500m in R&D and creating 13,000 jobs in IDA client companies, will be achieved.

Table showing the amount of grants paid in Co. Carlow and Co. Wicklow from 2007 to 2012

County	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Carlow	€553,820	€480,305	€176,000	€0	€0	€9,503,141
Wicklow	€629,010	€232,593	€791,321	€513,000	€0	€48,328

Job Creation

66. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the steps being taken by Industrial Development Authority Ireland to attract investment and additional employment to north Dublin following the reported loss of up to 570 jobs in the coming three years at MSD Swords. [53227/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): In the case of the Merck Sharp and Dohme (MSD) plant in Swords, the company has had to undertake a review of its worldwide manufacturing capabilities to improve its overall operational effectiveness. Following the merger of that company with Schering Plough, the combined operation has excess manufacturing capacity worldwide. Accordingly, as part of an overall rationalisation, the company has, unfortunately decided to close the Swords operation by 2017 and transfer production to other factories in the group, located in countries abroad.

The gradual shutdown of this plant gives a valuable space to seek a new operation for the factory. It is not anticipated that any staff will have to leave before mid-2014 at the earliest and that 130 jobs would be lost in the second half of 2014. The remaining positions would be phased out over the following three years up to the end of 2017. IDA Ireland will work closely with MSD with a view to identifying a buyer for the factory. I can assure the Deputy that every effort will be made to seek to ensure that this factory can continue as an employer in the area, after the current operation is due to close in 2017.

Regarding wider job creation in Dublin, I am pleased that the IDA continues to attract impressive levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) both in terms of attracting new projects and, also, expansions to existing operations in the capital. In addition, significant Research, Development and Innovation investments have been secured across a range of sectors, including Financial Services, ICT and Pharma and major Data Centre investments are being undertaken in different parts of the county.

In terms of wider national FDI, it is also important to remember that Ireland overall continues to be competitive in attracting new investment. Over 1,000 multinational corporations have chosen Ireland as their strategic European base. Multinationals currently employ 146,000 people directly and many more indirectly. In the wider context, as a Government, we have put in place strategies for job creation that are now starting to bear fruit. The Government will continue to deliver on its commitments in the *Action Plan for Jobs*. Through the *Action Plan for Jobs* in both 2012 and in 2013 we have addressed a wide range of competitiveness issues which has helped turn the economy around and provide the base for private sector job growth. We are currently developing an *Action Plan for Jobs* for 2014 which will build on these achievements. The work of the enterprise agencies will continue to play a huge role in this process.

Recent official data has shown that 58,000 jobs have been created in the country over the last 12 months, which is an impressive achievement, in light of the economic difficulties we have faced. This is the fourth quarter in succession where employment has grown. That CSO data shows that an additional 26,600 jobs have been created in the Dublin area alone in the last 2 years, as the economic recovery takes hold.

Companies Law Issues

67. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in view of the fact that the term “servant” appears in a number of instances in existing companies legislation and in the proposed Bill, if he will provide the Department’s definition of “servant”; if he will undertake to incorporate the definition into the Bill, as the absence of same could lead to potential abuse; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53250/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Company law in Ireland is currently spread out over 16 enactments and numerous statutory instruments. The Companies Bill 2012 (“the Bill”) is a consolidation of all these provisions in one Bill which aims to streamline, simplify and clarify the law. The Bill is the largest substantive Bill in the history of the State, spread out over 25 Parts, 17 Schedules and comprising some 1,429 sections.

Most of the existing references to “servant” are updated to “employee” in the Companies Bill 2012. For example, Section 285 of the Companies Act 1963 uses the terms “clerk, servant, workman or labourer”; however in the Bill the corresponding Section 622, uses the term “employee” exclusively. This is in line with the Company Law Review Group (CLRG) recommendation to modernise the language of this section. (Second CLRG Report at paragraph 4.19.4). The Department is currently examining a small number of other references to the term servant in the Bill to ensure that they are appropriate in the context of the relevant provision.

Business Regulation

68. **Deputy Patrick O’Donovan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his plans to introduce legislative or regulatory measures to make provision for mandatory audit rotation in the instance of public interest entities, including but not exclusively banks and other financial institutions in which the State has a financial interest; his views on whether the introduction of these mandatory measures would be in the public interest; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53254/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Audit proposals adopted by the EU Commission at the end of 2011 contain draft provisions relating to auditor and audit firm rotation in respect of the audit of public interest entities. These audit proposals are currently the subject of Trilogue negotiations between the European Council, the European Commission and the Parliament. The audit provisions arising from this process, including any pertaining to auditor and audit firm rotation of public interest entities, will be implemented in Ireland in the context of the transposition of these audit measures.

Jobs Data

69. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will substantiate claims that the economy is producing 3,000 jobs per month by providing a breakdown of the jobs for a sample month by standard occupational classification; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53281/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): According to the Quarterly National Household Survey for Quarter 3, 2013, published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), approximately 4,800 jobs per month have been created - a total of 58,000 in the 12 months to end of the third quarter of 2013. A monthly breakdown of jobs by standard occupational classification is not available. However, the following table provides statistics by Quarter, on Persons aged over 15 employed by Sector (Source: CSO Database). While these employment figures are very encouraging signs for the economy, we must continue to build on this progress and support further job creation. I am currently preparing the 2014 Action Plan for Jobs on behalf of the Government and we will continue, through that process, to build on the success of the actions we have taken over the last two years.

Table: Persons aged over 15 employed by Sector

Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment (Thousand) by Sex, NACE Rev2 Economic Sector and Quarter

-	2011Q3	2011Q4	2012Q1	2012Q2	2012Q3	2012Q4	2013Q1	2013Q2	2013Q3
Both sexes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All NACE economic sectors	1,845.6	1,847.7	1,825.0	1,836.2	1,841.3	1,848.9	1,845.6	1,869.9	1,899.3
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	82.4	80.3	80.5	87.1	85.6	90.0	96.2	103.4	110.6
Construction (F)	108.5	107.8	103.3	99.6	101.1	103.2	96.3	102.7	105.4
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor-cycles (G)	276.5	270.5	271.3	268.2	272.7	273.4	274.1	271.5	273.3
Transportation and storage (H)	96.7	92.6	90.2	90.9	90.3	89.0	88.8	86.0	88.2
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	121.1	119.9	117.6	120.0	123.1	118.3	120.3	129.6	137.7
Information and communication (J)	77.1	77.7	78.5	81.2	78.2	83.2	77.4	80.4	82.0
Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)	96.6	96.2	98.0	102.6	100.4	102.2	103.9	108.0	111.3
Administrative and support service activities (N)	69.4	65.3	62.5	63.0	66.6	63.2	59.5	58.0	64.7
Public administration and defence, compulsory social security (O)	99.3	102.3	99.5	99.6	99.7	96.0	95.2	95.1	96.1
Education (P)	137.2	144.5	146.6	146.3	140.6	145.3	147.5	150.3	140.8
Human health and social work activities (Q)	243.5	242.8	239.6	244.4	245.0	245.7	247.5	244.6	243.6
Industry (B to E)	238.9	244.5	236.0	231.7	231.1	237.2	238.0	238.4	242.0
Industry and Construction (B to F)	347.4	352.4	339.3	331.3	332.1	340.4	334.3	341.1	347.3
Services (G to U)	1,412.1	1,412.3	1,403.3	1,416.0	1,420.8	1,415.3	1,413.5	1,424.2	1,439.2
Financial, insurance and real estate activities (K,L)	99.1	104.1	101.0	99.3	102.3	102.8	99.7	98.9	101.5
Other NACE activities (R to U)	95.5	96.3	98.5	100.6	101.9	96.2	99.8	101.8	99.9
Not stated	3.8	2.7	-	-	2.8	3.2	-	-	-

EU Directives

70. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53355/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): My Department ensures that a high profile is given to ensuring that a good performance on the transposition of Directives is maintained. Within the Department transposition is monitored on a regular basis.

Currently one Directive is overdue since 11 May 2013, Directive 2010/32/EU on implementing the Framework agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and health care sector. We understand that Ireland is one of approximately 8 Member States that have not transposed this Directive. During discussions between my Department and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to the Government on the legal scrutiny and settlement of the draft Regulations to transpose the Directive, a number of additional legal issues were identified which has, of necessity, delayed transposition. These issues are being urgently addressed with a view to completing the process of transposition by the end of 2013. Close contact has been maintained with the European Commission throughout this process to apprise them of progress. A formal notice of Infringement has not been received to date, due to an administrative issue on behalf of the Commission.

A full list of the Directives to be transposed up to 2015 and the current position in respect of their transposition is provided in the following tables, which can also be accessed on my Department's website at www.djei.ie.

DIRECTIVES TO BE TRANSPOSED IN 2013 (Two)

Description of Directive	Deadline for Transposition	Current position
1. Directive 2010/32/EU implementing the Framework Agreement on prevention of sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU.	11/05/2013 Section: HSA Liaison	Overdue During discussions between the Department and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to the Government on the legal scrutiny and settlement of the draft Regulations to transpose the Directive, a number of additional legal issues were identified which has, of necessity, delayed transposition. These issues are being urgently addressed with a view to completing the process of transposition by the end of 2013.
2. Directive 2011/83/EU on Consumer Rights.	13/12/2013 Section: Competition & Consumer	Regulations are due to be signed by the Minister during week commencing 9 December, 2013.

DIRECTIVES TO BE TRANSPOSED IN 2014 (Three)

Description of Directive	Deadline for Transposition	Current position
3. Directive 2012/17/EU on the interconnection of central, commercial and companies registers	14/07/2014 Section: Company Law	Draft regulations are due to be submitted to the OPC during week commencing 9 December, 2013.
4. Directive 2012/28/EU on certain permitted use of orphan works	29/10/2014 Section: Intellectual Property Unit	Preparation for submission to OPC commenced.

Description of Directive	Deadline for Transposition	Current position
5. Directive 2013/10/EU amending the aerosol directive	19/03/2014 Section: Competition & Consumer	Currently with the OPC.

DIRECTIVES TO BE TRANSPOSED IN 2015 (Two)

Description of Directive	Deadline for Transposition	Current position
6. Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances	31/05/2015, although one aspect has an earlier date of 14/2/2014 Section: Chemical Regulation Policy Unit	Drafting of short, technical S.I. has commenced (to transpose Article 30 - deadline for transposition 14 February 2014). A draft was sent to the OPC for legal settlement on 1 November, 2013 and a draftsperson has been assigned. The Department will be meeting the transposition deadline.
7. Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings	20/07/2015 Section: Company Law	Drafting has not yet commenced.

DIRECTIVES TO BE TRANSPOSED IN 2016 (ONE)

Description of Directive	Deadline for Transposition	Current position
8. Directive 2013/35/EU on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields)	01/07/2016 Section: HSA Liaison	Drafting has not yet commenced.

CODIFIED DIRECTIVES as at 10 December 2013

CODIFIED DIRECTIVES¹ (Four)

CURRENTLY AWAITING TRANSPOSITION

Description of Directive	Unit Responsible	Current position
1. Directive 2009/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work (second individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC).	HSA Liaison	Drafting of the detailed transposing regulations continues
2. Directive 2009/142/EC of the European Parliament and Council relating to appliances burning gaseous fuels	Competition & Consumer	Draft with OPC.
3. Directive 2009/23/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on non-automatic weighing instruments	NSAI Liaison & Standards	Draft is with the OPC.
4. Directive 2000/54/EC on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work.	Chemicals Regulation Policy Unit	Ongoing liaison with OPC re finalisation of regulations.

RECAST DIRECTIVES (Three)

CURRENTLY AWAITING TRANSPOSITION

Description of Directive	Unit Responsible	Current position
1. Directive 2009/34/EC relating to common provisions for both measuring instruments and methods of metrological control (Recast)	NSAI Liaison & Standards	Draft is with the OPC. There is no deadline for transposition of this Recast Directive.
2. Directive 2006/95/EC of the European Parliament and Council on the Harmonisation of the laws of Member States relating to Electrical Equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits	Competition & Consumer	Undergoing a recast.
3. Directive 2009/105/EC relating to simple pressure vessels	Competition & Consumer	Undergoing a recast.

¹ Codification brings together previous legislation in a single new act. There are no time-lines required for the transposition of codified Directives.

Departmental Legal Costs

71. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53656/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): No costs have been incurred in my Department as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts for each of the past five years.

Invalidity Pension Appeals

72. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the progress to date in determination of 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. [53160/13]

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 evidence has allowed the appeal of the person concerned. The person concerned has been notified of the 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.

Work Placement Programmes

73. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will consider making the Gateway scheme accessible to those on a disability payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53164/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The purpose of Gateway is to focus on those people who are long-term unemployed. For this reason, eligibility is at present confined to those on the Live Register for 24 months and in receipt of jobseeker's allowance. These provisions are to ensure a targeted approach to those currently affected by long-term unemployment.

Eligible persons are being identified by the Department of Social Protection by applying the following conditions:

- A person must be unemployed and in receipt of a jobseeker's payment for at least 24 months, and
- Currently be in receipt of jobseeker's allowance, and
- Be fully unemployed.

Persons in receipt of disability payments are not eligible for participation on Gateway. Work placement and training opportunities for people with disabilities are available under community employment in addition to a range of other initiatives supportive of a return to and retention in the work place. I currently have no plans to extend the qualifying criteria beyond that identified above.

Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals

74. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Social Protection when a decision will be made on a person's jobseeker's allowance appeal (details provided). [53167/13]

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 19th November 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 papers have been received from the Department, the appeal 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 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.

Rent Supplement Scheme Administration

75. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she intends to re-evaluate the rent allowance limits in view of the current rental market; if her attention has been drawn to the fact that rents in an area (details supplied) are 4.4% higher in the third quarter of 2013 than they were the previous year, according to a daft.ie rental report; if she will re-examine rental limits in the county on that basis; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53174/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The purpose of the rent supplement scheme is to provide short-term support to eligible people living in private rented accommodation whose means are insufficient to meet their accommodation costs and who do not have accommodation available to them from 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 80,000 persons in receipt of rent supplement for which the Government has provided over €403 million in 2013.

Revised rent limits under the rent supplement scheme came into effect from Monday 17 June 2013 and will be in place until 31 December 2014. The new rent limits have been determined following an extensive review of the private rental market based on the most up-to-date data available. The rent limits review was completed during the second quarter of this year and used a number of data sources including that of the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) which contained details of actual registered rental tenancies. As outlined by the Deputy, the Daft.ie Q3 2013 rental report records a year on year increase of 4.4% in rents in County Wicklow. There is no detailed breakdown of this figure by area within the county or by property type.

There are currently over 2,400 rent supplement recipients in County Wicklow. Analysis shows that there are properties available within the maximum rent limits for rent supplement recipients in County Wicklow. It must be stressed that the purpose of the rent limit review was to ensure availability of accommodation for rent supplement tenancies and not to provide rent supplement tenants with access to all housing in all areas. The Department will continue to monitor rent levels throughout the country but at this point has no plans to revise any of the existing rent limits at this time.

Reliance on rent supplement for those persons with long term housing needs is being addressed with the Department's strategic policy direction to return rent supplement to its original

purpose, that of a short term income support. In July 2013 the Government approved the introduction of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Under HAP, responsibility for recipients of rent supplement with a long-term housing need will transfer from the Department of Social Protection to housing authorities. Officials in the Department are working with those in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, who are leading the project, in developing the necessary legal, policy and operational requirements to give effect to this transfer.

Question No. 76 withdrawn.

Rent Supplement Scheme Payments

77. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason rent allowance has ceased in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; if same will be reinstated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53184/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The rent supplement has been reinstated for the client in question. The payment was temporarily suspended due to an issue regarding the client's address. All arrears will issue accordingly at the end of the month.

Rent Supplement Scheme Eligibility

78. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Minister for Social Protection if rent supplement may be paid to a person living in a mobile home in a fixed location; her Department's policy on same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53185/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The purpose of the rent supplement scheme is to provide short-term support to eligible people living in private rented accommodation whose means are insufficient to meet their accommodation costs and who do not have accommodation available to them from any other source. There are currently over 80,000 rent supplement recipients for which the Government has provided over €403 million for 2013.

Social welfare legislation is specific in relation to the type of residence for which a rent supplement may be provided. Statutory Instrument No. 412 of 2007 states that subject to these regulations, a person shall be entitled to a supplement towards the amount of rent payable by him or her in respect of his or her residence. The term "residence" is defined as a "residential premises" meaning "a building or part of a building, used or suitable for use, as a dwelling and any land which the occupier of a building or part of a building used as a dwelling has for his or her own occupation and enjoyment with the said building or part thereof as its garden". It is the Department's view that a mobile home is not a building and as such it is not possible to pay rent supplement in respect of such a structure.

Questions Nos. 79 and 80 withdrawn.

National Internship Scheme Placements

81. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Social Protection her views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding the JobBridge scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53205/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme, was launched on 1 July, 2011 as part of the Government's Jobs Initiative. JobBridge provides work experience placements for those on the Live Register for a 6 or 9 month period to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills.

The Department requires that JobBridge host organisations have at least one full-time employee for the benefit and the protection of interns and to ensure the integrity of the scheme. The Department considers that this requirement is necessary to ensure that the host organisation can offer the intern a high-quality, real-workplace experience. The Department also considers that the support and example of workplace colleagues is a necessary part of the internship experience and that this is critical in enhancing the experience for the intern. The Department is not in a position to make exceptions to this requirement.

If an individual has any queries relating to the operation of the JobBridge Scheme, they may contact the JobBridge team via the Contact Us section of the JobBridge website www.jobbridge.ie.

Departmental Staff Sick Leave

82. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of sick days taken by staff of her Department over the past three years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53211/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The number of sick days taken by staff of the Department over the last 3 years is as outlined in the table below. The detail requested is being provided in respect of the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 which is the last year for which a complete record is available. The Deputy should note that the functions and staff of the Community Welfare Service transferred into the Department from the HSE on 1 November 2011 and that the functions and staff of the Employment Support Services transferred to the Department from FÁS on 1 January 2012. The additional staff represented an approximate 33% increase in the overall staffing figure of the Department over the 3 year period.

Year	Number of Sick Days	Percentage of Working Days Lost
2010	64,377	5.8
2011	71,680	6.3
2012	89,013	5.8

Live Register Numbers

83. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of persons who signed off the live register over the first 11 months of 2013; if she will provide a breakdown of the reason for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53244/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): A total of 390,577 live register claims were closed during the first 11 months of 2013. A detailed breakdown of this number by claim duration and closure reason is contained in the tabular statement.

Live Register claim closures 1 January to 30 November 2013.

Claim Duration

Questions - Written Answers

Closure Reason	<3 mths	3-6 mths	6 mths-1yr	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	> 5yrs	Grand Total
Found Work	59,724	26,697	21,144	13,309	5,336	5,304	874	132,388
No Longer Entitled to Unemployment	52,147	19,232	31,519	24,611	4,970	3,626	1,095	137,200
No Reason Stated	9,143	10,824	10,451	7,374	3,233	3,414	1,050	45,489
Other	6,475	3,355	3,123	2,428	1,131	1,327	461	18,300
Took up Educational, Training or Employment Placement	6,170	5,413	5,761	4,622	2,225	2,986	1,009	28,186
Transferred to other DSP Schemes	5,391	3,624	4,782	5,065	3,206	4,668	2,278	29,014
Grand Total	139,050	69,145	76,780	57,409	20,101	21,325	6,767	390,577

Question No. 84 withdrawn.

State Pension (Contributory) Eligibility

85. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason this Deputy, who has asked to restore the State pension (transition), has been refused, as the least the Government should do is increase the amount of jobseeker's benefit to be equal to the contributory State pension for persons aged 65 years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53274/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2011 provides that state pension age will be increased gradually to 68 years. This will begin in 2014 with the abolition of the state pension (transition) thereby standardising state pension age for all at 66 years. The state pension age will be further increased to 67 years in 2021 and to 68 years in 2028. These changes apply to all fully insured employees. Raising State pension age and the abolition of the State pension (transition) is a necessary step in ensuring the sustainability of pensions into the future. The recently published OECD report on the Review of the Irish Pension System confirms that reforms are necessary if we are to continue to put pension provision on a sustainable footing given the changes in demographics, the deficit in the Social Insurance Fund, and the difficult fiscal situation.

Where individuals exit the workforce prior to pension age they may seek the support of either the jobseeker's benefit or jobseeker's allowance schemes. Jobseeker's benefit is a weekly payment to people out of work and covered by social insurance and legislation provides that, subject to the person having paid 156 or more qualifying contributions and satisfying the general scheme conditions, a person whose benefit expires in their 65th year will continue to be paid

benefit up until the age of 66. On this basis, workers who suffer a substantial loss of employment at age 65 will generally be able to claim jobseeker's benefit for the full year to age 66 provided they have paid at least 156 qualifying contributions. Jobseeker's benefit is a substantial support to persons suffering the contingency of involuntary unemployment. Changes to rates of jobseeker's benefit would be a matter for Government to consider in a Budgetary context and there are no plans in this regard at present.

Social Welfare Appeals Data

86. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Social Protection the percentage of applicants refused a social welfare payment who do not go to the social welfare appeals office; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53278/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The information requested by the Deputy is not available. My staff have provided statistics on the number of claim disallowances and appeals lodged for the first ten months of 2013 in the attached table for the main Departmental schemes. I am however informed that appeals lodged are not solely in respect of disallowance of a claim for a social welfare payment but may arise on foot of a means test which involves a reduction in payment but does not result in payment ceasing as well as conditionality appeals. There may also be timing differences between the appeals and claim processing statistics, and thus the calculation the Deputy has requested cannot be derived based on these statistics.

Disallowances and Appeals Lodged

January - October 2013

Scheme	Rejected	Appeals Lodged
State Pension Contributory (Total)	6,594	118
State Pension Non-Contributory	1,984	229
State Pension Transition (Total)	7,406	36
Bereavement Grant (Sligo & Longford)	2,055	62
Jobseeker's Benefit	4,339	754
Jobseeker's Allowance	15,806	4,659
One-Parent Family Payment	1,173	548
Widow(er)'s Contributory Pension	1,070	34
Maternity Benefit	1,160	21
Treatment Benefit	23,485	3
Disability Allowance	12,459	5,766
Illness Benefit	31,962	1,456
Invalidity Pension	7,335	4,027
Carer's Allowance	8,917	3,426
Occupational Injury Benefit	899	17
Child Benefit (Domestic, FRA and EU)	985	541
Family Income Supplement	11,093	351
Domiciliary Care Allowance	2,200	1,523
Partial Capacity Benefit	N/A	63
Carer's Benefit	507	102
Disablement Benefit	330	301
Blind Persons Pension	81	29

Rent Supplement Scheme Applications

87. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will support a matter (details supplied) in Dublin 3 regarding rent supplement. [53286/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person concerned made an application for a rent supplement on 10 October 2012. As the application was incomplete, a request for further information was sent to him on 18 October 2012 detailing 12 items that were required in order to assess the application. As of 21 January 2013, 8 of the required items had been submitted and a request was sent for the 4 remaining items; to date they have not been received. A decision cannot be made on this application until such time as this outstanding information is provided.

Carer's Allowance Appeals

88. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Social Protection if a decision has been made on an appeal for a carer's allowance application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53288/13]

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 evidence has disallowed the appeal of the person concerned. However, on receipt of further information from the person concerned, the Appeals Officer has decided to re-open the appeal by way of an oral hearing. The person concerned will be notified of the date, time and venue for the hearing in due course.

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.

Respite Care Grant Appeals

89. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social Protection when a decision will be made in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9 whose respite grant appeal was lodged in March 2013; the reason of the delay in the processing this case; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53296/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the appeal from the person concerned was referred to an Appeals Officer who has decided to hold an oral hearing in January 2014. The person concerned will be notified of the arrangements for the 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.

Community Employment Schemes Data

90. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Social Protection the proposed changes to the community employment scheme; the implications these changes will have on the sponsoring bodies, participants and the communities in which they work; the level of consultation her

Department has had with the relevant stakeholders; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53309/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Department of Social Protection (DSP) is consolidating and improving the provision of training and work experience for CE participants in particular for those who wish to pursue a career in childcare.

For CE participants who work directly with children, a dedicated programme comprising formal learning and supervised work experience will become a mandatory part of participation. This formal learning programme will lead to a FETAC Level 5 Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education. This is the minimum entry requirement for a Childcare Practitioner. The duration of this programme will comprise of 2 years in which the Major Award will be completed and one year work practice leading to a maximum 3 year programme overall.

This programme involves defined standards of achievement, a career progression path, and a structure for CE participants in Early Years Services. These changes are designed to provide a more tailored and valuable support to the provision of community childcare and to achieve greater coherence between participation on CE and the job market.

The objectives of this policy are:

- to ensure that all Community Employment schemes with childcare places will, in the future, operate under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Framework and use the Síolta standards (the quality standards in childcare) as a developmental tool;

- to provide CE participants on childcare places who work directly with children with quality work experience, training, a clear progression path and qualifications in the childcare sector; and

- to re-align the allocation of CE childcare places under dedicated childcare schemes with the standards outlined by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

There will be no reduction in the number of childcare places supported under CE. The locations where CE participants currently work will not change, but their employer will now be the dedicated childcare scheme. Where a sponsor loses childcare places to the dedicated childcare scheme, these places can be back-filled with non-childcare related CE places provided that there is an appropriate work programme available.

The above improvements have been informed by consultation with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, County Childcare Committees and representatives of Scheme Sponsors and Supervisors.

Disability Allowance Appeals

91. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if there are over 18,000 people awaiting results for reviews within her Department on disability allowances; if, this is not the correct figure, if she will provide the correct figure; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53314/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I understand that the Deputy is inquiring about the number of successful appeals on disability allowance awaiting processing in the Department. There are currently 260 successful disability allowance appeals awaiting attention all of which were recently received from the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

The Department is currently working hard to eliminate backlogs of new disability allowance applications and to reduce waiting times for new applicants. The higher than average number of new applications being processed has led to a higher than average number of appeals to be processed and, consequently, delays may be experienced by some successful appellants who are awaiting payment. Again, every effort is being made to ensure these temporary delays are kept to an absolute minimum.

EU Directives

92. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of EU directives related to her Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53358/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): There is only one Directive related to the Department of Social Protection that falls into the category mentioned by the Deputy. The provisions of EU Directive 2010/41/EU (on the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity) require, amongst other things, the provision of social protection and maternity benefit to spouses and civil partners who are not employees or business partners but who participate in the activities of the self-employed worker, performing the same tasks or ancillary tasks. Other requirements are a matter for the Minister for Justice and Equality.

The deadline for transposition of the Directive was 5 August 2012. However, the Directive allows, in particular circumstances, for an extension of up to 2 years on the period allowed for the implementation of the social insurance provisions. Ireland secured agreement to allow it to avail of this extended period and so the deadline for implementation of this aspect of the Directive is 5 August 2014. The required provisions will be legislated for in a future social welfare bill so as to meet the extended deadline for implementation.

Departmental Legal Costs

93. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Social Protection the cost incurred in her Department as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts for each of the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53658/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): No costs have been incurred in the Department as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts in any of the past five years.

State Visits

94. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of visits that have been arranged by his Department for foreign dignitaries who are on official State visits to Ireland to any institution under his Department's aegis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53245/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): My Department routinely supports the organisation of visits to institutions when requested to do so. In respect of official State visits, I am advised that no such visits were arranged by my Department

since its establishment in June 2011.

EU Directives

95. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53346/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I can advise the Deputy that no EU directives concerning my Department have yet to be transposed into Irish law after the deadline for doing so has expired.

Departmental Legal Costs

96. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53648/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): As the Deputy will be aware, my Department was established on 2 June 2011 and therefore the available information is being provided from that date. I am advised by my Department that no costs have been incurred for the purpose referred to by the Deputy.

International Agreements

97. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if it is proposed to include in an intergovernmental agreement between the Government and the British Government on the export of electricity a commitment that all electricity generated above that required to meet this State's 2020 target will be exported to assist the UK in achieving its target. [53206/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): Ireland has the capability to achieve its national targets for renewable electricity from onshore renewable generation alone, with capacity to spare. This means that, under the co-operation mechanisms outlined in Directive 2009/28/EC, there is potential for projects of scale both onshore and offshore that are aimed at export markets. It is in this context that the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Mr. Edward Davey MP, and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy co-operation. That Memorandum sent a strong signal of our shared interest in developing the opportunity to export green electricity from Ireland to Britain and will result in completion of consideration of how Irish renewable energy resources, onshore and offshore, might be developed to the mutual benefit of both countries. The Department of Energy and Climate Change in the UK has published a response to its Call for Evidence on Renewable Energy Trading earlier this year. In that document it concluded that it was not possible to make plans for statistical transfer at this stage and noted that it was therefore exploring physical trading. The Intergovernmental Agreement is therefore dealing specifically with projects built under the co-operation mechanisms outlined in the Renewable Energy Directive, and in the first instance joint projects. The amount of energy to be procured by the United Kingdom is among the matters to be addressed ahead of signing any Inter-Governmen-

tal Agreement. An agreed programme of work is already underway so as to prepare for the Inter-Governmental Agreement. This work programme includes economic analysis, addressing policy and regulatory questions and dealing with grid issues. There are very complex engineering and market issues to be teased out but the ambition is to settle on an Inter-Governmental Agreement in early 2014. In advance of this it would be premature to state an export quantity.

Renewable Energy Generation Targets

98. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his views on whether the 2007 target of 500MW per year to be generated by ocean energy will be met. [53257/13]

101. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the position regarding the draft offshore renewable energy development plan. [53312/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): I propose to take Questions Nos. 98 and 101 together.

Ireland has one of the best offshore renewable energy resources in Europe. Cost effective harnessing of the potential of this sector will be crucial to reducing our dependence on expensive fossil fuel imports, creating a low carbon energy system and delivering jobs in the green economy.

My Department is currently finalising an Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP), with a view to publication early in the new year. Informed by the findings of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the OREDPP will identify how best to co-ordinate action across the environmental, energy and economic development policy areas in order to realise Ireland's abundant offshore renewable energy potential, using both offshore wind, and emerging ocean, renewable technologies.

Given the current state of readiness of ocean energy technology, the projections previously outlined for the sector to 2020 will not be achieved. Globally, the industry is at the pre-commercial stage. However, recent years have seen progress, including by indigenous developers, of some promising wave technology devices. While the sustainability and security of supply benefits of ocean energy will ultimately accrue to Ireland, with the right investment and support strategy, ocean energy also offers the potential for significant growth and employment in the medium to longer term. By investing in the early stages of the development of the sector, which will be a key deliverable of the forthcoming OREDPP, a significant part of the value chain, with its associated employment benefits, could be captured.

Post Office Network

99. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding paying Government payments through An Post; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53297/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): Operational matters and the role of developing commercial strategies for the post office network are a matter for the management and Board of An Post and one in which I have no statutory function. As shareholder, however, I have a strong concern in relation to the ongoing commer-

cial position of the Company and I regularly liaise with the Company in this regard. An Post has many strengths and has the largest retail presence in the country. I have been supportive of its attempts to diversify its income streams and to win a wider range of commercial contracts offering higher margins. Having invested in the computerisation of all post offices, An Post is well positioned to become the front office provider of choice for Government and financial services sector. In the context of the public sector transformation agenda I will continue to engage with my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to consideration, as appropriate, of the post office network for transactional elements of the business of Government Departments and Agencies. I have stressed to my Government colleagues that the network is ideally configured for over the counter transactions. Any such developments would, of course, need to be subject to public procurement requirements as appropriate.

Overall, I see a strong future for the network by using its existing strengths to remain a significant player as a front office for Government services.

International Agreements

100. **Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if under the memorandum of understanding between Ireland and the UK on wind energy, Ireland will forfeit all its claims to the carbon credits created by the proposed wind farms on cutaway bogs in the midlands; the persons that will be given ownership of such credits; if there is a time limit to any agreement on carbon credits under the memorandum or is it open ended; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53310/13]

102. **Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide an update on the memorandum of understanding between the UK and Ireland on the export of wind generated electricity to the UK; if a detailed draft has been agreed; if this memorandum will be made public; the date of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53313/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): I propose to take Questions Nos. 100 and 102 together.

Under Directive 2009/28/EC (the “Renewables Directive”), each Member State has been assigned a legally binding individual target for the development of renewable energy that they must achieve by 2020. The Directive provides a mechanism whereby renewable energy produced in one country cannot only be exported to another but can also be counted towards meeting that other country’s 2020 national renewable electricity target.

The United Kingdom Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Mr. Edward Davey MP, and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on energy cooperation on 24 January 2013. The MoU is publically available on my Department’s website.

That Memorandum sent a strong signal of our shared interest in developing the opportunity to export green electricity from Ireland to Britain and will result in completion of consideration of how Irish renewable energy resources, onshore and offshore, might be developed to the mutual benefit of both countries. An agreed programme of work is already underway so as to prepare for the Inter-Governmental Agreement. This work programme includes economic analysis, addressing policy and regulatory questions and dealing with grid issues. There are very complex engineering and market issues to be teased out but the ambition is to settle on an Inter-Governmental Agreement in early 2014. A key objective, from an Irish Government perspective, is to realise the potential for investment, jobs and growth. The amount of energy

to be procured by the United Kingdom, the sharing of the renewable energy credit, including the quantity and duration, and the mechanisms for sharing the resultant economic benefits, including an appropriate return to the Exchequer, are among the matters to be addressed ahead of signing any Inter-Governmental Agreement.

Question No. 101 answered with Question No. 98.

Question No. 102 answered with Question No. 100.

EU Directives

103. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when is it proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53348/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): There are three infringement cases in my Department concerning transposition of EU Directives. Transposition of the Third Energy Package, designed to facilitate completion of the internal market in electricity and gas, is a complex process. The European Commission has issued two Reasoned Opinions to Ireland in regard to its transposition of certain electricity related aspects of the package. The Commission stated that it wishes in the additional Reasoned Opinion, which issued in late April 2013, to complement the June 2012 Reasoned Opinion, with, inter alia, clarification of its views with regard to the transposition of the unbundling provisions in the Electricity Directive. My Department, following careful evaluation of the Commission's opinion, replied in September 2013 and will continue to liaise with the Commission on how full compliance is being implemented in Ireland. The second case relates to a Reasoned Opinion issued on Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC. A response to the Reasoned Opinion is currently being prepared and will issue in the coming weeks. The reply will set out: those articles whose transposition has been notified to the Commission since the Reasoned Opinion; those articles that require legislative amendment; and those articles that my Department considers to have been transposed through a combination of legislation and administrative procedures. Initial draft legislation is being progressed.

The third case relates to Directive 2009/31/EC on the geological storage of carbon dioxide and amending Council Directive 85/337/EEC, European Parliament and Council Directives 2000/60/EC, 2001/80/EC, 2004/35/EC, 2006/12/EC, 2008/1/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006. My Department transposed this in November 2011 exercising a provision under Article 4 of the Directive, not to allow geological storage of CO₂ for a period of 5 years as it was considered appropriate to await technological progress and work internationally. The Commission issued a Reasoned Opinion on 20 November 2013 as they do not consider this approach, which has been adopted by a number of countries, to constitute full transposition and consider that the Directive has only been partially transposed. My Department is now examining options to finalise transposition of the two articles (12 & 21) that are mentioned in the Reasoned Opinion. My Department will liaise with the Attorney General's Office and the Commission to ensure that a literal translation of the relevant Directive text into an EC Regulation made under the 1972 Act will satisfactorily transpose the Directive. My Department is looking at early 2014 to notify the Commission of final implementing measures. My Department continues to be committed to delivering full compliance on all three Directives.

Departmental Legal Costs

104. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53650/13]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte): I wish to advise the Deputy that there have been no such costs incurred by my Department.

Local Authority Funding

105. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the proposed allocation of moneys raised through motor taxation, including any money allocated for debt servicing, to Uisce Éireann and the local government fund. [53165/13]

106. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the proposed allocation of moneys raised through the local property tax, including any money allocated for debt servicing, to Uisce Éireann and the local government fund. [53166/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 105 and 106 together.

The local government funding model will change considerably in 2014. Under the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012, commencing in 2014, the Minister for Finance will pay into the Local Government Fund an amount equivalent to the Local Property Tax paid into the Central Fund during that year; this revenue will be allocated to local authorities from the Fund. The funding to be provided to local authorities for the provision of water services in 2014 will be governed by Service Level Agreements between Irish Water and individual authorities. The 2014 Revised Estimates for Public Services, to be published shortly, will set out the details of Local Government Fund income and expenditure for 2014.

Household Charge Collection

107. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of persons subject to penalties for non-payment of the household charge; the total value of these penalties; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53328/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): The Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011 provided the legislative basis for the Household Charge. Under the Act, an owner of a residential property on the liability date has been liable to pay the Household Charge, unless otherwise exempted or entitled to claim a waiver. It has been a matter for an owner of a residential property to determine liability and pay the Charge. The Local Government Management Agency has been administering the Household Charge system on a shared service/agency basis for all county and city councils.

I understand from data provided by the Agency that as of 3 December 2013 the total number of registrations for the Household Charge is 1, 304,934. Payments have been registered in

respect of 1,280,482 liable properties and waivers have been registered in respect of a further 24,452 liable properties. The number of estimated liable properties for the Household Charge is 1,620,814, and therefore the compliance rate stands in excess of 80.5%.

I am advised by the Agency that approximately € 9.3m has been collected by the local government sector in the form of Household Charge late payment penalties in respect of approximately 355,000 properties. Due to owners of multiple properties, some of which may be compliant and some of which may be non-compliant, it is not possible at this time to specify the number of owners who have paid Household Charge late payment penalties.

Under the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 outstanding Household Charge liabilities were, on 1 July 2013, increased to €200 and became a Local Property Tax liability collectable by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. Queries concerning the collection of Local Property tax liabilities which are former Household Charge arrears should be addressed, in the first instance, to the Revenue Commissioners.

Dormant Accounts Fund Management

108. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans in relation to dormant accounts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53161/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): Under the Dormant Accounts legislation, balances on dormant accounts with banks, building societies and An Post and the net encashment value of certain life assurance policies are paid into the Dormant Accounts Fund, which is managed by the National Treasury Management Agency. The primary purpose of the legislation is to re-unite the original account holders with their moneys, including all interest due. In addition, the legislation provides that disbursements from the fund may be made for charitable purposes or for purposes of community benefit.

The Disbursement Plan of 2009, put in place by the Dormant Accounts Board, will be replaced shortly by a new disbursement scheme in accordance with the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012. The 2012 Act also provides for the preparation of an action plan, to give effect to the disbursement scheme. Allocations for disbursement will continue to focus on programmes or projects to assist the personal and social development of persons who are economically disadvantaged, the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged and persons with a disability and will have regard to the policies and priorities of the Government in so far as they relate to the types of assistance being proposed, the amount of moneys available or likely to be available and ensuring that the moneys are expended in a cost effective manner.

In 2013, I allocated €6.385m for Dormant Accounts Measures, which includes €2.835m to be used to support labour force activation measures in local authorities. The corresponding provision for 2014 is €5.456m, which will allow for the continuation of funding to support the labour force activation measures and the implementation of a modest action plan. Further data in relation to Dormant Accounts Funding is available on my Department's website at www.environ.ie.

Private Residential Tenancies Board Remit

109. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Lo-

cal Government the reason for the requirement by the Private Residential Tenancies Board for landlords to re-register tenants at a cost of €90; the reason for the charge; his views on the possibility of amending the legislation to ensure landlords adhering to the law are not being punished by virtue of this recurring charge; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53238/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 sets out the fees to be charged by the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) for the registration of a tenancy and provides that the PRTB may adjust the fees charged, having regard to changes in the value of money. The registration fee for a tenancy is currently set at €90. Part 4 of the Act provides for security of tenure on the basis of four-year cycles whereby tenancies are deemed terminated at the end of each four year period and a new tenancy then comes into being, assuming the dwelling continues to be let to the same person. The first cycle of these tenancies is known as ‘Part 4 tenancy’ and each subsequent one is called a ‘further Part 4 tenancy’ in the Act.

Where a tenancy lasts in excess of 4 years, it becomes a ‘further Part 4 tenancy’ and must be re-registered on payment of the €90 registration fee. For the first six months of each tenancy the landlord, subject to conditions of notice, is free to terminate without giving a reason.

The Residential Tenancies (Amendment)(No. 2) Bill 2012 is currently before the Seanad and makes a number of amendments to the current fee structure. The Bill provides for the abolition of the fee for re-registering a tenancy after 4 years, as long as the re-registration is done within the specified timeframes. It is hoped that this amendment will encourage long term, stable tenancies in the rented sector.

Planning Issues

110. **Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to introduce legislation to require developers to ensure that information submitted in planning applications is factually accurate; if he intends to make it a criminal offence for developers to include misleading or false information in planning applications; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53264/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): Much of the information provided by a planning applicant on a planning application form and, where relevant, in response to a further information request, is checked by the planning authority in the course of its consideration of the application.

The giving of false information by a developer could lead to a permission granted being deemed invalid by the courts. I have no current plans to amend the Planning Act or Regulations in this regard.

Housing for People with Disabilities

111. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his attention has been drawn to delays in the development of a group home for women with physical and sensory disabilities at Drummond O’tra, Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, which is to be developed by Respond Housing Association; if he will ensure these delays are minimised; if his Department will release additional funding towards this project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53283/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): My Department’s Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) provides funding to approved housing bodies of up to 100% of the approved costs of accommodation for people with specific categories of housing need, including people with a disability. My Department’s involvement with the CAS relates primarily to the provision of funds for individual projects. The detailed administration of the scheme, the certification that projects comply with the terms and conditions of the scheme and the processing of applications for funding are the responsibility of the relevant local authority, in this case Monaghan County Council.

In April 2013, my Department approved funding of €900,000 under the CAS for the provision of a group home for people with physical and sensory disabilities at Convent Lands, Carrickmacross. On 2 December 2013, Monaghan County Council submitted a tender report for the project showing a substantial increase in construction cost compared to the initial cost plan prepared by the council and requesting approval for an all-in cost of €1.378 million. Considering that the cost has increased by over 50%, it will be necessary to carry out a value-for-money appraisal of this project before a decision on funding can be made.

Proposed Legislation

112. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to parliamentary Question No. 21 of 5 December 2013, the reason the condition was changed from the majority of those on the register of electors to owners; if his attention has been drawn to the difficulty this has caused in both providing proof and tracing landlords; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53284/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The amendment of section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 referred to in the Question, which requires a planning authority to respond to a request for the taking in charge of an estate received from a majority of the “owners” of the units in the estate, rather than the “owners or occupiers” as had previously been the case, was made to implement a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission Report of June 2008.

The Commission, in paragraph 1.31 of its report, stated that it “considers that the interests of tenant-occupiers of dwellings within an estate are often very different to those of unit owners. Occupiers who are not owners do not, as a rule, directly pay the service charge where a service charge is levied. They do not have a capital investment in the value of the estate. Indeed, some occupants of units on a given estate may intend to reside in an estate for a very short time only. As a result, the Commission questions the suitability of occupiers of property in a development, who are not unit owners, being eligible voters in the event of a plebiscite. The Commission accepts that under company law provisions it is open to unit owners to give a proxy vote to an occupant if they wish to do so. Ultimately, this should be left to the discretion of the unit owner.”

Environmental Impact Statements

113. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if a Natura impact statement and an addendum to the environmental impact statement in support of lease applications for the Dublin Array project have been submitted and considered by his Department. [53311/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): Additional information including an addendum to the En-

vironmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was received by my Department on 28 February 2013. All documentation in regard to the foreshore lease application can be viewed via my Department's website at www.environ.ie. To date the application has not been assessed by my Department. Any future environmental assessment by my Department of the proposed development will have regard to the information contained in the lease application including the EIS and NIS, the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan currently being prepared by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, the plan's associated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment as well as the best available advice from my Department's advisors and the Marine Licence Vetting Committee.

Unfinished Housing Developments

114. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the empty housing estate in County Sligo will be demolished in view of the need for social housing there; if there is a bond from the developers; and who will pay the cost of demolition. [53337/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The National Co-ordinating Committee, which I chair, was established as a response to the report of the advisory group on unfinished housing developments and has harnessed the expertise and goodwill of the construction and banking sectors, local authorities, residents representatives and NAMA. Local authorities are continuing to pursue developers and others to comply with their obligations under planning regulations. Predominantly developer/funder/receiver funded site resolution processes will remain the main vehicle to tackle unfinished developments. 553 developments have been brought to a resolution point in this way over the past 12 months alone. I expect that such processes will continue to make significant inroads into the remaining 992 inhabited unfinished developments.

Additionally, my Department has available a Special Resolution Fund of €10 million, provided in Budget 2014, to address the completion of infrastructure on developments which could not be resolved because of absences of, or inadequacies in, planning securities and other unforeseen cost and risk issues. The fund will be operated by the local authorities and will be carefully targeted mainly to address difficulties in public infrastructure that have arisen on certain developments included in my Department's National Housing Development Survey 2013. It is also necessary to explore resolution of those developments which appear to be commercially unviable due to location, build quality, commercial demand or other factors and where the most prudent course of action may be to seek the agreement of owners/funders to clear all or part of the site.

Accordingly, the National Coordinating Committee established a group to oversee the development of a strategy for these residual developments and to work with stakeholders in identifying and agreeing such sites for full or partial clearance, thereby improving the lives of existing residents and removing dangerous structures from public access. I understand that forty such developments have been initially identified and fall to be addressed by the relevant owners, receivers and funders. The names of the individual estates identified by the funders have not been identified to my Department for reasons of commercial sensitivity. The costs associated with this strategy are equally sensitive and I do not hold this information. Responsibility for the clearance of unviable estates remains the responsibility of the funders and I welcome their participation in this pragmatic approach which will further underscore a return to a properly functioning property market.

EU Directives

115. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53351/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): I am pleased to report that there are no directives awaiting transposition in areas for which my Department has responsibility and for which the deadline has passed. My Department continues to work hard to ensure that directives are transposed by their due date.

Departmental Legal Costs

116. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53653/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): My Department has not incurred any costs in relation to legal challenges in the courts taken by members of the Oireachtas over the past five years.

Liquor Licensing Laws

117. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his view on the suggestion that a condition of the granting of drink licences to pubs and restaurants would be the mandatory stocking of non-alcoholic beer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53178/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The position is that statutory provisions governing the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol products in licensed premises, including public houses and restaurants, is set out in the Licensing Acts 1833 to 2011. While the sale and supply of alcohol products in such premises is subject to specific conditions set out in the Licensing Acts, these conditions do not currently specify that such sale or supply is also subject to the availability of non-alcoholic beverages. Many licensed premises already provide a broad range of non-alcoholic alternative beverages in response to consumer demand and I would strongly encourage all licensed premises to do so. I would, however, be reluctant to impose a statutory obligation concerning the availability of specified products on licensed premises since there may be little local demand for any such product and such a provision would place an additional enforcement burden on the Gardaí.

Departmental Records

118. **Deputy Lucinda Creighton** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current location of a file (details supplied) apparently recalled by the Department on 6 October 1995; the reason the file was recalled; and the provision, under section 8(4) of the National Archives Act 1986, which provided the basis for closing the Department's prisoner files from public inspection. [53181/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am having enquiries made and will revert to the Deputy in due course.

Irish Prison Service

119. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if and when the Irish Prison Service will publish an implementation plan for the second year of its strategic plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53208/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I have been informed by the Director General of the Irish Prison Service that the Implementation Plan for Year Two of the Irish Prison Service Three Year Strategic Plan 2012 to 2015 is being finalised as part of the business planning process for 2014 and will be published on the Service’s website (www.irish-prisons.ie) shortly.

Garda Retirements

120. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the reason all the data requested with regard to a loss of earnings application in respect of a person (details supplied) have not been supplied to the financial shared services centre; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53209/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): My Department’s Financial Shared Services (FSS) centre received certain information from the Garda authorities that has facilitated the calculation of notional earnings for the period since the retirement of the person (details supplied) in August 2004 and these figures were sent to the person’s solicitor on 28 August 2013. The solicitor’s request for the calculation of notional earnings for periods of absence from work prior to the person’s retirement cannot be progressed by my Department until the FSS receives further information from the Garda authorities. I understand that the Garda authorities are currently examining the relevant records in order to progress this matter.

Inspector of Prisons Reports

121. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the actions the Department will take to address the findings and recommendations contained in the recent interim report of the Inspector of Prisons on the Dóchas Centre; and in particular the actions that will be taken to address overcrowding in the prison. [53221/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I wish to advise the Deputy that on receipt of the interim report from the Inspector of Prisons I met with the Director General of the Irish Prison Service, Michael Donnellan, and discussed the content of the Report with him. The Director General assured me that the concerns raised by the Inspector will be dealt with. In particular, concerns raised in terms of the general maintenance of the Dóchas Centre and housekeeping matters have been addressed. In addition, a major refurbishment programme has been undertaken by the Irish Prison Service to upgrade kitchens and the reception area.

In April 2012, I published the Irish Prison Service 3 year Strategic Plan. This strategy sets out the overall high level objectives and key strategic actions the Irish Prison Service intends to take during the period 2012 to 2015. One of the commitments given in the Strategy is that the Irish Prison Service will work in partnership with the Probation Service and other stakehold-

ers in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in order to develop a strategy for dealing with women offenders. It is intended to align the capacity of our prisons with the guidelines laid down by the Inspector of Prisons by 2014, in so far as this is compatible with public safety and the integrity of the criminal justice system.

In this regard, I can advise the Deputy that the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service published a joint Strategic Plan for 2013-2015. Both agencies are working together to develop a strategy which ensures a more targeted response to women offenders including:

- identifying and diverting women at risk of a custodial sentence through greater use of community sanctions, supports and inter-agency co-operation;
- strengthening early intervention measures in the community through adopting a co-ordinated multi-agency approach;
- improving outcomes for women currently in custody;
- exploring the potentials of women centric alternatives to custody;
- development of a suitable step down facility for women offenders, a pathway such as this from the Dóchas Centre to the community would have a positive effect on reducing the numbers in the Dochas Centre;
- enhanced co-operation with the community and voluntary sector.

In addition in September 2012, I announced the establishment of a Working Group to conduct a Strategic Review of Penal Policy. In line with a recommendation of the Thornton Hall Review Group which reported in 2012, the Working Group has been asked to carry out an all encompassing strategic review of penal policy incorporating an examination and analysis of all aspects of penal policy including the issue of female prisoners. This Review is ongoing and the Working Group is expected to report early next year.

Garda Deployment

122. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will provide assurances to local residents that all necessary Garda resources are being used following the reported increases in burglaries in a number of areas of north Dublin. [53228/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am informed by the Garda authorities that the areas referred to are in the Coolock and Raheny Garda Districts.

In that regard I am further informed that Garda data shows a decrease in burglaries in the Coolock and Raheny area, in line with the national trend. As the Deputy may be aware the latest crime statistics show that the rate of burglary has decreased by 8.9% nationally for twelve months ending 30 June 2013 and this underlines the impact being made by Gardaí under Operation Fiacla. As part of the measures which are co-ordinated under Operation Fiacla, Operation Acer is in force throughout the Dublin Metropolitan Region, including the Coolock and Raheny Districts. It is an intelligence driven operation and includes analysis led checkpoints and patrols to target specific areas and case manage targeted offenders. These arrangements are kept under review to ensure adjustments are made to maintain the effective focus of the operation.

Operation Acer operates alongside ongoing community policing measures, including problem solving with the community and providing crime prevention advice and assistance to victims of burglary. In this regard I am advised that a recent crime prevention leaflet drop in the

area has been well received in the community. The area is regularly patrolled by Community Gardaí including foot and bicycle patrols and there is also full engagement with local Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups in the area.

Local Garda Management closely monitors the allocation of all resources in the context of crime trends, policing needs and other operational strategies in the area to ensure optimum use is made of Garda resources, and the best possible Garda service is provided to the public.

Irish Language Issues

123. **Deputy Helen McEntee** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the steps being taken by his Department to progress the recognition of Irish Sign Language as an official language; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53258/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Programme for Government includes a commitment to “examine different mechanisms to promote the recognition of Irish Sign Language”. This process has already commenced. The National Disability Authority facilitated consultations with the Deaf Community in Ireland in 2012 at my request in relation to actions that could make improvements in the lives of deaf people and submissions received from them were considered for inclusion where possible and appropriate in the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan which was published in July 2013.

As part of the follow-up to that initiative, I chaired the first special themed meeting of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group on the issue of Irish Sign Language on November 28. This meeting brought together representatives of relevant Departments, the National Disability Authority, the Deaf community and other relevant stakeholders with a view to further progressing the implementation of the NDSIP in this regard.

The meeting reviewed the current situation across Government Departments and their Agencies with regard to promoting recognition of Irish Sign Language including in service provision and provided the Deaf Community with the opportunity of presenting their experience of dealing with the Public Sector. It also provided a useful opportunity to examine mechanisms which could promote the further use and recognition of Irish Sign Language and understand practical implications for service users. The intention is that outcome of this ongoing process will be reflected in the NDSIP through the incorporation of new actions and related performance indicators and timelines where necessary. Progress on all relevant actions will then be monitored as part of the Implementation Plan monitoring process.

The focus therefore remains on the identification of mechanisms for the further promotion and recognition of ISL with a view to promoting and supporting its use, thereby improving service delivery on the ground, rather than on its designation as an official language. The existing legislation in Ireland gives a level of recognition and practical measures equal to, or above that, in countries which have formally recognised sign language.

Youth Services Funding

124. **Deputy Helen McEntee** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the funding that will be made available to an organisation (details supplied) in view of the fact that it saves his Department thousands of euro every year through the services it provides and by keeping people out of jail or juvenile facilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53259/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The problem of drug misuse remains one of the most complex social problems that we face. Our national response to the problem is set out in the National Drugs Strategy for the period 2009-2016. The Strategy adopts a comprehensive and pillar based approach to the issue, involving the implementation of a wide range of measures across the five pillars of drug supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research. The Strategy is being led out under the stewardship of my colleague, the Minister of State at the Department of Health, Deputy Alex White. Under the National Drugs Strategy, the HSE is the lead organisation, under the treatment pillar, with responsibility for expanding the availability of, and access to residential detox facilities and treatment services for under-18s.

In the meantime, the Community Programmes Unit of Irish Youth Justice Service, working in partnership with the Young Persons Division of the Probation Service has supported the organisation in question over the past few years. This was on top of the funding the organisation received from the HSE. A request for funding and a business plan has been submitted to the Probation Service for 2014 by the organisation. It will be considered by Young Persons Probation and the Irish Youth Justice Service in the context of youth justice priorities and available resources. The Irish Youth Justice Service expects to be in a position to notify the funding allocations for 2014 to community based organisations early in January.

Legislative Measures

125. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when he intends to implement legislation to protect good samaritans who engage in good deeds in good faith but may find themselves being sued for their endeavours; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53268/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): Section 4 of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 inserted a new Part IVA into the Civil Liability Act 1961 which protects persons, described as ‘good samaritans’, from liability who act in good faith to give assistance, advice or care during an accident or emergency without expectation of payment or reward and in a way that does not constitute gross negligence. The Act also protects against liability persons involved in voluntary work for charitable or other purposes for the benefit of society, including sports, recreation and rescue. These provisions were commenced in 2011.

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings

126. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he has raised with the British Prime Minister the allegations raised in the Anne Cadwallader book, Lethal Allies, regarding new evidence it contains on the extent of collusion in the Dublin Monaghan Bombs in which 33 people were killed and the 1975 bombing of Kay’s Tavern in Dundalk in which two men (details supplied) were killed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [47677/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): At the outset I would say that none of us can forget the many acts of terrorist violence carried out on this island related to the troubles or, indeed, the pain that is still being felt as a result. The survivors and the relatives of those killed and injured have borne the grief of these tragic events and the memory of their loved ones lives on with them.

The atrocities perpetrated in Dublin, Monaghan, Dundalk and elsewhere in the 1970s stand out in the memory as particularly bloody episodes in this island’s history. These incidents are

among those reflected on in the book to which the Deputy refers. The Garda authorities are, of course, aware of the claims in the book. The Deputy will be aware that the author relies to some extent on material arising from the PSNI's historical enquiries team. The Garda authorities maintain a close working relationship with the PSNI and the historical enquiries team.

The late Judge Henry Barron and Mr. Patrick McEntee SC carried out detailed and painstaking inquiries into those awful events in Dublin and Monaghan in May 1974 and, indeed, other tragic atrocities that took place between 1972 and 1976 in which so many innocent people lost their lives. The Garda authorities co-operated fully with the Barron and McEntee inquiries. Since this Government took office, the Taoiseach has raised the issue with the British Prime Minister and the Tánaiste has also raised the matter with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Deputy will wish to note also that the Taoiseach met with Justice for the Forgotten and a group of victims and relatives in July of this year and assured them of the Government's continued support for their cause.

The Deputy will also be aware that this House and Seanad Éireann have previously and unanimously urged the British Government to allow access to documents relevant to these events. I know that many Deputies in this House have raised this issue directly with our counterparts at Westminster and that they will continue to do so.

US Surveillance Issues

127. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the response he has received from the Garda Síochána regarding whether the telephone of the Taoiseach was bugged by the United States National Security Agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [47683/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The House will appreciate that it is not the practice to comment on matters of national or personal security. But I can say that there is no evidence available to indicate that the phone of the Taoiseach was subject to the types of activities referred to by the Deputy.

The Irish Government's concerns in relation to surveillance issues have been conveyed bilaterally in contacts with the US Embassy in Dublin and it has been made clear to the US Embassy that any such surveillance here would be unacceptable.

In a response to a previous Parliamentary Question on this matter my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade indicated that following allegations of US surveillance of European Union institutions earlier this year, the EU has engaged regularly with the US authorities in both Washington and Brussels to seek clarification on the issues raised. An EU-US High Level Expert Group on data protection has been established, where this and related matters are discussed. The EU is represented on this working group by the European Commission, the Presidency of the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the work of the group is ongoing. A number of meetings have already taken place in Brussels and in Washington. Following this work, the Commission and the Presidency are expected to issue a public, factual report.

Visa Applications

128. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will arrange to have an application for a visa reviewed as a matter of urgency in respect of a person (details

supplied) in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53301/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The visa application referred to by the Deputy was made by a person who wished to join their spouse in Ireland on a permanent basis. It was received in the Visa Office, Dublin on 27 June, 2013. Following full consideration, the Visa Officer decided to refuse the grant of the visa on 18 October, 2013. The decision to refuse was appealed on 24 October, 2013 and was upheld by an Appeals Officer on 14 November, 2013 and a letter providing the reasons for this was issued to the applicant.

The Visa Appeals Officer did not consider that the person concerned provided sufficient evidence of their relationship history with their spouse in Ireland. Such evidence is key to establishing to the satisfaction of the Appeals Officer the *bona fides* of the relationship. Furthermore, the Visa Appeals Officer deemed the evidence provided to demonstrate adequate levels of available finances to be insufficient. This increases the likelihood that the granting of a visa in this case could result in a cost to State funds or resources.

It is open to the person concerned to make a new application should she so wish. Where doing so, the applicant should be in a position to address the reasons for the refusal. Guidelines regarding the visa application procedure are available on the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service - www.inis.gov.ie.

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.

Magdalen Laundries Issues

129. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the procedure in place for a Magdalen laundry restorative justice applicant who does not respond within the two months of being offered a lump sum payment as calculated by length of stay by the restorative justice implementation unit; if the applicant disagrees with the length of stay as calculated by the restorative justice implementation unit due to inadequate record keeping by a particular Magdalen laundry, the options that are available to that applicant if this correction process takes longer than two months in the case of the applicant needing more than two months to address the inaccuracy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53308/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): If an applicant receives a provisional letter of offer from my Department she should respond to the Restorative Justice Implementation Team within 2 months advising if she agrees or disagrees with the provisional assessment made by my officials on whether she falls within the scope of the Scheme and her duration of stay in a relevant institution. If she disagrees with the provisional assessment she should state her reasons and the case will then be reviewed.

Every case will be dealt with on its own merit. If an applicant has any queries in relation to the letters issued or the Scheme in general she should contact the Restorative Justice Implementation Team who will address any concerns she may have in a helpful and sensitive manner.

If an applicant does not respond at all during the period in question and makes no contact with the Restorative Justice Implementation Team, the presumption will be that she has decided not to accept the offer and not to participate in the *ex gratia* scheme.

Coroners Service

130. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will indicate the number of coroners approved by his Department who practise in County Mayo; the number of inquests held and completed by each coroner for each of the past five years; the total remuneration paid to each of these for each of the past five years; and if he will compare the number of inquests in County Mayo with the corresponding inquests in each county for each of the past five years. [53340/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): County Mayo is divided into three coronial districts, Mayo East, Mayo North and Mayo South, and there is one coroner serving each of these districts. Details of the number of inquests held in Mayo for the past five years are set out in the following table, in addition to comparable figures for Dublin and Cork City. Further data is available on the website of the Coroner Service (www.coroners.ie).

YEAR	DUBLIN	CORK CITY	MAYO
2008	792	239	71
2009	960	235	86
2010	769	221	104
2011	950	215	92
2012	606	223	88

The remuneration paid by Mayo County Council to the coroners concerned over the past five years is outlined in the following table. These amounts incorporate annual retainers paid to cover the costs of staffing, accommodation and general office expenses - approximately €21,000 in the case of Mayo South and approximately €12,000 in the case of the other two districts.

Year	Mayo East	Mayo North	Mayo South
2008	€19,437.97	€28,976.30	€96,279.62
2009	€18,223.90	€25,494.55	€96,670.10
2010	€22,984.06	€23,215.25	€110,167.40
2011	€21,889.49	€30,234.03	€94,581.54
2012	€22,665.08	€32,440.32	€97,877.36

EU Directives

131. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53356/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): My Department is responsible for one EU Directive that is overdue for transposition. This is Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings, for which the transposition due date was 27 October 2013. Regulations to give formal effect to the Directive are being finalised and I expect to be in a position to bring these into force shortly.

Defence Forces Recruitment

132. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Defence if he intends to hold a new recruitment drive for the Defence Forces in 2014. [53231/13]

141. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence when recruitment to the Defence Forces will reopen; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53324/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 132 and 141 together.

I am advised by the Military Authorities that the strength of the Permanent Defence Force, at 31 October 2013, the latest date for which details are available, was 9,222 comprising 7,422 Army, 778 Air Corps and 1,022 Naval Service personnel.

General Service recruitment recommenced in September 2013, from the existing competition panels from which, as of 2 December, there has been an intake of 360 recruits. In addition, 9 Engine Room Artificers for the Naval Service have recently been recruited while the induction of up to 8 Apprentices for the Air Corps is in the process of being completed. As the Permanent Defence Force is currently below the agreed stabilised strength of 9,500, it is my intention that targeted recruitment will continue within the resource envelope allocated to Defence. It is planned to run a new General Service recruitment competition in the first half of 2014. Details will be made available on the Defence Forces website www.military.ie when the competition commences.

With the support of the Chief of Staff and within the resources available, I intend to retain the capacity of the Defence Forces to operate effectively across all roles and to undertake the tasks laid down by Government both at home and overseas.

Defence Forces Properties

133. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which the various military establishments decommissioned in recent years throughout the country have been disposed of to date; the extent of the receipts on foot of such disposal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53316/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): My Department has been engaged on an ongoing programme of barrack consolidation since 1998. This programme has brought to fourteen the number of barracks closed during that time. To-date nine of these barracks - Clancy (Dublin), Castleblaney, Ballincollig, Fermoy, Naas, Monaghan, Cavan, Castlebar and a large portion of Longford - have been sold. In relation to the remaining barracks agreement has been reached for the sale of Lifford and Rockhill to Donegal County Council. Discussions are taking place in relation to the possible sale of Clonmel Barracks to South Tipperary County Council and the remaining part of Longford has been reserved by the OPW for the local Garda Síochána.

Magee Barracks in Kildare and Columb Barracks in Mullingar remain the property of the Department of Defence. Columb Barracks is currently used by an Garda Síochána and the Customs Service for training purposes and a large part of the barracks has been leased to Westmeath GAA Board for use as a potential centre of excellence.

In addition to the main barracks a number of other smaller properties have also been identified as surplus to military requirements in recent years. Some of these have already been disposed of whilst others are in the process of being prepared for disposal. These mainly consist of married quarters and Reserve Defence Force premises.

The total realised to-date in terms of sales of surplus property is €104m approx. An additional €1m approx. will be realised in early 2014 when the contracts for the sale by auction last week of ten former Reserve Defence Force properties are closed.

Defence Forces Equipment

134. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which Army road and off-road vehicles continue to be upgraded in order to ensure reliability in the event of emergency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53317/13]

135. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which Air Corps aircraft and equipment are regularly replaced and-or upgraded in line with requirements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53318/13]

136. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which all Naval Service vessels continue to be improved, upgraded or replaced as necessary to ensure reliability in the event of an emergency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53319/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 134 to 136, inclusive, together.

In the current economic situation, the acquisition of equipment for the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service takes place on a strictly prioritised basis to ensure that the Defence Forces can carry out their roles at home and overseas.

In recent years, a number of vehicle purchases took place which included minibuses, standard patrol vehicles and mid-coaches for troop transportation. The main acquisitions for 2013 were four tractor units, four 4x4 ambulances, four transit crew cabs, one 52 seater coach, five Ford Ranger 4 x 4 vehicles, twenty transit stores vans and a number of fork-lifts and recovery trailers. In addition, funding is provided on a continuous basis for the required maintenance of vehicles in the military transport fleet.

With regard to the Naval Service, a contract for the provision of two new ships was placed with Babcock Marine, UK in October, 2010. The first ship to be named LE Samuel Beckett is scheduled for delivery in March 2014; the second will be delivered in early 2015. This vessel replacement strategy combined with a continuous process of refurbishment and repair will ensure that the operational capability of the Naval Service is maintained at a satisfactory level. The acquisition of these new vessels with the very latest equipment suites will ensure that the Naval Service will be fully equipped to carry out its day to day roles in enforcing the State's sovereign rights over our waters and our fisheries and meeting Ireland's obligations in the area of maritime safety and security and fisheries protection.

The equipment and aircraft available to the Air Corps are of a high standard and are maintained by the Air Corps in accordance with best practice. There is no provision for the acquisition of new aircraft for the Air Corps in 2013. However, a significant level of investment in new equipment for the Air Corps took place in recent years. The investment programme included the delivery of Pilatus training aircraft, the acquisition of two light utility EC 135 and six utility AW 139 helicopters and a mid life upgrade on the two CASA maritime patrol aircraft. Expenditure in the Air Corps for 2013 relates to the maintenance and Power by the Hour contracts set up to keep the fleet operational and to maintenance on the CASA aircraft.

Defence Forces Strength

137. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the total strength of the Defence Forces including reserves, male and female; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53320/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The strength of the Permanent Defence Force at the end of October 2013, the latest date for which figures are available stood at 9,222, of which 558, or 6.06%, are women. With regard to the Army Reserve, the total strength at 30 November 2012, the latest date for which figures are available was 4,773. This figure comprises 3,782 men and 991 women. I am advised that following completion of the recent re-organisation of the Reserve Defence Force a more up to date strength figure for the Army Reserve is not available at the moment. I will provide this information directly to the Deputy once it comes to hand.

Defence Forces Deployment

138. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the number of Irish troops currently deployed overseas; the extent to which further deployments are pending; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53321/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): As of 1 December 2013, Ireland is contributing approximately 416 Defence Forces personnel to 14 different missions throughout the world. Full details of all personnel currently serving overseas are listed in the tabular statement attached. The main overseas missions in which Defence Forces personnel are currently deployed are the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) with 210 personnel, including the Deputy Force Commander. Members of the 42nd Infantry Group who are serving as part of the joint Finnish/Irish Battalion, are tasked primarily with patrolling, reconnaissance and occupying static posts while operating in close co-ordination and cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces in Sector West of UNIFIL's area of operations.

Other missions in which Defence Forces personnel are currently deployed are the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) with 119 Defence Forces personnel, including four (4) personnel at the Mission Headquarters, the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia with eight (8) personnel, including the Mission Commander; the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) with eight (8) personnel; the EUFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina with seven (7) personnel who are based at mission headquarters in Sarajevo; the NATO-led international security presence (KFOR) in Kosovo with twelve (12) personnel based in the mission Headquarters; and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan with seven (7) personnel who are based in the mission Headquarters in Kabul and four (4) personnel deployed for service with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in South Sudan. Ireland also contributes 25 observers and staff to various United Nations and OSCE missions and 16 other personnel to staff appointments at UN, EU and OSCE headquarters.

Apart from the recent deployment to UNDOF, no other deployments are envisaged at this time. The current contribution of some 416 personnel to overseas missions reflects the Government's continued commitment to our responsibilities in the area of international peace and security.

MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT DEFENCE FORCE SERVING OVERSEAS AS OF
1 DECEMBER 2013

1.	UN MISSIONS	-
-	UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) HQ	16
-	UNIFIL 43rd Infantry Group	186
-	UNIFIL Sector West HQ	8
-	UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) Israel & Syria	13
-	MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara)	3
-	MONUSCO (United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Demo- cratic Republic of the Congo)	4
-	UNOCI (United Nations Mission in Ivory Coast)	2
-	UNDOF (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force) Go- lan Heights Syria	119
-	UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service) South Sudan	4
-	TOTAL	355
-	EUFOR (EU led Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina)	7
-	EUTM Somalia (EU led Training Mission)	8
-	EUTM Mali (EU led Training Mission)	8
-	KFOR (International Security Presence in Kosovo) HQ	12
-	ISAF (International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan)	7
-	TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL SERVING WITH UN MISSIONS	397
2.	ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)	-
-	OSCE Mission to Bosnia & Herzegovina	2
-	OSCE Mission in Belgrade – Serbia	1
-	Staff Officer, High Level Planning Group Vienna	1
-	TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL SERVING OSCE	4
3.	EU MILITARY STAFF	-
-	Brussels	5
4.	MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES/ADVISERS/STAFF	-
-	Military Adviser, Permanent Mission to UN, New York	1
-	Military Adviser Irish delegation to OSCE, Vienna	1
-	Military Representative to EU (Brussels)	3
-	Liaison Office of Ireland, NATO/PfP (Brussels)	2
-	EU OHQ Operation Althea, Mons, Belgium	1
-	Irish Liaison Officer to SHAPE & Military Co-Op Division, Mons, Belgium	1
-	European Defence Agency (EDA) Brussels	1
-	TOTAL NUMBER OF DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL SERVING OVERSEAS	416

Defence Forces Representative Organisations

139. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which he has ongoing dialogue with the various representative bodies, such as PDFORRA; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53322/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Question is a repeat in view of Question 127 of 6 November 2013 (Reference number 47390/13) and the written reply to that question. The position is unchanged with the exception of one minor update where I can advise that I

regret that I was unable to attend the RACO Biennial Delegate Conference last week, despite my been originally scheduled to do so.

Departmental Expenditure

140. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence if he expects expenditure in his Department in the coming year to remain within budgetary guidelines; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53323/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): It is expected that expenditure in 2014 for the Defence Vote Group will remain within budgetary guidelines. My Department monitors expenditure trends closely, on an ongoing basis, to ensure that budgetary targets are achieved.

Question No. 141 answered with Question No. 132.

Defence Forces Strength

142. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Defence the extent to which he expects retirement to affect the numbers in the Defence Forces in the current year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53325/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am advised by the military authorities that between 1 January 2013 and 31 October 2013, the latest date for which figures are available, 362 personnel left the Permanent Defence Force. Taking these departures into account, the strength of the Permanent Defence Force at 31 October 2013 stood at 9,222. As the Deputy will be aware the Government has agreed a stabilised strength of 9,500 for the Permanent Defence Force. in the context of current strength numbers being below the agreed stabilised strength.

General Service recruitment recommenced in September 2013 from the existing competition panels. As of 2 December, there has been an intake of 360 recruits from these panels. In addition, 9 Engine Room Artificers for the Naval Service have recently been recruited while the induction of up to 8 Apprentices for the Air Corps is in the process of being completed. It is my intention that targeted recruitment will continue within the resource envelope allocated to Defence and in this regard it is planned to run a new General Service recruitment competition in the first half of 2014. With the support of the Chief of Staff and within the resources available, it is intended to retain the capacity of the Defence Forces to operate effectively across all roles and to undertake the tasks laid down by Government both at home and overseas.

EU Directives

143. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Defence the number of EU directives relating to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53349/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am advised that there are no EU directives related to my Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date been passed.

Departmental Legal Costs

144. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Defence the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53888/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Department of Defence has not incurred any costs as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts in the past five years.

Departmental Properties

145. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a decision will be made in respect of a request from his Department regarding the site for a tourism kiosk (details supplied) in County Dublin. [53222/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department has agreed in principle with Fingal County Council to their request for a site to locate a tourist information kiosk within the confines of the Fishery Harbour Centre in Howth. Discussions with the Council in relation to this project are ongoing. These discussions centre on ensuring that all the necessary legal and administrative aspects in relation to the project are finalised and in place. I expect that the site for the kiosk will be made available to Fingal County Council shortly subject to the necessary legal procedures being met.

Agriculture Schemes Payments

146. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 172 of 9 October 2013, when payments will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53157/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Payments under the Single Payment Scheme, Disadvantaged Areas and AEOS Scheme issued directly to the bank account of the person named on 4 December 2013. These payments were made subject to an agreement in place following the application of a Garnishee Order on the account of the person named.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme Payments

147. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a 2013 REP scheme 4 payment will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53159/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named commenced REPS 4 in February 2009 and received payments for the first four years of their contract. REPS 4 is a measure under the current 2007-13 Rural Development Programme and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all application to be completed before any payments can issue. Following the Land Parcel Identification Review (LPIS) an area discrepancy was identified which has resulted in the necessity for further clarification. This issue is currently being investigated with the intention of an early resolution

and payment in respect of 2013.

Single Payment Scheme Payments

148. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason a person (details supplied) in County Mayo had a reduction made on their 2013 single farm payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53214/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The reduction in question is due to the application of Financial Discipline. This is a reduction of 2.453658% and is applied in accordance with the relevant EU Regulations. It was necessitated by the need to ensure that the overall EU budget is not exceeded. The reduction applies on all payments under the Single Payment Scheme in excess of €2,000.

Scéim na hÍocaíochta Aonair

149. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den Aire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara cén uair a íocfar an dara cuid den Íocaíocht Aonair Feirme do 2013 le feirmeoir i gContae na Gaillimhe (sonraí tugtha), cén fáth a bhfuil moill leis an íocaíocht seo; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [53233/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Ó tharla iar-ratas an duine ainmnithe faoi Scéim na hAoníocaíochta 2013 a bheith tugtha chun críche le déanaí, eiseofar íocaíocht chomhardaithe faoin scéim sin sna laethanta amach romhainn chuig cuntas bainc ainmnithe an té sin.

Fish Landings

150. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of landings by non-Irish fishing vessels into the ports of Cobh, Castletownbere, Dingle, Renard, Fenit, Galway, and Killybegs; the tonnage and values of such landings for the year to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53237/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is the competent authority for the collection of fisheries landing data. I have passed the request to the SFPA who will respond directly to the Deputy.

Fishery Harbour Centres

151. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if funding will be provided for the dredging of Dunmore East Harbour, County Waterford; the position regarding this project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53289/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Capital Development Programme which my Department administers on an annual basis provides funding for capital works at the six Fishery Harbour Centres including Dunmore East.

Projects, including the dredging at Dunmore East Fishery Harbour Centre, will be consid-

ered for inclusion under the 2014 programme on the basis of available exchequer funding and other competing priorities.

Coillte Teoranta Reports

152. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will respond to the Woodland League in calling for the report of the review of Coillte, initiated by the last Government in 2010, to be made public; if he will suspend the passing of the new Forestry Bill until that document is made public; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53331/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): As the Deputy has indicated, a review of Coillte was undertaken on foot of a commitment in the previous Government’s Renewed Programme for Government. While significant work was undertaken in 2010 by an interdepartmental group dealing exclusively with the role, functions and operations of Coillte, the deliberations were superseded by the Government Decisions in 2012 in relation to the sale of state assets which encompasses Coillte and it is not my intention to publish the outcome of that, review.

I wish to advise that the purpose of the Forestry Bill is to reform and update the legislative framework relating to forestry in order to support the development of a modern forestry sector - it is not directly related to Coillte. The Second Stage debate on the Forestry Bill, 2013 was completed in Dáil Éireann on 27 November 2013 and the Bill was referred to the Select Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Single Payment Scheme Payments

153. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when area aid and single farm payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53335/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application under the 2013 Single Farm Scheme was received from the person named on 26 June 2013, which was outside the application period, thus incurring a 100% late penalty. The legal representative of the person named has written to my Department seeking a review of this penalty. An official from my Department will be in direct contact with the person named regarding this review

Single Payment Scheme Payments

154. **Deputy Patrick O’Donovan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the final deduction on a single farm payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53343/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named submitted an application for Single Farm Payment on 10 May 2013. Payment issued to the nominated account of the person named on 2 December 2013.

The payment was reduced by 1.13% due to an overclaim on one of the parcels submitted by the person named. To date, no appeal has been received from the person named.

EU Directives

155. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53345/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department seeks at all times to ensure that it is fully compliant with the implementation of European Union Directives and in this regard I can confirm that there are no directives overdue for transposition.

Departmental Legal Costs

156. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53647/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department has not incurred any cost of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts for each of the past five years.

Youth Cafés Provision

157. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide an update on an application for a youth café by an organisation (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53162/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Youth Affairs Unit of my Department supports the delivery of a range of youth work programmes and services for all young people, including those from disadvantaged communities, by the voluntary youth sector.

Total funding of €1.75m has been provided to my Department for a new capital funding programme for 2013 to support projects in the youth services, including new Youth Cafés. Pobal is assisting my Department with the application and evaluation process for the Youth Cafés scheme.

Some 95 applications for support under the scheme have been received. The evaluation process has been completed and details of the funding allocations to individual projects for the support of new youth cafés will be announced shortly.

Childcare Education and Training Scheme Expenditure

158. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the reason the process adopted that resulted in Early Childhood Ireland and Border Counties Childcare Network being awarded €900,000 to train 630 people working in the child care sector; if the process adopted an open tendering process and, if not, the reason for same; if the payment structure was agreed-outcome based, and, if not, the payment structure agreed and the timeframe for payment; the way the figure of €900,000 was arrived at; and if she will make a statement on the

matter. [53173/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As part of my Pre-School Quality Agenda, I will be introducing new qualification requirements for child-care workers. All staff caring for children in a pre-school service will be subject to a minimum qualification requirement of FETAC Level 5, while pre-school leaders delivering the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme will require a Level 6 qualification. These requirements will come into effect from September 2014 for new services, and from September 2015 for existing services.

In light of these timeframes, my Department has sought to work with the child-care sector to accelerate the process for training and upskilling its staff and improving the quality of care delivered to children. It is considered that, to achieve the required qualifications in the limited timescale available, staff in the child-care sector, who are on modest pay, should not have to pay the full cost of undergoing accredited training from their own resources.

For 2014 a learner fund totalling €1.5 million will be made available through the CCCs so that existing staff can choose a suitable training provider to upskill to Level 5 or 6 as applicable.

Early Childhood Ireland (ECI), which is the largest of the voluntary child-care organisations funded by my Department, and the Border Counties Childcare Network (BCCN), which provides quality supports including training in the Border counties area, have been asked as part of their 2013 work plan to offer additional training to the existing child-care workforce in relevant training modules at FETAC Levels 5 and 6. Additional grant funding will be made available to ECI and the BCCN in 2013 to provide for this.

Both ECI and BCCN submitted proposals to my Department outlining their plans to provide the increased level of training support to the child-care sector in line with their roles as voluntary child-care organisations.

242 child-care workers are currently participating in two FETAC Level 5 and ten FETAC Level 6 training modules provided by ECI. A further 278 child-care workers will commence training across fifteen courses (four Level 5 and eleven Level 6), in January 2014, with another 94 commencing training across five courses (one level 5 and four level 6) in February 2014. Some of the training courses are being delivered online, with the remainder being delivered face-to-face.

BCCN has identified approximately 60 child-care practitioners who will avail of their training programme with some of these commencing training as early as next week. The training modules for remaining participants will commence in January 2014.

Children in Care

159. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care who have had more than three care placements in a year for the years 2011, 2012 and to date in 2013. [53223/13]

160. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care under 13 years of age who are currently placed in residential units. [53224/13]

161. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care who have an allocated social worker, broken down on the basis of

the care status of the child, that is, if the child is placed in foster care, residential care or special care. [53225/13]

162. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children currently in the care of the State who have a formal care plan in place. [53226/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I propose to take Questions Nos. 159 to 162, inclusive, together.

The HSE compiles monthly performance reports which include statistics in relation to children in care. These reports are published on the HSE website. The latest figures published show that in September 2013:

- there were 38 (10.6% of children in residential care) children aged 12 or under placed in residential care;

- the total number of children in care who have an allocated social worker is 5,943 (91.9%), of whom 5,467 are in foster care (general/relative), 315 are in residential care, 23 are in special care, 15 are in high support care and 123 are in other care placements;

- the number of children in care who have a written care plan is 5,679.

There were 159 and 172 children who had more than 3 care placements in 2011 and 2012 respectively. In 2010, placements for children in Ireland were substantially more stable than for children in care in England and Wales, as evidenced by comparisons made by the HSE in its Review of Adequacy Report 2011. In 2010, 2.9% of children in care had 3 or more placements, compared to 10.7% and 10.3% of children in care in England and Wales respectively during the same period. As this is an annual metric only reported at year end, the figure for 2013 will not be available till March/April 2014.

Early Years Strategy Publication

163. **Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs when a draft of the national early years strategy will be ready; if she plans to carry out a public consultation on the strategy; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53261/13]

164. **Deputy Ciara Conway** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the key recommendations in the Right from the Start early years strategy; the responsibilities of the new child and family agency vis-à-vis its implementation; if she will provide a roadmap for its implementation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53290/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I propose to take Questions Nos. 163 and 164 together.

The Children and Young People's Policy Framework is currently being developed by my Department. The Framework will set out the overall principles, vision and outcomes for children and young people and will guide actions across Government over the period 2014 to 2018. I expect to circulate the Framework to other Ministers in December. Following approval by Government the Framework will be published early in the New Year for discussion at a Government meeting in January. The Early Years Strategy is one of a number of more detailed strategies under the Children and Young People's Policy Framework, and it also currently being developed by my Department.

Following my announcement that I would lead the preparation of Ireland's first Early Years Strategy, I appointed an Expert Advisory Group, chaired by Dr. Eilis Hennessy of UCD to advise my Department and myself on recommendations for inclusion in the Strategy. The work of this group has now concluded and I have received their comprehensive report, entitled *'Right from the Start'*. The report sets out a wide range of recommendations for consideration, covering issues that affect Ireland's youngest children and their families, including early childhood health, support for parents and ensuring quality in early years provision.

The recommendations in the report are being considered within my Department. Last week I held a consultation event at which key stakeholders from a wide range of relevant areas examined the recommendations and considered whether other issues needed to be considered for inclusion in the Early Years Strategy. The report and these deliberations will contribute substantially to the final draft of the new Strategy.

As soon as the Children and Young People's Policy Framework is approved by Government I intend to finalise the Early Years Strategy and submit it to Government for publication early in 2014. The final Strategy, which will encompass a wide range of issues relating to the early years of children's lives, will identify areas of responsibility including those that come under the remit of the new Child and Family Agency. It is expected also that the Strategy will set time frames within which recommendations are to be implemented.

Proposed Legislation

165. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the changes to the Child Care Act 1991, specifically regarding child care preschool regulations and the explanatory notes that accompany the regulations which are due to come into effect in January 2014; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53307/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Pre-school services are governed by Part VII of the Child Care Act 1991 and by the Child Care (Pre-School Services)(No.2) Regulations 2006. These Regulations are supported by explanatory notes which offer guidance and assistance in interpretation of the regulations.

Legislative amendments to Part VII of the Child Care Act 1991 were passed by the Oireachtas last week. These amendments will underpin a number of key reforms which I am introducing as part of the Pre-School Quality Agenda with the objective of improving the quality of childcare services. The amended legislation strengthens the current inspection regime, provides a statutory basis for registration of pre-school services and also provides for the setting of minimum qualification standards for staff working directly with children in pre-school services.

To provide for the implementation of the changes to the Act it will be necessary to amend or make additions to the current Regulations in a number of areas, and these will be considered following signing into law of the new amendments. New National Quality Standards, which will replace the explanatory notes to the regulations and which will set out the outcomes and supporting criteria against which the quality of childcare services will be measured, will replace the existing guidelines in 2014. However, the first priority is to embed registration, which is a new approach for the sector. Inspection against the new Standards will commence as early as practicable in 2014, following the development of new inspection tools and guidelines for services as well as a communications exercise with services, which will need to understand the impact of the changes to how they will be inspected.

HIQA Investigations

166. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide an updated report on the Health Information and Quality Authority investigation into Dublin North West social services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53333/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Foster care services in the Dublin North West Area have been inspected by HIQA on three occasions since September 2009, the most recent of which took place in October 2012. The purpose of foster care inspections is to review compliance with regulations and standards for all children. Despite progress from earlier inspections, inspectors found that some deficits identified previously had not been rectified. An Action Plan to address these issues was developed by HIQA.

In February 2013, I established a National Monitoring and Oversight Group within the HSE, to include input from a National Expert on Foster Care, to oversee implementation of the Action Plan and I received quarterly updates on the progress. I received the final report from the group on 1 November 2013.

I have been advised by the HSE that they have met with HIQA on several occasions to review progress. The HSE are due to have a further meeting with HIQA at the end of January 2014 and I have requested a further update on progress from the HSE and HIQA.

EU Directives

167. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of EU directives related to her Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53347/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): There are no such EU Directives relating to matters within the remit of my Department.

Departmental Legal Costs

168. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the costs incurred in her Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [53649/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): My Department was established in 2011 and no costs have been incurred since then as a result of Oireachtas members initiating legal challenges in the Courts.

HSE Expenditure

169. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the amount that has been paid in compensation over the past three years by the Health Service Executive either through the courts or by settlement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53156/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The query raised by the Deputy is a matter for the HSE. Accordingly, I have asked the HSE to collate this information and respond directly to

the Deputy as soon as it is available.

Medical Card Applications

170. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if a medical card will be awarded in view of new medical information in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53158/13]

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 issued to Oireachtas members.

Medical Card Applications

171. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Health if he will approve a medical card in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53163/13]

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 issued to Oireachtas members.

Hospital Services

172. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the care of a person (details provided) in County Donegal; if contact has been made with Wellington Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53168/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy.

Hospital Waiting Lists

173. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Galway may expect to receive an appointment for her awaited medical procedure, considering she was placed on a waiting list in April 2012. [53169/13]

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 been adopted by the Health Service Executive, 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 HSE to respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

HSE Staff Remuneration

174. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Health the types and values of allowances paid to senior managers and advisors at grade 8 or above employed by the Health Service Executive; if any such manager or advisor is in receipt of payments from public funds for two or more roles; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53171/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The Health Sector Consolidated Salary Scales, which are prepared and issued by my Department, set out the rates of pay and allowances for staff in the public health service. These scales were revised in July 2013 to take account of the reductions provided for under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013. Public service pay policy requires that the salary scales must be strictly adhered to and no employee should receive remuneration in the nature of pay and allowances of an amount greater than the amount prescribed. The remuneration arrangements for health service personnel are subject to approval by the Minister for Health, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy with the more detailed information requested.

Hospital Waiting Lists

175. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health in view of the fact that a person (details supplied) in County Waterford was referred to a consultant in January 2008 and has been on the waiting list for a gastric bypass for five years; if he will confirm when an appointment will be obtained; when the procedure is likely to take place; the number of other persons on the list for a gastric bypass; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53175/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): In relation to the detailed information requested by the Deputy, as this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to him directly.

Industrial Disputes

176. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health his Department's assessment of the possible impact on health services of an ESB strike; the precautionary measures in place; if all hospitals will be in a position to generate electricity; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53176/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy.

Mental Health Services Provision

177. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health his views regarding the closure of Curam Mental Health Clinic in Swords, County Dublin; if he is prepared to intervene in this matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53180/13]

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.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme Applications

178. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Health the provision for the fair deal in the Estimates of 2012, 2013 and 2014; the outturn in relation to spend in 2012 and 2013; the cutback in funding for 2014; the number of places on the fair deal scheme that will be reduced in 2014; the length of the waiting list at present of persons waiting to be approved under the fair deal scheme; the number approved that are awaiting fair deal payment to enable them to avail of the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53186/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The total budget for long-term residential care was €994.7m in 2012 and is €974m for 2013. According to the Appropriation Accounts published on the Comptroller and Auditor General's website, the outturn in 2012 was €962.6m. The outturn for 2013 will not be available until next year.

With regard to funding for 2014, the Deputy will be aware that the total amounts available to fund health services in 2014 will be considerably lower than for this year. Accordingly, all expenditure headings are being scrutinised. The funding that is available must be balanced across all of the various service areas in a way that achieves the best possible outcomes for the greatest number of service users and prioritises areas of greatest need as far as possible.

The needs of our older people are, and will remain, a very high priority for me and for the Government, and the resources that ultimately are available will be applied to provide the best possible mix of supports and services.

At end-September there were 1,433 applications for the Scheme in the process of being determined.

On 18 November there were 184 people on the placement list for the Nursing Homes Support Scheme. At that stage it was taking 7 days for funding to issue, from the date that the person was first placed on the list.

Hospital Admissions

179. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Laois will be transferred to a hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53188/13]

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 Facilities

180. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide in tabular form the total number of beds in the three paediatric hospitals, broken down by hospital site and by speciality; the projected total number of beds when the new national children's hospital is completed and for same by speciality; the method used to calculate the projected demand and the consideration which is given to population increase; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53191/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The new children's hospital will provide single rooms with en-suite bathroom and will provide overnight in-room accommodation for parents.

Planning of the number of beds for the new children's hospital was undertaken during the previous phase of this project on the Mater campus, based on ongoing analysis of paediatric hospital activity, ongoing review of Diagnostic Related Groups (clinical activity), review of existing and future service plans with each of the specialty groups and application of National CSO Population and Labour Force Projections. This was carried out in parallel with a review of paediatric acute care trends internationally and the application of LEAN healthcare principles. Following the Government decision to locate the hospital on the St James's campus, further analysis of existing and planned hospital activity is being carried out and the number of beds required in the new children's hospital at the St James's Hospital campus will be established as part of this process.

In regard to details of the beds by specialty in the three existing children's hospitals, as this is a service matter I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy.

Hospital Staff Issues

181. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health the timekeeping or auditing system used in hospitals within the State to ensure that staff (details supplied) are physically in the hospital during contracted hours; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53199/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As the issues raised are operational matters the Deputy's question has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Patient Statistics

182. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide in tabular form, by consultant, the number of public patients in each hospital within the State who were seen in 2012 by each consultant doctor as opposed to being seen by a member of the consultant's team; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53200/13]

183. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health the number of public patients in each hospital within the State that were operated on in 2012 by their consultant doctor as opposed to being operated on by a member of their team; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53201/13]

185. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health the number of public patients in each hospital within the State that were operated on in 2012 by their consultant doctor as opposed to being operated on by a member of their team; and if he will make a statement on the

matter.

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 182, 183 and 185 together.

In relation to the detailed information requested by the Deputy, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to him directly in these matters.

Patient Statistics

184. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients seen in each accident and emergency department, in each hospital, within the State between the hours of 9 to 5 p.m. on a Monday to Friday in 2011, 2012 and to date in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53202/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy.

Question No. 185 answered with Question No. 182.

Speech and Language Therapy

186. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that some speech and language services at Stewarts Hospital have been cut to the most vulnerable of residents, those with a learning disability, as a result of a speech and language therapist resigning their post for personal reasons; his views, notwithstanding the financial constraints of the State, that a new post should be advertised immediately to replace this professional as it does not breach the employment embargo; if he will confirm if it is the decision of the Stewarts Hospital Management Team not to replace this professional or have they been directed by his Department not to replace this professional; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53204/13]

188. **Deputy Robert Dowds** asked the Minister for Health when the Health Service Executive expects to approve the funding to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of a speech and language therapist working for an organisation (details supplied) in, Palmerstown, Dublin 20, and which has resulted in the cutting of speech and language services for young children in the area who are badly in need of such treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53215/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 186 and 188 together.

As the Deputies will be aware, the Health Service Executive has operational responsibility for the delivery of health and personal social services within the ambit of its Vote (Vote 39). The level of health services to be delivered within the available funding has been set out in the HSE National Service Plan, which I approved in January.

The reduction in size of the public service has been an essential component of the approach to addressing the State's fiscal difficulties. This has been combined with a firm focus on improving public service efficiency and effectiveness. The Haddington Road Agreement provides for some five million additional working hours annually.

These measures will enable the health service to continue to reduce overall numbers, while maintaining services and service levels to the greatest possible extent. The HSE can make staff appointments once it remains within its overall employment ceiling and has the financial resources to do so.

The particular issue raised by the Deputies is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. My Department has not issued any directive to the Stewards Hospital Management Team in relation to the filling of the post in question. I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputies.

Departmental Staff Sick Leave

187. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health the number of sick days taken by staff of his Department and the Health Service Executive over the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53212/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The information requested by the Deputy is detailed as follows:

Year	Total no. of sick days taken	Average no. of sick days
2010	4783	9
2011	4781	11
2012	3932	11

With regard to the Health Service Executive, they have been asked to collate the data sought as soon as possible and it will be provided directly to the Deputy by them when available.

Question No. 188 answered with Question No. 186.

Hospital Waiting Lists

189. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if it is the case that there are currently four operating theatres closed in Cappagh Hospital; if he will detail the waiting times, by procedure, at Cappagh in October 2011, 2012 and 2013; the date on which a person (details supplied) in County Cavan will receive treatment at Cappagh Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53216/13]

197. **Deputy Joe O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Cavan will undergo a surgical procedure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53266/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 189 and 197 together.

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 been adopted by the Health Service Executive, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists. In relation to the detailed information sought by the Deputies, as these are service matters, they have been referred to the

Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Data

190. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health when the Health Care Quality Indicators in the Irish Health System: Examining the Potential of Hospital Discharge Data report will be published; the reason for the delay in publishing this report in view of the fact that data from the report was put into the public domain in July 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53217/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The CMO's Office of my Department has been working on a report entitled 'Health Care Quality Indicators in the Irish Health System: Examining the Potential of Hospital Discharge Data'.

This work demonstrates the value of using the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) system to derive quality measures to support a greater knowledge and understanding of health care quality.

Following a period of consultation and further analysis, the report entitled 'Health Care Quality Indicators in the Irish Health System: Examining the Potential of Hospital Discharge Data' is currently being finalised with a view to publication in the near future.

Medical Card Eligibility

191. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health the reason the general practitioner card income limit for a couple over 70 is double that of a single person, but the income limit for a medical card for a couple over 70 is less than double that of a single person; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53232/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White): In making its budgetary decisions in a manner consistent with the introduction, on a phased basis, of a universal GP service without fees within its term of office, as set out in the Programme for Government and the Future Health strategy framework, it is the Government's intention not to remove access to GP services to persons aged 70 years and over who currently have such access.

Health Services Staff Issues

192. **Deputy Dara Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the reason staff within the environmental health service of the Health Service Executive were not allowed to join the staff incentivised career break scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53236/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As this is an operational matter the Deputy's question has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Charges

193. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on variations in hospital charges; his views on whether large disparities are unacceptable (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53239/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Section 55 of the Health Act 1970, as amended by section 6 of the Health (Amendment) Act 1991, provides for the making available by the HSE of private in-patient service and sets out that the HSE shall charge for any services so made available and provided to any such person in accordance with charges approved of or directed by the Minister.

There are currently two charges levied on private in-patients under Section 55 of the Health Act 1970 (as amended): a maintenance charge and a daily charge. The maintenance charge ranges from €586 to €1,046 per day for private patients who are accommodated in a private designated bed. The private in-patient daily charge is €75 and is applicable to all private patients without exception.

The Health (Amendment) Act, 2013 (No. 31 of 2013), signed by the President on 24th July 2013, provides for the introduction of a single private in-patient charge for all private patients, including those accommodated in public beds. The in-patient daily charge will cease and the hospital charge for a private day-case patient will be reduced from a total of €828 to €407 in a Category 1 hospital. The daily charge for a private patient accommodated overnight in a multi-occupancy room in a category 1 hospital will be €813. Currently, the equivalent charges applied to a patient in a semi-private bed are €1,008. These provisions will come into effect from 1 January 2014.

Charges levied by private hospitals are outside the remit of my Department and are a contractual matter between the patient and the treating facility.

Medical Card Reviews

194. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a review being carried out on a medical card application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53240/13]

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 issued to Oireachtas members.

Hospital Appointment Status

195. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a hospital appointment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53253/13]

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 been adopted by the Health Service Executive, 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 HSE to respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

Health Services Staff Training

196. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 203 of 27 November 2013, the reason his Department has ignored the suggestions provided (details supplied) at the Joint Committee on Health and Children hearings in May 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53262/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As I stated before, the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013 provides only for existing rights, i.e. within the Constitutional provisions and the Supreme Court judgment in the *X* case, and it does not confer any new substantive rights to a termination of pregnancy. One of the requirements for a medical procedure to be lawful under the Act in non-emergency circumstances is that, following certification, it must be carried out by an obstetrician on the Specialist Division of the Medical Council Register at an appropriate institution.

The training requirements for qualifying for such registration and the content of training programmes are a matter for the relevant training bodies, subject to approval by the Medical Council. The relevant training bodies may also wish to provide specific guidance for their members in relation to clinical care. As in all good medical practice, appropriate follow up should be offered to a patient following a medical procedure.

Question No. 197 answered with Question No. 189.

Hospital Waiting Lists

198. **Deputy Joe O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Cavan will receive a hip replacement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53267/13]

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 been adopted by the Health Service Executive, 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 HSE to respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme Oversight

199. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide comfort and assurance to persons who are availing of the fair deal scheme and who are in desperate fear their allowances will be cut through that scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[53273/13]

203. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an assurance that the fair deal scheme will be maintained and indeed enhanced in the future as the percentage of older people in our society continues to grow (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53298/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 199 and 203 together.

The total amounts available to fund health services in 2014 will be considerably lower than for this year. Accordingly, all expenditure headings are being scrutinised. The funding that is available must be balanced across all of the various service areas in a way that achieves the best possible outcomes for the greatest number of service users and prioritises areas of greatest need as far as possible.

The needs of our older people are, and will remain, a very high priority for me and for the Government, and the resources that ultimately are available will be applied to provide the best possible mix of supports and services. I can, however, assure those that are already in receipt of support under the Scheme that they will not be affected if the funding for the Scheme is reduced in 2014.

As the Deputy is aware, the Nursing Homes Support Scheme is currently being reviewed. This review, which is expected to be completed in early 2014, will make recommendations for the future operation and management of the Scheme.

Health Services Provision

200. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health his plans to allocate adequate health cover to an island on the western seaboard (details supplied) in County Galway in the event of the resident public health nurse not being on the island due to holiday time, sick leave and so on; his views on whether it is unsafe that in the event of the resident public health nurse not being on the island, no locum nurse is provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53285/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White): As this is a service matter, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services Provision

201. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the guidelines, protocols and management procedures in place in acute hospitals for the management of patients with sepsis; the oversight and accreditation systems in place to ensure compliance; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53291/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I have asked the HSE to forward details of the current guidelines, protocols and management procedures in place in acute hospitals for the management of patients with sepsis along with the oversight and accreditation systems in place to ensure compliance to the Deputy as soon as possible.

The Health Information and Quality Authority's (HIQA) report into the care and treatment

of Ms Halappanavar at University College Hospital, Galway recommended that the HSE should develop a national clinical guideline on the management of sepsis and ensure that all hospitals put in place arrangements for formal staff training on the recognition and management of sepsis and on the clinically deteriorating patients including pregnant women in line with the guideline.

The report also recommended that the Department of Health should immediately review the current arrangements in place to ensure the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) is adequately resourced to support the national endorsement of key national guidelines.

The NCEC through the processes of prioritisation and quality assurance of a clinical guideline reach consensus as to whether the clinical guideline has been developed using a quality methodology and is based on evidence.

Following on from the HIQA report I have requested that four national clinical guidelines are immediately commissioned and quality assured through the NCEC as a matter of urgency for the Irish health system. These guidelines are a National Maternity Early Warning Score Guideline, a National Paediatric Early Warning Score Guideline, a National Sepsis Management Guideline and a National Clinical Handover Guideline. I expect these guidelines to not only detail best practice but also to make recommendations for staff education and training. This is in order to provide for assurance of the competence of our doctors, nurses and midwives for these critical life-saving clinical issues.

I am pleased to advise the Deputy that significant progress has been made on this work to date.

Charitable Donations Administration

202. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that money received by charities and used as top-up payments is repaid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53292/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As has been reported extensively, a considerable number of Section 38 agencies have been found to be in breach of Government pay policy with regard to the remuneration of senior staff.

I have requested urgent action to ensure that every agency is fully compliant with Government pay policy. The HSE has a team of senior managers following up with individual agencies and the Director General of the HSE is meeting the Chairpersons and the CEOs of all the Section 38 organisations tomorrow.

The HSE will take whatever actions are necessary to deliver full compliance and ensure that any governance deficits identified are comprehensively rectified immediately.

The question of recoupment will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

As indicated above the HSE is urgently meeting individual agencies and it is important that due process is followed.

Question No. 203 answered with Question No. 199.

Health Services Issues

204. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will instruct the Health Service Executive to have a full inquiry into the death of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53299/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy.

HSE National Service Plan

205. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health when the Health Service Executive service plan for 2014 will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53315/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Under the relevant legislation, the 2004 Health Act (as amended), the Minister for Health has a period of 21 days to consider the Health Service Executive's National Service Plan after its adoption and submission by the HSE Directorate. That time period extends to Monday of next week, the 16th December. The legislation also provides that, once the Service Plan is approved, it is also a matter for me, as Minister for Health, to ensure that the approved Plan is laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas. The HSE is responsible for publication of the Plan as soon as practicable thereafter.

Health Services Issues

206. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Health the reason representations made to the Health Service Executive on 19 November regarding early intervention services have not yet been responded to; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53332/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As the particular issue raised by the Deputy relates to an individual case, this is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy.

Mental Health Services Provision

207. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Health the reason urgent representations made to the Health Service Executive on 26 November regarding the safety of a suicidal child have to date not been responded to; the way he plans to address the issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53334/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I understand that the HSE has recently been in contact with the Deputy concerning this case. The HSE has indicated that its health care professionals have been involved in this case for some time, and that services will continue to be provided in the light of clinical judgement to best meet the needs of this young person.

Services for People with Disabilities

208. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health the funding arrangements in place to avoid the delays experienced in securing appropriate services for persons with a disability

upon graduating from school in 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53338/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE National Service Plan for 2014 was submitted to my colleague, the Minister for Health on 25 November and is under consideration at present. The National Service Plan is prepared in accordance with the Health Acts and outlines the type and volume of health and personal services to be provided in 2014. I cannot comment on the provision of funding for specific services in the National Service Plan until the Plan has been approved by the Minister. However, the Minister has indicated to the Director General of the HSE that the provision of placements for school-leavers with disabilities is one of the priority service areas to be addressed in the 2014 National Service Plan.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has established a National Oversight Group consisting of disability umbrella organisations and HSE Regional Leads for disability services to coordinate a timely response to processing applications for day services and rehabilitative training places for school-leavers graduating in 2014.

I have been informed by the HSE that they are in the process of developing a new centralised regional application process which will be communicated to disability agencies by the end of December with the necessary information for agencies to distribute to parents also available by the end of December. It is envisaged that applications for day service and rehabilitative training places will be required to be returned to service providers by a specified date and young people and their parents will be advised of the option available to them by the middle of 2014.

With regard to young people with special needs currently attending mainstream schools, the HSE will provide information to the Department of Education and Skill's Special Education Support Service for schools to distribute to parents. Specialist disability services should not be the first option considered by a young person currently in mainstream school. The HSE, through its Occupational Guidance Service, will work with schools, service providers, young people and their families to identify training needs and explore suitable options.

Services for People with Disabilities

209. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health in the context of the aims and objectives espoused in the report of the disability policy review, if progress has been made on providing persons with a disability and their families with the options of selecting services which best meet their needs; if he will consider piloting a new system such as this in the Health Service Executive west region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53339/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services (VFM Review) which I published in 2012 envisaged that migration to the person centred model would be by means of demonstration projects, developed as proof of concept, and run in parallel with current services, following which their suitability for wider application would be evaluated.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) and disability agencies are already working on demonstration projects, at locations throughout the country, including the West, aimed at giving service users greater choice and control. A significant number of the projects underway show how aspects of the new policy will work in practice. These projects initiated by a range of service providers with the support of the HSE, Genio and the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies involve many different aspects of a more person-centred way of delivering day and residential services. The projects will be analysed in 2014 to determine their wider applicability, clarify

the issues which must be resolved before the projects can be scaled up, and identify the best way forward.

Just over 100 of these demonstration projects have been grant-aided by a non-profit organisation, the Genio Trust, with funding provided by the HSE, during the period 2010 – 2013 and they will provide a substantial contribution towards the transition to the new model of person-centred supports.

The grants have been targeted in the following areas:

- Projects to move/keep people out of institutional care by supporting them to live as independently as possible in the community, resulting in institutional closure;

- Active integration of people with disabilities into mainstream work, third level education and leisure activities;

- Measures to strengthen and build networks of support comprising family, friends and neighbours offering alternative respite;

- Empowerment of people with disabilities to take control of their own lives and strengthening of strategic advocacy particularly on the part of people with disabilities.

In addition to the projects which the HSE are funding through Genio, the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies who are based in Oranmore, Co. Galway are working with service providers in the West and in other regions of the country, through the Next Steps and Immersion initiatives, to support demonstration projects and shared learning in respect of the person centred supports model.

Residential Institutions Issues

210. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health further to a parliamentary question of 4 December 2013 regarding mother and baby homes, the institutions other than the National Archives where copies of inspections into mother and baby homes are held. [53341/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Under the Access to Institutional and Related Records (AIRR) Project, my Department may also hold information regarding inspections of mother and baby homes. Under the AIRR, individuals may request the release of papers relating to their own personal information.

EU Directives

211. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Health the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53354/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): There are four EU Directives, where the deadline has passed and have yet to be transposed into Irish law:

1. Directive 2011/62/EU on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, as regards the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of falsified medicinal products.

The Directive was due to be fully transposed by the 02/01/13. On 23 May 2013, the Minister for Health signed four statutory instruments which transposed into Irish law all of the Falsified Medicines Directive, with the exception of one article - Article 85c regarding the sale of medicines over the internet. It is expected that the transposition will be completed in the near future.

2. Directive 2011/24/EU of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.

This Directive was due to be transposed by 25/10/13. Partial compliance has been achieved. Work is underway to achieve full compliance as soon as possible.

3. Commission Implementing Directive 2012/52/EU of 20 December 2012 laying down measures to facilitate the recognition of medical prescriptions issued in another Member State

This Directive was due to be transposed by 25/10/2013. It is anticipated that transposition will be complete shortly.

4. Directive 2012/26/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October, 2012 amending Directive 2001/83/EC as regards pharmacovigilance

This Directive was due to be transposed by 28/10/2013. It is anticipated that transposition will be complete shortly.

My Department is committed to ensuring that the transposition of all Directives is completed as soon as possible.

Departmental Legal Costs

212. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Health the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53655/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The information requested is not readily available. I will get back to the Deputy as soon as possible regarding this matter.

Driver Licence Applications

213. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the locations of the new national driving licence service offices in County Dublin; if he is satisfied with the range of current locations; if there are plans for an office to be opened in a central location in the city centre area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53154/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The new national driver licensing application centres in Dublin are located at Leopardstown Shopping Centre, Citywest Shopping Centre and the Omni Park Shopping Centre. The operation of the National Driver Licensing Service is the statutory responsibility of the Road Safety Authority, and the location of the centres is a matter for the RSA. I have no role in this matter. I have forwarded the question to the RSA for direct reply. I would ask the Deputy to contact my office if a response has not been received within ten days.

National Car Test

214. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will give consideration to extending the 21-day period for NCT retesting for vehicle owners who are awaiting delivery of a replacement part; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53182/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have no proposals to change the re-test period set out in Statutory Instrument 567 of 2009 - *Road Traffic (National Car Test) Regulations 2009*.

Current regulations allow for an application for a re-test to be made not more than 21 days after the day on which the test certificate was refused, and for a re-test to be carried out on a day which is not more than 30 days after the day on which a test certificate in respect of the vehicle was refused. This time period is deemed adequate to provide customers with a reasonable amount of time to address the failed items identified and arrange a re-test, while minimising the risk that additional fail items may develop in the intervening period.

Broadband Services Expenditure

215. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the amount of expenditure incurred by Iarnród Éireann to install wifi on its services in the years 2012 and to date in 2013. [53229/13]

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 the implementation and development of individual projects, such as the installation of Wifi on Iarnród Éireann's services, is a matter coming under the remit of Iarnrod Eireann.

Noting this I have referred the Deputy's question to Iarnród Eireann for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

Broadband Services Expenditure

216. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the amount of expenditure incurred by Bus Éireann to install Wi-Fi on its services in the years 2012 and to date in 2013. [53230/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The expenditure incurred by Bus Éireann to install Wifi on its commercial services is solely a matter for the company. With regard to its PSO services, some funding is provided by the National Transport Authority for the installation of Wifi.

I have therefore referred the Deputy's question to Bus Éireann for direct reply in relation to Wifi on both commercial and PSO services. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

Rail Services

217. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the current policy in relation to wheelchair access on the DART, commuter and inter-city trains; his future plans to make the trains more accessible for wheelchairs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53241/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Department's policy in relation to accessible public transport is contained in my Department Sectoral Plan 2012 under the Disability Act 2005 *Transport Access for All* which sets out a series of policy objectives and targets for accessible transport across all modes of transport. With regard to Iarnród Eireann this includes making all suburban and Inter-city passenger trains accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments accessible subject to available resources. Accessibility is built into all new public transport infrastructure projects and vehicles from the design stage. Funding is also being provided for accessibility improvements to existing public transport infrastructure and facilities as resources allow.

I understand from Iarnród Eireann that all operational rolling stock on the DART, Commuter and Intercity trains are accessible for persons of reduced mobility. Iarnród Eireann's current policy is to have a portable wheelchair ramp at all stations. In addition they are also located on board Inter-City trains. As a member of staff is required to safely deploy the ramp for use from either the station or train advance notice of at least 24 hours is required. While Iarnród Eireann has no plans at present to purchase new rolling stock which would provide electronic ramps, I recently asked them to investigate the feasibility of retro-fitting electronic ramps on the DART fleet.

Cycling Facilities Provision

218. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to extend the Dublin bikes scheme to Dublin North Central or Dublin North East areas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53242/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly): Responsibility for the roll-out, extension, maintenance and commercial elements of the Dublin City Bikes Scheme is an operational matter for the National Transport Authority, working closely with Dublin City Council. Noting the above, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

Tourism Promotion

219. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will include the millennium celebration of the Battle of Clontarf 2014 on all relevant Tourism Ireland publications as the event will bring in more tourists and create jobs. [53260/13]

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

Road Projects Status

220. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on the current state of negotiations regarding funding for the Narrow Water Bridge project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [47686/13]

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. The initial selection and prioritisation of works to be funded is also a matter for each local authority.

The Irish Government supported the original decision by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to approve the allocation of EU funding to the Narrow Water bridge project and committed an up-front funding contribution of €3.9 million in January this year. The funding which was to be provided by my Department for the Narrow Water Bridge Project represented a significant commitment given the current financial circumstances. This funding contribution was due to be matched with a contribution from the Northern Ireland Executive in line with the agreed funding ratios for the Programme. The Government was disappointed that the tender process resulted in a doubling of the initial estimated cost budgeted for by the project partners for the construction of the bridge. The Government has indicated on many occasions that it would be willing to help to address the shortfall in funding for the Narrow Water Bridge, but this depended entirely on matching contributions from the other parties, including the Northern Ireland Executive. Also, we could not agree to be solely responsible for any further overruns.

As the Deputy will be aware, as part of the recovery programme that this Government has had to pursue to put the country back on its feet, unfortunately, there will be a further reduction in regional and local roads spending in 2014 of over €60 million. Ultimately it is from this budget that any additional funding from this State would have had to come and we would not have been in a position to provide a further €10 million towards this project as well as to underwrite any potential further overspend. The estimated figure of a requirement from my Department of €10 million was based on correspondence received from SEUPB and Louth County Council. Given the significant difference between the initial estimates and the returned tender prices, the Deputy will appreciate the need to take a conservative approach to the funding requests.

The progression and importance of this project has been discussed with my government colleagues and on a number of occasions at the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) most recently on 8 November. The priority is to avoid the loss of the EU funding involved. As the Deputy will be aware, members of the party that he leads are members of the Northern Ireland Executive and of the NSMC and agreed this position as articulated in the Plenary Joint Communiqué that issued following that meeting in particular: “Ministers remain supportive of the concept of the Narrow Water Bridge and have asked for an urgent analysis of the issues involved. They remain conscious that the priority is not to lose the EU funding involved.”

It is important to note that there are time constraints with regard to the INTERREG funding. It has to be spent by 2015. SEUPB has since withdrawn the letter of offer and has indicated that it proposes to re-allocate the funding to eligible projects capable of being delivered before the end of 2015. I know that officials in my Department and the Department for Regional Development have identified possible replacement projects, that will benefit cross-border communication and economic co-operation in the transport sector and will be working up proposals for consideration by SEUPB.

Marine Safety

221. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will publish marine safety notices in the relevant industry publications to ensure that the information is disseminated as widely as possible; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53279/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The purpose of a Marine Notice is to notify relevant information to seafarers and mariners and to provide navigational information for maritime traffic, for example in an area where there are activities by vessels carrying out hydrographic or seismic surveys, fishing research or underwater operations. The overall aim is to target the information where it is needed, and in a cost effective way.

My Department circulates Marine Notices to a wide range of individuals and organisations, ranging from State agencies and the fishing industry, to international shipping and water-based recreational interests. Marine Notices are posted on the Department's website and distributed electronically, via email, to those who have asked to be included on the distribution list. They are targeted across the full range of the maritime sector, from merchant to fishing and leisure, plus ports, harbours, offshore energy, marine engineering companies, etc. From time to time, Marine Notices, once issued, are duplicated on the websites of other organisations and publications. A small number of Marine Notices are also sent out in hard copy to people who have requested the communication that way, usually due to lack of computer or email access. On occasions, particular issues or individual Marine Notices may be published in maritime industry publications but I have no plans for such publication of Marine Notices as a matter of course.

Irish Sports Council

222. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the total costs incurred by the Irish Sports Council resulting from the recent legal action involving it and a board member; if the figure presented is the final costs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53294/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this question is a matter for the Irish Sports Council, I have referred it to them for direct reply. I ask that the Deputy informs my office if a reply is not received within 10 days.

Irish Sports Council

223. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he has received the Turpin report into corporate governance at the Irish Sports Council; if he will outline its findings; if he intends to publish the full report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53295/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have just received the report referred to by the Deputy. I will consider its findings and recommendations and will then decide on what action, if any, that I need to take. I will publish the report on my Department's website in the New Year.

Road Projects

224. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will request the National Roads Authority to provide the necessary funding as a matter of priority

to address a very dangerous stretch of road between Curraheen and Derrymore on the Tralee to Camp road, County Kerry; if he will request the Road Safety Authority to immediately investigate this health and safety issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53306/13]

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, 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.

EU Directives

225. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of EU directives related to his Department that have yet to be transposed into Irish law despite the deadline date having passed; when it is proposed that these directives will be transposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53359/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): There are currently two EU Directives under my Department's remit where the transposition deadline has passed but the Directives are not yet transposed into Irish Law. The first is Directive 2011/76/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 September 2011, amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures. The Directive has a transposition date of 16 October 2013. The means of transposing the Directive is being reviewed at present with a view to transposition in 2014.

The second is Directive 2011/82/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011, facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences. This Directive has a transposition date of 7 Nov. 2013. However, Directive 2011/82/EU was adopted pursuant to Article 87(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). As Article 87 is within Title V of the TFEU (Freedom, Security and Justice), then Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol 21 TFEU apply. This means that the Directive is not binding upon Ireland or the UK. The Directive is also subject to a challenge in the European Court of Justice. Ireland is awaiting the outcome of the Court's judgement on the correct legal basis for Directive 2011/82/EU before considering if we should opt in.

Departmental Legal Costs

226. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the cost incurred in his Department as a result of Oireachtas Members initiating legal challenges in the courts for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [53659/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): My Department has not incurred any costs as a result of legal challenges in the Courts initiated by Oireachtas members.