

Written Answers.

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

Questions Nos. 1 to 8, inclusive answered orally.

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings

9. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware that the 41st anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings is on 17 May 2015; that the British Government still refuses to release vital documents and information that it has on the bombings; and if he will urgently raise the issue with his British counterpart. [19376/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The 41st anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings took place two days ago on May 17th. The survivors of those terrible attacks, and the families of the victims, are now into the fifth decade of their search for answers. Commemorations took place last Saturday, 16th May, at which the Government was represented by Minister of State Aodhán Ó Riordáin. Anniversaries can be a particularly difficult time, and the Dublin and Monaghan families are in my thoughts today as we discuss those dreadful events of 41 years ago.

I welcome the continued all-party support for the campaign on behalf of the Dublin-Monaghan families. On Friday last, 15th May, I met with the Justice for the Forgotten campaign, which supports victims and their families, including the Dublin and Monaghan families, to discuss how the Government can best support their efforts. In 2014, Justice for the Forgotten received a grant of €48,000 from my Department's Reconciliation Fund to assist with its important work.

The Government fully supports the all-party Dáil motions of July 2008 and May 2011 urging the British Government to allow access by an independent international judicial figure to all original documents in their possession relating to the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. I have raised this issue with the British Government on a number of occasions and have received assurances from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that the British Government would consider afresh how it can respond to the Dáil motions.

I had a constructive telephone conversation with the Secretary of State on the day of her re-appointment on our shared priorities and the challenges that lie ahead. We agreed to an early meeting for a more detailed discussion. I intend to raise this issue when I meet with Secretary of State Villiers later today and I can assure the House that I will be pressing for a detailed response to our long-standing request.

Questions Nos. 10 to 12, inclusive, answered orally.

Middle East Issues

13. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware of a new report by Breaking the Silence, an organisation of veteran Israeli soldiers, that contains testimonies from 60 Israeli soldiers who fought in last summer's war in Gaza; that these testimonies show the Israeli army's scant regard for the safety of civilians; and that it breached international law obligations to protect civilians; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19338/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): On 23 July 2014, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva held a Special Session on the conflict in Gaza, which was then still taking place. At that session, Ireland made a statement characterising the situation as follows: "Ireland condemns both the firing of missiles from Gaza into Israel, by Hamas and other militant groups, and the killing of hundreds of civilians in military attacks by Israel on targets in Gaza which fail to respect the requirement under international law for any military action to be proportionate and discriminate. It is clear to us that neither side is paying adequate regard to the cost of their actions on innocent civilians." The statement continued: "Ireland fully accepts that the Government of Israel has the right to defend its people, but this right does not negate the rights of others. Any use of military force in self defence must be in accordance with international humanitarian law, and in particular must be both discriminate and proportionate. In view of the casualty figures, we are not convinced this has been the case."

The recent report by Breaking the Silence supports the assessment which we delivered at the time. Breaking the Silence is an important and internationally highly regarded organisation, with which my Department has frequent contact, and through which Israeli soldiers themselves speak out courageously about troubling aspects of the use of force.

The testimonies in the report seem to corroborate the picture of how it was that such dreadful level of civilian casualties occurred during the fighting. At the heart of the international rules regulating the use of force is the need to distinguish, at all times, between civilians and combatants and to ensure the proportionality of any activity aimed at a military objective, so as to minimise civilian casualties. Political leaders must accept responsibility for ordering military action on a scale that makes widespread, disproportionate civilian suffering unavoidable.

The Commission of Inquiry set up by the Human Rights Council, into the events of the Gaza conflict, is expected to submit its report to the HRC at the June session.

Finally, it is essential also, in any consideration of the terrible events in Gaza last summer, to stress again, as Ireland did in our statement to the Human Rights Council, that "the firing of missiles against Israeli civilian targets is without doubt contrary to international law."

Questions Nos. 14 and 15 answered orally.

Human Rights Issues

16. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on the rising tensions and violence in Macedonia; that leaked wiretaps have shown massive violations of human rights, and abuse of power by the current government; that this has caused public outrage and street protests, calling for the government's resignation; that separate clashes with an armed group in a town in the north of Macedonia left 22 persons dead; and if he discussed the destabilising situation, and current events, with his European counterparts. [19340/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I have been deeply troubled by the worsening situation in Macedonia for some time, and the subject was discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels yesterday. We are very concerned about the situation, both at the events of the weekend of 9 and 10 May, and the wider political instability facing the country. Ministers agreed to monitor the situation closely, and the High Representative indicated that the matter will be discussed again by the Council in the near future.

The protracted crisis in Macedonia was highlighted by the violent clashes which occurred ten days ago (9-10 May) during a police operation against an alleged terrorist group. Kumanovo, where these appalling events occurred, is close to Macedonia's border with Kosovo and Serbia. During the two-day shoot-out, 22 people were killed, and some 40 were injured. I extend my condolences to the families of all those who died.

In the immediate aftermath of these events, EU Commissioner Hahn issued a statement calling on 'the authorities and all political and community leaders to co-operate, to restore calm and fully investigate the events in an objective and transparent manner'. I fully support that call. In the interests of the country and the stability of the region as a whole, I urge all parties to exercise restraint and avoid any further escalation of violence.

This incident took place against a backdrop of wider political instability, which has been of concern for some time. The difficulties caused by the ongoing boycott of Parliament by the opposition since late 2012 were further compounded by the recent wire-tapping scandal, with the opposition accusing the main government party of engaging in an illegal surveillance programme of over 20,000 people. Ireland supports calls for a prompt and rigorous investigation into all allegations of wrongdoing, with full respect for the principles of due process and freedom of expression.

Last month, the EU General Affairs Council expressed grave concern regarding the deteriorating situation in the country and urged all sides to focus on finding solutions to the ongoing political crisis.

We welcome all efforts to redress the situation and restore stability. We believe that continued EU engagement is even more necessary than ever in view of the events in Kumanovo.

It is important to continue work to restore trust in the institutions of Macedonia in order to avoid further instability, and we welcome all efforts in this regard, including those of the European Parliament, which has been facilitating talks between the government and opposition parties. I hope that the talks in recent days between the four largest political parties in Macedonia can find a way out of the current political crisis.

Question No. 17 answered orally.

Human Rights Issues

18. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade further to Parliamentary Question No. 430 of 6 May 2015, if he will report on developments in the case of an Irish citizen (details supplied) detained in Egypt; if there has been further contact with the Egyptian Foreign Minister since the meeting in New York in the United States of America; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19308/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I discussed this case with Egyptian Foreign Minister Shoukry in New York on Monday 27 April, outlining Ire-

land's concerns on the case and expressing our disappointment that a decision on the application for bail, an application formally supported by the Irish government, had been refused along with other bail applications in this case.

Our two objectives in this case remain clear: firstly, to see this Irish citizen released by the Egyptian authorities so that he can return to his family and his studies in Ireland, and secondly to maintain strong consular support for his welfare while he remains in detention.

It is important to bear in mind the role of the Irish Government where citizens are imprisoned abroad. Irrespective of any views regarding the fairness or appropriateness of any arrest abroad, the reality is that where an Irish citizen is charged with an offence under the law of a foreign country, it is the foreign law that applies and it is the relevant foreign court which decides matters such as bail and release. The decision to release this person will be a decision that is made solely by the Egyptian authorities.

The considered approach and sustained action that I and my officials have taken in this case has been to further these objectives, and most importantly to avoid any action that could be counterproductive or detrimental to this citizen's best interests.

Given that the trial is under way, the Irish Government must exercise restraint in its public comment. This is entirely consistent with our approach in other consular cases, in line with our clear objectives in this case and what we firmly believe to be in the citizen's best interests and to be most likely to contribute to a positive outcome for him.

Our Embassy in Cairo undertook a further consular visit to the individual on 19 May. Separately officials in my Department discussed the case with the Egyptian Ambassador on 20 May. My Department will remain in ongoing contact with the Egyptian authorities and will continue to provide consular support in the run up to the next scheduled hearing on 3 June, and to take all appropriate action that is in this citizen's best interests.

Question No. 19 answered orally.

Good Friday Agreement

20. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is concerned that the new British Government has pledged to scrap the Human Rights Act; that this could see Britain pull out of the European Convention on Human Rights; and that this would breach the Good Friday Agreement; and if he has discussed the issue with his British counterpart. [19342/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): This is a repeat of my reply to Question No. 8 (19497/15). The commitment of Ireland to the promotion and protection of human rights is an underlying principle of Ireland's foreign policy and is a priority for the Government. Ireland is currently a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council and we pursue our human rights priorities in many international fora. Ireland is a firm supporter of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights system and liaises regularly with the UK in relation to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' supervision of states' implementation of Court judgments.

I should note clearly at the outset there is not at this time any legislation before the British Parliament at Westminster to repeal the 1998 UK Human Rights Act. Indeed the new British Government has not yet published its legislative programme for this parliamentary term, although it is expected to do so later this month. In the absence of any detailed proposal it is

difficult to speculate on potential consequences. Obviously were any proposal to be made it would have to be carefully analysed.

On the broad question of human rights and the Good Friday Agreement, the views of the Government are clear and unchanged. The protection of human rights in Northern Ireland law, predicated on the European Convention of Human Rights, is one of the key principles underpinning the Agreement. As a guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, the Government takes very seriously its responsibility to safeguard its institutions and principles. The fundamental role of human rights in guaranteeing peace and stability in Northern Ireland cannot be taken for granted and must be fully respected. The Good Friday Agreement is clear that there is an obligation to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law and this is an ongoing obligation.

Placing human rights at the heart of the peace process in Northern Ireland has helped to ensure the participation and trust of all communities. A shared emphasis on human rights and all that this implies is part of what makes the peace process credible and effective. The Government will work closely with the UK Government and with the power-sharing Executive in Belfast to ensure that the protection of human rights remains at the heart of civic life, politics and ongoing societal change in Northern Ireland.

We will follow closely all developments in this regard. I plan to raise this matter with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when I next meet with her.

Question No. 21 answered orally.

Middle East Issues

22. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he supports a European Union wide ban on certain Israeli settlement goods; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19283/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The EU has a clear and long standing position that Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory are illegal, and are damaging to the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Products from these settlements therefore are severely penalised by being ineligible for the lower tariffs applicable to goods from Israel, or from Palestinian producers, or many other countries.

Consideration has been given for some time to EU level guidelines on the labelling of goods from settlements, to prevent them being misrepresented as produce of Israel. In March I co-signed a letter with 15 other EU Foreign Ministers urging the High Representative to push this proposal forward again, and following yesterday's discussion at the Foreign Affairs Council I am confident of early progress on this issue.

In 2014, Ireland and many other EU members published advice warning citizens against investing in settlements.

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings

23. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the current situation regarding the Irish Government's request to its British counterparts, to release

British files relating to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19336/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): This is a repeat to my reply to Question No. 9 (19376.15). The 41st anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings took place two days ago on May 17th. The survivors of those terrible attacks, and the families of the victims, are now into the fifth decade of their search for answers. Commemorations took place last Saturday, 16th May, at which the Government was represented by Minister of State Aodhán Ó Ríordáin. Anniversaries can be a particularly difficult time, and the Dublin and Monaghan families are in my thoughts today as we discuss those dreadful events of 41 years ago.

I welcome the continued all-party support for the campaign on behalf of the Dublin-Monaghan families. On Friday last, 15th May, I met with the Justice for the Forgotten campaign, which supports victims and their families, including the Dublin and Monaghan families, to discuss how the Government can best support their efforts. In 2014, Justice for the Forgotten received a grant of €48,000 from my Department's Reconciliation Fund to assist with its important work.

The Government fully supports the all-party Dáil motions of July 2008 and May 2011 urging the British Government to allow access by an independent international judicial figure to all original documents in their possession relating to the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. I have raised this issue with the British Government on a number of occasions and have received assurances from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that the British Government would consider afresh how it can respond to the Dáil motions.

I had a constructive telephone conversation with the Secretary of State on the day of her re-appointment on our shared priorities and the challenges that lie ahead. We agreed to an early meeting for a more detailed discussion. I intend to raise this issue when I meet with Secretary of State Villiers later today and I can assure the House that I will be pressing for a detailed response to our long standing request.

Common Security and Defence Policy

24. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if Ireland supported the European Union request to the United Nations to sanction military action against migrant boats crossing from Libya to Europe; the discussions that preceded this request; the persons who participated in these discussions; and the role Ireland had; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19324/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The current humanitarian situation in the Mediterranean is of great concern to Ireland, and our EU and Southern partners. Solutions must be found jointly to address a crisis on this scale and to prevent further loss of life.

The EU High Representative recently visited the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York to discuss aspects of the EU's response to the crisis, including the possibility of a CSDP operation. In her address to the Security Council, the High Representative made clear that the priority must be to prevent the loss of lives at sea and that this requires a comprehensive approach which must be undertaken in close partnership with countries in the region, with regional organisations, the wider international community and in particular with the UN Security Council. She recalled the EU's firm intention "to always respect international law, international

humanitarian law and human rights”. While reference was made to ongoing preparations for a possible naval operation in the framework of the CSDP, no request was made to the UN Security Council to sanction military action.

On 20 April, I attended a joint meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs and Justice and Home Affairs Councils to discuss migration issues, and in particular the situation in the Mediterranean. At that meeting, Minister Frances Fitzgerald and I, together with our EU partners, confirmed our strong commitment to act to prevent recurrence of such tragedies. We agreed that work would be taken forward along three strands: reinforcing Frontex activities to save lives at sea, a fairer sharing of responsibilities regarding resettlement and relocation projects within the EU and a range of options to combat organized crime networks and human traffickers.

The Taoiseach attended a special meeting of the European Council on 23 April at which Heads of State and Government agreed that the immediate priority is to prevent more people from dying at sea. They undertook to use all tools at the EU’s disposal and to work with countries of origin and transit of migrants to tackle the root causes of the current human emergency.

A comprehensive range of commitments were agreed under four broad headings: strengthening the EU’s presence at sea, countering traffickers in accordance with international law, preventing illegal migration flows and reinforcing internal solidarity and responsibility.

This comprehensive strategy included a commitment to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and destroy vessels before they are used by traffickers, who exploit vulnerable people for profit and put their lives at risk. The Council invited High Representative Mogherini to begin preparations for a possible EU CSDP operation to this effect.

At the Foreign Affairs Council which I attended yesterday, EU Foreign Ministers adopted a Council Decision to establish a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The Mission will be called EUNAVFOR MED and will implement its mandate in several phases. The first phase will focus on the detection and monitoring of migration networks through information gathering and patrolling on the high seas and in accordance with international law. A second phase will involve the boarding, search seizure and diversion of vessels of human traffickers who drive this trade in human misery and exploit people for profit. A third phase provides for taking measures against the vessels including through disposing of them or rendering them inoperable.

The Political and Security Committee, acting under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, will decide on when to make the transition between the different phases, taking into account any applicable UN Security Council Resolution and consent by the coastal states concerned.

In discussions to date Ireland has insisted that the EUNAVFOR MED operation should be carried out in full accordance with international law. We have also placed particular emphasis on ensuring that any vessels assigned to the CSDP operation will be ready and equipped to perform Search and Rescue tasks as necessary.

Separately, in line with the Taoiseach’s commitment at the European Council, the Government has despatched a naval service vessel and crew to assist in humanitarian search and rescue tasks in the Mediterranean.

Middle East Issues

25. Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the

Irish Government's position in relation to the ongoing wars in Libya, and elsewhere in the Middle East, in the context of the growing refugee crisis; his views that these wars are contributing to the refugee crisis, and if so, the demands the Irish Government has made, at European Union level, in relation to this; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19325/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): Recent months have seen Libya paralysed by intensifying conflict, with competing factions vying for political legitimacy and control of cities and infrastructure.

The continuing UN brokered talks on Libya are an important development. My hope is that this dialogue process will, with the benefit of full participation by all relevant actors, soon reach agreement on a government of national unity and a sustainable ceasefire.

I pay tribute to Bernardino Leon who has been leading the UN efforts to foster a negotiated political solution to the Libyan crisis.

In recent months, I have engaged in many discussions of the evolving Libyan crisis, including with my European counterparts at meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Council.

In my view, the lack of effective governance and the rule of law in Libya is one factor which contributes to the levels of uncontrolled and dangerous migration emanating from Libyan shores.

Ireland is supporting the development of a comprehensive strategy to address this human emergency across various strands at EU level. This includes tackling the root causes through continued provision of development assistance as well as supporting conflict resolution and capacity building in source countries in sub-Saharan Africa; preventing further loss of life at sea by countering the criminal activities of smugglers who drive this trade in human misery and exploit vulnerable people for profit; as well as performing search and rescue tasks as necessary. The overall EU strategy also envisages a fairer sharing of responsibility for relocation and resettlement on which Ireland's engagement is led by my colleague the Minister for Justice and Equality.

Human Rights Issues

26. Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has had discussions at European Union level over the serious, and without substance, comments by the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, labelling Venezuela as a country that supports terrorism and as a threat to the security of the United States of America; and if he acknowledges that this statement will only destabilise the Americas region. [19334/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The situation in Venezuela is a matter of concern to Ireland and to our EU partners and is monitored closely within the EU's Foreign Affairs Council. The recent steps taken by the United States are intended to impose financial and travel restrictions on seven named individuals in leadership positions in Venezuela whom the United States has identified as being involved in human rights violations. The accompanying Executive Order signed by President Obama provides the legal basis for the sanctions in accordance with US law.

The measures invoked by the United States have given rise to diplomatic tensions between the US and Venezuela and have been commented on widely. I am pleased that the US has advised that the measures in question are not directed against the Venezuelan people as a whole, only against the named individuals. Official sources have clarified that the US does not con-

sider Venezuela to be a threat to its national security and Venezuela is not listed by the US State Department as a state sponsor of terrorism. President Obama and President Maduro discussed their countries' bilateral relations at the Summit of the Americas in Panama on 10 April in what was described as a candid, serious and frank manner. Since then, a team from the US State Department has returned to Caracas, at President Maduro's invitation, for official discussions.

I am following the situation in Venezuela closely and with concern. Increasing internal tensions, political polarisation, and a severe economic crisis have led to serious shortages in medical supplies and daily goods. I am concerned that a severe humanitarian crisis may develop if the situation is not resolved soon. The deaths, casualties and detentions arising from the unrest in Venezuela require full, impartial investigation in accordance with due legal process. The apparently high levels of impunity in the case of serious crimes are a matter of further concern.

I share the view expressed by EU High Representative Mogherini, and by Venezuela's regional partners, that the government there must work with all parties and with civil society to overcome the difficult situation in the country. I encourage all sides to enter into inclusive and open negotiations to meet the legitimate concerns of the people of Venezuela. I remain of the view that the best hope for progress is an inclusive dialogue to address the challenges facing the country, fully respecting the democratic rights of people on all sides.

I welcome the recent report that Venezuela's National Electoral Commission have confirmed that legislative elections will be held by the end of the current year. It is essential that the elections, and the campaign preceding it, be held in a manner that is fully free and fair and in accordance with international standards.

Human Rights Issues

27. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views regarding the lack of a credible opposition to President Nazarbayev in the recent presidential elections in Kazakhstan; his further views regarding the freedom to organise a political opposition in Kazakhstan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19307/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I refer the Deputy to my written reply to his question of 6 May concerning the Presidential election in Kazakhstan on 26 April.

My reply referred to the Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission which was deployed at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. This Statement identifies certain issues which give grounds for serious concern, including the lack of genuine choice for voters between political alternatives. The Statement also notes that President Nazarbayev and his political party dominate politics in Kazakhstan and the Statement expresses concern that there is a lack of credible opposition, with several prominent critics of the government either imprisoned or living in exile. At the UN Human Rights Council last October, Ireland spoke at the Universal Periodic Review of Kazakhstan and expressed the hope that Kazakhstan would receive a visit from Mr. Maina Kiai, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

We welcome the fact that this visit took place in January and we look forward to discussing the Special Rapporteur's report of his visit next month at the Human Rights Council. It is also expected that the OSCE/ODIHR final report on the presidential elections is expected in the coming weeks. In the interim, I would take this opportunity to renew my appeal to the Kazakh authorities to respond positively to the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR report, includ-

ing previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations not already addressed in the electoral law.

Human Rights Issues

28. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide an update on the case of a person (details supplied); the length the Government are prepared to go to ensure that this person is released; the progress the Irish diplomatic service has made to date; the consular assistance that has been provided to this person, and his family; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19330/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): This Irish citizen's trial, having been postponed a number of times, has commenced. The next hearing is due to take place on 3 June.

At the last hearing of the trial, the citizen's application for bail, an application formally supported by the Irish Government, was refused along with other bail applications in this case.

Our two objectives in this case remain clear: firstly, to see this Irish citizen released by the Egyptian authorities so that he can return to his family and his studies in Ireland, and secondly to provide consular support for his welfare while he remains in detention.

The considered approach and sustained action that I and my officials have taken in this case has been to further these objectives, and most importantly to avoid any action that could be counterproductive or detrimental to this citizen's best interests.

It is important to bear in mind the role of the Irish Government where citizens are imprisoned abroad. Irrespective of any views regarding the fairness or appropriateness of any arrest abroad, the reality is that where an Irish citizen is charged with an offence under the law of a foreign country, it is the foreign law that applies and it is the relevant foreign court which decides matters such as bail and release. The decision to release this citizen will be a decision that is made solely by the Egyptian authorities.

Given that the trial is under way, the Irish Government must exercise restraint in its public comment. This is entirely consistent with our approach in other consular cases, in line with our clear objectives in this case and what we firmly believe to be in the citizen's best interests and to be most likely to contribute to a positive outcome for him.

Officials in my Department remain in ongoing contact with the Egyptian authorities and will continue to provide consular support both to the citizen himself and to his family in Ireland in the run up to the next scheduled hearing on 3 June, and to take all appropriate action that is in his best interests.

Humanitarian Aid Provision

29. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the support being provided by Ireland to Nepal, following the recent devastating earthquake; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19174/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Sean Sherlock): The earthquake in Nepal on 25 April has resulted in the deaths of over 8,000, with almost 18,000 injured and many thousands displaced. At least 66 people were killed and over 1,000 injured in a further strong earthquake on 12 May.

Following the disaster, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Charlie Flanagan, T.D., and I announced initial assistance of up to €1 million in Irish Aid funding for affected communities in Nepal. This included food, shelter, water, hygiene and basic medical supplies for affected communities. The funding has been provided to Irish NGOs who are working with partners on the ground in Nepal and through Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative.

We have airlifted 63 tonnes of life-saving humanitarian supplies which are most needed in this crisis, including tents, blankets, and tarpaulins, and water and sanitation equipment.

Irish Aid is currently arranging further airlifts of 50 tonnes of supplies to Nepal. These items are being directed to Irish Aid's NGO partners, Goal, Concern and Christian Aid, who are assisting communities in the worst-affected areas. This will bring Ireland's assistance following the disaster to over €1.5 million. A highly skilled member of Ireland's Rapid Response Corps was also deployed to Kathmandu to assist UNICEF in the water and sanitation area.

My officials will continue to liaise with our UN, NGO and Red Cross partners in Nepal on this tragic humanitarian situation and to review what further assistance Ireland can provide for the people most seriously affected.

Military Aircraft Landings

30. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is satisfied that the permissions granted by his Department for the landing of United States of America military aircraft at Shannon Airport, pursuant to the Air Navigation (Foreign Military Aircraft) Order of 1952, do not create a security risk for Ireland; if he has had discussions with either the Department of Defence or the Department of Justice and Equality, regarding the need for enhanced security measures at airports here, similar to the recent raising of security levels at United States of America military bases, in response to the threatening environment perpetuated by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19310/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): Security arrangements at Irish airports do not come under the remit of my Department. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has primary responsibility for the matter. Neither he, nor the Minister for Defence, has raised any issues in this regard with me.

United Nations

31. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his Department has put forward, or has taken a role in, the development of policies to strengthen the United Nations' remit, especially in relation to states where the government, and the rule of law, have failed, or where a former government without any democratic mandate is making war on its own citizens. [19203/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): In international efforts to find political solutions to end conflict we naturally look to the UN and the UN Security Council for leadership. In some situations of protracted conflict where Ireland has limited ability to affect real change on the ground, we focus on the humanitarian relief effort to alleviate suffering, in those areas where we can make a difference.

I believe that the Security Council must be better equipped to respond to the many security crises that confront us. Ireland has taken a lead role in calling for Security Council reform,

arguing for a more representative Council, improving its working methods and reform of the veto. Such reforms would better equip the Council to deal with conflicts such as those in Syria and Libya.

While the immediate prospects for a political resolution in Syria remain bleak, it is incumbent on all in the international community to support the new UN Special Envoy, Steffan di Mistura, in his efforts to progress a solution based on the Geneva principles which provide for transition to a new, agreed form of government within Syria. It also remains important that all regional stakeholders who are in a position to exert influence are fully engaged in UN-led peace efforts. Ireland continues to support a referral by the UN Security Council of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, and of the need for accountability for the multiple war crimes committed during the conflict.

Ireland has been strongly supportive of the efforts of the UN to facilitate an inclusive talks process aimed at reaching a political solution to the Libyan crisis. Libya is a country which, since the outbreak of violence last year, has been sorely lacking in the rule of law. The vacuum of effective state authority which has accompanied Libya's descent toward civil war in recent times has been cruelly exploited by terrorist groups including groups affiliated with ISIS. I would restate my hope that the progress made in the UN brokered talks on Libya heretofore can soon be translated into an agreement which can guarantee a better future for the people of Libya.

It is my hope that in the immediate to short term progress can be made on resolving these conflicts and the many other conflicts that confront us. In the medium term I hope that the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform will bear fruit and better equip the UN Security Council to respond to future crises.

Sovereign Debt

32. Deputy Thomas Pringle asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his attention has been drawn to the increasing concerns of vulture fund practices in countries such as Argentina; the efforts his Department has made to bring attention to the issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19326/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am aware of the challenges faced by a number of countries with regard to the restructuring of their sovereign debt. In the case of Argentina, where a minority of creditors have withheld their agreement to a proposed restructuring, a particularly bitter dispute has developed involving adjudication by a United States Court. We greatly regret that it has not proved possible to resolve this dispute thus far.

Ireland attaches considerable importance to the resolution of sovereign debt issues and, in common with our EU Partners, supports the recent and ongoing analytical work by the IMF on sovereign debt restructuring. We recognise the importance of an appropriate international agreement, built upon a market-based voluntary contractual approach regarding sovereign debt restructuring, taking account also of the significant economic, social and financial issues, including those relating to activities by so-called "vulture funds", which this entails.

We support efforts to resolve global debt issues through dialogue, in the most appropriate fora and using the most appropriate and effective mechanisms, to best support those countries most seriously affected.

I addressed the issue of debt restructuring processes in my reply to a Question on 6 May.

As I indicated then, Ireland is actively engaged in ongoing global processes to address the issue of sovereign debt restructuring. Work being undertaken at a number of levels, including in the IMF and at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Addis Ababa in July this year, offers the means for meaningful dialogue on the matter.

In partnership with our EU colleagues, we are working for the success of the Addis conference, which is central to the ongoing negotiations on a new framework for global development to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals. These major international negotiations at the UN are being co-chaired by Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN, with Kenya.

EU Membership

33. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on the implications for Irish foreign policy of a Greek exit from the eurozone and a British exit from the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19328/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As the Minister for Finance has advised the House, Greece continues to be the focus of considerable contacts among EU Finance Ministers, whose most recent meeting on the issue was held last week in Brussels. The Eurogroup statement of February 20th guides these considerations and work is ongoing.

Direct bilateral trade and financial linkages between Ireland and Greece are limited. In terms of the eurozone as a whole and wider implications, the Department of Finance's Stability Programme Update of 6 May 2015 states "While there has been no significant contagion to date, financial stress has the potential to re-emerge with the uncertainty surrounding developments in Greece. The risks of a return to global financial market turbulence could also possibly increase".

Regarding the debate around the UK's membership of the EU, that is an issue with which I am very closely engaged. Following his re-election earlier this month, Prime Minister Cameron has reiterated his commitment to holding a referendum on the country's EU membership by 2017.

Any such vote would, of course, be a matter for the UK people to decide. That said, my Government colleagues and I have been clear in voicing our view that joint British-Irish membership has been hugely beneficial to our country and our relationship with the UK. The important role the EU has played in the context of Northern Ireland should also not be forgotten, as the Taoiseach emphasised recently in a speech in Belfast. As Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, I am also very conscious of the contribution of the UK in terms of the EU's work in the foreign policy and development aid spheres.

Ireland's unique relationship with the UK – in economic, social, cultural and historical terms – means we have a deep interest in the outcome of this debate about that country's future in Europe. We also value the contribution the UK has made to the EU during the four decades we have been members together and we share a similar approach on many key policy areas. Given the importance we attach to their ongoing membership, a key priority will be ensuring that our UK partners remain fully aware of the potential consequences for Ireland and Irish-British links of any fundamental change in the nature of their membership of the EU.

I have addressed many of these points directly with Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond. I have also written to him following his recent re-appointment and will remain in close contact with him in the time ahead.

Humanitarian Aid Provision

34. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will report on the assistance provided to Nepal following the recent earthquakes and consequent humanitarian disaster; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19329/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Sean Sherlock): The earthquake in Nepal on 25 April has resulted in the deaths of over 8,000, with almost 18,000 injured and many thousands displaced. At least 66 people were killed in a further strong earthquake on 12 May.

On 27 April, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and I announced initial assistance of up to €1 million in Irish Aid funding for life-saving assistance for affected communities in Nepal. This included food, shelter, water, hygiene and basic medical supplies for affected communities. The funding has been provided to Irish NGOs who are working with partners on the ground in Nepal and through Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative.

We have airlifted 63 tonnes of life-saving humanitarian supplies which are most needed in this crisis, including tents, blankets, and tarpaulins, and water and sanitation equipment.

Irish Aid is now arranging further airlifts of 50 tonnes of supplies in the coming days. These items are being directed to our NGO partners, Concern, Goal and Christian Aid, who are assisting communities in the worst-affected areas. This will bring Ireland's assistance following the disaster to over €1.5 million. A highly-skilled member of Ireland's Rapid Response Corps was also deployed to Kathmandu on 1 May to assist UNICEF in the water and sanitation area.

My officials will continue to work with our UN, NGO and Red Cross partners in Nepal on this tragic humanitarian situation, and to review what further assistance Ireland can provide for the people most seriously affected.

UN Conventions

35. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on the recent use of cluster munitions by Saudi Arabia in its airstrikes against Yemen, as reported by Human Rights Watch, particularly in view of our stated commitment to the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19309/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): Ireland continues to support and encourage universalisation of the Convention in all multilateral fora and is deeply concerned about reports of any use of cluster munitions including recent allegations of their use in Yemen.

I call upon all states, including those States who have not signed the Convention, as well as non-state actors to refrain from using these weapons.

My Department is now preparing for the First Review Conference to the Convention, which will take place in Croatia in September 2015, and which presents an important opportunity to further strengthen and solidify the growing international norm against the use and retention of these inhumane weapons.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) was adopted at a Diplomatic Conference in Dublin in 2008. Ireland has been a major supporter of the movement to ban cluster munitions from the very outset of this initiative.

The Convention entered into force on 1 August 2010 and as of 25 March 2015 a total of 116 states have joined the Convention (91 States parties and 25 Signatories).

Common Security and Defence Policy

36. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will detail any discussions he has had regarding the tragic deaths of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea; if there is assistance that Ireland may provide; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19173/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The appalling tragedies in the Mediterranean are the result of continuing conflict and underdevelopment across the neighbouring region. Already this year more than 1,800 people are known to have drowned attempting the crossing to Europe, compared to just over 400 over the same period in 2014. It is essential that the European Union play its part in tackling this humanitarian challenge, in all its dimensions.

The Foreign Affairs Council, which I attended in Brussels on 20 April, focused on the situation, including in an emergency joint meeting with the Justice and Home Affairs Council. The meetings took place just after the tragedy off Lampedusa in which over 800 people died. The Council addressed the crisis again yesterday, 18 May, following up on the Special Meeting of the European Council which the Taoiseach attended on 23 April, and adopted a Council Decision to establish a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The Mission will be called EUNAVFOR MED and will implement its mandate in several phases. In discussions to date Ireland has insisted that the EUNAVFOR MED operation should be carried out in full accordance with international law.

Given the origins of this crisis, it is clear that there needs to be an immediate response at sea, to which Ireland is contributing directly by providing a naval vessel to participate in search and rescue operations. However we also need to respond in the wider region by addressing root causes. Political solutions are essential. In the meantime, there is a huge need for increased humanitarian assistance, which Ireland is providing. In recent weeks, we have provided funding of €1 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its work with migrants in Libya.

More broadly, Ireland's support for people affected by the Syrian crisis will total €41 million for the four years to the end of 2015. We have also provided almost €36 million in humanitarian funding to Somalia since 2008. To date in 2015, €1 million has been approved for the UN's Common Humanitarian Fund in Somalia, with a further €1.7 million to be provided to our NGO partners for their lifesaving work on the ground.

We are continuing to review the assistance which Ireland can provide in terms of the immediate humanitarian effort and long-term development needs.

Human Rights Issues

37. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a person (details supplied) is reportedly being kept in a section of a jail that makes it difficult for that person's parent to have contact with him during visits; and if he will try to use any influence he has to ensure the person is moved to different section, which will allow his parent better access to him, and more personal visits. [19341/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am aware of the situation as outlined by the Deputy.

Officials at the Irish embassy in Cairo remain in ongoing contact with Egyptian Government departments and officials regarding all aspects of the case. I can confirm to the Deputy that the Embassy has lodged a formal request with the relevant authorities seeking a move within the prison.

Given that the trial is under way, the Irish government must exercise restraint in its public comment. This is entirely consistent with our approach in other consular cases, in line with our clear objectives in this case and what we firmly believe to be in the citizen's best interests and to be most likely to contribute to a positive outcome for him.

Officials in my Department will continue to monitor this specific issue in particular and to provide consular support in the run up to the next scheduled hearing on 3 June, and to take all appropriate action that is in this citizen's best interests.

Northern Ireland Issues

38. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has contacted the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Ms Theresa Villiers, since her re-appointment to that post; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19225/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I welcome the re-appointment of Theresa Villiers MP as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. As Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, my working relations with Theresa Villiers have been very close and constructive, involving regular and in-depth engagement, in particular in the context of the Stormont House Agreement. I had a constructive telephone conversation with Secretary of State Villiers on the day of her re-appointment, 11 May, on our shared priorities and the challenges that lie ahead. In particular, we discussed the crucial work that remains to be done in implementing the Stormont House Agreement. I will also meet with her later today to discuss these matters and other matters of mutual interest and concern in more detail.

Last December the signing of the Stormont House Agreement demonstrated what can be achieved when the two Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive parties work together towards the shared aims of advancing the reconciliation agenda and building a more prosperous Northern Ireland. It is time to return to this work. I look forward to doing so in partnership with Secretary of State Villiers and in support of the power-sharing institutions in Belfast.

Consultancy Contracts Data

39. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Taoiseach the total expenditure on consultancy by his Department and the number of consultants engaged by his Department in the years 2011 to 2014; the names of the consultancy companies awarded contracts; the steps that have been taken to reduce the expenditure on consultancy and the reliance on consultants by his Department in these years, and for the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [18968/15]

The Taoiseach: The total amount of expenditure on consultancy by my Department in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 was €112,890.24. The majority of this expenditure related to the EU Presidency in 2012 and 2013.

A table details the number of consultants engaged by my Department from 2011 to the end

of 2014.

Year	Name	Details	Amount paid per Year
2011	QTS LIMITED	Health and Safety Consultancy and Safety Statement 2011.	€1,270.50
	TOWERS WATSON (IRELAND) LTD	Facilitation of ORP Workshops and Report - held end Nov 2011	€12,100.00
2012	QTS LIMITED	Annual Safety Review to include Risk Assessment Nov/Dec 2011 and Full Review & Update of Safety Statement 2012	€1,270.50
	CAROLINE ERSKINE	EU Communication Advisory Service	€25,830.00
2013	CAROLINE ERSKINE	EU Communication Advisory Service	€30,553.20
	Q4 PUBLIC RELATIONS	PR support for the Convention on the Constitution	€18,500.95
2014	Q4 PUBLIC RELATIONS	PR support for the Convention on the Constitution Plenary meetings	€8,408.29
	QTS LIMITED	PEEP Assessment and disabled access review	€2,091.00
	RA CONSULTING	Design and Implementation of a Staff Consultation Initiative	€9,298.80
	University College Dublin	Leadership Development Programme	€3,567.00

My Department has taken steps to reduce expenditure on consultancy and the reliance on consultants. My Department undertakes competitive tendering for contracts in accordance with the Office of Government Procurement.

Northern Ireland Issues

40. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach regarding his recent comments in Dáil Éireann on the Order of Business in respect of the Ballymurphy massacre, if any action was taken; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19147/15]

The Taoiseach: The text of a draft All Party motion was circulated to Party Leaders for their consideration last week.

Northern Ireland Issues

41. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach if he spoken, by telephone or otherwise, to the British Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron, since the British Prime Minister's re-election; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19149/15]

42. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach his plans to speak to the British Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron, regarding increased violence in the North of Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19150/15]

The Taoiseach: I propose to take Questions Nos. 41 and 42 together.

I spoke with Prime Minister Cameron following his success in the UK elections to congratulate him on his appointment as British Prime Minister.

I expect to meet with the Prime Minister in the coming weeks to build on our very close

relationship and to continue our work on sustaining and developing the strong and positive relationship that exists between our two countries.

I look forward to renewing our engagement on the full range of issues of common concern to the UK and Ireland, including all aspects of the current situation in Northern Ireland.

EU Membership

43. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach his views regarding the planned referendum in the United Kingdom in 2017 regarding a possible exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union; the actions Ireland is taking, in view of the fact the United Kingdom is our largest trading partner; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19151/15]

44. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach his views that Ireland and the European Union should make changes to prevent the United Kingdom from leaving the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19152/15]

45. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach if the European Council agrees that more should be done to prevent the United Kingdom from leaving the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19154/15]

The Taoiseach: I propose to take Questions Nos. 43 to 45, inclusive, together.

Other EU Member States in the EU share Ireland's strong desire for the UK to remain a member of the European Union. The European Council in June 2014 acknowledged that the UK's concerns need to be addressed.

The new British Government is now committed to holding a referendum on the UK's membership of the Union before the end of 2017. Our hope is that the British people will vote to remain in the European Union.

The EU is stronger with the UK as a fully committed member. Furthermore, as I have said before on several occasions, joint Irish-British membership of the EU has played an instrumental role in bringing our economies, peoples, and countries closer together. It has also played a significant part in supporting the peace process in Northern Ireland. A UK withdrawal from the EU would therefore be harmful to our interests and the strong relationship between our two Governments.

The challenge now is for the British Government to work together with all Member States and the EU institutions to help find a consensual basis for continued British membership of the EU. This is in everyone's interests, including those of the EU itself. It is my intention that Ireland will play an active and constructive role in any negotiation process.

Much will depend on the detail of the UK's proposals for EU reform and we look forward to soon learning more about what the British Government has in mind. Ireland has made it very clear that we are ready to consider the merits of sensible reform proposals that could improve the functioning of our Union. At the same time, we will be equally clear if we believe a proposal is undesirable or unachievable. We want to avoid any outcome that could undermine or otherwise adversely affect our Union.

The Government is determined to do all it can to help keep the UK in the EU. But we also recognise that we must be prepared for any scenario. That is why work is under way across Government to ensure that we fully understand the issues at stake.

My own Department is leading this work, in close cooperation with other Government Departments including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Finance.

Taoiseach's Meetings and Engagements

46. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Taoiseach if he has spoken to, or met with, the leader of the Scottish National Party; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19155/15]

Taoiseach (Deputy Enda Kenny): I met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at the last British Irish Council Summit which was held in the Isle of Man in November. I hope to meet with her again at the British Irish Council Summit which is convening in Dublin next month.

Central Statistics Office Remit

47. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Taoiseach if he is aware that the Office for National Statistics in the United Kingdom has, since 2011, systematically measured the personal well-being of the population in order to gain a more complete picture of national well-being; if he sees merit in statistics of this type being gathered in this jurisdiction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19269/15]

The Taoiseach: The Central Statistics Office (CSO) conducted a pilot survey on the topic of subjective well-being in Quarter 3 of 2013 as part of the Quarterly National Household Survey. Respondents were asked to answer the following questions using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means 'not at all' and 10 means 'completely':

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

These are the same questions as are being asked by the Office for National Statistics in the United Kingdom.

The results of the survey are currently being analysed and it is expected that they will be published in a special release by the end of June. That release will also contain the results of a set of questions on volunteering which were asked in Quarter 3 of 2013 and cross-classifications between the two sets of results.

Depending on user interest in the results, the CSO will examine the possibility of repeating the survey on subjective well-being on a regular basis.

Crime Data

48. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Taoiseach when the Central Statistics Office will begin to publish recorded crime statistics again; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19479/15]

The Taoiseach: The CSO will resume publication of quarterly Recorded Crime Reports in late June 2015.

Simultaneously, the CSO will publish the review of the quality of Garda recorded crime administrative data, identifying to the extent possible the statistical impacts as regards coverage and classification from the issues highlighted in the Garda Inspectorate Report.

Social Welfare Eligibility

49. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection her views on a matter (details supplied) regarding social welfare thresholds and tax relief; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19683/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The means test for social assistance payments takes account of the income a person or couple has in terms of cash, property (other than the home) and capital.

The social welfare code recognises the couple status of cohabiting couples and treats married and cohabiting couples in a similar manner. This situation is long-standing at this stage. The EEC Equality Directive 79/9 and the subsequent Supreme Court case (*Hyland v Minister for Social Welfare*, 1989) led to the change in treatment of non-married cohabiting couples in the social welfare code. The Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for the total income a married couple received in social welfare benefits to be less than the couple would have received if they were not married and cohabiting. The current treatment of married and cohabiting couples in the welfare system is in line with this judgement.

The treatment of cohabiting couples for the purposes of taxation is a matter for the Minister for Finance.

Social Welfare Overpayments

50. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the way an overpayment occurred in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; the amount of the overpayment; if the person can appeal the decision; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19164/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The overpayment occurred as the person in question was absent from the State between the dates of 5 September 2012 to 19 February 2013 while still in receipt of disability allowance (DA) contrary to the conditions for receipt of that scheme. The person in question failed to inform the department of this change.

The person concerned was notified on 15 January 2014 of the decision to disallow DA for the period that he was absent from the State and that an overpayment of €5,116.80 was being assessed against him as a result of this revised decision. He was given the option to request a review or to appeal that decision within 21 days of that notification. He did not avail of either option.

The department will be in contact with the person concerned in relation to proposals for the recovery of this debt. He will be given the opportunity to respond to these proposals.

Domiciliary Care Allowance Appeals

51. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal in respect of a domiciliary care allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19192/15]

Tánaiste and 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 3 March 2015. 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 case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Mortgage Interest Supplement Scheme Appeals

52. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will accept a late appeal against the decision to refuse mortgage support in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Kildare, whose support was withdrawn, if an oral hearing will be arranged; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19202/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): As outlined in previous replies to the Deputy, the most recent being PQ 15/5296, the documents outstanding to enable this case to be reviewed were set out to the client in letters from the Department on 16th May 2014, 6th August 2014 and 4th September 2014. The client was written to again on 5 February 2015 requesting outstanding information and indicating that if this was not received within 21 days no further review would be possible. As nothing further was received from the client a further letter was issued on 10 March, 2015 stating that the opportunity for a review has now closed.

Invalidity Pension Appeals

53. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the progress in determining an application for invalidity pension in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19205/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Invalidity pension (IP) is a payment for people who are permanently incapable of work because of illness or incapacity and who satisfy the pay related social insurance (PRSI) contribution conditions.

The department received a claim for IP for the person concerned on 13 January 2015. The person concerned was refused IP on the grounds that the medical conditions for the scheme were not satisfied. He was notified on 1 April 2015 of this decision, the reasons for it and of his right of review and appeal to the independent social welfare appeals office (SWAO).

The additional medical evidence submitted with your representations will be treated as a review request from the person in question. The review of the decision to disallow IP will be

processed as quickly as possible and when a decision is made the person concerned will be notified directly of the outcome. If the decision to disallow is confirmed, the person in question will retain the right to appeal to the SWAO.

Disability Allowance Appeals

54. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will urgently examine a review of an application for a disability allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19211/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal by the person concerned was referred to an Appeals Officer on 14 April 2015, who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Farm Assist Scheme Payments

55. **Deputy Seán Conlan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the reason a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan has not received a reply regarding a request to review the decision reached by her Department to reduce a farm assist payment that was lodged in January 2015; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19214/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an Appeals Officer, having fully considered all of the available evidence, decided to revise the means assessment in this case and, thereby, allowing the appeal of the person concerned.

Following the successful appeal, the person concerned submitted additional correspondence seeking a review of the revised means assessment. Appeals Officer has agreed to review his decision and the person concerned will be contacted when the review of his appeal has been finalised.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Eligibility

56. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she has considered extending social protection supports, including jobseeker's benefit and illness benefit, to self-employed persons; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19251/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Self-employed persons are liable for PRSI at the Class S rate of 4% which entitles them to access long-term benefits such as State pension (contributory) and widow's, widower's or surviving civil partner's pension (contributory) as well as maternity benefit, adoptive benefit and guardians payment

(contributory).

Self-employed workers may also access social welfare supports by establishing eligibility to assistance-based payments such as jobseeker's allowance and disability allowance. In the case of jobseeker's allowance they can apply for the means-tested jobseeker's allowance if their business ceases or if they are on low income as a result of a downturn in demand for their services.

In September 2013, the report of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare on Extending Social Insurance Coverage for the self-employed was published. The Group was asked to examine and report on issues involved in extending social insurance coverage for self-employed people in order to establish whether or not such cover is technically feasible and financially sustainable, with the requirement that any proposals for change must be cost neutral.

The Group found that the current system of means tested jobseeker's allowance payments adequately provides cover to self-employed people for the risks associated with unemployment. In this context, the Group noted that almost 9 out of every 10 self-employed people who claimed the means tested jobseeker's allowance during the three-year period from 2009 to 2011 received payment. Consequently, the Group was not convinced that there was a need for the extension of social insurance for the self-employed to provide cover for jobseeker's benefit.

The Advisory Group also considered that it would not be appropriate to extend social insurance to the self-employed for short-term illness supports, such as illness benefit. In making this determination the Advisory Group acknowledged that some self-employed people could continue to obtain an income while suffering an illness whereas an employee, experiencing a similar illness, might not. Furthermore, control difficulties might arise with a self-employed person self-certifying their non-participation in their business. On the other hand, the Group found that extending social insurance for the self-employed is warranted for cases related to long term sickness or injuries and recommended that Class S benefits should include the invalidity pension and the partial capacity benefit for an additional mandatory contribution.

Any decision to change these provisions in relation to self-employed persons would be a matter for Government to consider in a Budgetary context.

Departmental Funding

57. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the funding allocated to the school meals programme and the school books grant. [19277/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): The Government has allocated an additional €2 million for the school meals programme in 2015, providing a total allocation of €39 million. The programme provides funding towards the provision of food services to some 1,600 schools and organisations which benefits 207,000 children.

The additional €2 million will be used to increase payments to existing schools which are part of the Department of Education and Skill's initiative for disadvantaged schools 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools', (DEIS), with a focus on the provision of breakfast clubs. The Department is currently considering options regarding the allocation of the additional funding.

Funding of the school books grant scheme is a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Education and Skills.

Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance Scheme Payments

58. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the cost of increasing the back to school clothing and footwear allowance by €50 for each recipient of the allowance. [19278/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): The back to school clothing and footwear allowance (BSCFA) scheme provides a once-off payment to eligible families to assist with the extra costs when children start school each autumn. The Government has provided €44.3 million for this scheme in 2015.

In 2014, BSCFA payments were made to over 166,000 families in respect of over 304,400 children at a cost of €42.5 million. The rate of payment was €100 in respect of children aged 4 to 11 and €200 for children over 12 years in second level education. Payments will be made at the same rates in 2015.

Using the number of children covered by the scheme in 2014 as a basis, the cost of increasing the BSCFA payment by €50 for each eligible child would be approximately €15 million. Any changes to the scheme to increase the rate of payment would have to be considered in a budgetary context.

Disability Allowance Applications

59. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if backdated payments will be made in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; if she will investigate this case, as the person's means may have been calculated incorrectly for the period of suspension; if she will reinstate the entitlement for the period August 2012 to March 2014 as a matter of urgency; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19301/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person in question was in receipt of disability allowance (DA) from 4 April 2012. Payment ceased with effect from 28 August 2012 as it was decided that her means, which were derived from her spouse's employment, were in excess of the statutory limit for DA.

A new application was received from the person concerned on 28 February 2014 and was awarded with effect from 5 March 2014 based upon the circumstances of the person in question at that time. Limited backdating of DA may be considered in appropriate circumstances. If the person in question wishes to apply for the payment of DA to be back-dated, she should write to DA section setting out her reasons for the request and evidence of her eligibility for the earlier period and a decision will be made.

Guardian's Payment Applications

60. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the procedure to be followed in order to obtain a guardianship payment in respect of a person already in receipt of child benefit in respect of a child the person cares for; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19317/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Receipt of child benefit does not imply automatic entitlement to guardian's payment as there are a number of qualifying conditions which must also be satisfied.

Consequently, any person who believes they may be entitled to guardian's payment should complete and submit the appropriate application form, which is available on the Department's website www.welfare.ie or which can also be obtained by telephoning LoCall 1890 66 22 44.

The completed application will be examined by a Deciding Officer who will consider all of the evidence and make a decision on whether the person concerned is entitled to the payment.

Carer's Allowance Applications

61. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a decision will be made on a review of a carer's allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo. [19318/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The application from the person in question has been disallowed on the grounds that the applicant is working outside the home for more than 15 hours a week contrary to the statutory requirements of the scheme. The person concerned was notified on 12 March 2015 of this decision, the reason for it and of her right of review and appeal. The person in question has requested a review of this decision. The review is currently being processed and once completed, the person concerned will be notified directly of the outcome. If the outcome of the review is to confirm the decision to disallow, the person in question will retain the right to appeal the decision to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Disability Allowance Appeals

62. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a person (details supplied) in County Carlow will receive a reply to an appeal in respect of a disability allowance. [19352/15]

Tánaiste and 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 16 March 2015. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant papers and comments by or on behalf of the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought from the Department of Social Protection. These papers have been received in the Social Welfare Appeals Office on 16 April 2015 and the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Question No. 63 withdrawn.

Commencement of Legislation

64. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a commencement order will be signed regarding section 16 of the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014, which inserts section 51(2A) in the Civil Registration Act 2004, providing for marriages to be conducted in outdoor locations; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

[19359/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014 was enacted on 4th December 2014.

The provisions of the Act will be put into operation on the basis of an implementation plan involving both procedural and system changes. This work is being progressed as quickly as possible in order that the various provisions of the Act can be commenced.

The Act includes provisions to clarify what constitutes a “place that is open to the public”. This is to ensure that the public policy objectives with regard to the solemnisation of all marriages (whether civil, religious or secular) in both outdoor and indoor venues are upheld. These provisions are being prioritised for commencement.

It should be noted that marriages by religious or secular solemnisers may currently be solemnised at an outdoor venue with the agreement of the parties and the solemniser. The position in relation to venues (both indoors and outdoors) for civil marriages solemnised by registrars is that, under section 52 of the Civil Registration Act 2004 these are subject to “matters specified” by the Minister.

These “matters specified” have been revised to reflect the updated position and will be published very shortly. Civil marriages may then be solemnised outdoors with the agreement of the parties and the registrar.

Disability Allowance Applications

65. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if a disability allowance will be granted in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5. [19387/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The disability allowance (DA) application from the person in question was refused on medical grounds and he was notified of this decision and the reasons for it on 27 November 2014.

The person concerned subsequently appealed the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office (SWAO). His appeal was disallowed by an appeals officer (AO) on 29 April 2015 and he was notified of this decision in writing by the SWAO on the same date.

An AO’s decision is final and conclusive in absence of any relevant fresh facts or evidence. He may however submit a new application if he wishes.

Jobseeker’s Allowance Eligibility

66. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if an interim payment and-or jobseeker’s allowance is available in the case of a person (details supplied), when that person reaches 65 years of age; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19423/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person concerned may have the necessary number of PRSI contributions to apply for Jobseeker’s Benefit (JB). A decision on eligibility can be made by the Department once an application has been received. In cases where a person does not qualify for JB an application for Jobseeker’s Allow-

ance, which is a means tested payment, may be made.

Disability Allowance Appeals

67. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal for a disability allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; if she will expedite a reply. [19425/15]

Tánaiste and 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 9 April 2015. 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 case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Back to Work Family Dividend Scheme

68. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when payment under the back to work family dividend scheme will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19440/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The regulations which underpin the operation of the new Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) scheme were signed on 7 May 2015.

The claim for the person concerned, was received on 19 March 2015, is now awarded with first payment, including arrears issuing on 15 May 2015.

Disability Allowance Appeals

69. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a decision will be made on an appeal in respect of a disability allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19441/15]

Tánaiste and 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 12 May 2015. 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 case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Disability Allowance Applications

70. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if an application for a disability allowance will be processed in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19454/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I can confirm that the Department received an application for disability allowance (DA) from the person concerned. Unfortunately, the application form submitted by the person in question was not fully completed. The Department has written to the person in question on 12 May 2015, pointing out the information that needs to be supplied in order for a decision to be made.

A decision will be made on his application for DA upon receipt of the requested information and the person in question will be notified of the outcome.

Departmental Expenditure

71. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the total cost of relocating her Department staff in Letterkenny, County Donegal, from their High Road office to the Oliver Plunkett Road office, due to the discovery of asbestos material during renovations at the High Road office; and when the High Road office will be open to the public. [19475/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Department did not incur any additional direct costs as a result of the decision to relocate staff from High Road to our offices in Oliver Plunkett Road for a period during the renovation of office space in High Road. The move was managed locally by DSP staff and management within existing resources with a view to ensuring minimal disruption to public services.

The High Road Office is expected to re-open to the public in early June 2015.

Carer's Allowance Appeals

72. **Deputy Seán Conlan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the reason a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan has not received a reply in relation to an appeal in respect of a carer's allowance. [19485/15]

Tánaiste and 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 9 April 2015. 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 case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Benefits Data

73. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will provide, in tabular form, the number of applicants who have applied for farm assistance payments over the past ten years who have been successful and unsuccessful each year; the number who have appealed; the average waiting time for payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19500/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The information requested by the Deputy relating to the number of farm assist applications received by my Department, the number awarded, the number that have been unsuccessful and the average waiting time for payment over the past ten years is not available.

However I am informed that between 2005 and 2014 there was an annual average of 9,236 recipients of farm assist and a total of 1,684 appeals received by Social Welfare Appeals Offices. A breakdown of the number of recipients at the end of each year and the number of appeals received annually is detailed in the following tabular statement.

Farm Assist Recipients and Appeals received 2005-2014

Year	Recipients	Appeals Received
2005	7,824	114
2006	7,480	71
2007	7,396	66
2008	7,496	61
2009	8,972	137
2010	10,714	244
2011	11,333	220
2012	11,029	271
2013	10,303	286
2014	9,809	214

Jobseeker's Benefit Payments

74. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the estimated full year cost for replacing the three day rule for the payment of jobseeker's benefits, with a sliding scale system determined by hours worked. [19563/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The jobseeker's benefit and jobseeker's allowance schemes provide income support for people who have lost work and are unable to find alternative full-time employment. The 2015 Estimates for the Department provide for expenditure this year on the jobseekers' schemes of €3.01 billion.

It is a fundamental qualifying condition of both schemes that a person must be fully unemployed for four in any period of seven consecutive days, so a person working four or more days a week will not qualify.

It is recognised that a changing labour market has resulted in a move away from the more traditional work patterns, resulting in an increase in the number of persons employed for less than a full week.

This is an important policy issue for the Department but any changes to the current criteria could have significant cost implications for the jobseekers' schemes. In particular any change to jobseeker's benefit criteria would have implications for jobseeker's allowance and a range of other working age schemes. In this context the cost associated with moving the jobseeker's

benefit scheme to an hours-based system, as outlined, are not available.

The Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare has examined the issue of the interaction of the tax and social welfare systems to determine how the social welfare system can best achieve its goals of supporting persons through periods of involuntary unemployment, while incentivising work and disincentivising welfare dependency. I am currently considering the report of the Group.

Family Income Supplement Eligibility

75. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the estimated full year cost of replacing the 38-hour threshold for family income supplement qualification, with a sliding scale system (details supplied) that would reflect the fact that many persons may be working, or wish to work, less than 19 hours per week, and may be in just as much need as current recipients of this supplement. [19564/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The family income supplement (FIS) is an in-work support which provides an income top-up for employees on low earnings with children. FIS is designed to prevent in-work poverty for low paid workers with child dependants and to offer a financial incentive to take-up employment. There are over 50,000 families in receipt of FIS, an increase of 70 per cent since 2011. The estimated spend on FIS this year is approximately €350 million, an increase of €50 on last year. The average FIS payment per family is €118 per week.

To qualify for FIS, a person must be engaged in full-time insurable employment which is expected to last for at least 3 months and be working for a minimum of 38 hours per fortnight or 19 hours per week. A couple may combine their hours of employment to meet the qualification criteria. The applicant must also have at least one qualified child who normally resides with them or is supported by them. Furthermore, the average family income must be below a specified amount which varies according to the number of qualified children in the family.

The “hours worked” eligibility criterion has been reduced significantly since the introduction of the scheme in 1984, from 30 hours per week to 19 hours per week in 1996. The costs associated with replacing the 38 hour threshold for FIS qualification with a sliding scale system, as outlined, are not available. However, reducing the “hours worked” requirement would have implications for a range of other working age schemes and would have expenditure implications. In addition the proposal set out by the Deputy is significantly more complex than the present scheme and could require additional resources to administer.

Currently, persons subject to the contingency of unemployment may be supported under the jobseeker’s schemes. Under jobseeker’s benefit and jobseeker’s allowance a person may, subject to scheme criteria, work for up to three days and continue to receive support under the schemes.

Invalidity Pension Payments

76. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if the circumstances of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny will be examined as a matter of urgency, in respect of an overpayment made to that person by her Department, with a view to accepting a payment of €50 per week as an initial repayment. [19582/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person concerned is in receipt of invalidity pension (IP) which included an increase for a qualified adult (IQA) in respect of his spouse. Entitlement to this increase, which had been in payment with effect from 14 October 2010 at the maximum weekly rate, is subject to the means of the spouse continuing to be within the prescribed limits.

A condition of receipt of IP is that a recipient must notify the department as soon as possible of any changes in their circumstances which may affect their payment, including the circumstances of their qualified adult.

Following a review, a deciding officer (DO) determined that the person in question was entitled only to a reduced rate of IQA from 03 November 2011 as his spouse had means from employment which were not previously declared to the department. As a result of this revised decision, the person concerned has incurred an overpayment for the period 3 November 2011 to 15 April 2015. Notification of the revised decision issued to the person in question on 22 April 2015, setting out the reasons for the decision and advising him of his right to review and appeal.

A DO will contact the person concerned in due course regarding proposals for the recovery of the overpayment. He will be given an opportunity to comment on the proposals and/or propose alternative arrangements at that time.

Rent Supplement Scheme Payments

77. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if an increase in rent allowance will be granted in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow, in view of the special circumstances of their case. [19590/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Department has not been informed of any change of circumstance for this client. The client concerned is in receipt of his full entitlement to Rent Supplement based on monthly rent, weekly income and family composition. The client should advise the Department immediately of any changes in circumstances which might alter this entitlement.

Community Employment Schemes Operation

78. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the circumstances under which persons employed under the community employment schemes can have their placement extended; the number of extensions allowed in 2014, where community employment projects experienced difficulty in recruitment, due to lack of eligible candidates; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19594/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): With effect from 3 April 2000, lifetime participation on Community Employment (CE) by an individual is limited to:

- 3 years for persons under 55 years of age;
- 6 years for persons of 55 years of age up to State Pension age;
- Eligible persons in receipt of a qualifying disability-linked social welfare payment are eligible for **one** additional year on CE over the standard maximum participation caps, i.e. 4 years maximum time on CE for those under 55 years of age, and 7 years maximum time for those

between 55 years of age and State Pension age.

Participation on CE prior to 3 April 2000 is not counted. Offshore island residents are exempt from this participation cap, subject to the availability of places on island-based CE schemes.

The above maximum durations are strictly enforced to ensure fairness to all participants and to maintain throughput of places which allows more people to benefit from participation on the scheme.

However, there is provision for extending 10% of the places where a participant is only eligible for 1 year on the scheme. This normally applies to facilitate the completion of a recognised award by a participant, to complete work experience or to support the service where there may be delays in Garda vetting of posts.

The Department does not collate statistics on extensions allowed.

Rent Supplement Scheme Applications

79. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding rent supplement in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare. [19597/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The client concerned is in receipt of their full entitlement to Rent Supplement based on their monthly rent, weekly income and family composition.

Disability Allowance Appeals

80. Deputy John McGuinness asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the status of an application for a disability allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; if payment is being made and if arrears have been approved. [19605/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Following a successful appeal against a decision to disallow disability allowance (DA), the person in question has been awarded a DA payment with effect from 30 April 2014. His first payment was on 18 March 2015 and any arrears due will follow shortly.

Questions No. 81 to 83, inclusive, withdrawn.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments

84. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an alleged overpayment in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19623/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): From 31 January 2014, the person concerned had been in receipt of a supplementary welfare allowance payment of €186 per week. In the course of a review of this claim in June 2014, it was found that certain income from capital had not been declared. Current legislation requires the Department to assess means from the full capital value of any property owned by a claimant apart from the

family home.

The person concerned was written to on 9 July, again on 8th September 2014 and again on 22 January 2015 requesting further documents in order to assess any possible overpayment. As no reply was received, the client was notified that the total amount paid to him under SWA, i.e. €13,206, would become an overpayment and entered as a debt if the Department was not contacted before 24 February 2015.

Correspondence was received from the person concerned on 3 March 2015 that included a valuation of the property in question confirming the overpayment of the total amount paid. The total of the overpayment was reduced to €12,328.70 as a result of an inter-scheme adjustment on the award of jobseeker's allowance. A notification letter was issued on 15 May 2015 to this effect. There has been no recoupment to date as the person concerned is not currently claiming a social welfare payment.

Disability Allowance Applications

85. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a decision on disability allowance will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19641/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I can confirm that the Department has received an application for disability allowance (DA) from the person concerned. The Department has written to the person in question on 24 April 2015, asking him to forward information necessary to make a decision on his application which was omitted from his initial application. A final decision will be made on his application for DA upon the receipt of the above requested information.

Disability Allowance Applications

86. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will confirm the status of an application for disability allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [19661/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): In order to determine the circumstances of the person in question, his file was forwarded to his local Social Welfare Inspector. S/he will arrange to meet with the person concerned as soon as possible. A final decision on his entitlement to disability allowance will be given on receipt of the Social Welfare Inspectors report. The person in question will be notified directly of the outcome.

Disability Allowance Appeals

87. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding a disability allowance payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19681/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Department was received notification on 13 May 2015 that the appeal of the person in question has been allowed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office. The application is with a deciding officer for processing and the department will contact the person in question directly in due course.

Rent Supplement Scheme Administration

88. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when she will next review the rent supplement limits for County Meath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19684/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): The rent supplement scheme provides 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 approximately 69,000 rent supplement recipients for which the Government has provided over €298 million for in 2015.

The Department recently published a review of the maximum rent limits, “Maximum Rent Limit Analysis and Findings” and it is available on www.welfare.ie. The review finds that increasing rent limits at this time could potentially add to further rental inflation in an already distressed market, affecting not alone rent supplement recipients, but lower-income workers and students. Between the rent supplement scheme and the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) administered by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the State accounts for a third of the private rented market. The State is therefore a very significant player in the sector which has a responsibility not alone to rent supplement recipients but also to the market as a whole, including all those in private accommodation.

In light of the review’s findings, the Department will instead continue to allow for flexibility in assessing customers’ accommodation needs through the National Tenancy Sustainment Framework. Under this approach, each tenant’s circumstances throughout the country, including those in the Meath area, are considered on a case-by-case basis and rents can be increased above prescribed limits as appropriate. I am satisfied that this is the appropriate response at this time which has assisted in excess of 1,500 rent supplement recipients throughout the country to retain their rented accommodation.

The review clearly points out that the main cause of difficulty for persons renting or seeking to rent at this time is the much reduced availability of affordable private rented accommodation, which is representative of the position in Meath. The issue of supply is being addressed by Government through the Construction 2020 Strategy and the Social Housing Strategy. My Government colleague, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, is also considering a number of policy options in relation to achieving greater rent certainty.

I can assure the Deputy that I am keeping this matter under close review to ensure that the appropriate supports continue to be provided for rent supplement recipients.

Invalidity Pension Applications

89. **Deputy John O’Mahony** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will receive a decision on an invalidity pension review; the reason for the delay; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19685/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The department received a claim for invalidity pension (IP) from the person concerned on the 18 August 2014. The person concerned was refused IP on the grounds that, based upon the evidence supplied, the medical conditions for the scheme were not satisfied. The person in question was notified on the 11 December 2014 of this decision, the reasons for it and of his rights of review and appeal.

The person concerned requested a review of this decision and submitted further medical evidence on 27 February 2015 in support of his request. Following a review of all the information available it has been decided that there is no change to the original decision. The person concerned was notified on 14 May 2015 of the outcome of the review and of his right to appeal the decision to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office within 21 days.

Disability Allowance Eligibility

90. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding a pension in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19703/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person concerned is on a reduced rate of disability allowance as he has means assessed against him in relation to his spouse's employment. If there has been a change to this income or any other aspect of his means, the person in question should forward up to date details and evidence so that his entitlement may be reviewed.

Child Benefit Data

91. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the control savings and reviews recorded on child benefit in each of the past three years; the overpayments sought each year, and the repayments to date; the multiplier used in calculating control savings; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19704/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The vast majority of social welfare claimants are receiving their correct entitlements. In line with the commitments in the Compliance and Anti-Fraud Strategy 2014–2018, the Department aims to minimise risks of fraud and eliminate incorrect payments. This involves appropriate checks at the point of claiming, strengthened by systematic reviews of claims in payment and verification that the conditions for entitlement continue to be met.

Control activity is focused on prevention of fraud and error at claim application stage. Savings made from the prevention of fraud and error at application stage cannot be estimated as the claim will not go into payment. Reviews of claims in payment are also an essential element of the control programme of the Department. Control savings are used as a performance indicator for year-on-year control review activity and represent an estimate of the value of prevented future expenditure that would have been incurred had this control work not been carried out.

Control savings are calculated by applying validated multipliers to the difference in the rate of payment before and after the control activity. The multipliers for Child Benefit (CB) are as follows:

CHILD BENEFIT (applies to monthly rate of payment)	Multipliers
Termination	X 34
Reduction in Payment	X 12

Multipliers used in assessing control savings estimate the total future savings to the Department of a revocation or reduction resulting from a control action. The multiplier used is based on the average amount of time the person who ceases to claim will remain off the books before

returning.

Overpayments, on the other hand, arise in relation to past events where a Deciding Officer has sufficient evidence that a person has been paid an amount in excess of their entitlement for a given period, either through payment at a rate above that which they should receive or where they are paid beyond the relevant date.

The following table provides details regarding CB control activity and overpayments:

Child Benefit	Control Reviews	Control Savings Recorded - €M	No. of Overpayments Assessed	Value of Overpayments Assessed - €M	Recoveries€M
2012	421,144	€83.2	3,723	€4.9	€3.9
2013	375,332	€76.6	4,269	€5.5	€4.2
2014	409,917	€72.7	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Note: Overpayment recoveries recorded in any given year can be proper to overpayments relevant to other years. Overpayments recorded in 2014 form part of the statutory accounts of the Department and are currently the subject of an audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Department is committed to ensuring that social welfare payments are available to those who are entitled to them. In this regard, the control programme of the Department is carefully monitored and the various measures are refined to ensure that they remain effective.

Child Benefit Data

92. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the number of quarterly child benefit review forms issued in each of the past three years and in 2015 to date; if these form part of the control review process; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19705/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Child benefit is a universal payment made to parents/guardians for the support of their children. It is paid to some 615,000 families in respect of 1.18 million children, with an expenditure of approximately €1.9 billion in 2014.

Safeguarding the child benefit budget is a priority and the Department takes a proactive approach to ensuring that it is only paid to eligible families. A policy of issuing continuing eligibility certificates to parents commenced in 2008 and is still in operation; forming part of the overall review process.

Details of certificates issued since January 2012 are shown in the table:

Year	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
2012	114,970	83,740	107,749	75,693	382,152
2013	60,851	80,214	76,920	119,080	337,065
2014	121,326	90,889	93,692	65,763	371,670
2015	75,732	--	--	--	75,732

Free Travel Scheme Administration

93. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if

there is classification in the free travel scheme between the various groups that qualify for the scheme such as old age pensioners and persons with disabilities, that is, if there is a greater level of funding allocated to one group over the other; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19713/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The current free travel scheme provides free travel on the main public and private transport services for those eligible under the scheme. These include road, rail and ferry services provided by companies such as Bus Átha Cliath, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann, as well as Luas and services provided by over 90 private transport operators. There are currently in excess of 810,000 customers with direct eligibility with an annual allocation of €77 million.

The free travel scheme is available to all people aged over 66 living permanently in the State. Applicants who are under age 66 must be in receipt of a qualifying payment in order to qualify for the scheme. The qualifying payments for those aged under 66 are invalidity pension, blind pension, disability allowance, carer's allowance or an equivalent social security payment from a country covered by EC Regulations or one with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement.

Allocation of funding for free travel is not based on the various qualifying schemes but on expected passenger numbers who avail of their free travel pass, and as such there is no greater level of funding allocated to one group over any other.

Free Travel Scheme Data

94. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection in cases where disabled persons qualify for a travel pass but do not have access to public transport where they live, the outcome for the funding allocated to their travel pass under the free travel scheme; the options that are open to those persons in regard to recouping that cost to be used towards private travel arrangements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19718/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Allocation of funding for free travel is not based on the numbers on each qualifying scheme but on expected passenger numbers who avail of their free travel pass. It is not possible for an individual person who has qualified for the scheme to receive a cash payment instead.

Under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme (SWA) the Department of Social Protection may award a travel supplement in any case where the circumstances of the case so warrant. The supplement is intended to assist with ongoing or recurring travel costs that cannot be met from the client's own resources and are deemed to be necessary. Every decision is based on consideration of the circumstances of the case, taking account of the nature and extent of the need and of the resources of the person concerned.

Where the travel costs are non-recurring, the SWA scheme provides for exceptional needs payments to be made to assist with essential, once-off expenditure in exceptional circumstances. There is no automatic entitlement to such payments. Again, every decision is based on consideration of the circumstances of the case, taking account of the nature and extent of the need and of the resources of the person concerned. The ENP scheme is not intended to cover circumstances where responsibility for the payment or the expenditure rests with another Government Department or Agency.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance Eligibility

95. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if funding will be provided to separated parents, who are living a substantial distance from each other, to enable the child to visit the second parent by train or other public transport on a regular basis, given that the second parent is not living in the family home, and whose income is limited on social welfare payments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19730/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): Under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme (SWA), the Department may award a supplement towards travel related costs. The supplement is intended to assist with ongoing or recurring travel costs that cannot be met from the client's own resources and are deemed to be necessary. Every decision is based on consideration of the circumstances of the case, taking account of the nature and extent of the need and of the resources of the person concerned.

Where the travel costs are non-recurring, the SWA scheme provides for exceptional needs payments to be made to assist with essential, once-off expenditure. There is no automatic entitlement to such payments. Again, every decision is based on consideration of the circumstances of the case, taking account of the nature and extent of the need and of the resources of the person concerned.

If the Deputy has details of a specific case, they should be provided to the Department's Community Welfare Service for consideration.

Money Advice and Budgeting Service Funding

96. **Deputy Anthony Lawlor** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if additional funding will be provided to the Money Advice and Budgeting Service in view of the Government's announcement to strengthen the service's role, as part of a suite of measures to address mortgage arrears; if so, if she will provide details of funding increases; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19733/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is the statutory body responsible for providing information, advice (including money and budgeting advice service) and advocacy services on a wide range of public and social services. CIB delivers on this remit through a network of delivery partners which includes 51 local Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) and 42 local Citizens Information Services (CIS). In 2015 the CIB has been allocated a budget of €46m of which some €17.9 million is allocated to the MABS network of companies.

Proposals are being developed at present with a view to ensuring that MABS will play a greater role in offering information, advice and assistance to mortgage holders in arrears. Additional services to provide assistance in identifying the best options, completing financial statements and considering proposed solutions will be rolled out by MABS offices on a phased basis, following a process of engagement between the Citizens Information Board, MABS and other relevant stakeholders. This will ensure that mortgage holders in arrears have access to information on the range of supports and options available, advice on the ones most suited to their needs, and assistance in pursuing such options, where necessary.

Disability Allowance Appeals

97. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will expedite an appeal for a disability allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19770/15]

Tánaiste and 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 12 May 2015. 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 are received from the Department, the case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

Carer's Allowance Applications

98. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will receive a decision on a review of an application for carer's allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19773/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The claim from the person in question is currently under review in regard to medical eligibility as the care recipient has turned 16 and their domiciliary care allowance ceased.

Having examined all of the documents provided in support of the application and having weighed up the evidence a deciding officer has decided that the person being cared for is not so invalided or disabled as to require full-time care and attention as laid down in carer's allowance legislation. The person concerned was notified of this decision on the 9th April 2015, the reason for it and of his right of review to this office. He has submitted additional information in support of his continued eligibility which will be reviewed as soon as possible. Pending the outcome of this review the carer's allowance payments to the person concerned will continue.

Social Insurance Payments

99. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding a pension matter (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19790/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Credited contributions (credits) are awarded in circumstances such as unemployment or illness, to help protect the future social insurance entitlements of insured persons during periods when they may not be in a position to make paid contributions (via Pay Related Social Insurance or PRSI).

If a person is in insurable employment, they pay a PRSI contribution each week. PRSI contributions are not made when a person:

- is absent from work due to an illness; or
- is unemployed.

Where a person is unable to work due to illness or injury, they may be paid illness benefit and their contributions will continue while on this scheme.

If a person becomes unemployed, even temporarily, and does not qualify for an unemployment payment, they can sign-on for credits at their local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Office to keep their social insurance record up-to-date.

They will get a credit for each full week of proven unemployment. They must be available for work, genuinely seeking work and capable of work.

These credits are like the PRSI contributions you pay while you are working. Credits are usually awarded at the same class as your last paid PRSI contribution.

My Department is not advised when people working in temporary positions become unemployed during the year. It would up to the people themselves to advise their local Intreo centre and seek advice on the options available to them.

Information on all of the Department's schemes, including the availability of credited contributions, is available from all Intreo centres and Social Welfare Local/Branch offices. Information is also available on my Department's website (www.welfare.ie) and on the Citizens' Information website (www.citizensinformation.ie).

Disability Allowance Payments

100. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding disability allowance back money in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19804/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Disability allowance arrears will issue to the person in question in the next few days.

Fuel Allowance Payments

101. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will increase the free electricity allowance for persons with disabilities who have to use electric wheelchairs on a permanent basis and who have to recharge the batteries of the wheelchairs every night, as these additional costs should be taken into consideration in these cases; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19807/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): My Department pays an electricity or gas allowance as part of the household benefits package to 415,000 customers, at an estimated cost of €227 million in 2015. The allowance represents a contribution towards the energy costs of a household rather than meeting those costs in full.

The electricity allowance has a monthly value of €35 for both electricity and gas customers. The value of the allowance was protected in Budget 2015. Electric Ireland and Bord Gáis customers receive this amount as a credit on their bills. Customers who have switched to other companies receive a direct monthly cash payment. It does not increase where the customer uses more electricity, and there are no proposals for such a change. Any decision to increase the household benefits package would have budgetary consequences and would have to be considered in the context of budget negotiations.

Help will also continue to be available for people with special or additional energy needs through the exceptional needs payment scheme under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme. There is no automatic entitlement to such payments. Every decision is based on consideration of the circumstances of the case, taking account of the nature and extent of the need and of the resources of the person concerned.

Tobacco Control Measures

102. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Finance if he will confirm that the international tobacco industry will not be allowed to evade the taxation of cigarettes with new tobacco products such as heated tobacco cigarettes which it is actively developing and introducing to a number of new markets in Europe and elsewhere; his plans to ensure a co-ordinated Government response to the taxation of heated tobacco cigarettes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19664/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As the Deputy will be aware, the tobacco industry has developed a number of novel tobacco products, which include heated tobacco products. At present the tax treatment of tobacco products is provided for in Directive 2011/64/EU (the ‘Tobacco Products Tax Directive’), which harmonises the structures and definitions of tobacco products. Ireland has implemented this Directive through Chapter 3 of Part 2 of the Finance Act 2005. The Tobacco Products Tax Directive does not, at this time, explicitly provide for heated tobacco products, given these products are relatively new.

I am aware that products such as these products have been placed on the market in continental Europe, and that the tax authorities of our fellow Member States have taken different approaches towards taxing such products, reflecting their view of which product definition such products fall under. These products have yet to enter the Irish market, and as such have not been presented to the Revenue Commissioners by importers for the payment of duty. While a determination has yet to be made by the Commissioners as to which product definition such products would fall under in our excise law, I am confident that the Tobacco Products Tax Directive and our own legislation will allow these products to be subject to a duty of excise.

Overall, I am of the opinion that the best way forward in dealing with this matter is at a EU level by providing a definition of heated tobacco products in the Tobacco Products Tax Directive. I can inform the Deputy that the matter has been raised at EU level and officials from the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners are currently engaged in technical discussions with our European partners to examine the best possible way forward with regards to a harmonised definitions and tax treatment of these types of tobacco products.

Universal Social Charge Application

103. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Finance if the anomaly whereby pensioners with a pension in excess of €12,012 pay the universal social charge on all of their pension, which costs them up to €1,572, is likely to be addressed under the current pay review; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19772/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The Universal Social Charge (USC) was introduced in Budget 2011 to replace the Income Levy and Health Levy. It was a necessary measure to widen the tax base, remove poverty traps and maintain revenue to reduce the budget deficit. It is a more sustainable charge than those it replaced, and is applied at a low rate on a wide base.

The USC, like the Income Levy before it, does not apply to social welfare payments or payments of a similar nature. However, occupational pensions are liable to the USC, if the payment is greater than the exemption threshold, which from 1 January 2015 is €12,012 per annum. At that income point the application of the USC would result in a charge of €180 approximately per annum.

As you are aware, delivering on a commitment in the Programme for Government, the USC was reviewed by my Department in the lead up to Budget 2012. The report is available at my Department's website at www.finance.gov.ie. The issue of USC applying to occupational pensions of retired public servants who entered the public service before April 1995 was examined as part of that review. However, the Government decided not to exempt the occupational pensions of these individuals from the USC charge as it would be very costly and difficult to achieve, and it would involve all income earners with the equivalent income benefiting from the exemption. In addition, it would also undermine the principle of the USC being applied to income with few exceptions.

However, as a result of the review of the USC, the Government decided in Budget 2012 to increase the entry point to the Universal Social Charge from €4,004 to €10,036 per annum. It is estimated that this removed almost 330,000 individuals from the charge. An estimated further 87,000 individuals have been exempted from the charge as a result of the extended exemption threshold introduced in Budget 2015. This latter extension equalises the position for single individuals whose sole source of income is the State Contributory Pension with Public Service pensioners whose pension is at an equivalent level. Furthermore, I intend to continue to reform the tax system in this manner in future budgets, subject to having the required fiscal space. I would point out however, that the changes to the income tax system included in Budget 2015 mean that all those who paid Income Tax and/or USC in 2014, including pensioners, will see a reduction in their tax bill this year where income is equal.

Any review of public service pay is primarily a matter for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Notwithstanding this and the foregoing, I can assure you that the points raised have been noted and will be considered in future policy decisions on the USC.

Tax Code

104. Deputy Brendan Griffin asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider increasing the threshold for inheritance tax for families with one child; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19172/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) is the overall title for both Gift and Inheritance Tax. The tax is charged on the amount gifted to, or inherited by, the beneficiary of the gift or inheritance.

For the purposes of CAT, the relationship between the person who provides the gift or inheritance (i.e. the disponent) and the person who receives the gift or inheritance (i.e. the beneficiary), determines the maximum life-time tax-free threshold known as the "Group threshold" below which gift or inheritance tax does not arise.

There are, in all, three separate Group thresholds based on the relationship of the beneficiary to the disponent.

The Group A tax free threshold of €225,000, applies where the beneficiary is a child (including adopted child, stepchild and certain foster children) or minor child of a deceased child

of the disposer. Parents also fall within this threshold where they take an inheritance of an absolute interest from a child.

The Group B tax free threshold of €30,150, applies where the beneficiary is a brother, sister, a nephew, a niece or lineal ancestor or lineal descendant of the disposer.

The Group C tax free threshold €15,075, applies in all other cases.

Where a person receives gifts or inheritances in excess of their relevant tax free threshold, CAT at a rate of 33% applies on the excess over the tax free threshold. In recent years these thresholds were reduced and the rate has been increased in order to maintain the yield from capital taxes in the face of falling asset prices and as part of our fiscal consolidation efforts. In addition, taxes on capital are less harmful from an economic perspective than taxes on employment.

I am aware that the property market continues to improve, with positive developments which had been restricted to the Dublin area now manifesting in other areas of the country, though not to the same extent in terms of price rises, and I recognise that this has a bearing on taxation of the inheritance and gifting of property with respect to CAT thresholds. In this light, I will be keeping Capital Acquisitions Tax thresholds and other aspects of the tax under review, particularly in the context of preparations for Budget 2016 and the consequent Finance Bill. I do not, however, have any plans to modify an individual's threshold based on the number of his or her siblings.

VAT Rate Application

105. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide the individual measures which constitute the value added tax policy gap; and if he will provide the potential revenue foregone as a result of each measure. [19189/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As the Deputy is aware, the Value Added Tax policy gap measures the additional revenues that could in principle be collected if a uniform rate (i.e. the standard rate, which is 23% in Ireland) applied to all consumption, thereby eliminating the effects of reduced rates and exemptions.

Ireland operates a number of reduced VAT rates and exemptions which influence the size of Ireland's VAT policy gap. In this regard, VAT in Ireland is not purely treated as a revenue collecting mechanism. Ireland's VAT rate structure has clear social (e.g. 0% on food etc.) and economic (e.g. 9% on tourism related activities) goals which are in line with the EU VAT Directive.

The cost associated with abolishing exemptions and reduced rates of VAT would depend on the level at which the standard rate is fixed. At present the standard rate is 23%. However, it would in theory be possible to radically reduce the VAT policy gap on a revenue neutral basis - e.g. the Tax Strategy Group paper on VAT prepared in advance of Budget 2015 (available on the Department's website at <http://finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/14.04%20Selective%20VAT%20Issues.pdf>) estimated that a standard rate of 15% (the lowest level permitted under the VAT Directive) could be achieved on a broadly revenue neutral basis by merging the zero, 9%, 13.5% and 23% rates. However, this would involve applying VAT to food, children's clothes and oral medicines as well as raising the VAT rate on a range of other areas of consumption such as fuel and hospitality services.

The cost of maintaining zero and reduced rates in the context of leaving the standard rate at its current level of 23% is set out in the following table. This is a straight line calculation and

takes no account of changes to spending behaviours.

Rates	Amount
Zero rate items	€2.1 billion
9%	€1.8 billion
13.5%	€2.7 billion

These figures are the most recent figures provided by the Revenue Commissioners which are available in its online ready reckoner (available at www.revenue.ie/en/about/statistics/ready-reckoners.pdf).

Costings related to exempted services such as transport, education and charities are not available.

Living City Initiative

106. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will increase the maximum floor area of eligible buildings under the living city initiative, in view of concerns that the cap of 210 sq. m. per project will exclude many pre-1915 properties within the designated areas. [19201/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The Living City Initiative is a targeted tax incentive aimed at the regeneration of houses in the parts of the inner cities which are most in need of regeneration. The residential element of the relief was initially targeted at Georgian houses but the scope was later extended to buildings which were constructed before 1915 for use as a dwelling, following an independent ex ante cost benefit analysis by Indecon Economic Consultants.

Previous owner occupier and section 23 type schemes had a maximum floor area limit of 125 square metres. The Living City Initiative limit of 210 square metres is larger than previous schemes to take account of the fact that some pre-1915 houses tended to be constructed on a grander scale.

In addition, it is important to note that “house” includes any building or part of a building used or suitable for use as a dwelling. Many of the larger houses in the Special Regeneration Areas have been split into units, for example, there may be a commercial premises on the ground floor with a residential premises on the upper floors, or a house may be divided into a number of residential apartments. In that case, expenditure incurred on the unit that the owner occupies as his sole or main residence should qualify for relief where the necessary conditions are met.

As the scheme rolls out over the coming months, all aspects of it will be kept under review. It is important to note that I do not see this as a widespread initiative, as it is targeted at regenerating those areas which are most in need of attention.

IBRC Liquidation

107. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance the amount in fees KPMG received for providing advice before, during and after the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation was liquidated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19207/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I note that I answered a very similar

question for the Deputy on 30th April 2015.

I am advised that due to commercial confidentiality and sensitivities, the Special Liquidators do not propose to provide details of amounts due and paid to KPMG by Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited prior to the appointment of the Special Liquidators. However, any amounts owing at the date of the appointment of the Special Liquidators rank as unsecured claims. Amounts due and payable to KPMG since the appointment of the Special Liquidators are detailed in the progress update report of 12 March 2015, which is available on the Department of Finance website at http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/DOF_IBRC_Progress%20update%20report%20to%2031%20Dec%2014.pdf.

Total fees of €76m were paid to KPMG (KPMG Special Liquidator team: €71.4m and KPMG migration team: €4.6m) to 31 December 2014 of which approximately €4.5 million was recovered from NAMA. In addition a rebate of €5 million was agreed with KPMG following discussions at the request of the Minister.

Tax Relief Abolition

108. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Finance when tax relief for mortgages for principal residences will end; his plans to offset the negative financial impact of such a decision on mortgage holders. [19213/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The Deputy will be aware that mortgage interest relief has been abolished for homes purchased since 1 January 2013. Up until 2018 however, tax relief continues to be available for interest paid on all qualifying home loans taken out on or after 1 January 2004 and on or before 31 December 2012, regardless of whether the individuals concerned are first-time buyers or non-first-time buyers.

This Government is committed to helping address the particular problems faced by those that bought homes at the height of the property boom between 2004 and 2008. In this regard, in Budget 2012, I fulfilled the commitment in the Programme for Government to increase the rate of mortgage interest relief to 30 per cent for first time buyers who took out their first mortgage in that period. This was the period during which house prices peaked. This 30% rate will continue to be applicable to these first-time buyers for the remaining years that mortgage interest relief continues to be available. In the absence of this change the mortgage interest relief available would have gradually reduced to a rate of 15%.

Single individuals, married couples and civil partners that are first-time buyers, qualify for mortgage interest relief for the first seven years of their mortgage up to a maximum ceiling of €10,000 and €20,000 respectively. Thereafter relief is restricted to ceilings of €3,000 and €6,000 respectively.

The system of mortgage interest relief is designed and targeted in such a way that the relief is of greater value in the early years of a qualifying loan where the interest represents a greater proportion of the repayment. Mortgage interest relief is of lesser value to individuals whose repayments are made up of a higher proportion of principal than interest, as would generally be the case for those who move in to the eighth and subsequent years of their loans. It is worth noting that the application of the ceilings already work to reduce the relief available in a gradual manner. In addition, as the amount of interest payable reduces as a mortgage is paid down, the level of mortgage interest relief also reduces in tandem.

Given the additional relief already available to those that purchased their homes between 2004 and 2008, over and above that available to other qualifying homeowners and given that

mortgage interest relief has now lapsed in terms of new qualifying loans, I am not convinced of the merits of revisiting the provisions at this stage.

IBRC Liquidation

109. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Finance the legal challenges or investigations in place which could prolong the process leading to the conclusion of the liquidation of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation; and if in place, if he will provide details of the challenges or investigations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19237/15]

110. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Finance the timeframe for the conclusion of the liquidation of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19252/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 109 and 110 together.

It is too early at this stage to advise on the likely timeframe for conclusion of the liquidation. Significant progress has been made to date in winding up the affairs of IBRC but further work remains.

A progress update report published in March 2015, which is available on the Department of Finance website, highlights the progress which has been made since the liquidation of IBRC in February 2013 while also highlighting the key tasks remaining in the liquidation.

The liquidation of IBRC can only be concluded once all assets are realised, all creditor claims have been resolved (including those subject to litigation) and all surplus funds have been distributed to creditors.

There are a number of challenges given the volume of litigation involving IBRC and the length of time it takes for each case to be heard and determined. IBRC is currently party to over 700 legal cases which are at various stages in the litigation process.

A number of significant pieces of litigation have been delayed as a result of applications by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions requesting that criminal cases relating to individuals in IBRC take precedence over civil cases. This has resulted in the civil actions relating to liquidation issues being delayed until 2017/2018.

In addition, and while this is not expected to prolong the liquidation, the Special Liquidators have also been issued with a Direction to investigate various transactions and to report to me by 31 August 2015.

NAMA Expenditure

111. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Finance the total cost since the establishment of the National Asset Management Agency for advisers, consultants, lawyers, auctioneers and public relations companies; if he will provide details of the top 20 cumulative payments over the years to third party organisations and persons for their services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19253/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by NAMA that the breakdowns of the costs and supplier sought by the Deputy are as set out in the following table.

Total spend on advisers, consultants, lawyers and auctioneers: inception to 2014.

Legal, consulting and advisory fees as per the published accounts for 2010 to 2014 and include invoices paid to suppliers and the movement in expense accruals.

Legal, Consultants and advisory	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Portfolio Management fees	5,087	15,992	6,882	5,549	3,775	37,285
Legal fees	3,311	9,478	4,634	2,975	8,574	28,973
Due diligence (further breakdown below)	29,605	44,505	4,086	-	-	78,196
Other internal audit fees	-	-	288	-	-	288
Tax fees	463	562	531	1,223	754	3,533
Cross operational organisational project	-	-	-	193	43	236
Financial adviser and consultancy fees	5,014	12	55	19	-	5,100
Total	43,480	70,549	16,476	9,959	13,146	153,610
Less due diligence costs recovered on loan acquisitions	(29,605)	(34,505)	-	-	-	(64,110)
	13,875	36,044	16,476	9,959	13,146	89,500
Due diligence breakdown						
Legal	7,062	7,053	85	-	-	14,200
Loan valuation	9,295	20,900	2,187	-	-	32,382
Property	4,419	7,607	513	-	-	12,539
Audit	8,829	8,945	1,301	-	-	19,075
Total non-recurring due diligence costs	29,605	44,505	4,086	-	-	78,196

Note: NAMA do not make any payments to PR firms directly; payments are made by the NTMA and recharged to NAMA via the NTMA General recharge.

Top twenty cumulative payments to suppliers: inception to 2014

Supplier Name	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
KPMG	7,477	9,971	4,615	1,067	458	23,588
PriceWaterhouse Coopers	8,330	4,341	1,370	73	182	14,297
Ernst & Young Chartered Accountants	1,521	6,867	113	0	0	8,501
Alvarez & Marsal Europe Llp	2,214	4,410	482	0	0	7,106
FTI Consulting Ltd	881	2,676	786	0	0	4,342
UHY Hacker young Llp	659	2,096	1,155	0	0	3,909
UBS Limited	0	0	50	0	3,850	3,900
Jones Lang LaSalle Ltd	824	2,406	860	0	0	4,090
Deloitte & Touche	1,438	1,487	7	0	0	2,933
Aon Risk Solutions	0	459	934	788	649	2,830
Arthur Cox	1,033	669	568	311	224	2,804
McCann Fitzgerald	0	262	273	634	1,497	2,667
Hogan Lovells International Llp	2,197	1,046	144	0	852	4,239
Eugene F Collins	269	0	272	1,888	25	2,454
Grant Thornton	123	1,029	1,372	567	57	3,146

Supplier Name	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Allen & Overy Llp	922	679	583	527	0	2,711
Donal O'Buchalla & Co Ltd	329	873	2	0	0	1,204
Dillon Eustace	709	428	5	0	0	1,141
Smith & Williamson Freaney Ltd	110	788	165	0	52	1,115
Eastdil Secured LLC	0	0	0	1,109	0	1,109

Note: Top twenty supplier payments above are the cumulative of all expense types outlined in part one of the response which includes due diligence expenses incurred at the inception of NAMA which were later recovered from the Participating Institutions.

NAMA Operations

112. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Finance the timeframe for the winding down of the National Asset Management Agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19255/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As I recently highlighted, in my response to Dáil Question 12 on 7 May 2015, I am advised that the NAMA Chief Executive, in his opening address to the Public Accounts Committee on 18 December 2014, stated that NAMA is aiming to redeem a cumulative 80% (€24 billion) of its senior debt by the end of 2016.

To date, NAMA has redeemed a total of €17.8bn, that is 58%, of its senior debt. NAMA also hopes that it will have redeemed all of its senior bonds by the end of 2018 a full two years ahead of schedule. NAMA's success is providing increasing visibility regarding the elimination of the State's contingent liability through the accelerated redemption of NAMA's government guaranteed senior notes.

The NAMA Chief Executive stated that these targets were predicated on conditions in the Irish market remaining favourable and on NAMA being in a position to retain sufficient specialist staff to enable it to generate the optimal financial return from the realisation of its residual loan portfolio.

Financial Services Regulation

113. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if his Department has examined the option of exempting all small and medium enterprises with turnover of less than €150,000 from regulatory requirements in order to lessen the administrative and financial burden; the estimated cost of this to the Exchequer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19256/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As Minister for Finance, I have responsibility for the development of the legal framework governing financial regulation, while the day to day responsibility for the supervision of financial institutions is a matter for the Central Bank which is statutorily independent in the exercise of its regulatory functions.

In relation to regulatory requirements, the Central Bank does not place any requirements on SMEs other than those authorised as a financial service provider. While the Central Bank has certain protections in place for SMEs, for example the Code of Conduct for Business Lending to Small and Medium Enterprises, the Central Bank does not place any requirements on SMEs.

The Central Bank's risk-based framework for the supervision of regulated firms is proportionate to the nature, scale and complexity of a regulated financial services provider while, at the same time, ensuring an adequate level of protection for consumers who avail of the financial service. In that regard, the most significant firms - those with the ability to have the greatest impact on financial stability and the consumer - receive a high level of supervision. Conversely, smaller financial service providers that pose a much lower risk are supervised accordingly.

Other regulatory requirements for this sector are primarily a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. However I can advise the Deputy of the following changes which I have implemented in order to assist small to medium enterprises in lessening the administrative and financial burden.

Small businesses with a low turnover can opt to be exempt from VAT thereby avoiding the administrative burden that VAT registration entails. The current thresholds are €37,500 for services and €75,000 for goods, in a 12 month period, these thresholds increased in 2008 from €35,000 and €70,000 for services and goods respectively. Any increase in the thresholds above the level of inflation would require a derogation from EU VAT law and agreement by all 28 Member States before it could be introduced.

Businesses with an annual turnover of €2 million or less can opt to account for VAT on a cash receipts basis, where VAT is not required to be paid until payment for the supply is received.

VAT returns are generally made bimonthly, but in order to reduce administrative burdens Revenue allow half-yearly filing to taxpayers with an annual VAT liability of under €3,000, and filing three times a year to taxpayers with an annual VAT liability of between €3,001 and €14,400.

In Finance Act 2014 the special relief reducing the standard rate of Alcohol Products Tax by 50% on beer produced in small independent breweries which produce not more than 20,000 hectolitres per annum was extended to apply to small independent breweries which produce not more than 30,000 hectolitres per annum.

I would also refer the Deputy to my written reply today to his question regarding the provisions exempting small and medium enterprises from corporation tax and exempting the investors in such enterprises from capital gains tax.

Tax Code

114. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to make changes to the capital acquisitions tax and capital gains tax rules in order to facilitate seamless business succession; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19260/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the following measures are currently in place to facilitate business succession.

Capital Gains Tax

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) is charged at the rate of 33% in respect of gains on the disposal of assets. The first €1,270 of gains made by an individual in any year is exempt from CGT.

A relief from CGT, known as retirement relief, is available where an individual aged 55 or over is disposing of business or agricultural assets. In order to qualify for the relief, those assets must have been owned and used for business or farming purposes for a period of 10 years prior

to the disposal. Retirement relief has been available since the introduction of CGT in 1975.

In the case of disposals outside the family, full relief applies where the consideration for the disposal is €750,000 or less. The threshold is reduced to €500,000 where the person disposing of qualifying assets is aged 66 or over and the disposal takes place on or after 1 January 2014. Marginal relief applies where the consideration slightly exceeds the relevant thresholds.

Where the disposal is within the family, for example, a disposal by a parent to a son or daughter, there is no upper limit on the relief except where the person who is disposing of the qualifying assets is aged 66 or over and the disposal takes place on or after 1 January 2014. In such a case, the relief is capped at €3m.

Capital Acquisitions Tax

Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) is the overall name for both Gift and Inheritance tax. The tax is charged on the amount gifted to, or inherited by, the beneficiary of the gift or inheritance.

For the purposes of CAT, the relationship between the person who provides the gift or inheritance (i.e. the donor) and the person who receives the gift or inheritance (i.e. the beneficiary), determines the maximum life-time tax-free threshold known as the “Group threshold”- below which gift or inheritance tax does not arise.

There are, in all, three separate Group thresholds based on the relationship of the beneficiary to the donor.

Group A: tax free threshold €225,000 applies where the beneficiary is a child (including adopted child, stepchild, and certain foster children) or minor child of a deceased child of the donor. Parents also fall within this threshold where they take an inheritance of an absolute interest from a child.

Group B: tax free threshold €30,150 applies where the beneficiary is a brother, sister, a nephew, a niece or lineal ancestor or lineal descendant of the donor.

Group C: tax free threshold €15,075 applies in all other cases.

Where a gift or inheritance consists of business property (such as land, buildings, plant and machinery), the value of the business may be reduced by 90% for CAT purposes provided certain conditions are met, for example, minimum periods of business usage of the property both before and after the gift or inheritance. This specific relief from CAT on the transfer of businesses by way of gift or inheritance was introduced in 1994 and is known as CAT Business Relief.

The introduction of business relief was an acknowledgement by the government of the day that it wished to encourage entrepreneurial activity and also prevent the forced sale of trading entities to pay significant CAT liabilities.

As stated, business relief reduces the taxable value of qualifying business property by 90% when calculating CAT.

Therefore, when business relief applies in full, business property with a market value of, say, €1m, would be treated as worth only €100,000 when calculating CAT. This can have the effect of reducing the effective rate of CAT from 33% to 3.3% on the transfer of a business. Business relief or CAT agricultural relief may also be availed of in the farming sector

It would be inappropriate for me to discuss specific potential measures which may be reviewed as part of the Budget process. However, I am open to the consideration of proposals

the Deputy or others may wish to put forward as part of the pre-Budget consultation process.

VAT Rebates

115. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if he has explored the possibility of offering a rebate on value added tax as paid by the public service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19265/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Generally, activities engaged in by public bodies are outside the scope of VAT and therefore they have no entitlement to VAT deductibility on their inputs and do not account for VAT on their supplies. Where their activities fall within the scope of VAT, for example, where their services are in competition with similar services provided by taxable private sector entities, they are required to register and account for VAT.

The provision of a VAT rebate scheme in relation to non-taxable services provided by public bodies would confer no benefit on the exchequer in that any cost reduction for a public body would be matched by an equivalent reduction in net tax revenues. In addition, competition between public and private sector bodies would be distorted as public bodies engaged in the provision of non-taxable services would have a cost advantage over private sector bodies engaged in the provision of similar non-taxable services.

The VAT treatment of public bodies generally is a complex policy issue, which is being examined currently at EU level. I look forward to considering whatever proposal emerges.

Tax Code

116. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if he has examined exempting corporation tax due on small and medium enterprises; if he has explored exempting capital gains tax for all investors in small and medium enterprises; the effect of this on Exchequer revenue generation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19266/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I would like to inform the Deputy that measures have been introduced in the Taxes Acts in recent years which benefit small and medium enterprises.

A 3-year tax relief for start-up companies commencing a new trade was introduced in 2009, and extended in subsequent Finance Bills, as a support to encourage new business development. The relief is granted in respect of the profits of a new trade and chargeable gains on the disposal of any assets used for the purposes of the new trade. The relief is granted by reducing the corporation tax on profits relating to the trade to nil where the total amount of corporation tax payable by the company for an accounting period does not exceed €40,000. Marginal relief is granted on a tapering basis where the total amount of corporation tax liability for the accounting period is between €40,000 and €60,000.

The qualifying period has been extended in subsequent Finance Acts, and the relief is now available to qualifying companies commencing to trade up to and including 2015. As part of one of the early extensions of the relief, in Finance Act 2011, the basis on which relief is computed was changed to link the reduction in corporation tax to the amount of employers' PRSI paid in an accounting period, subject to a limit of €5,000 per employee and an aggregate limit of €40,000. The purpose of this change was to better target the relief at companies generating

employment.

Subsequent amendments have also extended the relief to provide that, where a start-up company does not have sufficient profits to claim the relief in a given year, any relief unclaimed in the first three years can be carried forward into future years for use against future corporation tax liabilities.

The total annual cost of the relief is €6m, and it was due to expire at the end of 2014. However in last year's Finance Bill it was extended to the end of 2015, in order to allow for a review of the operation of this measure to take place in 2015 to ensure that it meets the policy objectives of creating jobs and activity in Ireland and provides value for money for the Irish taxpayer.

I would also mention that certain small enterprise grants made under section 10(5) of the Údarás na Gaeltachta Act, 1979 and section 21(5)(a) (as amended by the Industrial Development (Amendment) Act, 1991) of the Industrial Development Act, 1986 are not liable to corporation tax under TCA, section 223.

Capital Gains Tax

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) is charged at the rate of 33% in respect of gains on the disposal of assets. The first €1,270 of gains made by an individual in any year is exempt from CGT.

The Finance Act 2014 provides relief from a future CGT liability for entrepreneurs who, on or after 1 January 2014 and on or before 31 December 2018, invest the proceeds of an earlier disposal in respect of which CGT was paid in new business ventures, which are subsequently sold.

A qualifying enterprise for the purpose of the relief is defined as an enterprise which, at the time of the making of the initial risk finance investment, is a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise, as defined in Article 2 of the Annex to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 and which:

- has not been carrying on any business, trade or profession, or
- has been carrying on a trade, business or profession for less than 7 years.

The relief is in the form of a tax credit against any capital gains tax liability on the future disposal of chargeable business assets of the qualifying enterprise made more than 3 years after they were acquired. The tax credit will be the lower of:

- the CGT paid on the earlier disposal where all the consideration on the disposal, apart from any CGT paid, is invested in chargeable business assets (or a proportionate amount where less than the full amount is reinvested), and
- 50 per cent of the CGT payable on the disposal of chargeable business assets.

Chargeable business assets are assets used wholly for the purposes of a new business carried on by an individual or new ordinary shares issued on or after 1 January 2014 in a qualifying company in which the shareholder is a full-time working director. The assets must have been acquired at a cost of not less than €10,000. In the case of investment through a company, each shareholder must own not less than 15% of the shares in the qualifying company carrying on the new business (or in a holding company which owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of a qualifying company carrying on a new business) and must be a full-time working director in the qualifying company. Assets held as passive investments do not qualify for the relief.

If the proceeds of a disposal of chargeable business assets are in turn reinvested in another

new business, CGT relief can be claimed on the same basis as outlined above. At the time of its introduction, the CGT entrepreneur relief was estimated to cost €20m in a full year.

I have no plans to introduce full exemptions on the lines of those referred to by the Deputy.

Tax Relief Availability

117. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance if his Department has explored applying a relief similar to the United Kingdom's entrepreneurs' relief; the cost of implementing same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19267/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As the Deputy will be aware, my Department carried out a review of the Employment and Investment Incentive (EII) and Seed Capital Scheme (SCS) in advance of the recent Budget. Part of that review included a public consultation process. A report on this review was published on Budget Day and is available on the Budget website.

One of the options considered in the review was the introduction of a scheme similar to the UK EIS as there is a perception that the UK scheme is far more generous than the EII. However, the level of relief available under the UK scheme of 30% is less than the EII which provides up to 40% relief. The main advantage of the UK scheme appears to be the availability of CGT relief.

I would point out that I have introduced a scheme for entrepreneurs where CGT liability is deferred if they re-invest qualifying gains made in a company into another company.

As a result of the review carried out on the EII and SCS, I decided to make some amendments to the schemes. The EII will be amended as follows:

- The annual company limit is being increased from €2.5 million to €5 million and the life-time limit from €10 million to €15 million;
- The minimum holding period for shares is being increased by 1 year to 4 years;
- Medium-sized companies in non-assisted areas will be included;
- Internationally traded financial services where certified by Enterprise Ireland will qualify;
- Hotels, guest houses and self-catering accommodation will remain eligible for a further 3 years; and
- The operating and managing of nursing homes will be included for 3 years.

These measures are subject to approval from the European Commission.

The SCS has been re-branded as "Start-Up Relief for Entrepreneurs" (SURE), which Minister Bruton and I launched last week. The scheme has been simplified and will be advertised and marketed by Local Enterprise Offices.

Mortgage Interest Rates

118. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding the high standard variable rates of mortgages; and if he will make

a statement on the matter. [19300/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The lending institutions in Ireland - including those in which the State has a significant shareholding - are independent commercial entities. The setting of interest rates is a commercial decision for the institutions concerned. Nonetheless, the issue of regulation of interest rates remains a policy area under active review.

Competition between the banks will be crucial in ensuring that the price that the customers have to pay moves in the right direction. The banks must be convinced that customers will switch to other banks unless they reduce their Standard Variable Rates (SVRs).

I met with the Governor of the Central Bank on 2 April and SVRs were discussed. On foot of this, the Governor undertook to review the issue of the standard variable rates charged by the lenders.

The Department of Finance have now received the Central Bank's report on the influences on Standard Variable Mortgage pricing in Ireland.

I will meet with the six main banks this week to discuss the issue of SVRs and the Report is a valuable input in framing that discussion.

Exchequer Deficit

119. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the contribution, in millions of euro, to the Exchequer deficit in the period January 2015 and April 2015 compared to the same period in 2011 arising from the change solely in non-tax revenues; and the principal contributors, in millions of euro, from the various heads to that change in non-tax revenues. [19312/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I would point out that the information requested by the Deputy is currently available on my Department's website at the following link:

<http://www.finance.gov.ie/what-we-do/public-finances/exchequer-returns/exchequer-statements>

However, the tables following set out the position in terms of Exchequer Deficit and total non-tax revenues collected at end-April 2011 and at end-April 2015 respectively.

Exchequer Deficit and Total Non-Tax Revenue:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Total Non-Tax Revenue	411	395	-16
Exchequer Deficit	-9,913	-2,319	+7,594

Total Non-Tax Revenue broken down by component:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
National Lottery Surplus	80	67	-13
Income from Credit Institutions (Financial Support Scheme)	3	0	-3

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Income from Credit Institutions (Eligible Institutions Guarantee)	283	52	-231
Central Bank Issue of Coins	0	3	+3
Total Surplus Incomes/Royalties	366	121	-245
Local Loans Fund	1	0	-1
Other Advances	8	3	-5
Total Interest on Loans	10	4	-6
E.S.B.	0	203	+203
Other Dividends	0	7	+7
Total Dividends	0	210	+210
Property Registration Authority Fees	8	20	+11
Motoring Fees	5	2	-3
NDFA Act	0	5	+5
Other Receipts collected by Departments etc.	14	25	12
Miscellaneous	4	1	-4
Pension levy	4	5	+1
Public Service Pension Payments	0	0	0
Irish Water State Guarantee Fee	0	3	+3
Total Other Receipts	35	60	+25
Total Non-Tax Revenue	411	395	-16

Please note that figures are rounded to the nearest million and therefore rounding may effect totals.

Exchequer Deficit

120. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the contribution, in millions of euro, to the change in the Exchequer deficit in the period January 2015 and April 2015 compared to the same period in 2011 arising from the change solely in voted expenditure; and the principal contributors, in millions of euro, from the various items of voted expenditure to that change in voted expenditure. [19313/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I would point out that the information requested by the Deputy is currently available on my Department's website at the following link:

<http://www.finance.gov.ie/what-we-do/public-finances/exchequer-returns/exchequer-statements>.

However, the tables following set out the position in terms of Exchequer Deficit and total net voted expenditure for the period at end-April 2011 and at end-April 2015 respectively.

Exchequer Deficit and Net Voted Expenditure:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Voted Current Expenditure	13,908	13,047	-861
Voted Capital Expenditure	934	672	-262
Total Net Voted Expenditure	14,841	13,719	-1,123
Exchequer Deficit	-9,913	-2,319	+7,594

Total Net Voted Departmental Expenditure (Current and Capital) by vote group etc:

Department	End-April 2011 €m	Department	End-April 2015 €m
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	343	Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	319
Arts, Sport and Tourism	72	Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	83
Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	67	Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	37
Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	98	Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	n/a
Defence	272	Defence	277
Education and Science	2,887	Education and Skills	2,632
Enterprise Trade and Employment	243	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	213
Environment, Heritage and Local Government	400	Environment, Community and Local Government	145
Finance Group	343	Finance Group	118
Public Expenditure and Reform	n/a	Public Expenditure and Reform	255
Foreign Affairs	237	Foreign Affairs and Trade	177
Health and Children	4,635	Health	4,282
Children and Youth Affairs	n/a	Children and Youth Affairs	368
Justice Group	692	Justice Group	688
Social and Family Affairs	4,217	Social Protection	3,764
Taoiseach's Group (including Legal Votes)	56	Taoiseach's Group (including Legal Votes)	49
Transport	390	Transport, Tourism and Sport	312
Recovery of advance to Social Insurance Fund	110	Recovery of advance to Social Insurance Fund	0
Total Net Voted Expenditure	14,841	Total Net Voted Expenditure	13,719

Please note that figures are rounded to the nearest million and therefore rounding may effect totals.

As the Deputy will be aware, since April 2011, there have been a number of new Departments established and significant restructuring and transferring of functions amongst other Departments. Therefore, it is not always possible to compare the previous vote group structure position at end-April 2011 with the current voted group structure at end-April 2015. However, at end-April 2015, total net voted expenditure has reduced by €1,122 million or 7.6% when compared to the same period in 2011.

Exchequer Deficit

121. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the contribution, in millions of euro, to the change in the Exchequer deficit in the period January 2015 and April 2015 compared to the same period in 2011 arising from the change solely in non-voted expenditure; and the principal contributors, in millions of euro, from the various items of non-voted expenditure to that change in non-voted expenditure. [19314/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I would point out that the information requested by the Deputy is currently available on my Department's website at the following link:

<http://www.finance.gov.ie/what-we-do/public-finances/exchequer-returns/exchequer-statements>.

However, the following tables set out the position in terms of Exchequer Deficit and total non-voted expenditure for the period at end-April 2011 and at end-April 2015 respectively.

Exchequer Deficit and Non-Voted Expenditure:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Non-Voted Current Expenditure	2,818	4,337	+1,519
Non-Voted Capital Expenditure	3,062	1,209	-1,853
Total Non-Voted Expenditure	5,880	5,546	-333
Exchequer Deficit	-9,913	-2,319	+7,594

Total Non-Voted Current Expenditure by component:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Interest	2,082	3,035	+953
Other Debt Management Expenses	62	50	-13
Total Service of National Debt	2,144	3,084	+940
Contribution to EU Budget	571	917	+346
Postal & Telecommunications Services Act 1983, section 46	13	0	-13
Payments to Marathon Petroleum Ireland Ltd	3	0	-3
Election Expenses	14	5	-9
Payments to Political Parties under the Electoral Acts	5	5	0
Salaries , Pensions and Allowances	14	13	-1
Oireachtas Commission	34	33	-1
IDA & ADF Payments under Developments Banks Act 2005	18	21	+3
NDFA Act	1	4	+3
Miscellaneous	0	0	0
Pensions Insolvency Payment (Amendment) Scheme 2011	0	2	+2
Irish Fiscal Advisory Council	0	0	0
Payments under Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Act 2008	0	2	+2
Transfer of Local Property Tax Receipts to Local Government Fund	0	251	+251
Total Non-Voted Current Expenditure	2,818	4,337	+1,519

Please note that figures are round to the nearest million and therefore rounding may effect totals.

Total Non-Voted Capital Expenditure by component:

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Carbon Fund Act 2007	2	0	-2
Other Payments under Statute	0	0	0
Promissory Notes issued under the Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Act 2008	3,060	0	-3,060

-	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Total Other Capital Payments	3,062	0	-3,062
Loans to Insurance Compensation Fund	0	79	+79
Loans to Social Insurance Fund	0	1,110	+1,110
Total Loans	0	1,189	+1,189
Development Banks Act 2005	0	2	+2
Bretton Woods Acts 1957 - 1999	0	4	+4
European Investment	0	14	+14
Total investment in International Bodies	0	20	+20
Total Non-Voted Current Expenditure	3,062	1,209	-1,853

Please note that figures are round to the nearest million and therefore rounding may effect totals.

Exchequer Deficit

122. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance his Department's estimate of the effect of all tax changes since the current Government came to office, in millions of euro, to the change in the Exchequer deficit in the period January 2015 and April 2015 compared to the same period in 2011 and the total change in tax revenues during that period. [19315/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The following table sets out the position in terms of Exchequer Deficit and total tax revenues collected at end-April 2011 and at end-April 2015 respectively.

Exchequer Deficit and Total Tax Revenue:

	End-April 2011 €m	End-April 2015 €m	Change €m
Total Tax Revenue	9,611	12,864	+3,253
Exchequer Deficit	-9,913	-2,319	+7,594

The table following sets out the estimated full year cost or yield at the time of introduction in respect of the various tax packages introduced by this Government since 2011 to date. In addition, the costs or yields do not take account of any amendments or changes that may have been introduced in the associated Finance Acts, or amended to reflect changes in the estimated cost or yield as a result of delays in State Aid approval or commencement orders etc.

-	Total -cost/+yield €m
Jobs Initiative 2011	-75
Budget 2012	+1,270
Budget 2013	+1,730
Budget 2014	+265
Budget 2015	-510

It is important to point out that the cost and yields stated above do not take account of the second round impact on aggregate demand. As the Deputy will be aware, the second round impact of stronger demand is greater tax yields. In addition, I should point out that actual tax revenue outturns are driven by a number of factors such as the macroeconomic drivers, growth

and strategic policy measures introduced to promote jobs and growth in the economy.

Tax Avoidance

123. **Deputy Pat Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 152 of 6 May 2015, the number of times in each of the past ten years a penalty was imposed on an employer under section 987 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, as amended, for failure to comply with regulations under Chapter 4 of Part 42 relating to the collection and recovery of income tax under the pay as you earn system, in circumstances where a failure to keep and maintain a register of employees or to deduct and remit income tax in relation to employees arose from a misclassification by the employer of employees as being self-employed; the number of times an employer was prosecuted under section 1078 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, as amended, for knowing or wilful delivery or issuing of incorrect returns, statements, accounts or invoices, entailing a representation by the employer that certain employees were self-employed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19405/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that while they capture the various constituents of yield from their compliance interventions (income tax/PRSI/USC that ought to have been collected by employers under the PAYE system plus interest on late payment and penalties) involving non-operation by employers of the PAYE system, their records do not capture each of the separate or specific types of contraventions and penalties relating to those contraventions. On that basis, the more granular information sought by the Deputy as a follow up to Parliamentary Question No. 152 of 6 May 2015 is not available.

I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that, while criminal prosecutions have been initiated against those filing incorrect returns, statements, accounts or invoices, such prosecutions did not arise solely from incorrect employer PAYE returns, records, etc. relating to payments made tax-free to individuals when such payments should have been made through the PAYE system.

I am further informed that the question of whether a contract between parties is one of a contract of service [i.e. an employee] or a contract for service [i.e. self-employed] depends on the facts and circumstances of each case and these are primarily matters to be discussed between the parties to the contract. As explained in my reply to Question No. 152 on 6 May 2015, when conducting compliance interventions, Revenue will take action to recover unpaid tax, interest, and penalties where warranted, in cases where there has been mis-classification of the status of the person carrying out the work on a contract.

Central Bank of Ireland

124. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding the Consumer Credit Act 1995; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19412/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I have been informed by the Central Bank that it investigates specific complaints made and, where appropriate, will exercise its discretion to pursue a case under the Administrative Sanctions Procedure or a summary criminal prosecution. As to the question of how the Central Bank will exercise this discretion, the Central Bank has indicated that this will wholly depend on the particular circumstances of each case. If a person has specific concerns regarding suspected failure by an institution/person concerned in

the management of such an institution, to comply with section 129(2) of the Consumer Credit Act 1995, a complaint may be made to the Central Bank and the Central Bank will consider it.

The Central Bank has as one of its statutory objectives “the proper and effective regulation of financial service providers and markets, while ensuring that the best interests of consumers of financial services are protected” and accordingly seeks at all times to ensure that the best interests of consumers of financial services are protected when implementing its statutory mandate.

IBRC Operations

125. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 30 of 7 May 2015, if he has requested the valuation report of the residential mortgage portfolio of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation from the special liquidators; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19470/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As explained to the Deputy in Parliamentary Question No. 30 of 7 May 2015, in order to protect the confidentiality of customer data, the integrity of the sales processes and the liquidation more generally, the Department of Finance and NAMA were not made aware of nor did they receive the independent valuations of the loan assets at either a portfolio or a loan level, nor have they been made aware of the sales prices achieved for any individual mortgage sold as part of the liquidation. Therefore, in order to maintain the integrity of the liquidation, a request to the Special Liquidators for the valuation report on the residential mortgage portfolio of IBRC has not been made by either me or my officials.

Publicly available information regarding the loan sales processes are detailed in the progress update report of 12 March 2015, which is available on the Department of Finance website at:-

http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/DOF_IBRC_Progress%20update%20report%20to%2031%20Dec%2014.pdf.

Financial Services Regulation

126. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Finance if he is aware of customers whose mortgages were sold to Mars Capital No. 3 Ireland Limited as part of Project Pearl by the former Irish Nationwide Building Society and who are being told to send correspondence to a post office box and are therefore unable to send registered post to the company; if this is acceptable practice by a financial organisation under financial regulations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19471/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): At present, the particular referenced firm is not regulated by the Central Bank. Unregulated entities that have acquired mortgage loan books are not subject to regulation by the Central Bank and are therefore not subject to the provisions of its Codes, such as the CCMA - though many such firms have stated that they will voluntarily comply with the CCMA.

However, borrowers whose loans are sold to unregulated entities will be protected by the Consumer Protection (Regulation of Credit Servicing Firms) Bill 2015 when it is enacted. The purpose of the Bill is to ensure that consumers retain the protections they had prior to the sale

of their loan. This Bill will require entities dealing with the consumer to be authorised by the Central Bank and subject to its Codes of Conduct. Dealing with the consumer is credit servicing and the definition of credit servicing is broad. Owners of loan books who deal directly with consumers, that is, who are servicing their own loan books, will be regulated. Otherwise they can have the loan book serviced by a regulated credit servicing firm.

The Bill was published in January and second stage of the Bill was taken in the Dáil on 4 February. Since then, my officials have been in contact with the Central Bank and with the Office of the Attorney General to further progress the legislation. The Bill will continue its progress through the legislative process and I look forward to further discussion of the Bill at Committee Stage which has been set for 27 May.

With regard to contacting such firms, correspondence may be sent by registered post to a PO Box, although it will not be signed for. However, there will be a record that the post was delivered to the P.O. Box. If the customer is experiencing difficulty contacting the firm by post, it may be of benefit to contact the firm by phone and discuss the particular circumstances with them.

Tax Relief Application

127. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 293 of 21 April 2015, if he will arrange for the med 2 form to be amended to reflect the fact that the cost of attending a relevant practitioner as distinct from the cost of the procedures carried out qualifies for tax relief; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19472/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the Med 2 form contains details of the range of dental treatments that qualify for tax relief under section 469 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. I am further informed that the Revenue Commissioners are currently reviewing this form to ensure that it accurately reflects the full range of expenses that may be claimed in relation to non-routine dental interventions.

Flood Risk Insurance Cover Provision

128. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to introduce a scheme to the effect that, following the completion of a comprehensive and agreed flood alleviation scheme to the required international standard, insurers may be obliged in law to reinstate flood insurance cover to homes and businesses within the same area; his views that the State should share in the risk for a defined period, immediately following the completion of such works; if he has studied different models of risk sharing abroad; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19474/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am very conscious of the difficulties experienced by householders and businesses that cannot get flood insurance.

The issue of provision of new flood cover or the renewal of existing flood cover is a commercial matter for insurance companies, which is based on a proper assessment of the risks they are accepting. I, as Minister for Finance, am not in a position to direct insurance companies to provide flood cover to specific individuals.

The current Government approach to address the availability of flood insurance is to address

the underlying problem through appropriate remedial works. This involves:

(a) prioritising spending on flood relief measures by the OPW and relevant local authorities to address those areas of greatest need including areas where the insurance industry is finding it most difficult to provide cover - so that flood relief programmes can have maximum impact, where economically feasible,

(b) improving channels of communication between OPW and the insurance industry with the objective of ensuring that appropriate and relevant information on completed OPW flood defence schemes is provided to insurers to facilitate, to the greatest extent possible, the availability to the public of insurance against the risk of flooding.

This coordinated whole-of-Government approach is led by OPW, under the aegis of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, with further involvement from the relevant local authorities and other bodies in order to maximise the level of resources available to address flood relief works. Because of cost and scale of these types of flood defence works, it is an approach which will see benefits over the medium and long term.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Insurance Ireland and the OPW on the sharing of information in relation to completed flood defence works came into effect in on 1st June 2014 and the first full renewal cycle following the MoU has not yet been completed. In January 2015, Insurance Ireland provided a report to OPW on progress so far. While this report showed some improvements, it is expected that a fuller and more detailed report on progress under the MoU will be made available to OPW after June 2015. I will assess the progress reported to OPW in June and will consider whether the current approach is delivering the expected results and whether other approaches need to be considered.

Broadly speaking, insurance and compensation systems for flood risk in Europe have been divided into three categories: (i) traditional private insurance systems; (ii) pooling systems in which the government has a considerable role, and (iii) compensation systems fully administered by the government. Direct comparison with other jurisdictions is difficult as circumstances and legislative frameworks differ widely. My officials will continue to keep developments in other countries under review, including, in particular the establishment of the Flood Re Scheme in the United Kingdom, which is soon to be up and running.

In cases where individuals are experiencing difficulty in obtaining flood insurance and believe that they are being treated unfairly it is open to them to contact Insurance Ireland which operates a free Insurance Information Service for those who have queries, complaints or difficulties in relation to insurance. Their service can be contacted at (01) 676 1914 or by email at info@insuranceireland.eu.

Living City Initiative

129. Deputy Joe Costello asked the Minister for Finance the process for determining the areas covered by the Living City initiative; if consideration will be given to expanding the areas covered to include Broadstone and Royal Canal Bank in Dublin 7, Infirmary Road and Montpelier in Dublin 7, both sides of Aughrim Street in Dublin 7, New Wapping Street and Castleforbes in Dublin 1 and Seville Place in Dublin 1; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19484/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The Special Regeneration Areas for the Living City Initiative were designated by the Minister for Finance following consultation with the relevant city councils and an independent review by a third party adviser. Specific criteria

were set down in respect of the areas which should be included within the remit of the Living City Initiative which were required to be taken into account by the relevant city council in putting forward the proposed Special Regeneration Area for each city.

In particular, it was stated that the Special Regeneration Areas should be inner city areas which are largely comprised of dwellings built before 1915, where there is above average unemployment and which demonstrate clear evidence of neglect, dereliction and under-use. It was specified that areas which are generally regarded as affluent, which have high occupancy rates and which do not require regeneration should not be included in the Special Regeneration Areas. The Living City Initiative is a very targeted urban regeneration incentive. The criteria to be met for the inclusion of an area in the scheme are more stringent than simply being in one of the relevant cities, and being constructed pre 1915.

It is important to note that I do not see this as a wide-spread Initiative, as it is targeted at those areas which are most in need of attention. However, it is a newly launched scheme, and it will be kept under review.

Tax Code

130. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Finance the reason a person (details supplied) in County Wexford is liable for pay as you earn and pay-related social insurance on his income from a community employment scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19491/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Income from Community Employment Schemes is regarded as income for tax purposes and is therefore chargeable to PAYE income tax and PRSI. The appropriate Tax Credit of €3,300 has been granted to the person concerned.

Participants in Community Employment Schemes are exempt from the Universal Social Charge (USC). It appears however that USC has been deducted from the income of the person concerned. Revenue will contact the employer in this instance and advise the employer to re-fund any USC deductions incorrectly taken from the person concerned.

Credit Union Services

131. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the consultation he or the Central Bank of Ireland have engaged with the Irish League of Credit Unions regarding the proposal for a multi-debt initiative to be facilitated by StepChange. [19559/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The Registrar of Credit Unions at the Central Bank is the independent regulator for credit unions. Within her independent regulatory discretion, the Registrar acts to support the prudential soundness of individual credit unions, to maintain sector stability and to protect the savings of credit union members.

My role as Minister for Finance is to ensure that the legal framework for credit unions is appropriate for the effective operation and supervision of credit unions.

I understand that talks are ongoing between StepChange Debt Charity and the banks regarding the potential of operating a service to help people struggling with the burden of debt to find a solution to their problems.

I have been informed by the Central Bank that in 2013 it operated a pilot scheme to develop

a process to facilitate a voluntary agreement outlining a co-ordinated approach among lenders to the resolution of multiple debts owed by distressed borrowers. The aim of the pilot framework was to achieve sustainable and fair outcomes without the need for borrowers to enter the full insolvency process. The pilot scheme focused on enhancing co-operation between lenders of secured and unsecured debt in order to resolve distressed debt at an early stage and included StepChange Debt Charity. All credit unions were invited to take part in the pilot scheme. The Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU), the Credit Union Development Association (CUDA) and the Credit Union Managers Association (CUMA) attended meetings with the Central Bank in relation to the pilot scheme. However, while both CUDA and CUMA participated in the pilot scheme, ILCU did not participate in it.

State Claims Agency

132. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Finance if it is the policy of the State Claims Agency to appeal every decision of the High Court which is awarded against the State; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19568/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): It is not the policy of the State Claims Agency (SCA) to appeal every decision of the High Court which is awarded against the State. The SCA, together with its lawyers, carefully considers the facts of any individual case, having regard to its particular liability and causation issues, prior to deciding on the merits of an Appeal, if any, to the Court of Appeal or Supreme Court.

It is a relatively rare event for the SCA to appeal decisions of the High Court to the Court of Appeal, or the Supreme Court. To put the matter in context, the SCA, in the 13 years since its inception, has taken two cases on Appeal from the High Court to the Supreme Court. These cases were non-HSE cases and were appealed successfully by the State Claims Agency.

Departmental Legal Costs

133. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19569/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As a register of the legal fees spent by the Department of Finance specifically in appealing decisions delivered by the High Court is not maintained, it has not been possible in the time available to collate all the information requested. However, the requested information will be collated and forwarded to the Deputy in writing.

State Claims Agency

134. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Finance the success rate of the State Claims Agency in appeals on behalf of the Health Service Executive of cases which have been lost in the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19570/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): There are four cases currently under appeal to the Court of Appeal / Supreme Court, which have been taken by the State Claims Agency on behalf of the Health Service Executive. All of these cases are ongoing, and, as such, are yet to be determined by the Court of Appeal / Supreme Court.

Property Tax Assessments

135. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details of a lump sum payment recently made for local property tax in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; the years for which this amount applied; and the amount relating to each of those years. [19593/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by Revenue that the €750 payment received in this case was allocated in the order of €200 to arrears of 2012 HHC, €112 to LPT 2013 (half year), €225 to LPT 2014 and the remaining balance of €213 to LPT 2015. The 2015 year still has an outstanding balance of €12 as there were insufficient funds left from the payment to fully meet the liability (€225) for the current year.

IBRC Liquidation

136. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Finance the hourly rates being paid to the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation liquidator and to the staff of same; the number of staff involved and their pay grades; the estimated cost of the liquidation; and the discounts sought or received by him. [19596/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Slide 61 of the Special Liquidators' Progress Update Report dated 12 March 2015, which is available on the Department of Finance website at http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/DO_F_IBRC_Progress%20update%20report%20to%2031%20Dec%2014.pdf, details the costs of the liquidation for the period 7 February 2013 to 31 December 2014.

KPMG rates are based on NAMA negotiated rates for the relevant services. These rates were put in place following a competitive tender conducted by NAMA.

The rates agreed with the Special Liquidators for this assignment are as follows:

Grade	Rate Per Hour (excluding VAT)
Partner	€295
Director	€260
Associate Director	€220
Manager	€190
Supervisor	€165
Senior Accountant	€165
Semi-senior accountant	€165
Junior accountant	€95

The number of staff working on the assignment has fluctuated over the course of assignment given various activity volumes as the loan sales progressed. The headcount requirement peaked at 330 staff from KPMG.

Total fees of €76 million were paid to KPMG (KPMG Special Liquidator team: €71.4 million and KPMG migration team: €4.6 million) to 31 December 2014 of which approximately €4.5 million was recovered from NAMA. In addition a rebate of €5 million was agreed with KPMG following discussions at the request of the Minister.

Personal Public Service Data

137. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if the Revenue Commissioners are requesting those with personal public service numbers similar to their spouse's but ending with the additional letter 'W' to have new personal public service numbers issued to them by the Department of Social Protection; if so, the reason this is necessary; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19642/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised that the Revenue Commissioners are, in certain limited circumstances, requesting those with PPS numbers similar to their spouses but ending with the additional letter W (i.e. 'W numbers') to have new PPS numbers issued to them by the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

The circumstances when a customer is asked by Revenue to get a new PPSN include, when they commence employment, when there is a separation or when the 'main' PPSN is no longer in use as happens on the death of their spouse.

The vast majority of people nowadays are using their own number. The process of replacing a PPSN is relatively straightforward. The service is provided by the Client Identity Section (CIS) in the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and they can be contacted by telephone at 1890 927999. DSP subsequently informs Revenue of the change.

I am advised by Revenue that as part of the changeover process, CIS verifies the identity of the individual, secures their consent, removes the existing 'W number' and replaces it with either a new number or one that the individual may have had prior to marriage. In addition, all pre-existing records relating to that individual are transferred over to the new PPSN. Once completed, a letter advising of the new PPSN is issued to the individual at their home address.

Tax Credits

138. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide, in tabular form, for each tax credit, the estimated full-year cost of making each of the following tax credits refundable, that is, single person tax credit, married person or civil partner tax credit, widowed person or surviving civil partner tax credit, pay as you earn - employee tax credit, and single person child carer credit. [19676/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that they have not undertaken any exercise to estimate a projected cost of refundable tax credits or the cost to the Exchequer of establishing the necessary administrative system to facilitate the refund of tax credits.

Any such exercise in estimation would be highly complex as it would involve assumptions about the manner in which such a system would operate, its possible effects on individuals not currently in the tax net and how such a system might interact with any social protection payments.

In the absence of a fully designed scheme of refundable tax credits that addresses all of the relevant issues outlined, an estimated cost of refunding the credits referred to by the Deputy is not currently available.

Banking Sector Regulation

139. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the circumstances in which customers who were mis-sold payment protection insurance on their credit card can claim compensation, even if the product was purchased more than six years ago; the role the Central Bank of Ireland will play in this; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19680/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I have been advised by the Central Bank that at their request a voluntary redress scheme has been put in place in relation to card protection insurance provided by Homecare Insurance Ltd (HIL) and purchased through a number of credit card providers.

Customers who purchased or renewed a card protection policy, on or after 1 August 2006, provided by Homecare Insurance Ltd (HIL) and purchased through credit card providers, Bank of Ireland, MBNA Limited or Ulster Bank Ireland Limited may claim redress. The Central Bank intervened in this issue as information provided to customers, at point of sale, advertised some card protection benefits which were not needed i.e. liability for unauthorised use if a card was lost/stolen was covered by the card scheme and therefore, customers did not need additional insurance for this.

The scheme commenced on 30 March 2015. The credit card providers have been contacting impacted customers who should have received an explanatory letter and a claim form at this stage. Policyholders are required to sign and return the claim form to be considered for a refund of premiums paid since 1 August 2006 less any amounts paid to customer in respect of a previous claim. The policyholder is not required to demonstrate or articulate why they feel the policy was mis-sold to them but rather to sign and return the claim form.

Tax Relief Application

140. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Finance his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding tax relief; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19683/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): Persons who are married or in a civil partnership may have their liability to income tax assessed on the basis of separate or joint assessment. In these cases the personal tax credit and an element of the standard rate band can be transferred between spouses or civil partners as the case may be.

Persons who are cohabiting, other than in a marriage or civil partnership, are treated for the purposes of income tax as separate and unconnected individuals and thus cannot transfer tax credits or bands between them.

The issue raised by the Deputy relating to the social welfare payment is a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Social Protection.

Tobacco Seizures Data

141. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of cigarettes and the amount of tobacco seized by law enforcement in 2013 and 2014 and in 2015 to date, detailing the number of cigarettes seized for each brand and the percentage of total confiscated cigarettes accounted for by each brand. [19707/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the number of cigarettes and amount of tobacco seized by them in 2013, 2014 and 2015 (to 14 May), are as set out in the following table:

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-	2013	2014	2015 (to 14/05/2015)
Cigarettes	40.8m	53.4m	22.5m
Tobacco	4,203 Kgs	9,823 Kgs	673 Kgs

I am further advised that some 456 brands were found in product seized in 2013, 463 brands in 2014 and 316 brands to date in 2015. Details of those brands that represented 1 per cent or more of the total seizures in each year are listed in the following tables.

2013 Cigarettes seized by brand

Brand	Volume	%
GOLD CLASSIC	10,796,140	26.43
MODENG	10,000,000	24.48
BENSON & HEDGES	3,813,773	9.34
MARLBORO GOLD	1,477,749	3.62
PALACE	1,279,140	3.13
MARLBORO	1,144,489	2.80
L&M BLUE	990,883	2.43
SEPTWOLVES	850,357	2.08
WINSTON	790,200	1.93
EMAIL RED	644,120	1.58
CK	605,400	1.48
EIGHT	407,750	1.00

2014 Cigarettes seized by brand

Brand	Volume	%
FEST	15,621,000	29.23
D&D	10,086,620	18.87
FREE	7,190,800	13.45
PECT	2,634,260	4.93
MARLBORO GOLD	2,048,318	3.83
WINSTON BLUE	1,647,220	3.08
BENSON & HEDGES	1,643,379	3.07
MARLBORO	1,445,920	2.71
MINSK CAPITAL (SUPERS-LIM)	945,760	1.77
L&M BLUE	890,817	1.67
SEPTWOLVES	541,576	1.01

2015 Cigarettes seized by brand (year to date)

Brand	Volume	%
DON	10,398,820	46.11
MANCHESTER	7,680,000	34.06
MARLBORO GOLD	581,168	2.58
MARLBORO	449,221	1.99
SEPTWOLVES	252,752	1.12

Brand	Volume	%
NZ	246,760	1.09
BENSON & HEDGES	222,864	1.00

Excise Duties Collection

142. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide a breakdown in excise returns, by category and by month, from January 2013 to April 2015. [19708/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the breakdown of excise receipts by category and by month from January 2013 to April 2015 is as shown in the following tables. Please note that the receipts shown for 2014 and 2015 are provisional and may be subject to revision. The “Other Excise” category includes Licences, Betting and Travel Tax.

2013	Alcohol €m	Tobacco €m	Oils €m	Carbon €m	VRT €m	Other Excise €m
JAN	93.5	1.1	231.4	26.0	52.1	8.3
FEB	40.6	104.8	158.9	42.7	64.6	3.0
MAR	52.2	52.5	173.2	33.6	55.1	3.9
APR	77.2	72.0	170.5	37.6	47.5	9.8
MAY	68.5	93.6	182.8	29.4	38.8	4.3
JUN	85.2	93.2	161.4	39.2	27.2	4.4
JUL	80.9	70.1	173.9	25.8	36.0	11.0
AUG	88.6	59.6	175.8	30.5	42.2	5.4
SEP	80.2	87.5	164.9	28.9	24.5	8.9
OCT	117.9	90.2	177.1	28.0	21.5	13.3
NOV	142.4	141.6	171.1	32.3	16.7	4.9
DEC	74.9	197.7	92.8	34.4	11.2	4.0
TOTAL	1002.0	1063.9	2033.8	388.4	437.3	81.2

2014	Alcohol €m	Tobacco €m	Oils €m	Carbon €m	VRT €m	Other Excise €m
JAN	96.9	1.1	231.6	25.1	73.8	7.3
FEB	53.8	47.9	156.0	45.1	74.4	4.6
MAR	86.1	47.9	171.7	38.4	69.8	4.3
APR	74.6	61.7	173.4	31.3	55.9	8.6
MAY	93.5	91.2	179.7	35.1	40.6	2.5
JUN	87.0	90.1	163.2	34.5	30.6	1.5
JUL	97.2	74.5	174.6	27.8	59.2	7.6
AUG	102.9	75.3	169.4	25.2	55.5	2.5
SEP	92.5	70.8	173.6	29.6	30.9	2.4
OCT	135.0	108.7	176.9	28.0	23.9	12.4
NOV	125.4	123.9	160.6	31.6	16.7	1.8
DEC	95.0	190.5	93.5	33.6	10.8	1.3
TOTAL	1139.8	983.6	2024.2	385.4	542.1	56.9

2015	Alcohol €m	Tobacco €m	Oils €m	Carbon €m	VRT €m	Other Excise €m
JAN	102.2	1.1	239.3	21.8	104.7	6.4

2015	Alcohol €m	Tobacco €m	Oils €m	Carbon €m	VRT €m	Other Excise €m
FEB	55.8	51.8	163.7	51.6	88.6	0.9
MAR	68.4	57.7	173.1	37.2	85.2	0.8
APR	92.7	68.2	177.5	43.5	62.2	6.7
TOTAL	319.0	178.8	753.6	154.1	340.7	14.7

Rounding may affect totals.

Income Data

143. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an update on figures for the income earned, and tax paid, including universal social charge, by those on incomes of €70,000 and above (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19731/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that a wide range of statistical information is now available on the Commissioners' enhanced statistics webpage at www.revenue.ie/en/about/statistics/index.html. In particular, in response to the Deputy's Question, at www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/pssn/rv01/homepagefiles/rv01_statbank.asp detailed information is presented on the breakdowns of gross Income Tax and Universal Social Charge (USC) paid by income range. This information can be found under the heading "Income Tax and Corporation Tax Distribution Statistics", where Table RVA04 shows Income Tax and USC payments by income range.

This facility provides breakdowns on the annual distribution of Income Tax from 2004 to 2012 and USC from 2011 to 2012 using the Central Statistics Office data toolset. Whereas previously information of this nature was provided by way of static tables in documents, these data are now published in a format which may be dynamically accessed by a range of user defined queries. Data for later years will be updated in due course. Should the Deputy require, the Commissioners are available to assist and may be contacted by email at statistics@revenue.ie.

Property Tax Yield

144. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an update on the net receipts for Local Property Tax (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19744/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that statistics regarding Local Property Tax (LPT) net receipts, compliance rates and other information are available on the Revenue website at <http://www.revenue.ie/en/about/statistics/lpt-compliance.html>. Updates to these statistics will be published in due course but at present information on the amount collected or compliance rates by valuation band are not presently available.

These statistics include the years 2013 onwards. Information concerning the Household Charge in 2012 is not available from Revenue as the Commissioners only assumed responsibility for Household Charge collection from July 2013 onwards. As neither the Household Charge nor LPT were levied in 2011, no statistics in respect of that year are available.

Tax Code

145. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Finance the reason accounts in the name of children are subject to Deposit Interest Retention Tax, while those in the name of persons over 65 years of age may qualify for an exemption; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19745/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the legislation governing the operation of Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) is set out in Chapters 4 and 5 of Part 8 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (the Act).

Under Section 257 of the Act all deposit takers are obliged to deduct Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) from payments of interest made to an account unless the account qualifies as an exempt account. There is no specific exemption in the case of interest paid on deposit accounts or on credit union accounts held by children. Such a provision could be difficult and costly to administer, from the point of view of establishing who the beneficial owner of the account is. The tax code does not provide for an exemption from tax for children.

Regarding individuals aged over 65, since the enactment of the Finance Act 2007, individuals are exempt from Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) on their interest income provided they or their spouse or civil partner are aged 65 or over, and their total income in a year (including the interest) is below the annual exemption limit.

The annual exemption limits for 2015 are as follows:

€18,000 (in the case of a single person) and

€36,000 (in the case of a married couple or civil partnership).

This measure is targeted to provide relief to older people on incomes below the limits mentioned only. It is an income limit and not an allowance.

There are alternative savings products, offered by the National Treasury Management Agency through An Post, which are tax free (Savings Bonds, Saving Certificates, Instalment Savings and the National Solidarity Bond).

Repatriation of Money

146. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Finance the taxation arrangements concerning sums of money brought into Ireland by Irish emigrants returning from Dubai; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19746/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the taxation arrangements concerning sums of money brought into Ireland by Irish emigrants returning from Dubai will vary, depending on the facts and circumstances of each case.

Where an individual accumulates a sum of money from income earned while working in Dubai over a number of years, during which time the individual was not tax resident in Ireland, then the amount accumulated is outside the charge to tax in Ireland.

If the Deputy wishes to supply the facts and circumstances of a particular case, I will endeavour to provide a response appropriate to such facts and circumstances.

Tax Code

147. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to review the taxation position of residential landlords, in view of the recent reports that up to 30% of landlords are considering selling their properties and getting out of the rental market, due to the excessive charges and taxes that are being levied on rental income, and the reduction in reliefs for mortgage interest; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19759/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): It is not clear from the question what excessive charges and taxes the Deputy is referring to.

However, in relation to the taxation of rental income, I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that rental income for tax purposes is the gross rental income less allowable expenses incurred in earning that rent, as specified in section 97(2) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. The main deductible expenses are:

- any rent payable by the landlord in the case of a sub-lease;
- the cost to the landlord of any goods provided or services rendered to a tenant;
- the cost of maintenance, repairs, insurance and management of the property;
- the interest on borrowed money used to purchase, improve or repair the property (which, in the case of residential property, is restricted to 75% of the interest and is subject to compliance with Private Residential Tenancies Board registration requirements for all tenancies that existed in relation to the property in the relevant year); and
- the payment of local authority rates.

In addition, capital allowances in respect of wear and tear are available in relation to capital expenditure incurred on fixtures and fittings provided by a landlord for the purposes of furnishing rented residential accommodation. These allowances are granted at the rate of 12.5% per annum of the actual cost of the fixtures and fittings over a period of 8 years.

I am aware of course that recent reports on the private rental sector have stated that, among other things, the restriction on the amount of interest that is deductible from gross rents from residential property and the lack of a deduction for local property tax (LPT) are impediments to securing long term investment in good quality rental homes.

As regards the former issue, the Deputy is no doubt aware that this measure was introduced in the April 2009 supplementary budget in respect of all residential lettings as part of an urgent revenue-raising package aimed at stabilising the public finances.

The Deputy will also be aware from responses to previous Parliamentary Questions that the Government agreed in principle to accept the recommendation of the Inter-Departmental Group on the design of a local property tax that LPT be treated as a deductible expense in calculation of a landlord's taxable income, but has not, as yet, decided on the manner in which this will happen or its timing.

Exchequer Deficit

148. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his Department's estimate of the effect of all announced changes to voted expenditure since the current Government came to office, on the change, in millions of euro, to the Exchequer deficit

in the period January 2015 and April 2015, compared to the same period in 2011. [19316/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): The table below shows net voted expenditure and the Exchequer deficit for the period January to April 2011 and for the period January to April 2015. This information was published in the end April 2011 and end April 2015 Exchequer returns.

Expenditure and deficit position: January to April 2011 compared with January to April 2015

-	Jan April 2011 €m	Jan April 2015 €m	Change €m
Net Voted Expenditure	14,841	13,719	(1,122)
Exchequer Deficit	(9,913)	(2,319)	7,594

The Expenditure Reports, published annually on Budget Day, covering the period 2012 to 2015 set out the detail in relation to budgetary expenditure measures. These Reports are on my Department's website. When comparing the year on year Budget expenditure changes, and the reduction in expenditure between 2011 and 2015, it should be noted that these changes in expenditure arise from a number of factors, including: expenditure measures, set out in the Expenditure Reports published on Budget Day, required to meet fiscal targets and deal with certain service pressures; changes in live register related expenditure; and at a net voted expenditure level, changes in PRSI income.

The table compares the 2011 outturns for gross and net voted expenditure with the 2015 Budget Estimates.

2011 expenditure outturn compared to 2015 Budget Estimates

-	2011 Outturn €m	2015 Budget Estimates €m	Change €m
Gross Voted Expenditure	57,362	53,626	(3,736)
Net Voted Expenditure	45,573	41,294	(4,279)

Public Procurement Contracts

149. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the steps the Office for Government Procurement is taking to provide small and medium enterprises with an opportunity to compete for tenders against larger companies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19691/15]

150. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the Office for Government Procurement has looked into the French system of dividing up tenders, to provide small and medium enterprises with a better chance of being successful; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19692/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 149 and 150 together.

The Government acknowledges the significant role that SMEs play in the Irish economy and is committed to ensuring that SMEs are fully engaged with public sector procurement and the opportunities presenting.

The French system of dividing up tenders to provide small and medium enterprise a better chance of being successful when tendering for public contracts is known as ‘lotting’. In April of 2014, my Department reviewed and updated the existing guidelines and procedures including the area of “lotting.” Circular 10/14 issued following the review and in this circular buyers were asked, where reasonable and without compromising efficiency and value for money to consider the sub-division of contracts into lots, enabling smaller businesses to compete for these elements. The circular also set out other initiatives aimed at opening up opportunities for small businesses that want to tender for public contracts and also to ensure that engaging with government procurement is easy and low cost. These initiatives include:

- buyers being advised to undertake market analysis prior to tendering in order to better understand the range of goods and services on offer, the competitive landscape, including the specific capabilities of SMEs
- requiring supplies and general services contracts with an estimated value of €25,000 be advertised on the Government’s electronic tendering portal, e-Tenders, thus promoting transparency in procurement
- encouraging suppliers including SMEs to fully use e-Tenders and avail of its facilities in relation to registration, e-tendering and automatic alerts in relation to future tendering opportunities
- encouraging buyers not to set turnover thresholds at more than twice the estimated contract value and to put limits on insurance levels for suppliers where possible
- promoting the greater use of “open” tendering and less use of “restrictive” tendering
- encouraging SMEs to consider using consortia where they are not of sufficient scale to tender in their own right or where they may lack certain capabilities necessary to provide a compelling proposition.

The circular has been broadly welcomed by industry representative associations. The reform of public procurement across the public service is ongoing and will continue to provide opportunities to the SME sector to win business. The Office of Government Procurement will continue to work with industry to ensure that winning Government business is done in a fair, transparent and accessible way and to ensure that Government procurement policies are business friendly.

Public Procurement Contracts

151. Deputy Brendan Griffin asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform when works are due to commence on the upgrading of a slipway (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19353/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): Tenders have been invited for the repair of storm damage to the slipway. When received these tenders will be considered from technical and cost perspectives. Depending on weather conditions the estimated completion time is 6 weeks.

Flood Relief Schemes

152. Deputy Derek Nolan asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will

provide funding for relief works at a bridge on a river (details supplied) in County Galway, in order to prevent flooding in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19357/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The proposed Dunkellin River and Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme, which is being undertaken by Galway County Council (GCC) with funding from the Office of Public Works, includes flood mitigation works in the area referred to by the Deputy.

Works at Rinn Bridge would include the construction of three flood eyes, the construction of a two stage channel for a distance of 50 metres upstream and 50 metres downstream of the bridge, and selective channel maintenance to remove encroaching vegetation and fallen or in-stream trees.

GCC submitted the scheme proposals to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) for consideration in November 2014. A number of submissions in relation to the proposals were received by ABP from interested parties. The OPW understands that ABP issued a request for further information to GCC on 2nd March 2015 and that it has set a deadline of 10 July 2015 for GCC to respond. It is understood by GCC that ABP intends to make a determination on the case before 1st October 2015.

The OPW is committed to funding the works should the proposals receive planning approval.

Lease Agreements

153. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if a long-standing lease will be renewed in respect of lands (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19413/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The grazing licence for these lands expired on 28th February 2015. Consideration of any further licence has been postponed for the time being, pending consideration of improvement works in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre.

Haddington Road Agreement Review

154. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide, in tabular form, the annual cost to the Exchequer of lifting the increment freeze imposed on public sector workers in the Haddington Road agreement, on gross salaries less than €35,000, and between €35,000 and €65,000. [19545/15]

155. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide, in tabular form, the annual cost to the Exchequer of restoring the overtime payments imposed on public sector workers in the Haddington Road agreement, on gross salaries of less than €35,000 and of between €35,000 and €65,000. [19546/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 154 and 155 together.

The Haddington Road Agreement provided for savings arising from the implementation of various measures, including overtime rate changes and increment deferrals. Both of these measures are currently being implemented across the public service at Departmental and Agency

level within the reduced pay allocations provided in accordance with the annual estimates process. While it is not possible to determine the current costs that would arise in respect of reversing the measures for particular grades of public servants, by pay band, the overall savings arising in respect of the overtime and increment freeze measures in the context of the Haddington Road Agreement were estimated at €49 million and €60 million respectively.

Public Sector Pay

156. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the annual cost to the Exchequer of increasing the salary paid to approximately 4,000 low paid public sector workers in receipt of family income supplement, to bring their income above the benefit threshold. [19547/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): Family Income Supplement (FIS) is a weekly tax-free payment to employees with children, paid directly by the Department of Social Protection to the employee subject to qualification criteria based not only on salary, but also on the personal circumstances of the claimant, in particular family size. Qualification for payment is a matter directly between the employee concerned and the Department of Social Protection. Employers including public service employers have no role in deciding on or determining the thresholds for payment. Data in relation to the payment is held by the Department of Social Protection and is not available to public service employers to support a response to the question posed.

I should point out that while all public servants have contributed substantially to the recovery and reaching our fiscal deficit target of 3% GDP by 2015, the reductions imposed on public servants through the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009-2013 have been progressive, thereby ensuring that reductions imposed impacted on low paid workers least and that higher reductions were imposed on the higher paid. The pay cuts applied to public servants under the 2013 FEMPI Act apply only to those higher paid public servants on annual salaries of €65,000 or more. The core pay of 87% of the workers in the public service was not reduced by the legislation. In the context of the public service pay discussions currently under way, I have already confirmed that I am committed to benefit lower paid public servants disproportionately.

National Minimum Wage

157. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the annual cost to the Exchequer of introducing a living wage, minimal threshold, gross salary of €11.45 an hour. [19548/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): The Low Pay Commission was officially launched on 26 February 2015. This independent body is now beginning its work on advising the Government on the appropriate rate of the National Minimum Wage. It is expected to submit its first report to Government by the middle of July and the Commission will examine the rate of the minimum wage on an annual basis from now on. The establishment of this new body was a key commitment in the Statement of Priorities agreed by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste last year. Any decisions by Government in relation to that rate that may impact on pay in the public service will be implemented accordingly. Pending the outcome of the considerations of the Commission, no speculative rates of increase in the minimum wage have been costed.

Pension Levy

158. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide, in tabular form, the annual cost to the Exchequer if the first €17,500, €20,000, €22,500, €25,000 and €27,000 of income, respectively, were exempted from the pension related deduction. [19549/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): Based on estimates of current PRD yield the data sought by the Deputy is set out in the following table.

Increase in PRD Threshold	Estimated Cost
€17,500	€20m
€20,000	€40m
€22,500	€118m
€25,000	€196m
€27,000	€257m

Garda Station Closures

159. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide an update on the status of a Garda station (details supplied) in County Kildare; if there have been any inquiries concerning or plans for its future use; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19762/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The former Garda Station in Ballytore, Athy, Co. Kildare closed in 2013. The married quarters attached to this Garda Station is currently occupied by a serving garda and the station is regarded as operational and is not available for other uses.

Public Sector Pensions Levy

160. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if, in the course of the current pay review, he will ensure the pensions of retired public servants, which were reduced under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act in respect of such persons' pensions in excess of €12,000 per annum by between 8% and 28%, will have same restored as quickly as possible; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19772/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): A number of measures have been introduced in recent years which impact on public service pensions in payment. The Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR), commencing 1 January 2011, imposed reductions on annual public service pensions in payment in excess of €12,000, using a progressively tiered set of bands and rates with a top rate of 12% on any public service pension amount over €60,000. The legislation was amended from 1 January 2012 to increase the top rate of PSPR from 12% to 20% on the portion of any public service pension amount in excess of €100,000.

The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013 which provided for pay reductions for public servants receiving annualised remuneration of €65,000 under the Haddington Road Agreement, also provided for additional Public Service Pension Reduction rates ranging from 2% to 8% to be applied to all annual public service pensions in payment in excess of €32,500 from 1 July 2013. Full-year savings from these pension measures is currently in

excess of €125 million.

In relation to the impact of PSPR on the income of public service pensioners I met with representatives of retired public service pensioners in May 2013 and indicated at that time that it was my intention as a matter of priority to move towards reducing the burden of public service pension reductions, with the initial focus on the people in receipt of low pensions, at the earliest date economic progress permits. I also met with the representatives of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants in March last and my officials are currently considering a presentation and submission made by the Alliance to my officials on 7 May last.

In addition to the formal talks process currently underway with the public service unions and associations, I will continue to engage appropriately with the representatives of public service pensioners in relation to matters relevant to them.

Flood Prevention Measures

161. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the Office of Public Works will complete works at a location (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19774/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The Office of Public Works (OPW) has included in its 2015 programme of works the refurbishment of this stretch of Flood Defence of approx 1 kilometre in length at Garrane, Killorglin, Co. Kerry. An access haul road was constructed late last year to facilitate this flood defence refurbishment work.

Several residences have been constructed at this location approximately 1.5 metres below tide level in an area protected by a peat flood defence constructed and maintained by OPW. OPW is engaged in negotiations with affected landowners about the prospect of relocating an existing back drain to allow the construction of a more substantial designed flood defence to defend against the extreme events experienced at this location and to account for the very poor adjoining geology. The substantially stronger flood defence at this location requires an increase in land mass to support the greater footprint. This in turn requires the back filling of the existing back drain and the construction of a new offset back drain with associated sluice structures.

OPW is also in ongoing discussions with the National Parks and Wildlife Service as the location of the proposed works is within a designated Special Area of Conservation.

Flood Prevention Measures

162. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide an update on the provision of new flood defences in Foynes, County Limerick. [19782/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The provision of flood defences in Foynes is being undertaken by Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) with funding from the Office of Public Works.

In 2014, the OPW approved funding for LCCC to commission a study to survey the existing flood defences in Foynes and to prepare a detailed design for improved defences, including costings and a Cost Benefit Analysis, to provide protection against the 1-in-200 year flood event, which is the standard level of protection for coastal defences.

LCCC held a Public Information Evening in relation to the proposals in Foynes in January of this year. The OPW understands that LCCC is currently advancing the project through the Planning process. Progression of the project is a matter for LCCC.

Flood Prevention Measures

163. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will provide an update on the provision of new flood defences in Askeaton and Balysteen, County Limerick. [19783/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): On foot of an application from Limerick City and County Council (LCCC), the Office of Public Works approved funding of €30,000 in March of this year under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme for the appointment of consultants to prepare a detailed design of flood relief measures for Askeaton. It is a matter for LCCC to progress this project and the Deputy should contact the Council directly to receive an update on the current status of the project

LCCC also submitted an application for funding under the Scheme for a project at Ballys-teen. This application was not approved as the proposal submitted did not meet the minimum cost-benefit ratio required under the eligibility criteria of the Scheme. It would be open to LCCC to submit a fresh application that meets the eligibility criteria, which are available on the OPW website.

Departmental Legal Costs

164. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013 and 2014, respectively, on appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20164/15]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): In response to the Deputy's question there has been no expenditure on legal fees in my Department appealing decisions taken by the High Court.

Work Permits Applications Data

165. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding work permits; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19415/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Employment permits policy is calibrated to encourage the meeting of general labour and skills needs from within the workforce of Ireland the EU or other European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Ireland's labour market is part of a much greater EEA labour market which affords a considerable supply of skilled workers. Notwithstanding the priority afforded to Irish and EEA nationals, however, Ireland does operate in a global skills market, and where we experience skills gaps, the employment permits system has been designed to facilitate the employment of highly skilled individuals from beyond the EEA in Ireland.

The table provides the overall figures of employment permits granted for each year from

2010-2014. 25,836 employment permits have been granted in total during the period, of which 8,444 were renewals. The number of new permits issued in the period represents a yearly average over the five years of 0.16% of the labour market.

Employment Permits granted 2010 - 2014

Year	NEW	RENEWAL	TOTAL
2010	3394	3877	7271
2011	3184	2016	5200
2012	2919	1088	4007
2013	3034	829	3863
2014	4861	634	5495

Joint Labour Committees

166. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the measures he is taking to address the poor levels of pay in the farm contractor sector; if he will support a call for a minimum rate of pay of €9 per hour; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19690/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Agriculture Workers employed in the farm contractor are covered by the Joint Labour Committee for the Agriculture sector. In 2011, the High Court ruled that certain provision of the Industrial Relations Acts of 1946 and 1990 governing the making of Employment Regulation Orders (EROs) were unconstitutional. The experienced adult rate of pay provided for the Agriculture ERO at the time of the High Court ruling was €9.10 per hour.

The effect of the ruling was that National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) could not enforce the minimum pay and conditions of employment prescribed in EROs in force at the time of the High Court decision.

However, existing contractual rights of workers in sectors covered by EROs were unaffected by the ruling. Contractual rights can be altered only by agreement between the parties involved.

New entrants to employment in JLC sectors after the High Court ruling could be employed on a rate of pay agreed between the worker and the employer, subject only to the terms of the National Minimum Wage.

On 1 October 2013, I published the Report of the Labour Court's Review of the Joint Labour Committee (JLC) system. The Report owes its genesis to Section 41A of Industrial Relations Act 1946 (inserted by Section 11 of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012) which provides that reviews of each JLC be carried out by the Labour Court, as soon as practicable after the commencement of the Act, and at least once every 5 years thereafter. The review assisted the Labour Court's deliberations as to whether any JLC should be abolished, maintained in its current form, amalgamated with another JLC or its establishment order amended and the Labour Court is required to make recommendations to the Minister to this effect.

The Court's recommendation in relation to the Agriculture sector was that the JLC be retained for that sector with reduced scope.

With the exception of the Agriculture JLC, implementation of the recommendations, regarding the scope of the other JLCs were given effect by way of Ministerial Order. As the Agricultural Workers JLC was established under primary legislation, and the scope of the JLC is derived from the definition of “agriculture” in section 1 of the 1976 Industrial Relations Act, any amendment to the scope of the existing JLC will require an amendment to this definition to reflect the Labour Court recommendation. I intend to introduce the necessary amendment to the 1976 Act by way of a Committee Stage amendment to the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2015.

It should be borne in mind that the JLC system provides a framework within which employers and employee representatives can come together voluntarily and negotiate terms and conditions of workers in their respective sector. For vulnerable workers, the advantage of JLCs is that they see fair terms and conditions such as wage rates, sick pay etc. agreed and given effect by ERO, while for some employers, the advantage of the JLC system, based as it is on the principle of self-governance, means that they can agree and set minimum pay and conditions, agree on work practices which are custom-made to their industry – a flexibility which cannot be achieved by primary legislation. Where both parties to a JLC see commonality of purpose and outcome then an agreement may emerge.

This process sits very much within the context of Ireland’s voluntarist system of industrial relations.

Making work pay continues to be a cornerstone of this Government’s agenda and the setting up of a Low Pay Commission is one of the key commitments in the Statement of Government Priorities agreed in July last year.

The Commission was launched on the 26th February and it is currently operating on an interim non-statutory basis. Legislation to provide for the establishment of the Commission on a statutory basis has been published and I expect that it will be enacted quickly.

The principal function of the Low Pay Commission will be to annually examine and make recommendations on the national minimum wage, with a view to securing that the minimum wage is adjusted incrementally and progressively increased over time, without damage to enterprise or employment.

The Low Pay Commission will also be able to examine any matter generally related to its functions. A work programme will be agreed by Government and presented to the Commission in each February. Nothing relevant will be excluded from its deliberations.

The Commission sought the views of anyone with an interest in the minimum wage as part of a public consultation process. I understand that submissions are currently being considered and I expect the first report of the Commission by the middle of July.

Job Retention

167. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he has instructed his officials and Enterprise Ireland to provide all necessary support to the workers of Cadbury to save all the jobs now threatened by a proposal to move the jobs to Poland. [19241/15]

168. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he and agencies under his aegis have expressed grave concerns to 3G Capital-Berkshire Hathaway, following its takeover of Heinz-Kraft-Mondelez, on proposals to reduce the Mondelez

Cadbury workforce. [19242/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 167 and 168 together.

Immediately after the announcement by the company concerned, I established an inter-agency group to coordinate the response to the proposed job losses.

The group, chaired by Enterprise Ireland, will seek to secure alternative employment for the area affected and ensure that departing workers have access to supports they need from State agencies for retraining, access to social welfare supports, access to advice on employment rights and access to advice and support for those workers who intend to start their own businesses. The group includes Local Enterprise Offices, IDA Ireland, Solas, Education and Training Boards, Department of Social Protection, MABS and the Citizens Information Bureau.

The inter-agency group made it clear that it stood ready to meet unions and staff representatives at any stage. I understand that Enterprise Ireland is meeting with employee representatives this week to discuss in general terms the approach of the agency to supporting restructuring, job protection and job creation.

Enterprise Ireland has had meetings with the company's management on a weekly basis since the announcement of the proposed job losses, and has been in contact with the company on a continuous basis regarding the assistance it could provide for restructuring to minimise job losses. I have also had discussions with Mondelez at senior executive level and the company has committed clearly to me that it will invest in its operation here with the aim of achieving best in class production process.

The Company and its workers and the union who represent them are engaged in discussions in the company's restructuring proposals.

The Labour Relations Commission is available, if required, to assist the parties concerned. I know that in similar situations in the past, the parties have facilitated access to commercially sensitive information. It is a matter for the parties in each dispute to decide however.

Ireland's body of employment rights legislation protects all persons legally employed in Ireland on an employer-employee basis. Persons working under a contract of employment, on a full-time or part-time basis, have the same protection under law.

The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) is mandated to secure compliance with employment rights legislation. NERA's Workplace Relations Customer Service Section provides information in relation to employment, equality and industrial relations rights and obligations and how to obtain redress where appropriate.

Workplace Relations Customer Services staff are available to meet the Cadbury workforce to provide information and answer any questions they may have with regard to their present situation.

Action Plan for Jobs

169. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation as the lead Minister for the Action Plan for Jobs, with regard to improving credit to small and medium enterprises, if he has examined the crowd-funding model; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19257/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Action Plan for Jobs 2015 recognises that alternative financing activities such as peer to peer business lending, invoice finance, and crowdfunding can be a valuable source of funding to micro, small and medium businesses (SMEs) either as a complement to traditional bank funding or as an alternative to traditional bank intermediation in instances where bank credit has either been refused or not sought in the first place. The Government through the SME State Bodies Group, chaired by the Department of Finance are keeping the issue of alternative sources of finance under review as to how to best utilise their benefits to promote business development.

Recognising its potential importance my Department has been examining the crowdfunding model and has engaged with discussions on it at national and EU level.

Crowdfunding for business is in 2 forms: equity and lending. There are a range of possible issues associated with both forms. In broad terms the issues of consumer protection and regulation are relevant, as are the tax treatment of money lent or invested by the crowd. These issues are a matter for my Government colleague the Minister for Finance.

Another issue for Government is whether it should co-invest or co-lend with the crowd. In this regard the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA), as controller and manager of the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF), is currently working on commercial investment opportunities in the SME sector that will meet the strategic objectives and investment strategy of the ISIF. The NTMA has identified that there is a potential opportunity for the ISIF to provide lending support to SMEs through alternative finance lending providers that use a peer to peer model.

The NTMA sought proposals on behalf of a fund or funds that could be established to support lending via alternative finance lending providers with a view to assessing the level of interest from parties who might manage such a fund. The NTMA is now working through a process to see if a dedicated fund or funds can be established which would use ISIF and co-investor capital to support loans to Irish SMEs originated on alternative finance lending platforms.

Small and Medium Enterprises Supports

170. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if the concept of vouchers for new start-ups and entrepreneurs, which would provide financial assistance and business advice in the early start-up phase, has been explored; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19259/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Enterprise Ireland is the agency under my aegis with responsibility for the development of Irish enterprise, deepening Ireland's footprint in world markets, and supporting employment creation in our economy. Enterprise Ireland offers a range of financial and non-financial supports to assist clients through all stages of the business development cycle. As a first step towards innovation and collaboration with Higher Education Institutes companies can avail of €5,000 Innovation Vouchers which are designed to build links between Ireland's public knowledge providers and small businesses and are helping to create a cultural shift in the small business community's approach to innovation. The Innovation Vouchers initiative is open to all small and medium-sized limited companies registered in Ireland. Applications are not restricted to clients of Enterprise Ireland.

Furthermore Enterprise Ireland has introduced a Skills Voucher to support the Software Sector. The core objective is to encourage continuous capability building in core software develop-

ment skills in Enterprise Ireland client companies.

This offer helps companies to free up some senior developers' time to up-skill less experienced people in the company. This initiative is open to High Potential Start-Up clients and other small and medium companies and funding of a maximum of €5,000 is available.

In 2014, the Government reformed the structure of State supports for micro and small enterprises by establishing the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). Establishing the LEOs as a first stop shop for start-ups, micro-enterprises and small businesses means that entrepreneurs have one central place to go where they can get information and assistance in identifying and accessing all available supports, such as financial supports or "soft" supports, such as training and mentoring. Start-ups in particular can obtain training and business advice on all aspects of running and developing a business.

Financial supports available from the LEOs to all micro-enterprises include online trading vouchers for enterprises that want to establish an online presence for the first time. The online trading vouchers are offered to LEO clients on behalf of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Small and Medium Enterprises Supports

171. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he has considered treating micro-enterprises as distinct from the small and medium enterprise group; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19261/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): In 2014 the Government reformed the structure of State supports for micro and small enterprises by establishing the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). This reform was undertaken to provide an enhanced structure offering easy local access to all Government supports for micro and small business in one location. Establishing the LEOs as a first stop shop for start-ups, micro-enterprises and small businesses means that entrepreneurs have one central place to go where they can get information and assistance in identifying and accessing all available supports, such as financial supports or "soft" supports, such as training and mentoring. Start-ups in particular can obtain training and business advice on all aspects of running and developing a business. The majority of businesses that access LEO support are from within the micro-enterprise sector.

While enterprises larger than micro enterprises can access soft supports from the LEOs the suite of LEO financial supports are available only to micro-enterprises i.e. those with fewer than 10 employees. This is in line with the EU definition of micro-enterprises as enterprises that employ fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed €2m.

In addition Microfinance Ireland (MFI), as a not-for-profit lender, has been established to deliver the Government's Microenterprise Loan Fund. While all business sectors are eligible to apply to MFI its services are confined to the micro enterprise sector.

Public Procurement Regulations

172. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he has considered ring-fencing moneys in his Department directly to procurements of innovation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19262/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Given the nature of my Department's business, the level of direct procurement undertaken represents a small percentage of our annual "Estimate". In that regard, my Department's Corporate Services Division is tasked with procurements relating to the day-to-day running of the Department and its Offices.

Procurements are undertaken with due regard to Government Financial guidelines, ensuring value to the exchequer and in compliance with relevant circulars relating to the use of centralised Framework Agreements and contracts negotiated under the auspices of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). Where no central OGP Framework Agreement is in place my Department procures directly.

With particular reference to ICT, my Department procures equipment and services, including maintenance of existing systems and development of new services. While all technology acquisition may be regarded as spending on innovation, the level of innovation in technology solutions varies. My Department is conscious of the need to keep its technology up to date; however, much of this spending will be for technology solutions which are tried and tested, as solutions with significant levels of innovation may carry additional project risks. On occasion, more innovative solutions are considered having regard to the nature of projects and the benefits offered by such new innovation.

Procurements relating to accommodation of the staff of the Department and any maintenance of such accommodations are the responsibility of the Office of Public Works.

Given that the bulk of procurement is undertaken from central Government contracts that my Department is required to use, consideration has not, to date, been given to ring-fencing moneys for the procurement of innovation.

Finally, it would be a day-to-day matter for each Agency under the auspices of my Department to organise its procurement as each sees fit within the confines of central Government Procurement instructions.

Product Classification

173. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his plans to provide businesses which comply with the regulatory framework with a quality insurance and national and international branding for services and goods provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19263/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): In the time available, it has not been possible for my officials to compile the information requested by the Deputy. Once the available information is collated, I will arrange for it to be forwarded to the Deputy.

Road Projects

174. **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the discussion he has held with the job creating authority on the use of timber removed during the construction of motorways to create employment in the kindling and fuel industry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19295/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Commission-

ing the construction of motorways is a matter in the first instance for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the National Roads Authority and I have no function in this matter. My understanding is that the removal of trees, where necessary, would normally be part of the contract for the construction of a motorway. The further use of the timber would be a matter for the contractor or sub-contractor.

Microenterprise Loan Fund Applications

175. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the reason a small business (details supplied) in County Longford was not eligible for micro-finance scheme funding to support the creation of 22 jobs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19613/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Microfinance Ireland (MFI) was established to manage and control the Microenterprise Loan Fund as it has the appropriate credit expertise and the corporate governance disciplines to oversee the effective operation of the Fund. MFI provides loans of up to €25k to start-up, newly established, or growing microenterprises employing less than 10 people. MFI is independent in its decision making and I am not involved in its day to day decision making activities.

An application in relation to the details supplied was received twice by MFI. MFI has informed my Department that when the credit assessment team feels it necessary they will look to confirm the numbers of employees in a business prior to full assessment. In this case the number of jobs confirmed was fewer than 10 and the assessment proceeded. The initial application was declined in March 2013 and a detailed letter of decline was issued outlining MFI's key areas of concern and what the client needed to do before re-submitting an application for consideration.

A further application was received in October 2014 and assigned to a new Loan Assessor. The assessment of this application did not conclude as further information was needed to assess the proposal fully and the customer ultimately withdrew his application.

Local Enterprise Offices

176. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will provide, in a tabular form, the total budget allocated to each local enterprise office for 2015; the amount drawn down by each one to the end of April 2015; if he is satisfied that each office will have sufficient funding for its operations until the end of the year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19614/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Budget allocations for the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are drawn down from my Department by the Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland and disbursed to the LEOs in accordance with an agreed methodology.

The total budget allocation for each individual Local Enterprise Office (LEO) for 2015 and the amount drawn down from the Local Enterprise Development Vote to the end of April 2015 by the Centre of Excellence for allocation to each LEO is set out in the table.

LEO Budget allocations 2015 and drawdowns January-April 2015

LEO	2015 Allocation	Drawdown to end Apr 15
Carlow	€472,659	€110,000
Cavan	€654,619	€110,000
Clare	€447,222	€110,000
Cork City	€582,719	€110,000
Cork North/ West	€1,106,387	€110,000
Cork South	€806,914	€110,000
Donegal	€743,744	€110,000
Dublin City	€1,121,774	€110,000
Dublin South	€753,420	€110,000
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	€707,481	€110,000
Fingal	€819,862	€110,000
Galway	€712,429	€110,000
Kerry	€719,580	€110,000
Kildare	€667,960	€110,000
Kilkenny	€670,136	€110,000
Laois	€477,010	€110,000
Leitrim	€575,138	€110,000
Limerick	€1,150,260	€210,000
Longford	€527,237	€110,000
Louth	€597,001	€110,000
Mayo	€559,161	€110,000
Meath	€658,533	€110,000
Monaghan	€602,237	€110,000
Offaly	€560,408	€110,000
Roscommon	€483,881	€110,000
Sligo	€632,897	€110,000
Tipperary	€1,190,764	€210,000
Waterford	€929,603	€210,000
Westmeath	€596,737	€110,000
Wexford	€678,131	€110,000
Wicklow	€735,669	€110,000
Total	€21,941,572	€3,710,000

It should be noted that a further amount totalling €7,658,807 was drawn down at the end of April and will be disbursed to the LEOs by the Centre of Excellence to meet 2015 second quarter payments under Current and Capital requirements.

The Capital budget for the LEOs for 2015 is €18.5m with the increase of €3.5m acquired in 2014 being maintained. This will enable the running of the successful IBYE (Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur) competition again in 2015 – details of which I will announce next week.

In addition, as announced last Friday, a competitive fund to the value of €5m will be available over the period 2015 – 2017 to the LEOs. It will operate on a competitive basis whereby LEOs can collaborate together and/or with external Parties to develop and roll-out job creation initiatives in their local region. These initiatives will focus on clearly defined opportunities, weaknesses or business challenges impacting on micro-enterprise locally, regionally and nationally in order to grow and sustain employment and to scale micro-enterprises.

I am satisfied that the monies made available to the LEOs for Local Enterprise Development are sufficient to support their crucial role in facilitating job creation at local level throughout

the country.

177. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of full-time staff in each local enterprise office on 8 May 2015; the number of part-time staff; the locations at which vacancies exist; and when these vacancies will be filled. [19615/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): There is a total 181 staff (mixture of full time and part time) across the 31 Local Enterprise Offices. Details of individual LEO Resources are listed in the table. These resource figures are based on a recent survey of LEOs conducted by Enterprise Ireland.

The difference in staffing levels between various LEOs is due in many cases to historical reasons whereby the former CEBs had a reduced staffing complement due to the impact of the moratorium on public sector recruitment etc. and also circumstantial reasons whereby the amalgamation of two Local Authority areas such as Limerick and Tipperary has resulted in a larger LEO staff complement.

It is intended that Enterprise Ireland in conjunction with the local Authorities (through the LGMA) will conduct a more detailed analysis over coming months to analyse survey results on a LEO by LEO basis to identify LEOs where there might be pressure points in terms of skills and resources.

It should be noted that an open competition is currently underway by the Public Appointments Service to fill four Head of Enterprise posts (Clare, Louth, Meath and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown). Sanction for the filling of LEO posts is provided by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. In addition the LEO Graduate Programme is well underway with the majority of graduates *in situ* at this stage.

LEO Resources Summary as at Q1 2015

LEO	Resources
Carlow	3 (3 WT)
Cavan	7 (4 WT 3 PT)
Clare	5 (5 WT)
Cork North West	7 (5 WT 2 PT)
Cork South	5 (4 WT 1 PT)
Cork City	4 (1 WT 3 PT)
Donegal	4 (4 WT)
Dublin City	10 (9 WT 1 PT)
Dublin South	6 (6 WT)
Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown	9 (9 WT)
Fingal	7 (5 WT 2 PT)
Galway	3 (3 WT)
Kerry	8 (6 WT 2 PT)
Kildare	4 (4 WT)
Kilkenny	4 (4 WT)
Laois	3 (1 WT 2 PT)
Leitrim	5 (3 WT 2 PT)

LEO	Resources
Limerick	7 (5 WT 2 PT)
Longford	3 (1 WT 2 PT)
Louth	6 (1 WT 5 PT)
Mayo	7 (7 WT)
Meath	9 (8 WT 1 PT)
Monaghan	6 (5 WT 1 PT)
Offaly	5 (4 WT 1 PT)
Roscommon	3 (2 WT 1 PT)
Sligo	7 (7 WT)
Tipperary	12 (11 WT 1 PT)
Waterford	6 (4 WT 2 PT)
Westmeath	5 (4 WT 1 PT)
Wexford	5 (5 WT)
Wicklow	6 (4 WT 2 PT)

Job Creation Data

178. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will provide a breakdown on the 90,000 jobs created in the past four years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19629/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) contains a target to see an additional 100,000 jobs created by 2016, a target assessed via the Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Quarterly National Household Survey, or QNHS. More specifically, the target is assessed using the seasonally adjusted employment total for the quarter in question. The latest available QNHS data refers to the fourth quarter of 2014, and is available on the CSO's website, www.cso.ie. A complete breakdown of all QNHS data is available from that source.

In summary, according to the QNHS, the number of people employed in Ireland four years ago, in Q4 2010, was 1,857,300. In Q4 2014, the comparable number was 1,927,600, an increase of 70,300 jobs. In Q1 2012, there were 1,838,400 people employed, indicating that the number of jobs created since the APJ was launched is 89,200. The additional jobs created since the APJ was launched are broken down in the following tables, as of the CSO website on May 18 2015, and questions regarding the data should be directed to the CSO.

-	-	-	000	000	000
-	-	-	Q1 2012	Q4 2014	Change
		Males			
		In labour force	1,195.5	1,191.3	-4.2
		In employment	980.1	1,046.0	65.9
	of which:	Full-time	847.2	907.3	60.1
		Part-time	131.6	138.2	6.6
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing		72.8	93.0	20.2
B-E	Industry		169.3	174.6	5.3
F	Construction		97.9	107.6	9.7
G		Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	138.6	140.1	1.5

Questions - Written Answers

-	-	-	000	000	000
-	-	-	Q1 2012	Q4 2014	Change
H	Transportation and storage		71.9	72.1	0.2
I	Accommodation and food service activities		55.6	64.1	8.5
J	Information and communication		54.6	57.3	2.7
K-L	Financial, insurance and real estate activities		46.9	51.0	4.1
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities		60.5	72.3	11.8
N	Administrative and support service activities		33.8	32.5	-1.3
O		Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	50.8	49.2	-1.6
P	Education		38.7	43.2	4.5
Q	Human health and social work activities		45.8	48.0	2.2
R-U	Other NACE activities		39.5	41.1	1.6
		Unemployed	216.8	141.5	-75.3
	Not in labour force		566.9	572.3	5.4
	Unemployment rate %		18.1	11.9	-6.2
	Participation rate %		67.9	67.5	-0.4
		Females			
		In labour force	967.1	966.0	-1.1
		In employment	857.7	882.0	24.3
	of which:	Full-time	557.3	575.6	18.3
		Part-time	299.8	307.4	7.6
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing		9.4	11.9	2.5
B-E	Industry		68.2	66.6	-1.6
F	Construction		6.6	8.0	1.4
G		Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	132.5	136.1	3.6
H	Transportation and storage		17.9	17.8	-0.1
I	Accommodation and food service activities		63.9	74.2	10.3
J	Information and communication		24.8	24.9	0.1
K-L	Financial, insurance and real estate activities		55.3	50.4	-4.9
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities		37.2	44.7	7.5
N	Administrative and support service activities		30.0	32.8	2.8
O		Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	48.8	46.0	-2.8
P	Education		106.0	109.9	3.9
Q	Human health and social work activities		196.2	199.3	3.1
R-U	Other NACE activities		59.4	58.7	-0.7
		Unemployed	109.9	83.7	-26.2

-	-	-	000	000	000
-	-	-	Q1 2012	Q4 2014	Change
	Not in labour force		862.3	871.2	8.9
	Unemployment rate %		11.4	8.7	-2.7
	Participation rate %		52.9	52.6	-0.3
		All persons			
		In labour force	2,161.6	2,158.2	-3.4
		In employment	1,838.4	1,927.6	89.2
	of which:	Full-time	1,405.9	1,482.7	76.8
		Part-time	430.2	445.3	15.1
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing		82.3	105.9	23.6
B-E	Industry		237.3	241.2	3.9
F	Construction		104.2	115.8	11.6
G		Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	271.7	275.9	4.2
H	Transportation and storage		89.9	90.1	0.2
I	Accommodation and food service activities		119.6	138.4	18.8
J	Information and communication		79.3	82.3	3.0
K-L	Financial, insurance and real estate activities		102.0	101.7	-0.3
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities		97.9	116.9	19.0
N	Administrative and support service activities		63.7	65.7	2.0
O		Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	100.0	95.2	-4.8
P	Education		144.8	153.0	8.2
Q	Human health and social work activities		241.7	247.9	6.2
R-U	Other NACE activities		98.7	99.6	0.9
		Unemployed	326.7	225.4	-101.3
	Not in labour force		1,428.6	1,442.8	14.2
	Unemployment rate %		15.1	10.4	-4.7
	Participation rate %		60.2	59.9	-0.3

Source: Central Statistics Office, Ireland.

See StatBank Table QNQ03 and QNQ20

See QNHS Release Background Notes for further detail. The not stated group presented in Table 2a has not been separately seasonally adjusted.

ILO Economic Status/NACE Rev.2 Economic Sector.

Enterprise Ireland

179. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if Enterprise Ireland has the remit and role to secure jobs with companies that are at risk; and if he

will make a statement on the matter. [19630/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Enterprise Ireland is the Agency under my aegis which helps companies throughout Ireland to start and scale, to innovate and remain competitive on international markets. The manufacturing and internationally traded services companies that Enterprise Ireland (EI) works with are a vital source of employment in every county in Ireland and are spread across a wide range of sectors.

In January, EI reported that its client companies created 19,705 new jobs in 2014, and when job losses in these companies are taken into account, they created 8,476 net new jobs - the highest net gain in the history of the Agency. EI supported companies now directly provide employment for 180,072 people, comprising 156,202 full-time and 23,870 part-time workers.

EI uses a developmental approach across all aspects of clients' needs, including business development, sales and marketing capabilities, innovation and R&D activity, technology development, continuous competitiveness and lean improvements, leadership and management development, and access to finance.

Recognising the diversity of the EI client base, its supports are tailored to reflect each company's stage of development. This ensures that all of its new and existing clients, from Entrepreneurs and Start-Ups, to exporting SMEs and scaling companies, can access the appropriate supports to help them to create and sustain jobs.

EI works very closely with its client companies, seeking to proactively address development challenges or to engage before serious financial or other difficulties arise.

EI engages closely with those client companies reporting difficulties or potential job losses to determine the appropriate action and proactive measures that can be put in place.

Since the onset of the economic crisis, EI has invested in thousands of client companies with the objective of sustaining and growing their employment. In addition, EI works in close concert with partner development Agencies to respond to incidences with larger companies where a significant number of jobs are at risk. The objective in these circumstances is to identify all opportunities to maximise the number of jobs maintained, for example, through support for spin-out start-ups, Management Buy Outs, or commercial partnering. Taskforces comprising relevant personnel from the Development Agencies and other key stakeholders are used in these cases.

It is also important that in the event that a company in serious financial difficulty downsizes or closes, a range of interventions in other government policy areas can be brought to bear e.g. Redundancy Payments Scheme, Labour Activation/Training etc. which seek to ameliorate the impact of job losses.

Enterprise Support Services Provision

180. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his plans to introduce a grant system, through the local enterprise offices, for small and medium-sized companies affected by IS EN 1090, in order to offset the costs of achieving CE marking of steel certification to a European standard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19668/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Construction Products Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 225 of 2013) were signed into law by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in June 2013, to facilitate the application

of the Construction Products Regulation (or CPR) in Ireland and providing for inspection of products on the Irish market by Local Authorities. Since July 2014 structural steelwork and aluminium now fall under the CPR and therefore must carry CE marking to demonstrate that they comply with the European Commission's harmonised standard EN 1090-1:2009 which relates to the Execution of Steel Structures and Aluminium Structures.

Under EN standard 1090, there are requirements for conformity assessment of structural components, which requires certification by a third party, known as a 'notified inspection body'. In Ireland, the certification role is performed by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

In view of the NSAI's final certification role, and given the roles and responsibilities of other Departments and agencies, my Department has discussed the requirements of the CPR with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DCELG), the Department of Education and Skills, the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) network and the NSAI.

Any difficulty facing the small business sector is of course a concern. While there is no direct funding available from this Department for companies to upskill or update their processes in order to meet the CE marking requirements, there is information and guidance available through the DCELG website, the LEO's and the NSAI.

With regard to the role of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in providing training support for companies affected by the CPR, the LEOs were established as a first-stop-shop for the provision of advice and supports to the micro and small enterprise sector.

Five information workshops about the requirements under the CPR have been hosted over recent months by the LEO's in conjunction with the NSAI at various locations throughout the country. Steel fabricator companies affected by the CPR requirements were advised that they could explore training provision with SOLAS, Education and Training Boards (ETB) or Institutes of Technology (IT) for welding courses, and ultimately, CE marking certification which can be organised through the NSAI for companies who have successfully implemented the requirements of the CPR.

The provision of the specialist technical training required to achieve certification to an International or European Standard, such as that required by steel fabricators in this instance, is outside of the remit of the LEO services. However, I understand that the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Cork, Dundalk, Galway, Shannon, Tralee and Waterford provide metal fabrication apprenticeship training, which incorporates elements of certification training.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

181. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he has availed of the opportunity to access the confidential reading rooms in the US Embassy in Dublin, in order to assess the content of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership; if so, if he has had the opportunity to read US input papers and draft partnership chapters, consolidated texts, in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19669/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): I very much welcome Commissioner Malmström's efforts to improve transparency since she took office. As the Deputy will be aware the EUs negotiating documents and concept papers are now available publically on the EU's Trade website. Together with other member states we have encouraged the Commissioner in her discussion with the US side to improve access to the US negotiating documents and in this context the opening of reading rooms is a welcome first step. I have not

had the opportunity to read US input papers as they are not available. However, I look forward to the availability of consolidated texts in due course and to having access to these documents in Dublin.

Departmental Legal Costs

182. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013 and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20163/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The amount spent by my Department in legal fees in appealing decisions taken by the High Court for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 is as follows:

Year	€
2012	€109,697.05
2013	€28,817.35
2014	€45,725.00

Animal Welfare Expenditure

183. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position in regard to public money and animal welfare (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19738/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department has had extended correspondence with the person referred to by the deputy in relation to this matter and has explained the position to him on many occasions. In addition, HRI and the Turf Club have confirmed to my Department that they have fully examined all matters under their remit in respect of this issue, and that they have apprised the person concerned of the outcome. My Department has advised the person concerned that the matters raised were outside its remit but that he was at liberty to refer the matter to An Garda Síochána for further investigation if he wished.

The Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 was commenced on the 6th March 2014 and, arising from its commencement, all animal welfare matters now come within the remit of my Department. However, the position is that the Act does not have retrospective effect, and therefore matters which took place prior to the 6th March 2014 and were not part of the remit of my Department at that time remain outside my Department's competence.

Sheep Technology Adoption Programme Eligibility

184. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding a sheep technology adoption programme subsidy in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19163/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named, although a participant in the 2014 Sheep Technology Adoption Programme was not included in a return (Form STAP3) by his discussion group facilitator indicating compliance with the terms and conditions of the Programme. Accordingly, he was not considered for payment.

To date no appeal has been received in this matter. Furthermore the medical evidence mentioned has not been received by my Department. An official from my Department will make contact with the person named with a view to carrying out a review of the case and concluding the matter.

Single Payment Scheme Eligibility

185. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding a 2013 single payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19180/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application under the 2013 Single Payment/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 18 April 2013. Payment has not issued to the person named as, at this stage, the holding concerned has not satisfied the Scheme's minimum stocking density requirements. The person named was informed of this decision in writing on 30 January 2014 and advised of the option to appeal the decision should he so wish. To date no appeal has been received by my Department.

Disadvantaged Areas Scheme Payments

186. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment will issue under the 2014 disadvantaged areas scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; the reason for the delay in issuing this payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19191/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named was one of a number of applicants under the 2012, 2013 and 2014 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme, whose cases are impacted by the requirement of a minimum stocking density of 0.3 livestock units per forage hectare in 2011 and who applied for and was refused for derogation in this regard. The person named was notified of the outcome in writing and advised of the option to appeal to the Agricultural Appeals Committee should she so wish.

Single Payment Scheme Payments

187. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding a single payment overpayment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19212/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Officials in my Department have examined the case of 2014 Single Payment Scheme application of the person named. As the parcel in question was afforested in 2014 and has been deemed eligible for aid under the Afforestation Scheme it can be considered as eligible land under the 2014 Single Payment Scheme. My Department is now arranging to update the 2014 Single Payment Scheme application of the person named to reflect this position. On completion of this process arrangements will be made to cancel the previously notified debt.

Agriculture Scheme Penalties

188. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a penalty applied to a single payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry will be reviewed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19388/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application under the 2013 Single Payment/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 15 May 2013 and payments issued on 16 October 2013, 2 December 2013 and 30 September 2014 respectively under the Single Farm Payment Scheme and a payment issued on 27 September 2013 under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme. A review of the land parcels declared by the person named under the 2013 Single Payment Scheme revealed that several of the land parcels declared by the person named contained ineligible features and the person named was notified. In order to clarify the position regarding the area of any ineligible features my Department arranged for a ground verification check to be undertaken.

My Department is currently carrying out a full assessment of this case and will make direct contact with the person named when this assessment is completed.

Commonage Land Use

189. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason commonage in respect of farmers (details supplied) in County Kerry has been declared abandoned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19390/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department is carrying out a review of the findings of the inspection of the commonage parcel in question. On completion of this review, direct contact will be made with all of the claimants involved advising them of the outcome of this review.

Farm Inspections

190. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a farm inspection report is void without the signature of the landowner; if an inspection report is available to farmers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19414/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): EU Regulations governing the Direct Payment Schemes and other area-based schemes requires my Department to carry out on-the-spot checks on a number of farms covering such issues as eligibility under the schemes and compliance with Cross Compliance requirements, as set down in EU legislation, and the standards for Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). These inspections are mandatory and there are certain numbers and types that must take place annually. The governing regulations prescribe that for eligibility inspections a control report must be completed for every inspection. The regulations also state that the farmer shall be given the opportunity to sign the report during the check to attest his presence at the check and to add observations. A farmer does not have to sign the report and the lack of a signature does not diminish the report. Where irregularities are identified at the inspection the farmer must receive a copy of the control report.

In the case of Cross Compliance inspections, the regulations state that a control report must be completed for every inspection. In addition, the regulations prescribe that the farmer must be informed of any non-compliance determined at the inspection. It is not a regulatory requirement, for Cross Compliance inspections, that the farmer be given the opportunity to sign the

control report.

Fishery Harbour Centres

191. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason for the outstanding charge levied in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; if it relates to the use of fresh water and waste facilities not used by the named person; if this fact has been taken into account; if this is a standard charge to all boat owners; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19420/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Pursuant to the Fishery Harbour Centres Act 1968 (as amended), my Department is responsible for the six Fishery Harbour Centres located at Howth, Dunmore East, Castletownbere, An Daingean, Ros an Mhíl and Killybegs. Charges for the use of facilities and services at each of the Fishery Harbour Centres are levied by virtue of the Fishery Harbour Centres (Rates & Charges) Order 2012 (S.I. No. 214 of 2012) which came into effect on 1 July 2012. Different rates apply according to the type and nature of the vessel, the different use made of the facilities by the vessel, the size of the vessel and the quantity and species of fish landed (where applicable). For ease of reference the relevant charges under S.I. No. 214 of 2012 being applied to the person concerned are set out in the following table.

Charge 9 of Schedule 1 provides *inter alia* that the use of fresh water is “...mandatory on all vessels using a Fishery Harbour Centre whether or not they use fresh water...” other than vessels paying under charge no. 5 and charge no. 10 in Schedule 1 and charge no. 17 in Schedule 2. In this regard, please note the following:

- Charge no. 5 of Schedule 1 relates to landing of whitefish. It is generally only larger fishing vessels that opt to be invoiced under this charge.
- Charge no. 10 of Schedule 1 relates to use of harbour by passenger boats/vessels and cruise vessels.
- Charge no. 17 of Schedule 2 relates to berthing of yachts and pleasure crafts.

Waste charges are mandatory on all vessels using a Fishery Harbour Centre whether or not waste is disposed of, as set out in Charge 10 of Schedule 2. The Deputy should be aware that the mandatory nature of the charge is designed to reduce any incentive to discharge waste at sea. My Department is satisfied that the amount(s) that the person concerned has been invoiced for under the above Order to date are correct having regard to the provisions of the three charges as set out as follows.

Charge No./ Schedule No.	Description of Facility or Service	Rate or Charge
Charge 4/ Schedule 1	Use of harbour in connection with discharging of fish- (a) value: 0 - €500 per tonne	€4 per tonne/€0.20 per 50kg
	(b) value: €501 - €10,000 per tonne	€10 per tonne/€0.50 per 50kg
	(c) value: €10,001 or more per tonne	€40 per tonne/€2 per 50 kg
	(d) landings of mackerel and horse mackerel, over 2 tonnes	€14 per tonne/€0.70 per 50 kg

Charge No./ Schedule No.	Description of Facility or Service	Rate or Charge
	Fish Values to be based on the average price in the relevant harbour in the previous calendar year as determined by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority. Previous calendar year values will come into effect on 1 June each year. Note: Where average price values for the previous calendar year are not available either current values or values for the most recent calendar year available, whichever is the higher, will be substituted.	
	(e) fish for reduction to fishmeal	€2 per tonne/€0.10 per 50 kg
Charge 9/ Schedule 1	Use of fresh water (mandatory on all vessels using a Fishery Harbour Centre whether or not they use fresh water) other than vessels paying under charge no. 5 and charge no. 10 in this Schedule and charge no. 17 in Schedule 2: (a) fishing vessels (6 metres or more in length overall — Loa)	€30 per month per vessel or €2.50 per cubic metre metered
	(b) pelagic vessels	€90 per month per vessel or €2.50 per cubic metre metered
	(c) all other vessels *Note: If a charge for fresh water is levied at one Fishery Harbour Centre this charge will not be levied in another Fishery Harbour Centre used within that month.	€2.50 per cubic metre metered
Charge 10/ Schedule 2	Disposal of ship generated waste*. A vessel of — (a) less than 10 gross tons	€20 per month
	(b) 10 or more gross tons	€40 per month
	(c) 20 or more gross tons	€60 per month
	(d) 30 or more gross tons	€80 per month
	(e) 100 or more gross tons	€100 per month

*Note:

1. This charge is mandatory on all vessels using a Fishery Harbour Centre whether or not waste is disposed of.

2. If a charge for disposal of waste is levied at one Fishery Harbour Centre in a month this charge will not be levied in another Fishery Harbour Centre used within that month.

Departmental Expenditure

192. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment will issue in respect of professional fees for attendance at a court (details supplied); if he will ensure that there is no further delay in having this payment issued, as the court took place in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19449/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): In line with normal practice, the person concerned was asked in December 2014, through the local State Solicitor to whom he had submitted his initial claim, to provide a breakdown of the fees claimed along with supporting documentation. My Department has not received the requested material to date. On receipt of this, the matter can be progressed.

Herd Data

193. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding a herd number in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19481/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An applica-

tion for a herd number from the person concerned was received on 25 March. The application is currently being processed by the Regional Veterinary Office of my Department and will be finalised as soon as possible. I should clarify that, where an applicant under the National Reserve priority categories of 'young farmer' and 'new entrant' had not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 31 March 2015, their application under the National Reserve will be accepted once they had applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 31st March 2015. Similarly, applicants under the Young Farmers Scheme who have not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 29 May 2015 will have their applications under the Scheme accepted once they have applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 29 May.

Herd Data

194. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding a herd number in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19482/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application in respect of the person concerned was received on 4 March. The application is currently being processed by the Regional Veterinary Office of my Department and will be finalised as quickly as possible.

As the Deputy is aware, there has been a considerable increase in activity in this area and, to date this year, my Department's Regional Offices have processed over 3,000 new herd number applications and over 3,200 amendments to existing herd numbers.

I should clarify that, where an applicant under the National Reserve priority categories of 'young farmer' and 'new entrant' had not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 31 March 2015, their application under the National Reserve will be accepted once they had applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 31 March 2015. Similarly, applicants under the Young Farmers Scheme who have not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 29 May 2015 will have their applications under the Scheme accepted once they have applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 29 May.

Single Payment Scheme Data

195. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his plans to publish details of the single payments received by farmers; if so, the date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19501/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): In accordance with EU legislation (Regulation EU No: 1306/13) the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is obliged to ensure annual ex-post publication of all of the beneficiaries of CAP funding - both legal and non-legal persons. In accordance with the regulation the Department must, by the 31 May 2015, publish: The name of the beneficiary (unless the amount of payment under CAP funds is less than €1,250 in which case the individual will be identified by a code).

- The municipality where the beneficiary is resident.
- The amount of payment corresponding to each measure received by a beneficiary, and

- The nature and description of each measure.

The requirements imposed by an EU Regulation are directly applicable and binding in their entirety on a Member State and the Department does not have any discretion in the matter.

Work on developing the CAP beneficiaries' database is ongoing in my Department and it is intended that all appropriate information will be published in the required format by the 31 May deadline.

Aquaculture Data

196. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of aquaculture licence applications awaiting processing in his Department; the number waiting for more than 12 months; the number of licences granted by his Department in each of the past four years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19502/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): At present there are 625 aquaculture licence applications awaiting determination, of which 530 have been waiting for a period of over 12 months. The number of licences issued in each of the past four years is as follows:

Year	No.
2011	6
2012	16
2013	108
2014	94

The majority of areas in which aquaculture licence determinations are pending are designated as Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive and/or Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive (Natura sites). My Department is constrained by law from issuing or renewing aquaculture licences for sites located within these areas until such time as Appropriate Assessments have been conducted for the purpose of environmental compliance with these Directives.

My Department is working with the Marine Institute, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and the National Parks and Wildlife Service through a multi-annual work programme for aquaculture sites located within Natura areas. All of the baseline data on habitats and species for 'natura' areas has been acquired allowing for the Conservation Objectives to be set. This will enable all new and renewal aquaculture applications to be assessed in accordance with EU legislative requirements. A key factor of this work programme is the identification of prioritised bays based on the number of aquaculture sites and also the ready availability of scientific data and other factors. The prioritised list of bays is kept under continuous review by my Department in order to facilitate the optimum use of scientific and other resources.

The Appropriate Assessment process has now been completed in respect of twelve bays – Castlemaine Harbour, Roaringwater Bay, Dundalk Bay, Lough Swilly, Donegal Bay, Dungarvan Harbour, Ballycotton Bay, Kenmare Bay, Valentia Harbour/Portmagee Channel, Galway Bay, Clew Bay and Drumcliff Bay. While these Appropriate Assessments are carried out on a bay by bay basis, each licence application within a bay must be assessed individually. Factors to be considered include location of the sites within a bay, species, scale and intensity of production, potential visual impact etc.

A significant number of aquaculture licence determinations have been made in respect of

three Natura sites, Castlemaine, Roaringwater and Donegal Bay. My Department is currently examining the outcome of the remaining Appropriate Assessments which have been received to date, with a view to formulating policy recommendations in respect of individual licences held by operators in those bays. Such policy recommendations will take account of all national and EU legislative requirements and will reflect full engineering, scientific, environmental, legal and public policy aspects of each licence application. Work is ongoing in this area and it is anticipated that a significant number of licence determinations will be achieved this year.

In addition to the Natura requirements, under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, all licence applications must undergo an Environmental Impact Screening Assessment. This requires significant input from my Department's scientific and technical advisers.

Direct Payment Scheme Applications

197. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will arrange an urgent field verification visit to a herd owner (details supplied) in County Mayo, as this matter is delaying the transfer of the herd number and an application that must be submitted by 29 May 2015. [19550/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): I have arranged for my Department to carry out a field verification check on the land in question to establish its eligibility for payment under the Direct Payment Schemes. The person named will be informed of the findings of the verification check immediately following the completion of the visit.

Single Payment Scheme Applications

198. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the options available to a person (details supplied) in County Wexford to apply for a single payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19551/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The above named herdowner was issued with a guide to the number and value of entitlements he may be allocated under the Basic Payment Scheme 2015 to 2019. The number of entitlements is based on the number of hectares declared by him in 2013 but if he declares less land in 2015, the lesser number will apply. As he did not own any Single Payment Scheme entitlements in 2014, he has no reference value to carry forward to the new scheme. The projected value of the entitlements is therefore starting from zero and converging upwards over the five years of the scheme to a minimum of 60% of the national average unit value. He also received a pack in March 2015 with an application form and maps enclosed along with a copy of the Terms and Conditions applicable under the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme. In order to apply under the Basic Payment Scheme in 2015 completed application forms should be returned to the Direct Payments Unit, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Old Abbeylax Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois or submitted online to the Department no later than mid-night on FRIDAY 29 May 2015. This is the latest date allowed under EU rules and therefore cannot be extended. It is not permitted to submit an application form through a Local Office, or any other office of the Department.

If a pack was not received he should contact Co ordination Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Old Abbeylax Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois to request a reprint.

Laboratory Facilities

199. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the status of the review taking place of the regional veterinary laboratories. [19553/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department is currently undertaking a Strategic Review of its Laboratories as part of an Integrated Reform Delivery Plan agreed with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to consider the best means of delivering laboratory services to customers. This review is considering all of the Department's laboratories, including the central laboratory complex at Backweston and eight laboratories (including five Regional Veterinary Laboratories) located at other sites around the country. An extensive consultative process was initially undertaken with stakeholders. A Working Group was then convened, under an external chairman, Professor Alan Reilly, with the following Terms of Reference:

1. To define the laboratory services and expertise that the Department requires at present and in the foreseeable future;
2. To consider how these laboratory services and expertise can best be delivered; and
3. To outline an implementation plan, including timescale, for proposed changes.

The first meeting of the Working Group took place on 6 January 2015. The working group is considering various proposals at present. A report from this group is expected in due course.

Laboratory Facilities

200. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if the review contains a recommendation for the closure of regional veterinary laboratories in counties Sligo, Limerick, Cork and Kilkenny. [19554/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): There are no plans to close any of my Department's Regional Veterinary Laboratories. A working group has been established to review the best way to provide laboratory diagnostic services to farmers and this continues to be our priority. As would be expected they are looking at a range of options on how best to do this and will make their recommendations in due course. However, as I have publicly stated previously, I do not intend to close any regional veterinary laboratories.

Laboratory Facilities

201. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will publish the review containing a recommendation for the closure of regional veterinary laboratories in counties Sligo, Limerick, Cork, and Kilkenny. [19555/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): A working group was established in January 2015 to undertake a Strategic review of my Department's Laboratories and to report back to me with a series of recommendations. A report from the working group is expected in due course when my senior officials and I will give it appropriate consideration. However, as I have publicly stated previously, I do not intend to close any regional veterinary laboratories.

Laboratory Facilities

202. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will reassure the current laboratories that their existing status is secure. [19556/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): A working group was established in January 2015 to undertake a Strategic review of my Department's Laboratories and to report back to me with a series of recommendations. A report from the working group will be finalised in due course when my senior officials and I will give it due consideration. However, as I have publicly stated previously, I do not intend to close any regional veterinary laboratories.

Laboratory Facilities

203. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will confirm that the regional veterinary laboratories in counties Sligo, Limerick, Cork and Kilkenny will be retained in their current form. [19557/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department has no plans to change the current form of any of its Regional Veterinary Laboratories. All of these Regional Veterinary Laboratories will continue to operate as heretofore, providing a range of laboratory diagnostic support services to the farming community through private veterinary practitioners.

Laboratory Facilities

204. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the status of employment of the workers at the regional veterinary laboratories in counties Sligo, Limerick, Cork and Kilkenny. [19558/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The status of employment of the workers employed in my Department's Regional Veterinary Laboratories in counties Sligo, Limerick, Cork and Kilkenny, remains unchanged. All of these workers are Civil Servants serving in various different roles.

Animal Slaughtering Standards

205. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the criteria in force for bovine and equine animals being processed at the same time in the same plant. [19572/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Under EU law, primary responsibility for compliance with food safety and species segregation requirements rests in the first instance with food business operators. Slaughter plants producing meat for human consumption must meet the requirements set out in detailed EU regulations generally referred to as the 'Hygiene Package'. These regulations are implemented in Ireland under the European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations, S.I. No. 432 of 2009. Regulation (EC) No. 853 of 2004 makes specific reference in relation to species segregation, and provides that where establishments are approved for the slaughter of different animal species

or for the handling of carcasses of farmed game and wild game, precautions must be taken to prevent cross-contamination by separation either in time or in space of operations carried out on the different species.

My Department as the competent authority implements official controls designed to verify ongoing compliance by food business operators with the relevant Regulations and with their own Food Safety Management Systems and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans.

Animal Slaughtering Standards

206. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason for the delay in issuing the licence to an equine processing plant owner (details supplied) in County Kildare. [19573/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application from the company concerned for approval to operate an equine slaughter plant is under active consideration by my Department. All slaughter plants producing meat for human consumption must meet the requirements set out in detailed EU food safety regulations, generally referred to as the 'Hygiene Package'. These regulations are implemented in Ireland under the European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations, S.I. No. 432 of 2009. Large scale slaughter plants and all plants involved in equine slaughter operate under the supervision of my Department. Officials from the Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service of my Department have carried out a number of inspections and scoping visits at the proposed premises. A request to provide further documentation in relation to a Food Safety Management System and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan has been made to the applicant and a response is awaited. The granting of approval to operate will depend on the outcome of the ongoing assessment and the completion of any upgrading that may be required by the applicant to meet the regulatory standards.

Derogation Payments

207. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a person (details supplied) in County Limerick, who commenced farming in October 2013, will be entitled to entitlements under the Scottish derogation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19579/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The provision known as the Scottish Derogation makes available entitlements to those persons who never held entitlements under the Single Payment Scheme and who actively produced an agricultural product in the beef, dairying, sheep or arable sectors. Such production must have been in place on the 15 May 2013. I can confirm that the person named never held entitlements under the Single Payment Scheme. However, based on the information provided, I note that his herd-number was allocated in October 2013 and he commenced his farming at that time. If this is the case, the person named does not meet the production criterion and therefore would not be eligible under this provision.

Grassland Sheep Scheme Applications

208. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will examine the case of a person (details supplied) in County Laois, whose appeal against his Department's decision failed as the medical evidence provided was deemed to be insufficient; if he will reopen the case, as it is clear that the person was treated badly and unfairly by his Department; and if he will expedite a reply. [19604/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application under the 2014 Grassland Sheep Scheme was received from the person named on 15 May 2014. Payment has not issued to the person named as the holding concerned has not satisfied the Scheme minimum eligibility requirements namely, the submission of the annual sheep census form prior to the extended closing date of 14 February 2014. The person named unsuccessfully applied for the late acceptance of the form on the grounds of force majeure. The person named has been advised of the option to submit an appeal to the Agricultural Appeals Office should he so wish.

Departmental Agencies Staff Recruitment

209. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his plans to recruit additional permanent staff to a college (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19617/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): On 12 March 2015, I received a request from Bord Iascaigh Mhara for sanction to recruit 21 additional staff, including 3 positions with the National Fisheries College, of which 2 relate to Greencastle. This request by BIM for a very significant increase in staff resources must be considered by my Department in the context of the ongoing constrained budgetary situation and the staff resource constraints being experienced by my Department and its agencies. The BIM staffing request will be considered within the context of existing Government procedures for the assessment and consideration of such staffing requests.

Agriculture Scheme Eligibility

210. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in view of the revelation that over 4,000 farmers fall under the category of forgotten farmers, namely young farmers under the age of 40 who established their farm holding prior to 2008 and qualified for no, or low, entitlements, if he will immediately establish a working group of all the stakeholders in order to develop a strategy, not only to look at the entitlements issue but also at other on-farm supports for such a large number of young farmers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19621/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Officials from my Department met with representatives of the Forgotten Farmers Group on 1 April 2015. This group represents farmers under the age of 40, who established their holdings prior to 2008 and who hold low value entitlements. At this meeting the main request of the group was to increase the value of entitlements for farmers who are under 40 years to the National Average value of entitlements in 2015. It was estimated that this group would comprise of no more than 300 farmers. Following the meeting my Department carried out analysis of the group of farmers involved. It has been established that 3,900 farmers fulfil these criteria. An estimation of the cost of increasing the value of existing entitlements to the National Average for these 3,900 farmers stands at €12.288m. Under EU Regulations governing the distribution of funding un-

der the National Reserve, priority must be given to young farmers who commenced farming in the past 5 years and new entrants to farming who commenced in the last 2 years. Given the number of applications received under these two priority categories, it is not envisaged that there will be available resources to cater for this large additional group of farmers who commenced their farming activity prior to 2008.

Many of the farmers in this group will benefit from an increase in the value of their entitlements under the convergence process between 2015 and 2019. Farmers who hold entitlements that have an Initial Unit Value that is below 90% of the Basic Payment Scheme national average will see the value of their entitlements increase gradually over the five years of the scheme. By 2019, all entitlements for all farmers in Ireland will be at least 60% of the National Average value.

With regard to access under Pillar 2 to the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS) for young farmers who established their holdings prior to 2008, I intend to prioritise their applications under TAMS, with grant-aid payable at 40%.

Food Labelling

211. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the current status of plans for an all-island animal health regime, and single country of origin food label; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19622/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): I have been a strong proponent of origin labelling as a means of providing consumers with clear and transparent information about the food they consume, including as regards the origin of that food. The rules on origin labelling are determined at EU level and I recently signed into law an SI to give effect to the new European Regulations for country of origin labelling of meat from sheep, pigs, poultry and goats. These mandatory rules require a label to state the Member State where the animal was reared and slaughtered. They do not operate on a regional, multi member state or all-island basis.

The requirement at EU level applies only to pre-packaged meat. However, I believe this information should also be made available to consumers purchasing meat sold loose through butcher shops and deli counters. As a result, I have asked my officials to work with the Department of Health to extend these rules to “loose meat” and work is progressing well in bringing this to fruition.

With regards to Northern Ireland, I have been in regular contact with my counterpart Minister Michelle O'Neill on labelling issues that affect both jurisdictions on the island. There is also considerable engagement at official level and, only last week, my Department met with officials from DARD Northern Ireland to discuss the practical implementation of the new country of origin labelling requirements, including any impact which these may be having on the trade in lambs from Northern Ireland.

Ultimately, these issues are a function of the market and are driven by customer specification. This is borne out by the fact that live export of beef animals to the North is nearly 50% higher than it was at this time last year and this has been achieved without any change to the beef labelling rules. This shows that a true picture of the market forces impacting on the market takes time to become apparent and the situation for lamb this year is no different, particularly since the new rules have only been introduced from 1 April.

Of course, it is important that we continue to monitor the impact of labelling rules carefully.

I will continue to work to ensure that mandatory labelling laws provide clear and transparent information to consumers, are practicable, and do not negatively impact on Ireland's agri food exports.

As regards an all-island animal health regime, there is already a substantial degree of harmonisation of the veterinary regimes on the island of Ireland, particularly in view of the fact that the bulk of the animal health and welfare measures implemented on the island are based on EU legislation. However, the incidence of cattle disease is not uniform on the island, particularly in the case of Bovine TB and Brucellosis, resulting in different eradication programmes on both sides of the Border. This aside, there is ongoing good co-operation between the veterinary services North and South in the context of delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan under the North/South Ministerial arrangements.

Herd Data

212. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will receive a herd number; the reason for the delay; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19631/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application for a herdnumber from the person concerned is currently being processed by the Regional Veterinary Office of my Department. The case is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that a herd number will issue at an early date. I should clarify that, where an applicant under the National Reserve priority categories of 'young farmer' and 'new entrant' had not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 31 March 2015, their application under the National Reserve will be accepted once they had applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 31 March 2015. Similarly, applicants under the Young Farmers Scheme who have not been issued a herd number or added to a herd number by the closing date of 29 May 2015 will have their applications under the Scheme accepted once they have applied for a herd number or to be added to a herd number prior to 29 May.

Data Protection

213. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he is aware of the concerns of those in the farming community regarding the online publishing of payments received by persons in relation to the possible targeting of these persons by criminal elements, especially as many are in rural locations and some are living alone; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19652/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): In accordance with EU legislation (Regulation EU No: 1306/13) the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is obliged to ensure annual ex-post publication of all of the beneficiaries of CAP funding - both legal and non-legal persons. In accordance with the regulation the Department must, by the 31 May 2015, publish: The name of the beneficiary (unless the amount of payment under CAP funds is less than €1,250 in which case the individual will be identified by a code).

- The municipality where the beneficiary is resident.
- The amount of payment corresponding to each measure received by a beneficiary, and
- The nature and description of each measure.

I am aware of farmers' concerns about the publication of CAP beneficiary data, however, the requirements imposed by an EU Regulation are directly applicable and binding in their entirety on a Member State and the Department does not have any discretion in the matter.

Work on developing the CAP beneficiaries' database is ongoing in my Department and it is intended that all appropriate information will be published in the required format by the 31 May deadline.

Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland

214. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his views on concerns regarding the high rate of interest charges for farmers, and the agribusiness sector; the reason for Ireland's disproportionately high rates of such charges, in comparison to the European average; if he will address such concerns to the Central Bank of Ireland for urgent attention; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19686/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): In recognition of these issues, the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) was established last year by the Government as a state development bank. The SBCI aims to deliver lower cost, long-term, innovative and accessible funding to Irish SMEs, by offering tailored flexible products through its lending partners.

With regard to agriculture specifically, my Department and I have been active in exploring new and more competitive sources of funding and will continue to do so in the context of evolving market requirements. The recent announcement by the SBCI of a new product, 'Agriculture Investment Loans', is a welcome addition to the sources of funding currently in the market. This credit is available, subject to qualifying criteria, at favourable terms (i.e. longer term and lower interest rate) for investments by agricultural SMEs involved in primary agricultural production, the processing of agricultural products or the marketing of agricultural products.

In relation to accessing finance and credit terms generally, I have recently been in contact with the main banks. I emphasised that this is a critical phase in Ireland's dairy expansion and that the increased investment and output from production and processing will have significant downstream benefits across the economy generally, including for the banking sector. In order to support the on-going development of the dairy sector and to mitigate any potential difficulties caused by milk price volatility, I asked them to explore the full range of potential measures that could serve to alleviate the loan repayment burden facing farmers and offer maximum flexibility for dairy farmers in what may be a difficult year ahead. I believe that it is essential that short term cash flow difficulties are not allowed to undermine prudent investment plans or the longer term competitiveness of their operations. I will continue to communicate with the main banks on issues affecting the sector.

Organic Farming

215. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position Ireland is adopting, as part of the current European Union negotiations, on formulating new organic farming regulations; the contribution such farming makes to the overall agri-sector here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19688/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The EU Commission's proposal on formulating new Organic Farming Regulations was first introduced in

2014. While there are many elements in this proposal that are welcomed, every Member State, without exception, had issues of concern. The main elements of the proposal are as follows:

- Introduction of a risk-based control regime and the proposal to remove the requirement for the annual inspection by the Organic Control Bodies.
- Harmonisation of residue sampling, analysis and action thereby establishing a minimum threshold for pesticide residues above which the product cannot be sold as organic.
- The removal of the current flexibility where a farm can, under very specific conditions of separation, produce both organic and non organic products on the same holding.
- Severe restriction in the reduction of the conversion period.

While, in principle, Ireland is supportive of many aspects of the text we feel that the proposal overall is too ambitious and does not sufficiently reflect the varying stages of development of the organic sector at individual Member State level. The proposal, as formulated, could curtail the development of the sector in Ireland and may act as an impediment to farmers wishing to convert to organic production.

Organic farming makes a significant positive contribution to the overall agri-sector in Ireland both from an environmental and economic perspective. Organic farming involves farming in an environmentally friendly and sustainable fashion within a closed system with very restrictive lists of permitted inputs which include the non-use of soluble fertilizers (synthetic fertilizers) and pesticides.

Bord Bia research has shown that there is a market demand for Irish organic beef, lamb, fruit, vegetables and cereals and currently the sector is contributing over €100 million to the Irish economy. However, a significant percentage of the Irish organic food market is comprised of imports. The organic sector therefore offers real opportunities for Irish farmers and food processors in the form of import substitution in areas where Ireland is under-producing at present, and the large export markets such as the UK and Germany.

Beef Data Programme

216. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will address concerns relating to the mandatory six-year contract requirement which is part of the new beef data and genomics programme; his views on concerns surrounding the complexity of the programme; the efforts his Department is making to effectively communicate the benefits of it; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19689/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Government has made a provision of €52m for the BDGP in 2015. It forms part of the country's draft Rural Development Programme and will have a budget of approximately €300m over a period of 6 years. The BDGP will accelerate improvement in the crucial area of environmental sustainability in the national herd through the application of genomic technology and will bring about long-term strategic improvements to the sector by fundamentally improving the genetic quality of the beef herd. It will also position Ireland as a global leader in the application of genomics technology and confirm our reputation as one of the most important and renowned export focussed beef producing nations in the world.

Participants in the programme will receive a payment of €142.50 per hectare for the first 6.66 payable hectares under the scheme, and €120 per payable hectare after that. Payment to

scheme participants is on the basis of costs incurred and income foregone for each of the actions undertaken. All of the costs to the farmer, including in terms of time and effort, have been factored into the payment for the farmer as agreed with the European Commission. The payment includes a cost associated with the tissue tag sample and subsequent processing, and this will be deducted at source from the farmer's payment.

The BDGP builds on the schemes operated by my Department in recent years and all of the actions will already be familiar to most farmers entering the scheme, including the data recording elements and the genotyping requirements. There has been some concern regarding the requirement to join the scheme for a 6 year period. This multi-annual approach is required for all EU funded agri-environmental schemes and, in any event, should facilitate long term planning on individual farms. We have also included force majeure clauses in the Terms and Conditions to deal with situations where a farmer has to withdraw from the programme due to circumstances beyond his or her control.

The replacement strategy is the other main new element of the BDGP. The need for genetic improvement in the Irish suckler herd is widely acknowledged, and the adoption of genomic technology is a critically important tool in increasing production efficiency and ultimately farmer margins. This scheme is putting €300 million into accelerating genetic improvement and so the requirement for farmers to move towards using 4 and 5 star rated stock bulls and heifers is essential to its objectives. I am fully aware that these requirements will take time which is why there is a 5 year lead-in time.

Finally, I would like to add that both my Department and the ICBF have published Questions and Answers documents to address queries being raised by farmers and these will be updated regularly as other queries arise. I also issued some updated information on the contents of the scheme only yesterday. In addition, farmers can consult the Department's website for more information and I would encourage them to contact the Department's helpline if they have any further questions.

Sea Lice Controls

217. Deputy Michael McNamara asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his plans to review the use of teflubenzuron-based pesticides, which are being used in Irish salmon farms, in view of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency's recent decision to ban them, and order the removal of such pesticides from the market by their manufacturers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19695/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The use of a teflubenzuron-based medicine (Calicide) as an in-feed medication for the treatment of sea-lice on farmed salmon is authorised by the Health Products Regulatory Authority. Under the National Residues Control Plan for Aquaculture (as part of the overall National Residues Control Plan), the Marine Institute tests for residues of veterinary medicines, including teflubenzuron, in fish at harvest stage:

- to ensure farmed fish are fit for human consumption and do not contain substances exceeding their maximum residue limit, as laid out in the EU Residues Directive (96/23/EC) and
- to promote good practice in aquaculture with respect to the use of therapeutic treatments.

The results from this monitoring show consistent low occurrence of residues in farmed fin-fish, with 0% non-compliant target residue results for the period 2006-2014.

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In furtherance of my Department's policy of best practice in respect of aquaculture operations, I will keep the matter under review.

Sheep Census

218. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment of ewe premium for 2014 will be issued in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19696/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): An application under the 2014 Grassland Sheep Scheme was received from the person named on 7 April 2014. Payment has not issued to the person named as the holding concerned has not satisfied the Scheme minimum eligibility requirements namely, the submission of the annual sheep census form prior to the extended closing date of 14 February 2014. The Sheep Census form in respect of the person named was not received by my Department until 3 June 2014 which is outside the deadline fixed under the Scheme.

Bord na gCon Administration

219. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will provide, in tabular form, the board members of the Irish Greyhound Board, who also serve as directors of subsidiary companies of the board; when the recommendations of Indecon, in this regard, will be fully implemented; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19763/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Following the publication of the Indecon Report in July 2014, Bord na gCon submitted an action plan with timelines for implementing the 27 recommendations in the Indecon Report dealing with governance, finance, regulation and welfare. This action plan has been published on the Bord na gCon website.

Bord na gCon has assured my Department that it has assiduously followed up on the undertakings included in its response to the Indecon Report.

Table: Board Members of the Bord na gCon Board who also serve as Directors of Subsidiary BNG Companies

Galway Greyhound Stadium Limited	Cork Greyhound Race Company Limited	Kingdom Greyhound Racing Company Limited	Dublin Greyhound & Sports Association Limited	Shelbourne Greyhound Stadium Limited	The Waterford Greyhound Race Company 1953 Limited	The Youghal Greyhound Race Company Limited	The Limerick Greyhound Race Track Limited	The Clonmel Greyhound Racing Company Limited	Mullingar Greyhound Racing Company Limited
Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney	Phil Meaney		
William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	William O'Dwyer	
Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee	Tony McNamee		Tony McNamee
Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy	Mattie Murphy		
Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	Riona Heffernan	
Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert	Tim Gilbert		

Bord na gCon have informed me that the introduction of The Companies Act 2014, which was signed into law on 23 December 2014 and which will commence on 1 June 2015, will influence the planned restructuring of the subsidiary companies, including the composition of the board of directors for subsidiary companies. BNG have advised that it expects the re-

structuring process to be completed but by early 2016.

Departmental Funding

220. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if funding or supports will be provided by his Department in respect of a project (details supplied) that has considerable economic potential; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19786/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): I understand from my trade missions to China that there are significant opportunities for the development of exports of sport horses to that country. Earlier this year, I launched the Strategic Plan for the sport horse sector that was drawn up by Horse Sport Ireland, Teagasc and the Royal Dublin Society. The Strategy Report highlights the need to improve the marketing and sales capacity across the industry and emphasises the need to grow exports of sport horses to a range of markets, including China.

Horse Sport Ireland participated in a trade mission to China which I undertook in November 2014 and has advised me that as a result of this initiative a number of sport horses were exported to China having been first quarantined in Ireland.

In addition to the annual grant that I provide to Horse Sport Ireland, and the funding allocated to them under the Equine Infrastructure Scheme, I have provided HSI with an extra allocation of €600,000 this year to facilitate the implementation of their programme including enhancing their marketing strategy.

Horse Sport Ireland is in the process of establishing an International Marketing Division and a new International Marketing Director will take up duty in the organisation next month.

The individuals involved in the project referred to by the Deputy may wish to make contact with the new appointee in due course.

Common Security and Defence Policy

221. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Defence further to Parliamentary Question No. 122 of 30 April 2015, if there are Common Security and Defence Policy measures in north Africa he is opposed to if proposed by High Representative Mogherini; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19218/15]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Simon Coveney): At a joint meeting of Foreign and Interior Ministers, held in Luxembourg on 20 April, the Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner presented a 10 point plan of immediate action to be taken in response to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean. The key focus of the plan is on preventing loss of life. The 10-point action plan was considered by the Heads of States and Government at a Special European Council meeting on 23rd April. At the meeting of the Council, the Heads of State and Government committed to a comprehensive range of commitments, including at least tripling financial resources for Operations Triton and Poseidon, thereby enabling an increase in the search and rescue possibilities within the mandate of FRONTEX. EU leaders also committed to actions to prevent illegal migration flows, to reinforce internal EU solidarity and responsibility in relation to the processing of asylum applications and relocation of migrants, and to combat traffickers in accordance with international law. In addition, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy was invited to start preparations for a possible CSDP operation.

Following the announcement made by An Taoiseach at the meeting on 23 April, and Government approval and agreement with the Italian authorities last week, the L.E. EITHNE, with a crew of sixty-eight (68) personnel of the Permanent Defence Forces, departed the Naval Base in Haulbowline on Saturday, 16 May 2015, to assist the Italian authorities in humanitarian search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. The despatch of an Irish naval vessel represents a tangible and valuable Irish national contribution to assisting the Italian authorities in the humanitarian search and rescue operation and highlights our commitment to assist with efforts to prevent further tragedy and loss of life at sea.

At the formal Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council with Ministers of Defence in Brussels on 18 May, a Council Decision to establish a European Union military operation, EUNAVFOR Med, in the South Central Mediterranean was adopted. The Mission's mandate will be implemented in sequential phases. The first phase of the operation will support the detection and monitoring of migration networks through information gathering and patrolling in accordance with international law. A second phase, involving the targeting, seizure and possible destruction of the vessels and assets of human traffickers will only begin once appropriate UN Security Council authorisation is in place. The third phase is an operational/disruption phase, and the fourth and final phase is a mission withdrawal and completion phase.

While we are focused on the search and rescue mission, on the basis that the first phase of the CSDP operation will be carried out in full accordance with international law, Ireland has supported this aspect of the operation. In relation to further phases of the CSDP operation, we believe that many elements of the proposed action will require a UN Security Council Resolution. The Permanent Defence Forces will not be participating in the mission in the absence of such a resolution.

Ireland supports the actions of the Union to address the major challenge of migration in the Mediterranean. We cannot allow criminal gangs and smugglers to continue to exploit people at risk.

Air Corps

222. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Defence his plans to expand the role of the Air Corps; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19493/15]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Simon Coveney): The White Paper on Defence (2000) sets out the current defence policy framework. The role of the Air Corps as set out in the White Paper is to provide a range of military and non-military services in support of the State. These supports include maintenance of a general helicopter capability for a variety of tasks, including support to An Garda Síochána, as well as provision of a maritime patrol service, a ministerial air transport service, an air ambulance service on the basis of agreed arrangements with the Department of Health, and the provision of assistance to the principal response agencies, including the Irish Coast Guard, in relation to civil emergencies. The preparation of a new White Paper on Defence is one of my key priorities. The White Paper process, which is ongoing, is intended to provide an opportunity to examine critically future demands and consider how to best meet associated operational requirements across the Defence Forces.

Working groups comprising civil and military representatives from the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces are considering likely future operational demands and the defence capabilities to meet these demands. The question of the future operational roles of the Air Corps is being considered in this context.

I anticipate that the final draft of the White Paper will be submitted to Government by the end of July.

Army Personnel

223. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Defence his future plans for Custume Barracks, Athlone, County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19494/15]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Simon Coveney): I am aware that there have been recent rumours that there are plans to close Custume Barracks. These rumours cause unnecessary worry to military personnel and their families and are totally unfounded. I would like to reassure all concerned that there are no plans to close any barracks. Custume Barracks, Athlone is and will continue to be an important operational military barracks.

There has been considerable capital investment at Custume Barracks, Athlone in recent years, amounting to some €6.38m from 2009 to date. The most recent major projects undertaken at the barracks include investment of €932,000 in the construction of Armoured Vehicle Garaging facilities, €1.8 million investment in a Gymnasium and an upgrading of gas and water main facilities including the provision of new underground services and associated works, at a cost of €597,000.

In addition to the major capital projects as outlined above, there are ongoing works required to ensure the upkeep and repair of buildings and provide facilities generally for personnel.

Army Personnel

224. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Defence if consideration will be provided to a proposal with regard to the sale of Magee Barracks (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19805/15]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Simon Coveney): In July 1998, the Government approved a programme of evacuation and sale of six army barracks considered surplus to military requirements. Magee Barracks was one of the barracks identified for closure and disposal. On 1st July 2003 the Government decided the former Magee Barracks in Kildare Town would be among the State lands released to Kildare County Council for inclusion in the Sustaining Progress Affordable Housing Initiative. On foot of this Government decision Kildare County Council prepared a local area plan for the site which encompassed a range of uses including community use. Following discussions between the Department, Kildare County Council and the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and in accordance with the terms of the Housing Initiative, it was agreed that the entire site would be transferred to Kildare County Council. A final Contract for transfer was issued to Kildare County Council in January 2009. However, the Council advised the Department that it no longer wished to take possession of the property.

In September 2011, the Department, in response to a request from the Council seeking submissions for the proposed Local Area Plan for Kildare Town, advised the Council of the intention to sell the site. The Department also advised the Council that it recognised the site provides a unique opportunity for the development of Kildare Town and remains prepared to facilitate this subject to achieving a satisfactory return for the property in order to provide revenue for reinvestment in the Defence Forces. The Kildare Town Local Development Plan 2012-2018 has

made provision for substantial community developments on the barracks site which undoubtedly will be reflected in the value of the site to a developer.

It is now proposed to dispose of the remaining c. 54 acres of the Barracks by public auction later this year. While the future development of the site is a matter for Kildare County Council and any future owner, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan for Kildare Town, the Department will discuss further the issue of any possible community use of the site at the upcoming meeting with representatives from Kildare County Council.

Proposed Legislation

225. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality her views on a matter (details supplied) regarding the laws concerning Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19751/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): My Department is currently preparing for Committee Stage of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill 2013 which sets out a new legal framework for facilitating and supporting decision-making by adults who have difficulty in making decisions unaided.

The Bill provides for the replacement of the adult Wards of Court system with a less intrusive system that offers a continuum of options to support people in maximising their decision-making capability. The Bill will provide greater options to address the decision-making needs of a range of vulnerable adults such as persons with Alzheimer's, intellectual disability or mental illness and also persons who have acquired brain injuries through trauma or accident. Its enactment will be a key element in enabling Ireland to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Where a person is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and lacks the capacity to make decisions without some form of assistance, there will be a number of support options available. The court will be able to appoint a decision-making representative to take specified decisions on the person's behalf where the court finds that the person lacks capacity to take such decisions. A person will also be able voluntarily to appoint a co-decision-maker to take decisions jointly with him or her. In addition, a person will be able, as at present, to appoint an attorney under an enduring power of attorney to take decisions once the person no longer has capacity.

Where the court has appointed a decision-making representative or where an enduring power of attorney has been registered, it will no longer be possible for the person with Alzheimer's disease to take decisions or to sign documents in relation to the decisions for which a decision-making representative or an attorney have been appointed. Similarly, the person will have to take decisions and to sign documents jointly with the co-decision-maker on matters encompassed by the co-decision-making agreement.

Decision-making representatives, attorneys and co-decision-makers will all be answerable to the Office of the Public Guardian and will be required to submit annual reports, including details of any expenditure made from the person's finances.

Committee Stage is scheduled for 17 June and it is my expectation that the Bill will be enacted this year.

Garda Misconduct Allegations

226. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she is aware of the circumstances of a person (details supplied); if she will make arrangements to ensure this person's personal safety; her views on meeting with this person, the person's family and representatives, as soon as possible; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19194/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The case to which the Deputy refers is amongst those being considered under the mechanism established for the independent review of certain allegations of Garda misconduct, or inadequacies in the investigation of certain allegations, which have been made to me as Minister for Justice and Equality, or the Taoiseach, with a view to determining to what extent and in what manner further action may be required in each case.

A panel consisting of two Senior and five Junior Counsel was established for the purpose, all selected on the basis of their experience of the criminal justice system. The review of each complaint consists of an examination of the papers in the complaint by a counsel from the Panel. Following the review of each complaint a recommendation will be made as to whether any further action is desirable and could practicably be taken.

The independent review is at an advanced stage, with some recommendations now returned to my Department. I have started the process of preparing notification letters to the persons concerned of the outcome of the review in their cases and the person concerned will be notified in due course.

In the meantime I am aware that this person has expressed concerns as to his personal safety directly to my Department. Matters of this nature are the responsibility of the Garda Commissioner, who has the necessary facilities to assess any risk to this person's safety and to put in place any appropriate precautions to safeguard it. Accordingly he has been advised that he should bring his concerns to the attention of the Garda Síochána. At the same time, the Garda Síochána have also been made aware of this person's concerns and have been requested to make contact with him.

In these circumstances, it is not appropriate for me to meet with the person concerned.

Departmental Legal Cases

227. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will contact a person (details supplied) in County Cork with a view to meeting with that person as soon as possible; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19195/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): In the context of the publication of Mr McGinn's report, I indicated to family representatives, including the person referred to, that I am available to meet with them should they so wish, and my office has provided relevant contact details in this regard.

Pension Provisions

228. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the calculated losses to Garda pensioners, when those who are currently paid under the advance payment system are moved to an arrears payment system; the mechanisms that will be put in place to mitigate these losses; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19254/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): To date no proposals

have been agreed to change the process by which retired members of An Garda Síochána are paid their pension from the current method of payment in advance. I can, however, state that consideration of this matter is at an exploratory stage. It should be emphasised that there is no consideration being given to changing the amount of pension payments that retired Garda members receive. Whatever solution is reached on the issue will be the subject of discussions with the relevant bodies concerned and with a view to causing the least possible disruption to the personal circumstances of retired members.

Garda Station Refurbishment

229. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when the works currently being undertaken at Dundrum Garda station, Dublin 14, will be completed; the estimated final cost of the works; if she will provide details on the new facilities that will result from these works; and the additional technology that will be available as a result to the gardaí stationed in Dundrum. [19287/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The programme of replacement and refurbishment of Garda accommodation is based on accommodation priorities which are established by An Garda Síochána. The programme is advanced in close cooperation with the Office of Public Works (OPW), which has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Garda accommodation. Funding for such works is provided for in the Vote of the OPW.

In that context, I am advised that the programme of works at Dundrum Garda Station is being carried out in two phases. The first phase, which involved the refurbishment of the former Dundrum Courthouse in order to provide additional accommodation for An Garda Síochána, was completed in March 2013.

The contract for the second phase which will provide for a new public office, parade room, custody suite, office accommodation as well as male and female changing facilities and a canteen, was awarded in May 2014. It is anticipated that this final phase will be completed towards the end of 2015.

The estimated total cost for both phases is expected to be in excess of €3 million.

Crime Data

230. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number and category of crimes committed in the Stepside area, County Dublin, in each of the years between 2005 and 2014; and the crimes committed in 2015 to date. [19288/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide relevant available statistics directly to the Deputy.

Garda Transport Data

231. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of new patrol cars made available to members of An Garda Síochána undertaking policing within the south Dublin constituency, in the period March 2011 to date in 2015; and the total number of patrol cars attached to each of the relevant Garda stations, as of this date, as compared to those so attached in 2010. [19289/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Decisions in relation to the provision and allocation of Garda vehicles are a matter for the Garda Commissioner in the light of her identified operational demands and the availability of resources. Responsibility for the efficient deployment of Garda vehicles in each Division is assigned to the Divisional Officer, who may allocate vehicles between stations, as required by operational circumstances. The Deputy will appreciate that a degree of flexibility in allocating and re-allocating vehicles among stations, so as to best match the allocation of resources with policing priorities, is essential to the efficient management of the Garda fleet.

In that context, I am advised by the Garda authorities that the information in the format, as requested by the Deputy, in relation to a breakdown of the fleet by electoral constituency, is not readily available and would require a disproportionate use of Garda time and effort to extract the relevant information and cannot be justified at this time.

I have however been informed by the Garda authorities that the number of new vehicles allocated within the Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR) in the period concerned is as set out in the table.

New allocations DMR (March 2011 - May 2015)

2011 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR EAST	3
DMR NORTH	3
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	2
DMR SOUTH	1
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	2
DMR TRAFFIC	3
DMR WEST	3
TOTAL:	17

2012 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR EAST	2
DMR NORTH	3
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	1
DMR SOUTH	3
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	1
DMR TRAFFIC	5
DMR WEST	2
TOTAL:	17

2013 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR EAST	9
DMR NORTH	7
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	2
DMR SOUTH	6

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2013 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	4
DMR TRAFFIC	3
DMR WEST	8
TOTAL:	39

2014 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR EAST	11
DMR NORTH	17
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	8
DMR SOUTH	10
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	7
DMR TRAFFIC	13
DMR WEST	18
TOTAL:	84

2015 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL
DMR EAST	6
DMR NORTH	5
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	5
DMR SOUTH	9
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	4
DMR TRAFFIC	3
DMR WEST	8
TOTAL:	40

Comparison of vehicles allocated to the DMR in 2010 and 2015.

DMR REGION 2010

DIVISION	-
DMR EAST	55
DMR NORTH	138
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	81
DMR SOUTH	90
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	79
DMR TRAFFIC	65
DMR WEST	120
TOTAL:	628

DMR REGION AS AT MAY 2015

DIVISION	-
DMR EAST	57
DMR NORTH	113
DMR NORTH CENTRAL	70
DMR SOUTH	93
DMR SOUTH CENTRAL	68

DIVISION	-
DMR TRAFFIC	49
DMR WEST	120
TOTAL:	570

The Deputy will be aware that I recently secured a further €10 million for investment in the Garda fleet of which €7 million was made available in 2014. This funding brings the total investment in the Garda fleet in 2014 to €11 million. The remaining €3 million is being made available for the purchase and fit out of additional Garda vehicles in 2015.

In October, 2014, an order was placed for 370 new vehicles. These vehicles were delivered towards the end of 2014, and following fit out, are being allocated in accordance with the Garda Commissioner's operational requirements.

Garda Reserve

232. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of members of the Garda Reserve currently attached to each of the Garda stations engaged in policing within the Dublin South constituency area, compared to the numbers so attached to those stations in 2010. [19290/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As the Deputy will appreciate, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the distribution of personnel, including the Garda Reserve, among the Garda Regions, Divisions, and Districts. Garda management keep this distribution under continuing review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that the best possible use is made of these resources.

I have been informed by the Garda Commissioner that the Garda Reserve strength for the Dublin Metropolitan Regional (DMR) South Central and DMR South and DMR East Divisions for the year ending 31 December 2010, and on 31 March 2015, the latest date for which figures are readily available, was as set out in the table.

Garda Reserve

DMR South Central	2010	2015
Kevin Street	8	16
Kilmainham	5	8
Pearse Street	18	35
Harcourt Terrace	3	Closed May 2012
Donnybrook	4	8
Irishtown	1	7
Total	39	74

DMR South	2010	2015
Crumlin	6	8
Sundrive Road	7	6
Tallaght	9	10
Rathfarnham	6	5
Rathmines	8	6
Terenure	7	6
Total	43	41

DMR East	2010	2015
Blackrock	5	5
Dundrum	2	6
Cabinteely	0	0
Kill O'Grange	0	Closed April 2013
Dalkey	0	Closed June 2012
Stepaside	0	Closed March 2013
Dun Laoghaire	10	7
Shankill	3	2
Total	20	20

Naturalisation Certificates

233. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of persons granted citizenship in each of the following periods: 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012; 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2013; 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014; and 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015. [19291/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The number of certificates of naturalisation granted in each of the periods 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012, 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2013, 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014 and 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015 are 16,000, 23,300, 28,200 and 17,300 respectively.

The numbers of certificates granted in each period reflects both the number of applications received and the backlogs that had existed at the time and which had to be processed.

In 2011 there was a backlog of approximately 22,000 applications, of which 17,000 were awaiting a decision for more than 6 months.

The backlog of applications had decreased significantly to 8,200 in 2014, of which only 2,100 were awaiting a decision for more than 6 months.

In addition, application volumes have decreased from 19,400 for the period 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012; to 14,400 for the period 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015.

Garda Stations

234. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she is aware of complaints regarding infestations of vermin in Garda stations in Glanmire and Macroom, County Cork; her views on the health and safety risks to the public, as a result; and her plans to renovate these stations. [19311/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Garda authorities that administrative measures are in place to deal with a range of accommodation issues including instances of vermin infestation in Garda stations.

These measures are designed to ensure that such matters are dealt with promptly. Where instances of infestation are identified to local Garda management they advise Garda Housing Division. One of the following options is then pursued:

- Local management are authorised to contact a local pest control company to deal with the

matter

- Local Management contact the OPW maintenance helpline who then arrange for a pest control company to deal with the infestation.

In that context I am advised that there have been two instances of vermin infestation in Macroom within the last year, both of which were dealt with by a pest control company. I am further advised that there have been no instances of vermin infestation in Glanmire in 2014/2015.

The programme of replacement and refurbishment of Garda accommodation is based on requirements which are established by An Garda Síochána. This programme is advanced in close co-operation with the Office of Public Works, which has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Garda accommodation. Provision for expenditure on capital projects, including the provision of Garda accommodation, is provided for in the Vote of the Office of Public Works.

In that context, I have been advised by the Garda authorities that the purchase of a site for the provision of a new Garda station in Macroom has recently been completed.

With regard to Glanmire, I have been advised by the Garda authorities that the purchase of a premises for a new Garda station is currently the subject of legal proceedings. Accordingly, I am not in a position to provide any further information in relation to this matter.

An Garda Síochána has requested the OPW to bring forward proposals to improve the accommodation situation at Glanmire in the immediate term pending the outcome of the High Court proceedings in relation to the site acquisition at the premises at Glanmire Industrial Estate.

The provision of a new Garda station at Macroom and Glanmire will be progressed in the context of An Garda Síochána's identified accommodation priorities and the availability of funding within the Vote of the OPW.

Immigration Policy

235. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality her views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding immigration; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19416/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Immigration into Ireland takes a wide range of forms including EU citizens and their families exercising the right to free movement, work permit holders and their families, students, persons granted refugee status and their families and many other categories.

Not all immigrants into Ireland engage or interact with my Department. For example, EU/EEA citizens have the right of free movement across the EU and, therefore are not subject to any entry or exit controls; nor are they required to register their presence in the State with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB). Accordingly, my Department does not maintain figures in relation to the number of immigrants from EU/EEA countries in the State. Separately, of the categories of non-Irish nationals, who are required to register with the GNIB for stays of longer than three months, persons under 16 years of age are exempt.

Therefore, the likely best overall source of information on the number of non-Irish nationals in the State is the data produced by the Central Statistics Office in the census and published

on the CSO website. For the information of the Deputy, however, I have set out the number of non-EEA nationals who were registered with the GNIB at the end of each of the last five years.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. registered	134,044	128,836	121,009	107,435	106,598

Garda Transport Provision

236. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the quantity and details of new vehicles supplied to An Garda Síochána in the Sligo-Leitrim division since 2011; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19444/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Decisions in relation to the provision and allocation of Garda vehicles are a matter for the Garda Commissioner in the light of her identified operational demands and the availability of resources. Responsibility for the efficient deployment of Garda vehicles in each Division is assigned to the Divisional Officer, who may allocate vehicles between stations, as required by operational circumstances. In that context, a degree of flexibility in allocating and re-allocating vehicles among stations, so as to best match the allocation of resources with policing priorities, is essential to the efficient management of the Garda fleet.

As regards the Sligo/Leitrim Division I have been informed by the Garda authorities that, as of 14 May 2015, the number of new vehicles supplied is as follows:

Year	Number of Vehicles
2011	3
2012	3
2013	9
2014	13
14/5/2015	5
TOTAL:	33

The Deputy will also be aware that I recently secured a further €10 million for investment in the Garda fleet of which €7 million was made available in 2014. This funding brings the total investment in the Garda fleet in 2014 to €11 million. The remaining €3 million is being made available for the purchase and fit out of additional Garda vehicles in 2015.

Garda Recruitment

237. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if the new Gardai Síochána recruitment campaign, which will be announced soon, will be open to members of the general public, or if it will only be selected from a panel of unsuccessful candidates from other previous Garda Síochána recruitment campaigns; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19448/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Public Appointments Service (PAS) is managing the recruitment process for the Garda Commissioner and I have no direct involvement in the matter. I understand, however, that candidates who fail any stage of the process are eliminated from the competition.

The position in relation to the current competition is as follows: Following receipt of 24,000

applications, PAS invited candidates to complete Stage 1 of the competition which consisted of an assessment questionnaire and reasoning tests which were undertaken on-line. I understand that around 18,000 candidates completed this stage and fewer than 13,000 candidates reached a satisfactory standard. Those who did achieve a satisfactory standard were placed in three bands determined by their overall scores. 5,000 candidates (i.e. those in Band 1) were invited to take a subsequent series of tests and of that number, just over 3,000 were successful. To date the top 2,000 approximately from that group have been invited to supervised assessments and interviews. These interviews are ongoing and the details of successful candidates are forwarded to the Garda Commissioner. Those remaining from Band 1 will be brought forward for further assessment and depending on the Commissioner's recruitment needs, PAS will then move to those in Band 2 and possibly Band 3, if necessary.

While it is the Government's intention that there will be ongoing seamless recruitment to the force, there are no plans at present for a new recruitment campaign.

Crime Data

238. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will provide an update on the status of the Garda review on crime statistic classifications, arising from the Garda inspectorate report and Central Statistics Office concerns; the timeframe for its publication; the expected actions arising; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19478/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I understand that the review in question, which is being undertaken by the Central Statistics Office as the independent national statistics agency, involves a detailed analysis of certain issues raised by the Inspectorate in relation to the recording, classification and reclassification of crime, to see whether and to what extent they may have implications for the crime statistics which the CSO produces. This process has necessitated a temporary interruption in the publication of quarterly crime statistics. However, I understand that the CSO has indicated that it intends to resume publication of crime statistics by the end of June 2015. I am further advised that the CSO will at that time also publish an analysis of the quality of the data used in those statistics based on the above examination.

In parallel with this exercise, and also arising from the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate, An Garda Síochána is reviewing all aspects of the manner in which crime is being recorded and classified. In this regard, I am informed that a new Incident Recording Process which addresses the challenges identified in the report has been developed and is currently being piloted in three Garda Divisions. The pilot is focused on achieving data integrity for both crime and non-crime incidents reported to the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC) for inclusion on PULSE. This project is one of a range of measures being taken forward by An Garda Síochána under the aegis of an Implementation Steering Group which was established to focus on the implementation of the short, medium and long-term recommendations in the Report.

Garda Station Closures

239. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will provide a breakdown, per county, of the number of Garda stations that have closed over the past six years; the location of each Garda station; the number of gardaí stationed in each station; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19506/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The formulation of proposals in relation to the opening and closing of Garda stations is a matter, in the first instance, for the Garda Commissioner in the context of annual policing plans, as provided for in section 22 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

An Garda Síochána completed a comprehensive review of its district and station network in 2012 and 2013. The objective was to identify opportunities to introduce strategic reforms to enhance service delivery, increase efficiency and streamline practices within the organisation. The review concluded that a revised district and station network commensurate with the organisation resource base would best meet public demand.

The Garda District and Station Rationalisation Programme provides for effectiveness and efficiencies through a programme of restructuring and reconfiguration of the service delivery methods, concomitant with changes to work practices within the new rostering arrangements already introduced. In addition, I am advised by the Garda authorities that the closure of these Garda Stations has resulted in an additional 61,000 patrolling hours being made available to the communities right across the country.

I am advised by the Garda authorities that table A shows the breakdown of station closures for 2012 and 2013 per County.

Table A.

Region	County	2012	2013	Total for 2012 and 2013
Western Region	Clare	1	8*	9
	Galway	1	10	11
	Mayo	4	6	10
	Roscommon	3	3	6
	Longford	0	3	3
Total		9	30	39
Southern Region	Limerick	2	6	8
	Cork	7	7	14
	Kerry	3	9	12
Total		12	22	34
South Eastern Region	Tipperary	2	5	7
	Wexford	2	1	3
	Waterford	0	2	2
	Kilkenny	0	3	3
	Carlow	0	1	1
Total		4	12	16
Northern Region	Cavan	1	3	4
	Monaghan	2	3	5
	Donegal	3	5	8
	Sligo	1	4	5
	Leitrim	2	5	7
Total		9	20	29
Eastern Region	Wicklow	0	2	2
	Westmeath	0	4	4
	Meath	0	2	2
	Laois	0	2	2
	Offaly	1	1	2

Region	County	2012	2013	Total for 2012 and 2013
	Kildare	0	3	3
Total		1	14	15
Dublin Metropolitan Region	Dublin	4	2	6
Total		4	2	6
TOTAL		39	100	139

* Kilmihil Garda station closed on 31 January 2013 and Lissycasey Garda station provided the policing service to the sub-district of Kilmihil. On 15 December 2014 the Commissioner approved the closure of Lissycasey Garda station and the reopening of Kilmihil Garda station. The total number of station closures remains the same and the total for County Clare remains the same.

Tables B and C show the breakdown of station closures for 2012 and 2013.

Table B.

No	Region	Division	District	Station
1	Western Region	Clare	Kilrush	Carrigaholt
2	Western Region	Galway	Galway	Corrandulla
3	Western Region	Mayo	Béal an Mhuirthead	Bellacorick
4	Western Region	Mayo	Castlebar	Glenisland
5	Western Region	Mayo	Castlebar	Tourmakeady
6	Western Region	Mayo	Westport	Mulranny
7	Western Region	Roscommon/Longford	Castlerea	Loughglynn
8	Western Region	Roscommon/Longford	Boyle	Tarmonbarry
9	Western Region	Roscommon/Longford	Boyle	Cootehall
	Total Western Region: 9			
10	Southern Region	Limerick	Askeaton	Shanagolden
11	Southern Region	Limerick	Bruff	Doon
12	Southern Region	Cork North	Cobh	Glenville
13	Southern Region	Cork West	Clonakilty	Castletownsend
14	Southern Region	Cork West	Clonakilty	Ballygurteen
15	Southern Region	Cork West	Kanturk	Knocknagree
16	Southern Region	Cork West	Bandon	Ballyfeard
17	Southern Region	Cork West	Bantry	Goleen
18	Southern Region	Cork West	Macroom	Inchigeela
19	Southern Region	Kerry	Listowel	Ballylongford
20	Southern Region	Kerry	Listowel	Moyvane
21	Southern Region	Kerry	Tralee	Clochan
	Total Southern Region: 12			
22	South East Region	Tipperary	Thurles	Ballinure
23	South East Region	Tipperary	Nenagh	Ballinderry
24	South East Region	Wexford	New Ross	Ballywilliam
25	South East Region	Wexford	Wexford	Baldwinstown
	Total South Eastern Region: 4			
26	Northern Region	Cavan/Monaghan	Monaghan	Clontibret
27	Northern Region	Cavan/Monaghan	Monaghan	Smithboro
28	Northern Region	Cavan/Monaghan	Baileboro	Tullyvin

No	Region	Division	District	Station
29	Northern Region	Donegal	Glenties	An Duchoraidh (Doochary)
30	Northern Region	Donegal	Ballyshannon	Dunkineely
31	Northern Region	Donegal	Buncrana	Culdaff
32	Northern Region	Sligo/Leitrim	Ballymote	Bunnanadden
33	Northern Region	Sligo/Leitrim	Manorhamilton	Drumkerrin
34	Northern Region	Sligo/Leitrim	Manorhamilton	Kiltyclogher
	Total Northern Region: 9			
35	Eastern Region	Laois/Offaly	Tullamore	Geashill
	Total Eastern Region: 1			
36	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR South Central	Pearse St	Harcourt Terrace
37	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR North	Ballymun	Whitehall
38	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR North	Balbriggan	Rush
39	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR East	Dun Laoghaire	Dalkey
	Total DMR: 4			
	TOTAL: 39			

Table C.

No	Region	Division	Current District Station
1	Western	Galway	Galway Kiltullagh
2	Western	Galway	Loughrea Tynagh
3	Western	Galway	Loughrea New Inn
4	Western	Galway	Gort Shanaglish
5	Western	Galway	Gort Kilchreest
6	Western	Galway	Gort Kilcolgan
7	Western	Galway	Clifden Leeane
8	Western	Galway	Ballinasloe Menlough
9	Western	Galway	Tuam Kilconly
10	Western	Galway	Tuam Ballymoe
11	Western	Clare	Ennis Quin
12	Western	Clare	Ennistymon Lahinch
13	Western	Clare	Ennistymon Inagh
14	Western	Clare	Killaloe Mountshannon
15	Western	Clare	Killaloe Broadford
16	Western	Clare	Kilrush Doonbeg
17	Western	Clare	Kilrush Kilmihil *
18	Western	Clare	Kilrush Labasheeda
19	Western	Mayo	Castlebar Ballyvary
20	Western	Mayo	Castlebar Ballyglass
21	Western	Mayo	Ballina Ballycastle
22	Western	Mayo	Ballina Lahardane
23	Western	Mayo	Belmullet Blacksod
24	Western	Mayo	Claremorris Hollymount
25	Western	Roscommon/Long-ford	Roscommon Ballyforan
26	Western	Roscommon/Long-ford	Roscommon Knockcroghery

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No	Region	Division	Current District Station
27	Western	Roscommon/Longford	Castlereagh Ballintubber
28	Western	Roscommon/Longford	Longford Newtowncashel
29	Western	Roscommon/Longford	Granard Ballinalee
30	Western	Roscommon/Longford	Granard Ardagh
Total Western Region: 30			
31	Southern	Cork City	Anglesea Street Barrack Street
32	Southern	Cork City	Mayfield McCurtain Street
33	Southern	Cork City	Mayfield Mallow Road
34	Southern	Cork City	Gurranabraher Rathdruff
35	Southern	Cork West	Bandon Ballinspittal
36	Southern	Cork West	Bantry Adrigole
37	Southern	Cork West	Kanturk Meelin
38	Southern	Kerry	Tralee Camp
39	Southern	Kerry	Tralee Fenit
40	Southern	Kerry	Tralee Abbeydorney
41	Southern	Kerry	Killarney Beaufort
42	Southern	Kerry	Killarney Lauragh
43	Southern	Kerry	Killarney Kilgarvan
44	Southern	Kerry	Listowel Brosna
45	Southern	Kerry	Caherciveen Valentia Island
46	Southern	Kerry	Caherciveen Ballinskelligs
47	Southern	Limerick	Bruff Galbally
48	Southern	Limerick	Bruff Kilfinane
49	Southern	Limerick	Newcastle West Castletownconyers
50	Southern	Limerick	Newcastle West Kilmeedy
51	Southern	Limerick	Newcastle West Tournafolla
52	Southern	Limerick	Henry Street Mary Street
Total Southern Region: 22			
53	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Monaghan Newbliss
54	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Cavan Stradone
55	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Ballyconnell Bawnboy
56	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Carrickmacross Corrinshigagh
57	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Cavan Redhills
58	Northern	Cavan/Monaghan	Carrickmacross Shantonagh
59	Northern	Donegal	Buncrana Malin
60	Northern	Donegal	Letterkenny Na Brocacha
61	Northern	Donegal	Milford Min an Lá bain
62	Northern	Donegal	Glenties Gleann Cholm Cille
63	Northern	Donegal	Glenties Annagaire
64	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Ballymote Aclare
65	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Ballymote Easkey
66	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Ballymote Ballyfarnon
67	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Sligo Cliffoey

No	Region	Division	Current District Station
68	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Carrick on Shannon Cloone
69	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Carrick on Shannon Keshcarrigan
70	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Carrick on Shannon Dromod
71	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Manorhamilton Dromahair
72	Northern	Sligo/Leitrim	Manorhamilton Glenfarne
Total Northern Region: 20			
73	South Eastern	Tipperary	Nenagh Terryglass
74	South Eastern	Tipperary	Nenagh Rearcross
75	South Eastern	Tipperary	Cahir New Inn
76	South Eastern	Tipperary	Clonmel Grangemockler
77	South Eastern	Tipperary	Tipperary Town Dundrum
78	South Eastern	Waterford	Tramore Stradbally
79	South Eastern	Waterford	Dungarvan Ballyduff
80	South Eastern	Wexford	Enniscorthy Killealy
81	South Eastern	Kilkenny/Carlow	Thomastown Inistioge
82	South Eastern	Kilkenny/Carlow	Kilkenny Ballyragget
83	South Eastern	Kilkenny/Carlow	Kilkenny Johnstown
84	South Eastern	Kilkenny/Carlow	Carlow Leighlinbridge
Total South Eastern Region: 12			
85	Eastern	Wicklow	Baltinglass Hollywood
86	Eastern	Wicklow	Baltinglass Donard
87	Eastern	Westmeath	Athlone Ballinahowan
88	Eastern	Westmeath	Mullingar Castletown Geoghegan
89	Eastern	Westmeath	Mullingar Finea
90	Eastern	Westmeath	Mullingar Rathowen
91	Eastern	Meath	Kells Crossakiel
92	Eastern	Meath	Trim Kilmessan
93	Eastern	Laois/Offaly	Portlaoise Ballacolla
94	Eastern	Laois/Offaly	Birr Shannonbridge
95	Eastern	Laois/Offaly	Portlaoise Ballinakill
96	Eastern	Kildare	Kildare Ballytore
97	Eastern	Kildare	Naas Kill
98	Eastern	Kildare	Naas Ballymore Eustace
Total Eastern Region: 14			
99	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR (Eastern)	Dun Laoghaire Kill O' the Grange
100	Dublin Metropolitan Region	DMR (Eastern)	Blackrock Stepside
Total DMR: 2			
TOTAL: 100			

With regard to the number of Gardaí stationed in each Garda station that closed over the past six years, I am advised that An Garda Síochána is not in a position to provide the information requested as it would require a disproportionate amount of Garda time and resources to collate the data requested. I am further informed that any personnel allocated to Garda Stations that closed were reallocated to stations in the Garda District concerned.

Garda Strength

240. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will provide a breakdown, per county, of the number of gardaí stationed in each county, over the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19507/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As the Deputy will appreciate, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the distribution of personnel among the Garda Regions, Divisions, and Districts. Garda management keep this distribution under continuing review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that the best possible use is made of these resources.

I have received the information from the Garda Commissioner on the personnel strength for each Division, District and Garda Station by County for the years ending 31 December 2010 to 2014 and on 31 March 2015, the latest date for which figures are readily available. I have arranged that this information which is set out in spreadsheets be sent to the Deputy directly.

Court Orders

241. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of court orders which have been enforced and the number of those which were made, but not enforced, regarding private dwelling home repossession cases, for the year 2014 and to date in 2015; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [13121/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Deputy will be aware that, under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998, management of the courts is the responsibility of the Courts Service and I have no role in the matter. Section 4(3) of the 1998 Act provides that the Courts Service is independent in the performance of its functions, which includes the provision of information on the courts system. I am informed that statistical data on orders for possession is available on the Courts Service website, www.courts.ie.

It is important to note that the number of civil bills issued does not reflect either the number of orders for possession granted or necessarily equate with repossessions as it is up to the person or company who obtained the order for possession to pursue its execution. Therefore, relative to the number of civil bills issued, a small portion end up as repossessions since in many cases the civil bill gives rise to engagement of the borrower with the bank resulting in either a mortgage restructuring agreement between the bank and borrower or a Personal Insolvency Arrangement entered into under the Personal Insolvency Act.

The Central Bank's quarterly Residential Mortgage Arrears and Repossession Statistics have information which may be of interest to the Deputy and they are available at www.central-bank.ie. The statistics include the number of properties taken into possession by lenders during the relevant quarter including the number which were repossessed on foot of a Court Order.

Finally, as I am sure the Deputy is aware, the Government recently announced a series of measures to assist people in mortgage distress. The measures include a major reform of the Personal Insolvency framework in which the Government has agreed to give Courts the power to review and, where appropriate, to approve insolvency deals that have been rejected by banks; an expansion of the Mortgage to Rent scheme which will be undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the provision by the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) of additional services to provide assistance in identifying the best options, completing financial statements and considering proposed solutions.

These measures are aimed at increasing the supports available to people in arrears and to increase the number of people availing of them. The overall objective of the Government's initiatives in this area is to ensure that a full range of options is available to distressed borrowers and to keep as many people in their homes as possible.

Marriage Equality Referendum

242. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the role her Department had during the marriage referendum campaign; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19231/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): My Department was involved in the preparation of the Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill 2015, which contains the wording of the proposed constitutional amendment which is to be put to the people in a referendum on 22nd May. My Department also provided €1.5 million funding to the Referendum Commission, which is responsible for providing independent and impartial information in relation to proposals for constitutional change. In light of principles set out by the Courts, including in relation to the McKenna case, my Department does not participate in the referendum campaign.

Immigration Policy

243. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she has had any discussions with the authorities of the United States of America, in relation to accepting prisoners awaiting release from Guantanamo Bay for years because the United States of America will not allow these prisoners to be released into the United States of America. [15192/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As the Deputy may be aware Ireland has previously accepted two former detainees from the Guantanamo Bay detention facility for resettlement here in 2009.

Since their arrival the two individuals have received support and assistance to help them to adjust to their new circumstances.

In the context of continuing efforts by the US to close the facility at Guantanamo, the US authorities have asked Ireland to consider a further resettlement. The request is the subject of ongoing consideration.

Immigration Policy

244. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the extent to which a unified approach is likely to be adopted by the European Union in response to the refugee crisis arising from the various conflicts in Syria and North Africa; if the burden is likely to be shared equally by all European Union member states or through the setting up of safe havens in the homelands of the refugees; the extent to which Ireland continues to make a positive contribution in this regard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19285/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I cannot speculate as to the positions different Member States will ultimately take in respect of the various proposals put forward in response to the migration crisis in the Mediterranean. However, the consensus

both from the emergency joint meeting of EU Foreign and Interior Affairs Ministers in Luxembourg on Monday, 20 April 2015, attended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and myself and the special European Council in Brussels on Thursday, 23 April 2015, attended by the Taoiseach, was that the EU and its Member States needed to take urgent action on a broad front, even if there is disagreement on certain individual elements of the solution.

The Council Conclusions agreed on 23 April 2015 set out broad priorities which focused on strengthening Europe's presence at sea, fighting traffickers in accordance with international law, preventing illegal migration flows and reinforcing internal solidarity and responsibility.

Last week the European Commission published the European Agenda on Migration (EAM) which has been adapted to reflect the current situation and the need for urgent action. The EAM outlines the immediate measures agreed in response to the situation in the Mediterranean as well as the longer term measures necessary to re-balance all aspects of Europe's approach to migration. Included among the measures is funding for Regional Development and Protection Programmes for North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

In terms of immediate actions the two main proposals relate to resettlement and relocation. The Commission indicated that they will be recommending an EU resettlement scheme by the end of May for 20,000 places. This number will be distributed among Member States in accordance with several clearly defined criteria (Ireland's proposed share will be 1.36% or 272 persons). Participation would be voluntary, given that there are no existing powers under EU law to compel Member States to participate, but; depending on the approach adopted by Member States the Commission may bring forward binding and mandatory legislative proposals to cover the period beyond 2016.

In line with our regular commitment on resettlement, Ireland had already agreed to resettle 220 refugees over the next two years. However, the Taoiseach had indicated at the special European Council in April 2015 that we would re-examine this commitment in view of the deteriorating situation in the Mediterranean. Rather than waiting until the proposals announced in the European Agenda on Migration to be discussed formally by Home Affairs Ministers in June 2015, last Wednesday (13 May 2015), I announced that the Government had agreed in principle to resettle an additional 300 vulnerable people as our contribution to this important European initiative. This brings our total commitment on resettlement to the end of 2016 to five hundred and twenty (520) people, or nearly twice the quota of two hundred and seventy two (272) proposed by the Commission for Ireland.

This is in addition to support under the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Programme (SHAP) which grants temporary permission, of up to two years duration, to vulnerable close family members of either naturalised Irish citizens of Syrian birth or Syrian nationals already lawfully residing in the State. By the end of 2014 one hundred and fourteen (114) such family members had been granted permission under this scheme. In addition, Syrian nationals legally resident in Ireland, for example, students or persons on work permission's may apply for an extension of their permission to remain in the State while the crisis situation continues.

Relocation is a complicated issue and there are different perspectives among Member States. To deal with the situation in the Mediterranean the Commission is now proposing to trigger the emergency response mechanism under Article 78.3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU via a proposal to be published by the end of May 2015. This proposal will include a distribution mechanism for persons in clear need of international protection. Such persons would have their asylum claim considered in the receiving Member State. Until we see the details of what the Commission is proposing it would be premature to comment further at this point.

Garda Reserve

245. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality her views on whether members of the Garda Reserve should receive some preferential treatment, if and when they decide to apply to join An Garda Síochána, considering the level of service they would have already given to An Garda Síochána, and the experience they would have obtained in doing so; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19544/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I wish to put on record my appreciation for the contribution that those who volunteer for service as Garda Reserve members make on a daily basis to the work of An Garda Síochána. Together with full time members, they provide vital assistance to communities and neighbourhoods right across the country.

The Garda Síochána (Admissions and Appointments) Regulations 2013 provide that, as part of the competitive selection process organised by the Public Appointments Service for full-time membership of An Garda Síochána, “due recognition to any satisfactory service by the person as a reserve member” shall be given to such candidates. This provision was introduced in order to acknowledge the beneficial experience and skills gained by a reserve member and to allow them, at assessments and at interview, the opportunity to highlight that experience and skill. It is important that all persons wishing to join the full time force undergo the same competitive selection and recruitment process. In doing so the integrity of the process is maintained at all stages of the competition.

Commissions of Investigation

246. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality in view of the former Minister for Justice and Equality’s request in May 2014 for a report within three months, if the interdepartmental group on justice and mental health has considered the recommendations of the report of the Commission of Investigation into the Death of Gary Douch; the extent to which those recommendations have been implemented; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19606/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As the Deputy is aware, the former Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD, and Minister of State, Kathleen Lynch TD, published the Report of the Commission of Investigation into the death of Gary Douch on 1 May, 2014.

The Commission’s Final Report contained several conclusions relating to the management, medical treatment and psychiatric care of Stephen Egan prior to and subsequent to the killing by him of Gary Douch. The Commission recognised the many significant improvements which had been put in place since 2006, including reductions in prison overcrowding, investment in prisoner accommodation and improved health services for prisoners.

Having considered the Report of the Commission of Investigation, the Government decided to refer the Report to the Interdepartmental Group examining the issue of people with mental illness coming into contact with the criminal justice system. The Interdepartmental Group was directed to consider the recommendations in a cohesive way and to report back with an implementation plan within three months. The Group includes representatives from my Department and the Department of Health as well as relevant services including the Health Service Executive, the National Forensic Mental Health Service, An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Irish Prison Service.

The Group proceeded to examine the recommendations of the Commission of Investigation which relate to persons with mental illness and the criminal justice system and submitted an Implementation Plan for those recommendations to me and Minister of State, Kathleen Lynch in September, 2014.

I am advised that the Irish Prison Service has reported that significant progress has been made and that a comprehensive action plan has been put in place to ensure that the recommendations relating to the Service are being implemented. Actions in relation to recommendations not yet complete are being progressed and I have requested that implementation of these actions be closely monitored.

I am also advised that progress is also being made by the Department of Health on the Commission's recommendations including plans to replace the existing Central Mental Hospital and to otherwise enhance forensic mental health services nationally.

Residency Permits

247. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19616/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that, in response to a notification pursuant to the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned has submitted written representations.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. All representations submitted will be fully considered in advance of a final decision being made.

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

UN Conventions Ratification

248. **Deputy Gabrielle McFadden** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when the United Nations Convention for People with Disabilities will be ratified in Dáil Éireann; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19636/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): I refer the Deputy to previous answers on this issue on 16 April and 23 April 2015.

The Government has given a firm commitment to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and intends to proceed to ratification as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to ensure all necessary legislative and administrative requirements under the Convention are met. As the Deputy is aware, Ireland has a dualist legal system and therefore does not become party to treaties until it is first in a position to comply with the obligations

imposed by them, including the amendment of domestic law as necessary. We are determined to take the steps necessary to meet all the convention's requirements in a constructive, proactive and appropriate manner. I should stress that for Ireland, ratification is the end of the preparation and implementation phase, not the beginning.

A team within my Department has been charged with examining all outstanding obstacles to ratification, and has nearly completed the first phase of its work, which includes identifying all areas which will need attention to make ratification possible. An Interdepartmental Committee is in place to review issues and the actions and timeframe required to tackle them. Many of these issues involve amending unsuitable and outmoded language and in some cases, archaic legal provisions, in existing legislation. Another key task which is underway involves examining how the important issue of Reasonable Accommodation can be achieved in a meaningful way within our Constitutional framework as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

Progress towards ratification therefore continues to be made and much has been accomplished. One of the core obstacles to Ireland's ratification of the Convention is the requirement for enactment of capacity legislation. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill, published on 17 July 2013, provides a series of options to support people with impaired capacity to make decisions and exercise their basic rights in line with the principles of the UN Convention. It undertakes a comprehensive reform of existing legislation governing capacity. The Bill is currently awaiting Committee Stage in the Dáil.

The Committee has identified four main areas where legislative amendment or new legislation will be necessary to meet the requirements of the Convention. As the Deputy is aware, the legislative process takes time and it is important that we get it right in order to ensure the realisation of the rights of people with disabilities in a comprehensive and cohesive way.

Prison Medical Service

249. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she is satisfied that there are adequate levels of trained medical staff in our prisons; and the extent to which agency nursing is used in our prisons. [19653/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Director General of the Irish Prison Service that there are adequate levels of trained medical staff in all our prisons, notwithstanding the fact that the recruitment of medical staff to permanent positions continues to be very challenging in the current climate. Each prison has a number of nurses, and each prison is attended by a prison doctor. Doctors ordinarily attend prisons on week days, and provide on call medical cover outside of normal working hours. In addition, nursing cover is provided on a 24 hour basis in all closed prisons. I can confirm that on the 15th of May there were seven agency nurses assigned to the Irish Prison Service.

Where vacancies arise in prison medical posts, or where a post holder is absent from work, the Irish Prison Service arranges the assignment of a locum doctor to provide medical services under the provisions of its contract agreement with a locum agency provider. Similarly, where nursing vacancies arise, the Irish Prison Service secures the services of agency nurses under the provisions of its contract agreement with a nurse agency provider.

The Irish Prison Service recognises that, notwithstanding the fact that locum doctors and agency nurses provide essential and necessary support, the engagement of agency medical staff is generally less cost effective than employing permanent medical staff. In this regard, the Irish Prison Service keeps the staffing levels in medical posts under constant review.

I am pleased to say that the Irish Prison Service recently received sanction for the recruitment of 20 prison nurses. It is expected that a competition to recruit these nurses will be advertised in the near future, and the recruitment of additional nurses will have the effect of reducing the level at which agency nursing staff are being engaged at present.

The Irish Prison Service has confirmed that it will continue to provide an appropriate level of medical and nursing resources to deliver healthcare services in each prison, subject to available resources and competing priorities.

Asylum Support Services

250. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she is aware of the recent scheme put into circulation by the Irish Refugee Council and Doras Luimní (details supplied); her views that, at present, the system for handling asylum seekers is too long, causing strain on many persons, before their application for work permits and residency are accepted; and if she will examine said scheme to try and alleviate the waiting time for migrants, and make the entire system more transparent. [19654/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am aware of the proposal by the Irish Refugee Council and Doras Luimní for a one-off scheme to clear all cases in the protection process.

At the outset I should say that I have no plans to introduce such a scheme. The Deputy may be aware that there is a political commitment among EU Member States against any form of process that would grant residence status to persons present in the State without first examining the merits of their individual cases. Broad regularisation programmes are problematic, in particular as they could give rise to unpredictable and very costly impacts across the full range of public and social services.

I have previously acknowledged however that the length of time that many applicants spend in the protection process is a matter that needs to be addressed particularly in light of the sharp increase in asylum application volumes in 2014 and so far in 2015. The Deputy may be aware that an Independent Working Group was set up in October 2014 to recommend to Government what improvements should be made to the protection process, including direct provision and supports to asylum seekers. One of the tasks of the Working Group is to identify improvements to existing arrangements for the processing of protection applications taking account of the Government's intention to legislate for a single application procedure.

The Group began its work in November last under the Chairmanship of retired High Court Judge, Bryan McMahon and its membership is drawn from a range of interests in the international protection area including UNHCR, non-governmental organisations, protection applicants, academia, and relevant Government Departments and Offices. I understand that the Working Group's report to Government will be finalised in the coming weeks.

I have also committed to introducing legislative change in the Protection area to provide for a single application procedure with a view to reducing the length of time applicants spend in the protection process. On 25 March 2015 I published the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill, which has been approved by Government. This is the first step in delivering the Government's undertaking in the Statement of Priorities 2014-2016 to legislate to reduce the length of time protection applicants spend in the system. My objective is to reform the current multi-layered and sequential system which can result in applicants being accommodated in the State's system of Direct Provision for indeterminate periods of time. The single procedure will

identify at a much earlier stage those who are in need of international protection and should be granted status and those with no entitlement to stay in the State and who can safely return to their country of origin.

In accordance with the Government decision I have forwarded the General Scheme of the Bill to the Attorney General for the detailed drafting of the legislation which, subject to the approval of the Government at a future time, will be presented to the Oireachtas for enactment into law. My aim is for the legislation to be enacted by the end of this year.

Notwithstanding the deliberations of the Working Group on the Protection process and the future publication of the International Protection Bill, a number of measures have already been taken to address the number of cases on hand in the protection system which are yielding significant results. These include the scheduling of interviews of applicants on Saturdays, the transfer of subsidiary protection application processing to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner in late 2013, the establishment of a legal panel set up to assist the Commissioner with this work, and the appointment of additional members to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to assist with the processing of appeals.

My Department is also actively considering what other measures can be taken to reduce the number of cases on hand at the leave to remain stage of the process in advance of the introduction of a single application procedure.

Equality Issues

251. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the way she will deal with the issues and concerns raised by Transgender Equality Network Ireland, regarding lack of recognition of their position in society; and if she will meet the group, and help progress legislation, as necessary, to address their concerns. [19655/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): I have met TENI, as has my predecessor as Minister of State for Equality, and I am of course happy to do so again to discuss issues for which I have Ministerial responsibility. I should point out that the legislation in which they are particularly interested - the Gender Recognition Bill - is a matter for the Department of Social Protection and any issues the group is concerned about in that regard should be raised with that Department.

I should also mention that Equality legislation for which I am responsible prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment and the provision of goods and services on nine grounds, including gender and sexual orientation. The Equality Tribunal has found that gender identity is encompassed by the gender ground and that therefore discrimination on the basis of gender identity is prohibited under equality legislation.

Drugs in Prisons

252. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the extent of drugs, including tablets, obtained in recent drugs searches in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin 7. [19657/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Prison Service that for the period 01 February 2015 to 14 May 2015, 117 searches were carried out in Mountjoy Prison. 42 seizures of drugs were made over the course of these searches.

The Irish Prison Service, while loosely classifying materials seized as drugs (i.e. tablets, powder, etc.), is not in a position to state if any of these items are illegal drugs as no conclusive testing is conducted on substances found within the prison. The total for items confiscated includes perimeter security searches.

The Director General of the Irish Prison Service assures me that preventing the access of contraband into prisons remains a high priority. Efforts are made on a continuous basis to prevent the flow of drugs into our prisons, by for example, the installation of nets over exercise yards, vigilant observation of prisoners by staff, enhanced CCTV monitoring, the stricter control of visits and the use of targeted and random cell searches on a daily basis. As well as this the introduction of passive and active drug detection dogs and the installation of airport style security including scanners and x-ray machines has helped efforts to tackle the problem. Random searches of cells and their occupants have uncovered significant quantities of contraband in recent years.

Nevertheless, the Irish Prison Service recognises that constant improvements are required in this area. The Director General recently announced additional security measures aimed at further enhancing the security of our prisons including:

The introduction of a new free confidential telephone line which will be operational in June. Anyone with information on the trafficking of prohibited items into our prisons will be able to pass on that information in confidence.

The increasing of the number of passive and active dogs which are operational in all prisons. There are currently 8 passive dogs in training with a further 10 active dogs to begin training shortly. This will increase the Canine Unit to 39 dog teams.

The introduction of standard searching procedures for all persons entering our prisons.

Prison Security

253. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she is aware of the reaction and challenges posed by a person (details supplied) being moved into the CB Unit in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin 7; and if there is sufficient consultation with prison staff on such matters. [19658/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Prison Service that the prisoner in question (details supplied) was transferred to the Challenging Behaviour Unit (CBU) in Mountjoy Prison on 31 March 2015 for operational reasons. As the Deputy is aware on 23 April 2015, the prisoner carried out an unprovoked assault with a weapon on prison staff in which they received serious head and other injuries. This assault followed a number of other serious unprovoked attacks on prison staff in recent weeks. These assaults were of a more serious nature than those which would usually occur in our prisons.

The work of prison staff is challenging and demanding and dealing with offenders, many of whom have been convicted for violent offences or have a history of violence, brings with it a higher degree of risk than most other professions. However, I can assure the Deputy that while the risk might be greater - no act of violence against staff is acceptable or tolerated.

It should be noted that officials in the Irish Prison Service deal with over 8,500 prisoner transfers annually throughout the prison Estate. In addition, a large number of internal movements of prisoners occur on a daily basis. The Deputy will appreciate that for obvious logistical, operational and security reasons, those individual transfers are not discussed with members of

staff.

The Irish Prison Service has successfully introduced a number of measures across the prison estate such as, hand-held metal detectors, netting over prison yards, boss chairs and security screening machines to detect and prevent weapons from entering the prison to limit the scope of acts of violence. In addition, new prisoner programmes have been introduced such as the Incentivised Regimes policy, which provides for a differentiation of privileges between prisoners according to their level of engagement with services and quality of behaviour. The objective is to provide tangible incentives to prisoners to participate in structured activities and to reinforce good behaviour, leading to a safer and more secure prison environment.

The Deputy will be aware that in light of the recent serious incidents, including the incident carried out by the prisoner referred, the Irish Prison Service is implementing a number of additional measures to enhance staff safety including the introduction of personal protective equipment such as stab vest for high risk escorts. In addition further training is to be provided regarding de-escalation, the use of force and the use of safety equipment.

Garda Vetting Applications

254. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will provide an outline of the Garda vetting procedure for voluntary associations; if a change has recently taken place in this process; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19711/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) provides employment vetting to organisations registered with the Gardaí for this purpose and which employ persons in a full-time, part-time, voluntary or training capacity to positions where they would have substantial, unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults.

The process in respect of Garda vetting applications is standard for all organisations, voluntary or otherwise. Garda Vetting Disclosures are predicated on the signed authorisation of a vetting subject for An Garda Síochána to disclose to the registered organisation “details of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions which may be recorded in respect of them in the State or elsewhere”; or alternatively that there are “no prosecutions or convictions recorded in respect of them”. The disclosure is made to the requesting, registered organisation of the position at the time when it is issued.

It should be noted that the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) has no input into any decision by a registered organisation to employ an individual or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the organisation in question to use the information provided appropriately, fairly and only as one factor in an overall recruitment decision. Decisions on the suitability for the recruitment/engagement of the person concerned, therefore, rest at all times with the registered organisation.

In general, Garda Vetting applications are processed on a first-come, first served basis in chronological order from date of receipt. This is with a view to observing equity and fairness in respect of all vetting subjects. The current average processing time for vetting applications is four weeks. However, in some instances additional enquiries may be necessary and this may result in processing times in excess of the average.

Garda Vetting is presently conducted under policy as opposed to legislation. Before the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 could be commenced, a 2013 UK Court of Appeal judgment necessitated a review of the disclosure provisions in both

the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and the Spent Convictions Bill. That review has been completed and amendments to the Vetting Act and consequential amendments to the Spent Convictions Bill are currently being drafted.

Pending the amendment of the Bill, an Administrative Filter for Garda Vetting Disclosures was introduced with effect from 31st March 2014 which provides that certain minor offences that are over 7 years old are no longer disclosed. In line with that procedure a decision to disclose or not disclose non-conviction data is now made on the basis of an assessment of the relevance and / or the proportionality of disclosing the information in the context of the position of employment in question. This Administrative Filter already gives effect to the main provisions likely to be contained in the amended Act.

Commencement of Legislation

255. Deputy Robert Dowds asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when the commencement order for the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 will be signed. [19712/15]

256. Deputy Tom Fleming asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will provide an update on the implementation of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012; if she will expedite the finalisation of this Act to enable organisations which are acquiring staff to have those staff in place in a timely fashion; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19722/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I propose to take Questions Nos. 255 and 256 together.

Before the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 could be commenced, a 2013 UK Court of Appeal judgment necessitated a review of the disclosure provisions in both the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and the Spent Convictions Bill. That review has been completed and amendments to the Vetting Act and consequential amendments to the Spent Convictions Bill are currently being drafted.

I intend to bring the amendments to the Bill before the Oireachtas as soon as possible with a view to commencing the Act by the autumn. Pending the amendment of the Bill, an Administrative Filter for Garda Vetting Disclosures has been introduced, which provides that certain minor offences that are over 7 years old are no longer disclosed. This Administrative Filter already gives effect to the main provisions likely to be contained in the amended Act.

A copy of this Administrative Filter is enclosed.

Garda Vetting Procedures

Administrative Filter

In anticipation of the amendment and commencement of the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012, an administrative filter in respect of Garda Vetting Unit Disclosures will operate in accordance with the following procedural guidelines.

A. Criminal Convictions to be disclosed in all cases:

- 1) Offences Against the Person.
- 2) Sexual Offences

3) Convictions on indictment.

B. District Court Convictions which will not be disclosed:

1) Motoring Offences :

District Court convictions for motoring offences will not be disclosed after 7 years even where more recent offences have been committed. This is because it is considered that old minor motoring offences would not be relevant due to the passage of time.

2) Minor Public Order Offences :

The following convictions under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 will not be disclosed if the offence is over 7 years old even where more recent offences have been committed:

Section 4 (Intoxication),

Section 5 (Disorderly conduct),

Section 6 (Threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour),

Section 7 (Distribution or display of material which is offensive),

Section 8 (Failure to comply with direction of Garda),

Section 9 (Wilful obstruction).

3) Other minor offences – 1 Only :

District Court convictions for any other minor offence will not be disclosed after 7 years where the person has **one such offence only (excluding motoring or public order offences over 7 years old)**. This provision does not apply to offences against the person or to sexual offences.

C. Probation Act Provisions

Where persons have been dealt with by a district court in accordance with the provisions of section 1(1) (i) or 1 (1) (ii) of the Probation Act 1907, the offences will not be disclosed **except** in cases where the circumstances of the offence gives rise to a bona fide concern that the person concerned may harm a child or vulnerable person.

Where persons have been dealt with by a court in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Probation Act, these will be disclosed in all cases. (Section 1 (2) relates solely to persons “convicted on indictment”.)

D. Offences in respect of which a person is charged but subsequently not prosecuted or acquitted.

Non convictions will be considered for disclosure where the circumstances of an offence gives rise to a bona fide concern that the person concerned may harm a child or vulnerable person. This information will only be disclosed if the information is of such a nature that its disclosure is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of children or vulnerable persons, or both, as the case may be.

The Garda Central Vetting Unit will make such decision in the context of:

- The information concerned

- The relevance of the information to the type of work/activity
- The source and reliability of the information
- The rights of the vetting applicant and any submissions made by them.

Where the GCVU makes a determination to disclose information under this section the GCVU will:

- Notify the person who is the subject of the application for the vetting disclosure concerned, in writing, of its determination and of the reasons for it,
- Provide to the person a copy of the information to be disclosed,
- Notify the person of the intention to disclose the information to an Authorised Signatory for the registered organisation concerned after the expiry of 14 days from the date of notification, and
- Allow the applicant the opportunity to make a written submission.
- There will also be an appeals process in respect of a decision to disclose the information.

The GCVU will not issue a vetting disclosure in respect of a person until this process has been completed.

Departmental Funding

257. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding funding for a post (details supplied) in County Laois; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19736/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Under the Victims of Crime Office Funding Scheme for 2015 Laois Domestic Abuse Service was granted €12,500 in funding towards the provision of a court accompaniment service for victims of domestic abuse. Since 2005 this organisation has received similar amounts in funding on an annual basis to provide court accompaniment services.

Core funding for domestic violence services is provided by Tusla, which falls under the remit of my colleague the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Accordingly, the issue of my Department funding any particular post in Laois Domestic Abuse Service does not arise.

Road Traffic Accidents Data

258. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of fatalities and the number of serious non-fatal injuries on the N22 Cork-Kerry road, between Ovens and Ballyvourney in County Cork, since 1990; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19742/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am informed by the Garda authorities that the section of the N22 referred to by the Deputy is within the Macroom District and there have been 41 fatalities on that stretch of road from 1990 to 15 May, 2015. I am also advised that data in relation to the number of serious injuries which occurred at this location is available from 2000 and 61 such injuries have been recorded since then to 15 May,

2015.

The Deputy will appreciate that I have no direct role in road traffic enforcement which is principally a matter for An Garda Síochána. I am assured, however, that the stretch of road concerned is extensively patrolled by Garda members of Macroom Division Traffic Unit. In addition to the enforcement of the relevant provisions of road traffic legislation, breaches of the legislation are regularly targeted through specific Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) and multiagency checkpoints. An Garda Síochána also conducts speed enforcement initiatives, including the operation of ‘Go Safe’ safety camera vans at a number of locations on this stretch of road, details of which are available on the Garda website.

Firearms Licences

259. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the requirements that have to be met to possess a licence to hold a gun; when a person is refused the issuing of a gun licence, the conditions that have to be met the application is to be reconsidered; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19748/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I can inform the Deputy that Section 3 of the Firearms Act 1925 as amended, provides that an application for a firearm certificate shall be made to the Superintendent of An Garda Síochána of the District in which the applicant resides. An application for a restricted firearm certificate is made to the Commissioner who has delegated this responsibility to members of An Garda Síochána holding the rank of Chief Superintendent. Section 4 of the 1925 Act, as amended, provides the conditions to be satisfied prior to an issuing person granting a firearm certificate. The conditions include having a good reason for requiring the certificate, granting the certificate will not endanger public safety, security or the peace, the person is not disentitled to hold a firearm certificate and that secure accommodation for the firearm has been provided. Further information may also be sought from the applicant by an issuing person including proof of identity, proof of competence in the use of the firearm concerned, a requirement to provide details of his/her medical history and providing two referees to attest to the applicant’s character.

If an applicant is refused a certificate by an issuing person, the applicant must be provided with reasons for such refusal in writing. The applicant can then appeal the refusal, under Section 15A of the Firearms Act 1925 as amended, to the District Court within 30 days of receiving the refusal letter.

The District Court can confirm the decision of the deciding officer, or direct that person to reconsider the decision, or allow the appeal where the issuing person shall give effect to the Court’s decision. If a person reapplies for a firearm certificate, the application shall be considered by an issuing person under the legislation as outlined above. Each application is always considered on its own individual merits in accordance with law.

Coroners Service

260. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will provide an update on her plans to review the legislation governing the Coroner Service; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19754/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The Coroners Bill 2007 provides for a comprehensive reform of the Coroners Act 1962 and of the coroner system, in-

cluding the establishment of a new Coroner Service. It incorporates many of the recommendations made by the Coroners Review Group in 2000, and by the Coroners Rules Committee in 2003, as well as a detailed review of reforms to coronial systems in other common-law jurisdictions (particularly New Zealand and Northern Ireland).

I can confirm to the Deputy that a review of the Coroners Bill 2007 is underway, at my request, with a view to developing a plan for its progression.

The 2007 Bill is being reviewed in light of a number of developments since its publication including

- changed public finances;
- increased emphasis on delivering leaner, better integrated and more customer-focused public services; and
- developing coroner practice and caselaw, particularly on the application to coroners' inquests of Art. 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

As finalising the review is dependent on competing legislative priorities, I am not in a position, at present, to give an indication of a timeframe for this project.

Immigration Status

261. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if an application for de facto status will be expedited (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19761/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I have been informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department, that the person referred to by the Deputy currently has an application pending for residency in the State on 6th May 2015 arising from their De Facto Relationship with an Irish national. Applications of this type are dealt with in chronological order and a decision will issue on their case in the coming months.

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

Garda Investigations

262. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality in view of the recent increase in the number of explosive devices, such as pipe bombs, being found in County Leitrim and its environs, the action An Garda Síochána has taken, or is taking, to prevent this type of device from being constructed or brought into the county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19791/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): An Garda Síochána are currently investigating an incident which occurred last week in the area referred to by the

Deputy. Two persons were arrested having been found in possession of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and a firearm and ammunition. One of the persons arrested has appeared before the Special Criminal Court charged with a number of offences. Garda investigations in respect of the other person arrested are continuing.

There are substantial Garda operations in place to tackle the use of IEDs with operational strategies very firmly focused on disrupting the use of IEDs and bringing those involved before the Courts. Operation Enchant is the ongoing national Garda operation which coordinates investigations into the manufacture, supply and deployment of IEDs. Operation Enchant incorporates a co-ordination unit comprising personnel from the Special Detective Unit, Organised Crime Unit and Garda National Drugs Unit. This unit works closely with each Senior Investigating Officer in relation to each IED incident and also with the Garda Technical Bureau. The unit also works closely with the Garda Analysis Service and the National Criminal Intelligence Unit amongst others and assists local investigators in their investigations including, where appropriate, interviewing arrested persons and conducting searches.

I am informed by the Garda authorities that the number of recorded incidents associated with Operation Enchant for County Leitrim comprises less than one percent of the national total. I can assure the Deputy that all incidents involving IEDs are treated as a priority and investigated thoroughly by the Garda authorities.

Garda Vetting of Personnel

263. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs his views on difficulties currently being experienced by child care providers (details supplied); if he will liaise with the Department of Justice and Equality with a view to working towards a solution; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19176/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): As pointed out to the Deputy in a previous reply to a Parliamentary Question, the Department of Justice and Equality has responsibility for the vetting legislation which sets out the requirements in relation to the vetting of persons who work with children. I am aware of the concerns raised by childcare providers in relation to the requirement that a childcare service provide up to date vetting for each member of staff before they take up an appointment.

I have brought this matter to the attention of officials in my Department and they will raise this matter with officials in the Department of Justice and Equality when the application of the vetting requirements are being discussed.

School Completion Programme

264. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs further to Parliamentary Question No.172 of 12 February 2015, if the review of the school completion programme has been completed; if so, the findings of that review; if the school completion programme funding in the Tuam, Loughrea, Gort and Athenry areas of County Galway will be protected in the 2015-2016 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19206/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): The School Completion Programme aims to retain young people in the formal education system to completion of senior cycle and to improve the school attendance, participation and retention of its target

cohort. It is a targeted intervention aimed at school communities identified under the Department of Education and Skills DEIS Action Plan. It involves 124 locally managed projects and provides targeted supports to approximately 36,000 children and young people.

Since 1st January 2014, the Child and Family Agency has operational responsibility for the School Completion Programme, including the allocation of funds to local projects. In 2014, an allocation of €24.756 million was provided for the School Completion Programme. The Agency has indicated a similar allocation for the programme in 2015. The Agency has advised that Chairpersons of Local Management Committees have been requested to prepare their school retention plans for the 2015/2016 school year based on the expenditure allocated last year and to return them to the Agency by June 5th. Following receipt of these plans projects including those in the Galway areas referred to by the Deputy will be notified of their allocations for the 2015/2016 school year.

The ESRI is currently reviewing the School Completion Programme, which will help in future decisions on its structure, governance and operation. Its final report is expected next month. The Minister for Education and Skills recently published an evaluation of the DEIS programme which was also prepared by the ESRI, and which refers to the School Completion Programme as an integral support within DEIS in improving attendance and engagement in education.

I have advised the Agency of my commitment to ensuring that there is no diminution in the school completion programme services. The School Completion Programme is an important service within the Agency's educational welfare services. It is highly regarded as a key response in securing improved educational outcomes for children and young people at risk of early school leaving.

School Completion Programme

265. Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the reason funding for the school completion programme is no longer ring-fenced; if he will indicate the future of the programme, post-2015; his views on whether the current indeterminate nature of the funding is causing a problem for the programme, its participants and its teachers; whether the ring-fenced funding this programme enjoyed, while under the remit of the Minister for Education and Skills, should be restored to the programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19236/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): When my Department was established in 2011, it was given a remit to lead the development of harmonised policy and quality integrated service delivery for children and young people, to carry out specific functions in the social care field and co-ordinate actions across a range of sectors, including health, education, youth justice, sport, arts and culture in support of improved outcomes for children and young people.

On 1 January 2014, the Child and Family Agency was established as the dedicated State Agency for improving well-being and outcomes for children under the remit of my Department. Operational responsibility for the School Completion Programme, including the allocation of funds to local projects was assigned to the Agency from that date.

The objective in incorporating the School Completion Programme into the Child and Family Agency responsibility is to ensure the provision of effective services for children who have difficulties participating in school; to better integrate the educational welfare services with oth-

er support services for children and their families and to bring about an increased emphasis on planning, evidence based services and outcome measurement.

The estimate for the Child and Family Agency for 2015 is €631 million, a 4.3% increase on its 2014 allocation. With regard to funding for the School Completion Programme, the Programme, as with all major expenditure programmes, was the subject of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure which indicated savings requirements of the order of six and a half percent were required in each of the years 2012 - 2014 inclusive.

In 2014, an allocation of €24.756 million was provided for the School Completion Programme. The Agency has indicated a similar allocation for the programme in 2015. The Agency has advised that Chairpersons of Local Management Committees have been requested to prepare their school retention plans for the 2015/2016 school year based on the expenditure allocated last year and to return them to the Agency by June 5th. Following receipt of these plans all school completion projects will be notified of their allocations for the 2015/2016 school year.

The ESRI is currently reviewing the School Completion Programme, which will help in future decisions on its structure, governance and operation. The report is almost finalised and it is expected it will be available next month. The Minister for Education and Skills recently published an evaluation of the DEIS programme which was also prepared by the ESRI, and which refers to the School Completion Programme as an integral support within DEIS in improving attendance and engagement in education.

I have advised the Agency of my commitment to ensuring that there is no diminution in the school completion programme services. The School Completion Programme is an important service within the Agency's educational welfare services. It is highly regarded as a key response in securing improved educational outcomes for children and young people at risk of early school leaving.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

266. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the costs associated with supporting children with disabilities to access the early childhood care and education scheme year, by providing special needs assistant support where required; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19443/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): There are a number of measures in place in my Department to ensure that the free pre-school year is more accessible to children with special needs. These include an exemption from the upper age limit where a child would benefit from starting primary school at a later age. In addition, children with special needs can apply to have the pre-school year split over two years on a pro-rata basis, for example availing of the programme for 2 days a week in the first year and for 3 days a week in the second year. I know that the HSE does, where possible, provide additional supports to children with special needs to enable them to avail of pre-school services in mainstream pre-school settings.

Previous groups chaired by the Office of the Minister for Disability and the Department of Health agreed that the best approach to meeting the needs of children with special needs at pre-school age was through mainstream pre-school services, but no agreement was reached on what the model of provision would be, or, who would lead out on developing this.

The Secretary General of my Department has recently agreed with his counterparts in the Departments of Health and Education and Skills that my Department will seek to gain agree-

ment, in a relatively short time-frame, between the three sectors (children, education, health) on the most appropriate, workable model for supports to pre-school children with special needs. This will be followed by very close co-operation between the sectors in defining/developing the model and in making an agreed cross-departmentally supported proposal for the resources required to implement it.

There will be several challenges to agreeing an appropriate and workable model – including reviewing existing resources in the system to determine how they can best meet children’s needs, and accessing the additional investment needed. My Department has committed to leading this process and it is my intention that a proposal will be available in time for the Estimates process.

Child and Family Agency Funding

267. Deputy Denis Naughten asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if he will direct Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to protect domestic violence support services in County Roscommon by reinstating funding to Roscommon SAFE Link, Boyle, County Roscommon, following the withdrawal of financial support for its domestic violence and counselling services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19619/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): Responsibility for the funding of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Services transferred from the HSE to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, upon its establishment on 1 January, 2014. In 2014, Tusla provided funding in excess of over €17 million to support the provision of these services. This included the funding of some 60 services throughout the country:

- €10m for 20 Crisis Refuges and support services
- Over €4 million for 16 Rape Crisis Centres
- Almost €3.5 million for 24 Domestic Violence Support Services.

In addition, funding of €2.54m for domestic violence refuge services has recently transferred to my Department’s Vote from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, and in turn to Tusla. The purpose of this funding transfer is to ensure that the State’s relationship with domestic violence services is managed in a manner which is more coherent and adapted to the needs of service users i.e. victims of domestic violence.

Tusla has undertaken a comprehensive review of Sexual violence and Domestic violence services. The purpose was to identify strategic priorities and set out a roadmap for the delivery of these services. Tusla considers that there is scope for a more co-ordinated and more equitable provision of these services across the country. In reviewing the make up of current services, it is seeking to address any identified gaps in services, to avoid duplication and to support effective delivery of frontline services nationally.

Tusla has been reviewing and is considering some reconfiguration of domestic violence services in Co. Roscommon in order to address acute gaps in domestic violence service provision in the county.

At a meeting with Roscommon Safe Link on Friday 15th May, Tusla indicated that it will be funding the organisation in 2015 at the level of €91,720.

Tusla will continue to be engaged with stakeholders in Co. Roscommon around how best to

provide domestic violence support services as part of integrated community-based services for all of those in Co. Roscommon who require support in dealing with issues of domestic violence.

Aftercare Services

268. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the position regarding an after-care payment and other supports in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9; and if he will make urgent arrangements in order that this person may be assisted. [19637/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): I want to thank the Deputy for bringing this to my attention. The Deputy will appreciate that I am not in a position to comment, nor would it be appropriate for me to do so, on the specific matters raised that refer to an individual. My Department has, however, referred this to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, for attention and asked that they examine what supports they may be able to provide. As the Deputy may be aware, neither the provision of social protection supports or mental health services are within my remit.

On a more general point, I would note that an aftercare programme is based on an aftercare plan for a child who has been in care and is about to turn 18 years old. Based on an assessed need, an aftercare worker can make arrangements for various supports, including support for accommodation, and accessing training and education. Aftercare workers are provided both by Tusla as well as through services that are commissioned from community, voluntary and private organisations. The aftercare worker support provided by Focus Ireland, similar to one which you may have seen in the recent television documentary, is an example of such a service. Funding is also made available to support a person who is to remain on with their foster family as part of their aftercare plan. In other cases, funding supports are available to facilitate independent living or supported lodgings. Further, where a jobseeker has been in care during the 12 months prior to reaching 18 years of age then they are exempt from the reduced rates for jobseeker's allowance that would otherwise apply. However, a person, after turning 18 years of age, is entitled to choose whether or not to avail of planned supports, and this is outside the control of Tusla.

The Government has decided to amend the legislative provisions regarding aftercare. The aim is to create a clear statement of Tusla's duty to satisfy itself as to the child's or young person's need for assistance by preparing a plan that identifies those needs for aftercare supports. It is anticipated that the Aftercare Bill will be published shortly.

Youth Services Funding

269. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if he will prioritise the volunteer support system for youth organisations (details supplied) in the plans to change the funding model for the vital community services these organisations are delivering, in view of the fact that volunteers require Garda vetting, training and ongoing support to ensure they are confident and skilled to work with young persons, as prioritising the support of volunteers will pay dividends for our young persons and the communities they live in; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19667/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): My Department administers a range of funding schemes and programmes to support the provision of youth services to young people throughout the country including those from disadvantaged communities. The

funding schemes support national and local youth work provision to some 380,000 young people and involve approximately 1,400 youth work staff in 477 projects and 40,000 volunteers working in youth work services and communities throughout the country. In 2015, funding of €49.9m has been provided to my Department for these schemes. There has been no reduction in the overall allocation for youth services in 2015. This was an important priority for the voluntary youth organisations that have a key role in the provision of quality youth work services for young people.

Three of the targeted funding schemes, the Special Projects for Youth scheme, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, and Local Drug Task Force projects scheme, were the subject of a recently completed Value for Money and Policy Review. The schemes support the provision of youth services for young people who are at risk of drugs, alcohol misuse, early school leaving, homelessness or who are living in disadvantaged communities. In 2012, expenditure on the schemes amounted to €39.7m. The review involved an in-depth scrutiny of a complex area to do with the impact youth service provision has in young people's lives. Overall, the review found that the youth programmes can provide a significant contribution to improving outcomes for young people, and should be considered for on-going public funding.

The review makes a number of recommendations for the future operation of the youth schemes and their development in the years ahead. It recommends that the three schemes be replaced with a single, targeted, evidence-based and outcomes focussed scheme designed to secure the optimal outcomes for young people and their communities. It sets out guidance as to how services may be developed to better meet the needs of young people in the target cohort and how demographic information and CSO data about local areas should be part of the programme design. The key role of volunteers and volunteerism is both acknowledged by the report to date and considered a key element of the new programme, going forward. The review does not include a recommendation that the funding programme should be operated on the basis of a competitive tendering process. Instead, it recommends that the governance of the programme should be reformed with a greater role for the network of local youth officers throughout the county, employed by the Education and Training Boards, supporting the development of local youth services.

My Department has undertaken a detailed consultation process with the youth sector and providers of youth services, including volunteers, about the review's findings and recommendations. The consultation included regional meetings across the country. All local services were invited to participate. My Department is committed to working collaboratively with the voluntary youth sector, in the development and implementation of the new programme over the next two years. Support for volunteers engaged in the provision of youth services is a priority for my Department in this context. Supports in place include training and awareness programmes in child protection matters through the National Youth Council of Ireland, and support programmes for both staff and volunteer led youth services in implementing the quality standards initiatives in local youth services. I intend that the reforms recommended in the review will be progressed in the context of the new National Youth Strategy, which is nearing completion. The strategy will be a universal strategy for all young people aged 10 to 24 years. It will have a particular focus on the needs of young people who are at risk of experiencing the poorest outcomes. It is anticipated that the new National Youth Strategy will be finalised in early Summer.

Inter-Country Adoptions

270. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the process for reassessment of applicants for the purposes of inter-country adoption whose declaration of

eligibility and suitability has expired; if he will provide an outline of the timeframe, from application to completion, of this reassessment process; and if he will indicate whether priority is provided to applicants for reassessment as opposed to first-time applicants. [19709/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter under the remit of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, I have asked the Agency to respond directly to the Deputy.

Inter-Country Adoptions

271. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of declarations of eligibility and suitability for the purposes of inter-country adoption that have been issued since the passing of the Adoption Act 2010; the number of these applicants who have completed an adoption; the number who have had to do a reassessment due to their declaration expiring; and the number who have discontinued in the process or failed to renew their declaration of eligibility and suitability. [19710/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): As this is a service matter under the remit of the Adoption Authority of Ireland, I have asked the Authority to respond directly to the Deputy.

Child Poverty

272. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if he is aware of a report (details supplied); the action he plans to take as a result; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19734/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 - 2020 (BOBF), which was published and launched by Government in 2014, provides the overarching framework for the development and implementation of policy and services for children and young people.

The relevant issues identified in the report referred to by the TD, are addressed within this National Policy Framework.

As part of the implementation of Better Outcomes, Better Futures, government departments have identified child poverty as a whole of government priority action for 2015. The Department of Social Protection have the lead role in co-ordinating government strategies on child poverty and are the Sponsor of outcome 4 of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures - economic security and opportunity.

To inform the development of this approach, a national seminar on 'Investing in children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage' was held with the European Commission and attended by national stakeholders in November 2014.

The whole-of-government approach requires action in respect of the provision of child and family income supports, early childhood care and education and after-school care, prevention and early intervention services for children and parents in disadvantaged areas, a national programme to tackle educational disadvantage, a new physical activity plan and increased provision of school meals.

As regards my own Department there are a number of areas of focus. My Department is spending €260 million annually on early childhood care and education and after-school support programmes which provide care to 100,000 children. A number of these programmes are targeted at those on lowest incomes. In addition in early 2015, I established an Inter-Departmental Group on Future Investment in Early Years and After-School Care and Education. The work of the group is focused on identifying policy objectives to guide future investment, including:

- Improved outcomes for children, including those with special needs, in terms of their learning, wellbeing and development by ensuring access to high quality early years services.
- Support for parents to care for their children
- Contribution towards improvements in social inclusion and poverty reduction
- Support for parents' participation in education, training and employment

My Department is also leading the implementation of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme (2013-2016). The ABC Programme is being co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and will have a total funding allocation of up to €29.7 million. The ABC Programme draws on best international practice to break the cycle of child poverty where it is most deeply entrenched, and improve the outcomes for children and young people and existing services. Currently 13 areas have identified and communicated the implementation of a number of specific interventions for children and families based on identified need in the local area.

My Department also provides targeted support for disadvantaged, marginalised and at risk young people are provided through the Special Projects for Youth Scheme, the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, Rounds 1 and 2, Local Drugs Task Force Projects. In addition, some 31 national and major regional youth work organisations are supported under my Department's Youth Service Grant Scheme and other schemes include the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme and Youth Information Centres. In 2015, current funding of €49.93m will be provided to my Department for these schemes.

Tusla, the child and family agency is also responsible for the delivery of educational welfare services and I am advised by Tusla that the statutory Educational Welfare Services worked with over 20,000 children in 2013. Some 2,434 cases involved intensive intervention and a multidisciplinary approach and the provision of sustained support by an Education Welfare Officer to address the child's needs and support school attendance. During this period the School Completion Programme provided targeted support to approximately 36,000 children and young people at risk of early school leaving across 124 community based programmes.

Tusla also provides a range of services that offer advice and support to families. This includes over 100 family resource centres. The aim of the Family Resource Centre Programme is to combat disadvantage and improve the functioning of the family unit. The Programme emphasises involving local communities in tackling the problems they face, and creating successful partnerships between voluntary and statutory agencies at community level.

The main focus of these services is on early intervention aiming to promote and protect the health and well-being and rights of all children, young people and their families. At the same time particular attention is given to those who are vulnerable or at risk.

Child and Family Agency Funding

273. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if he will

provide details of funding for a project (details supplied) in County Laois for 2013 and 2014, and the estimate for 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19735/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): Tusla, the Child and Family Agency funds the project referred to by the Deputy in Co. Laois. The service in question received €73,164 in 2013, €67,400 in 2014 and has been allocated €67,000 this year.

The service involves the provision of domestic violence supports, including information, advocacy and counselling services to women experiencing or who have experienced domestic violence. The work of this project and other community-based Domestic Violence services is recognised and valued.

Tusla has recently completed an initial review of domestic violence and sexual violence services in order to identify strategic priorities and set out a roadmap for sexual violence and domestic violence services. There is for the first time a consolidated national budget for these services and an opportunity for more co-ordinated and equitable provision of sexual and domestic violence services across the country.

Future planning for Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence services will seek to address gaps, avoid duplication and support effective delivery of frontline services nationally.

Services responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Violence are being given high priority by Government, and Tusla will work closely with service providers giving particular priority to supporting front line services.

Child and Family Agency Funding

274. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding the Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19752/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): The group referred to by the Deputy is a specialist support agency which was contracted by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to provide support, advice and training for Family Resource Centres across the area of disability awareness and staff/volunteer training in personal advocacy for people with disabilities. The organisation is funded by Tusla up to the end of June 2015. I am assured by Tusla that existing Family Resource Centres have the capacity to deliver the services in question to an appropriate level.

In seeking to improve outcomes and wellbeing for children and young people, Tusla must ensure that it makes the most efficient use of its resources in a way that is efficient, equitable, proportionate and sustainable. Tusla is giving priority in 2015 to the protection of front-line services and those which are best aligned to the priority outcomes as set out in their Corporate Plan. Tusla values the work of the agency in question and recognises the impact of its work across the Family Resource Centre Programme. However, having regard to Tusla's priorities and the overall level of resource available, it is necessary to focus on those services operating more directly at the front line.

Tusla is in receipt of Exchequer funding of €643m in 2015 which represents an increase of €34m or 5.3% over 2014. The level of funding provided represents tangible evidence of this Government's commitment to improving services for the most disadvantaged children and families.

Child and Family Agency Funding

275. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if he will intervene with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, in regard to proposals to discontinue Sneem Family Resource Centre in County Kerry and the non-viable amalgamation proposal, due to geographical and distance factors, which will pose huge inconvenience for clients of the centre and diminish the role of local officers and volunteers to the centre, who are providing a quality service locally down through the years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19808/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): Sneem Family Resource Centre has been in receipt of funding since 2005 under the Family Resource Centre Programme which is administered by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. The Centre's budget for 2015 is set at €90,453.

I am advised by Tusla that representatives met with members of the Voluntary Board of Management last December regarding the provision of funding to the Centre under the Family Resource Centre Programme. The Centre has been without a full-time Co-ordinator since March 2013 despite three recruitment processes. This has impacted on the management and operation of the Centre in terms of services to children and families in the community and the continued development of the Centre in line with Tusla's priorities.

Tusla fully recognises the need for community-based family support services serving the communities of Sneem, Tahilla, Castlecove, Kilgarvan and Kenmare. Tusla will continue to work with the Centre and representatives from these communities to ensure that the funding currently available under the Family Resource Centre Programme is directed to a community-based service that is operating to its full potential and best supports and promotes the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families, in line with Tusla's priorities.

In this regard, a decision has been made to establish a new Family Resource Centre based in Kenmare to serve the communities of Sneem, Tahilla, Castlecove, Kilgarvan and Kenmare. A new legal entity will be formed. The current Voluntary Board of Management of Kenmare Community Care will be re-constituted. It will initially include community representatives from Sneem Family Resource Centre and Kenmare Community Care.

In time, it is proposed that the new Voluntary Board of Management will also include community representatives from Tahilla, Castlecove and Kilgarvan. The detail of this will be a matter for discussion and agreement under an agreed process which is being managed and facilitated by Tusla. The first meeting in this agreed process is to take place later this month.

Tusla has advised that Sneem Family Resource Centre will continue to administer its Programme funding until the process is completed and will continue to receive Tusla funding for counselling services during the process.

Medicinal Products Regulation

276. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Health his view on concerns raised in correspondence in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19319/15]

303. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Health his view on a matter raised in corre-

spondence (details supplied) regarding training for teachers and special needs assistants in the use of EpiPens; his plans to address this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19320/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 276 and 303 together.

Medicines legislation does not prohibit any person from administering a medicine to the person for whom it is prescribed, as long as the medicine is administered in the way it was intended by the prescriber. Section 4A (1) of the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations states: ‘It shall not be a contravention of the provisions of these Regulations for ‘(c) Any person, other than a registered medical practitioner or registered dentist, to administer to a patient, in accordance with the directions of a registered medical practitioner or registered dentist, any medicinal product subject to control by virtue of these Regulations.’

Adrenaline auto-injectors are medicinal products which are designed for administration by non-medical persons. It is noted that in the case outlined in the correspondence supplied that the child’s Consultant has provided her school with instructions for use of the auto-injector along with a copy of the Irish Food Allergy Network (IFAN) anaphylaxis guidelines. Additionally, EpiPens are supplied with a package leaflet which clearly outlines administration instructions. It is important that the school follows these instructions carefully in conjunction with guidance provided by the child’s parents in the event that the child experiences an anaphylactic reaction.

Schools can obtain additional information on the management of anaphylaxis from organisations such as the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation who have published guidelines for teachers on their website, a section of these guidelines deals specifically with the management of anaphylaxis at school.

Disability Support Services

277. Deputy Regina Doherty asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 485 of 6 May 2015, if he will provide details of the work, remit and terms of reference of the health and education steering committee; the number of times it has met; the progress and outputs to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19460/15]

330. Deputy Regina Doherty asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the work and outputs of the Health Service Executive’s national programme on progressing disability services for children and young people; the structure in place within the executive to ensure progress; the directorate it comes under; the number of meetings, consultations and so on it has held with community groups; if it reports regularly on the executive’s website; the impact it has had to date; its forthcoming plans; the funding allocation it receives and disseminates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19462/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 277 and 330 together.

An interdepartmental Cross Sectoral Team (CST) with membership drawn from the Department of Health, the Department of Education and Skills, the Health Service Executive, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has been in place for a number of years to facilitate a more collaborative approach at national level across the sectors on issues of mutual concern pertaining to children with disabilities. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, which was established in 2011, has also been included in the CST membership in order to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration.

The CST on foot of the Report drawn up by the Education and Health Working Group of the HSE Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People agreed to the establishment of a National Health and Education Steering Group. The purpose of the Steering Group (a sub group of the CST) is to promote closer collaboration on children's disability issues, based on departmental policies, across the health, education and children and youth affairs sectors with particular reference to the development of guidance on local structures/linkages/protocols to facilitate a more joined up approach across the sectors as recommended in the Report. The Steering Group has met on five occasions since it was established in mid 2014 and is currently examining the issue of local Education and Health Fora including their possible form and function. It will be reporting back to the CST on this issue later in the year.

The Health Service Executive, which has statutory responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services, is currently engaged in a reconfiguration of existing health related therapy resources for children with disabilities, including autism, to multi-disciplinary geographically based teams as part of its National Programme on Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18 years). This Programme is based on the recommendations of the Report of the National Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children aged 5-18 Years, which was produced by representatives of the professions and management involved in delivering multi-disciplinary services to children.

The Programme aims to bring about equity and consistency, with a clear pathway for children with disabilities and their families to services, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of the child's difficulties. The Programme is a key priority for the Executive's Social Care Directorate in 2015. An additional €4 million was specifically allocated in 2014 to drive implementation of the Programme. This equates to approximately 80 therapy posts. A further additional €4m (full year cost of €6m) has been allocated this year to assist in implementing the Programme.

I have asked the HSE to provide the Deputy with the detailed operational information she has requested concerning its Progressing Disability Services Programme. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Magdalen Laundries

278. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health when the Magdalen survivors can expect to receive a guide to their enhanced medical card, as indicated by him; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19656/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Redress for Women Resident in Certain Institutions Act 2015 makes provision for a broad range of health services and benefits for women who qualify under the Department of Justice and Equality Restorative Justice Scheme for women who were admitted to and worked in the Magdalen Laundries and similar institutions.

The HSE is finalising the arrangements for access to the health services provided for under the Act and will contact the women who qualify when these are in place. It is expected that the HSE will be in contact in June.

Each woman will receive a RWRCI card which will serve as evidence of eligibility for services under the Act. In addition, each woman will receive a comprehensive information note on the services available and contact details for further information from the HSE.

Medical Products

279. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the condition that Roaccutane is originally made for; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19166/15]

284. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he is satisfied and finds the list of side-effects provided for Roaccutane adequate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19178/15]

286. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the correspondence, agreement, conditions the Health Products Regulatory Authority made with a pharmaceutical company (details supplied) prior to the marketing of Roaccutane in 1983, and post-1983; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19181/15]

287. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if any members of the Health Products Regulatory Authority had or have a declared interest in his political party prior to, or since, 1983; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19183/15]

288. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the laws that were, and are, in place that ensure that any doctor or other medical personnel, or hospital or faculty, are required to report adverse drug reactions, associated with Roaccutane, since 1983; the authority these reports are submitted to; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19187/15]

289. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if the Health Products Regulatory Authority is compromising public safety, where Roaccutane is concerned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19188/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 279, 284 and 286 to 289, inclusive, together.

Roaccutane (isotretinoin) is authorised for treating severe forms of acne which have been resistant to other standard therapies. It should only be prescribed by or under the supervision of doctors with expertise in using the product and with a full understanding of the risk of therapy and the monitoring requirements.

When first authorised for use in Ireland in 1983, roaccutane was authorised for the management of cystic or conglobate forms of acne vulgaris, or for use in cases of severe acne which have failed to respond to adequate courses of accepted therapy.

Under European and Irish legislation, all medicinal products must be authorised before being marketed. As part of the marketing authorisation application process the applicant company must submit evidence that the medicine meets clear and predefined standards of quality, safety and efficacy, relevant to its proposed therapeutic use. This information is provided in a dossier and the type of data to be submitted is set out in EU Directives and guidelines. Relevant Irish Regulations set out the requirements for companies and the procedure for the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) in assessing applications.

Following assessment by the HPRA approval is given on the basis of a favourable benefit versus risk balance for the approved specific therapeutic indication. The approved conditions for use are contained in the product information for patients and their doctors.

Following authorisation, any change, for example new indications, updated safety information or product changes requires approval on foot of a formal application to vary the authorisation and the submission of relevant supporting data.

Once a medicine is approved and placed on the market, European and Irish legislation provides for ongoing monitoring of its benefits and risks. This monitoring includes review and evaluation of suspected adverse reaction reports at National and EU level. Roaccutane was most recently reviewed at EU level in April 2011 when further warnings regarding skin reactions were added to the product information for patients and their doctors. The risk of depression associated with the use of roaccutane was also reviewed at that time. However the existing comprehensive information on the risk of depression associated with roaccutane and the monitoring requirements provided on the product information were considered sufficient. The inclusion of these, and other side effects and warnings, in the product information are on the basis of information on use of the product including reports of side effects from patients.

The information for patients and for their doctors includes detailed advice on the risks associated with use of roaccutane and recommendations to minimise their occurrence. The package leaflet advises patients to tell their doctor if they ever had any mental illness (including depression, suicidal behaviour or psychosis), or if they take medicines for any of these conditions. It also advises them to contact their doctor immediately if they have signs of any of these problems.

The information for doctors lists potential psychiatric disorders. It emphasises that particular care needs to be taken in relation to patients with a history of depression and that all patients should be monitored for signs of depression during their treatment with the product and referred for appropriate treatment as necessary. The benefits of treatment are considered to outweigh its risks when the product is used in accordance with the product information.

Monitoring of benefits and risks of medicines takes place through a system known as pharmacovigilance. The EU passed new legislation in 2010 and 2012 to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the system and this legislation has been fully transposed into Irish legislation. One of the goals of the new legislation is to provide access to more information related to the benefit-risk aspects of taking a medication as well as providing opportunity for patients and consumers to directly report suspected problems.

The national regulatory medicines authorities (in Ireland the HPRA) in each EU member state are responsible for gathering and evaluating national adverse reaction reports and in turn, submitting these reports to the European Medicines Agency, which is responsible for the overall co-ordination of pharmacovigilance activities across the EU.

Reporting of adverse events has been a function of the HPRA since its establishment as the Irish Medicines Board in 1995 and prior to 1995 by the National Drugs Advisory Board.

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions by health professionals is undertaken on a voluntary basis with all health professionals strongly encouraged to report a suspected adverse reaction. These reports may be submitted at any time to the HPRA. The HPRA regularly reminds health care professionals about reporting in its Drug Safety Newsletter and further information on reporting and access to reporting forms is available on the HPRA website.

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions however is only one of a number of ways of identifying new adverse reactions. Individual reports of suspected adverse reactions alone are rarely sufficient to confirm that a certain reaction is caused by the medicine in question. Other factors such as the extent and conditions of use of the medicine, the nature of the reaction, the condition being treated, any new conditions arising and other medicines taken by the patient have to be taken into account. Further data is usually required, including worldwide spontaneous case reports, clinical trials and epidemiological studies, to confirm the reactions and help determine their significance.

Under the Irish Medicines Board's Acts 1995 and 2006, members of the HPRA are appointed by the Minister for Health. In the case of 1 position, i.e. the chairperson of the HPRA's Advisory Committee for Veterinary Medicines, the appointment is subject to the consent of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

The Deputy will be aware that in 2011 this Government introduced new arrangements for appointments to State Boards which have contributed to greater openness and transparency in the appointments process. Further reforms were announced by the Government in November 2014 whereby all appointments will be advertised openly on the State Boards portal operated by the Public Appointments Service (PAS), meet specific criteria necessary for the effective performance of the role and be processed in a transparent manner.

Each member of the HPRA Authority brings to the HPRA essential expertise in areas such as human and veterinary medicines, pharmacy, medical devices and finance. The members are highly qualified and well respected professionals in their field and political affiliation is not a consideration. I would also like to refer the Deputy to the detailed and extensive provisions in place governing ethics in public office, conflicts of interest and codes of conduct which govern the activities of all appointees to State Boards, including the HPRA.

Since its foundation in 1995 the HPRA has played a key role in ensuring that health products used by Irish patients are safe. I am satisfied that the HPRA operates to the highest standards of probity, accountability and transparency in its dealings with pharmaceutical companies, health professionals and patients alike.

Medical Products

280. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the exact pattern of adverse effects for Roaccutane; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19167/15]

283. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health in view of the fact that the Health Products Regulatory Authority has 289 adverse drug reaction reports, in association with Roaccutane since 1983, if he will identify these individually, by gender, year, and age; if he will provide a chronological list of these reports; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19177/15]

285. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the number of adverse drug reports that a pharmaceutical company (details supplied) submitted to the Health Products Regulatory Authority, in association with Roaccutane, since 1983; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19179/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 280, 283 and 285 together.

The information requested is not readily available and will be forwarded directly to the Deputy by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

Medical Card Applications

281. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding an application for a medical card in respect of a child (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19170/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme Data

282. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, (details supplied) for each local health area, the number of persons who have applied for but have not yet received a placement; who are currently approved for, but yet to receive, a placement; the average waiting time, from application to placement, for those approved; and the average waiting time, from approval to placement, under the fair deal scheme. [19171/15]

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. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Question No. 283 answered with Question No. 280.

Question No. 284 answered with Question No. 279.

Question No. 285 answered with Question No. 280.

Questions Nos. 286 to 289, inclusive, answered with Question No. 279.

Hospital Appointments Status

290. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite a medical procedure in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19193/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The scheduling of appointments for patients is a matter for the hospital to which the patient has been referred. Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she should take the matter up with the consultant and the hospital involved. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Long-Term Illness Scheme

291. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health his plans to have colostomy and ileostomy bags added to the long-term illness scheme [19196/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): Under the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, the HSE has statutory responsibility for the administration of the primary care schemes, including the Long Term Illness Scheme, therefore the matter has been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to you.

If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Health Services Provision

292. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an assurance that no attempt will be made by the Health Service Executive to close Monasterevin health centre in County Kildare, which has long been a vital asset to the local community; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19208/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE has responsibility for the provision, maintenance and operation of Primary Care Centres. Therefore, this matter has been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

General Practitioner Services Provision

293. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Health the provisions the Health Service Executive has made to ensure full-time general practitioner cover for persons in Monasterevin in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19209/15]

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 (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

294. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin who is on the waiting list for the National Rehabilitation Hospital in County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19210/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

General Medical Services Scheme

295. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the reason the drug Mepa Herz is not included in the list of medications approved under the drug payment scheme or the long-term illness scheme. [19234/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE has statutory responsibility for decisions on pricing and reimbursement of medicinal products under the community drug schemes in accordance with the provisions of the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, therefore, the matter has been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to you. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Tobacco Control Measures

296. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health his plans for regulations governing cigarette and packaged tobacco vending machines; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19235/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): In June 2014, the Government approved the drafting of legislation to provide for measures in relation to the sale of all tobacco products and non-medicinal nicotine delivery systems, including e-cigarettes. The legislation includes a proposal to prohibit the sale of all tobacco products from self-service vending machines. My Department has conducted a public consultation on this legislation, the results of which will inform the Regulatory Impact Analysis and the General Scheme of a Bill. It is expected that the General Scheme will be published during 2015.

Disability Services Provision

297. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health the numbers accessing the Gheel Intellectual Disability Service; the current numbers on the waiting list to access Gheel services for less than three months, between three and six months, between six and 12 months, and over one year; the timeframe for assessing applications and accessing the service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19238/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Local Drugs Task Forces Funding

298. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health the level of funding provided to, and the percentage of cuts to, local drugs task force funding for each year from 2011 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19239/15]

299. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the level of funding for each individual drugs task force for each year from 2011

to 2014 and in 2015 to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19240/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Aodhán Ó Riordáin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 298 and 299 together.

In line with the National Drugs Strategy, the Department of Health (DOH) administers a Drugs Initiative which primarily funds community based drugs initiatives supported by Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces. In addition, the Health Service Executive (HSE) also funds community based drugs initiatives supported by the Task Forces.

The following tables set out the budget allocation for each Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force (LDATF) and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (RDATF) for each of the years referred to by the Deputy:

LDATFs	2011	2012	2013	2014 DOH	2014 HSE	2015 DOH	2015 HSE
-	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Ballyfermot	1.492	1.570	1.522	0.461	1.026	0.255	1.231
Ballymun	1.210	1.181	1.145	0.633	0.488	0.423	0.698
Blanchardstown	1.152	1.124	1.091	0.179	0.914	0.179	0.914
Bray	1.612	1.573	1.526	0.574	0.916	0.574	0.916
Canal Communities	1.601	1.562	1.515	0.339	1.141	0.339	1.141
Clondalkin	1.455	1.422	1.429	0.388	1.008	0.388	1.007
Cork	1.618	1.579	1.531	0.412	1.108	0.412	1.108
Dublin 12	1.148	1.120	1.087	0.074	0.990	0.071	0.993
Dublin North East	1.259	1.229	0.988	0.422	0.595	0.422	0.595
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	0.949	0.926	0.898	0.095	0.787	0.095	0.787
Finglas Cabra	0.960	0.937	0.908	0.263	0.628	0.263	0.628
North Inner City	2.428	2.370	2.299	0.577	1.653	0.495	1.735
South Inner City	2.215	2.162	2.097	0.256	1.788	0.176	1.868
Tallaght	1.281	1.250	1.263	0.453	0.782	0.341	0.894
Total	20.38	20.005	19.298	5.126	13.824	4.432	14.515
Percentage Reduction	2.51	1.86	3.52		1.82		0.00

The same percentage reduction has been applied in all cases. However, variations in allocation levels in certain cases are attributable to changing levels of service provision from year to year.

RDATFs	2011	2012	2013	2014 DOH	2014 HSE	2015 DOH	2015 HSE
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
East Coast	0.873	0.852	0.584	0.058	0.509	0.058	0.509
Midlands	0.871	0.850	0.824	0.308	0.491	0.137	0.662
Mid West	1.534	1.496	1.452	0.148	1.260	0.148	1.260
North East	1.011	0.986	0.957	0	0.928	0	0.928
North West	0.785	0.766	0.743	0.272	0.448	0.259	0.462
North Dublin	0.847	0.826	0.801	0.456	0.321	0.310	0.467
South East	1.161	1.133	1.099	0	1.066	0	1.066
South West	0.871	0.850	0.824	0.103	0.696	0.103	0.696
Southern	1.060	1.034	1.003	0	0.973	0	0.973
Western	0.720	0.703	0.682	0.137	0.524	0.137	0.524
Total	9.733	9.496	8.969	1.482	7.216	1.152	7.547

The data in respect of 2014 and 2015 respectively reflects the fact that the Department of Health transferred €21.04m in funding relating to Drug and Alcohol Task Force projects to the HSE on 1 January 2014, with a further €1.02m transferring on 1 January 2015.

Services for People with Disabilities

300. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the provision of specialised chairs in respect of a child (details supplied) who has special needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19247/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Hospital Waiting Lists

301. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of the long waiting times for an appointment with a consultant orthopaedic surgeon (details supplied) in County Cork; his views that patients are being told that they will have to wait for up to three years for an appointment; the actions he will take to address these waiting lists; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19268/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Medical Card Applications

302. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if and when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19286/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Question No. 303 answered with Question No. 276.

304. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 306 of 6 May 2015, his plans to accommodate the remaining 2,850 persons from congregated settings, following the housing of the 150 persons being prioritised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19345/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE's report "*Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Community Inclusion*", (2011) proposes a new model of support in the community by moving people from institutional settings to the community, over a seven year time frame. The plan will be rolled out at a regional and local level and will involve full consultation.

In terms of housing, the Department of Health and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government are working in collaboration to support the transition of people with a disability from institutions to social housing in the community under the Government's *National Housing Strategy for People with Disability 2011 to 2016*.

As part of the implementation process, in 2013 and 2014 one million euro was transferred from the Department of Health's Vote to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's (DECLG) Vote to provide for the ring-fenced social housing costs of up to 150 people leaving disability or mental health institutions. At the end of December 2014, it is estimated that there were circa 3,000 people with a disability living in congregated settings. The HSE has prioritised the transition of 150 people from congregated settings in 2015. In 2015, one million euro has been allocated to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to continue this process.

As the HSE is responsible for leading out on the recommendations on "*Time to Move on from Congregated Settings – A Strategy for Community Inclusion*", I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, she can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Hospital Waiting Lists

305. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health if he will reschedule an operation in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath. [19350/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to

respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Health Strategies

306. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the public consultation he commenced, regarding easier access to rescue drugs in emergencies, including epipens adrenaline, salbutamol, glucagon, naloxone, and glyceryl trinitrate; when consultation will be complete; when actions will be taken following the consultation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19355/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I launched a public consultation process on the wider availability of a number of prescription-only medicines used in emergency situations on 20 February. Members of the public and other stakeholders were asked to respond to the consultation by mid-March. Submissions have been received from a wide variety of respondents and analysis of these responses is underway.

The consultation forms part of a wider review which aims to explore the feasibility of setting up a system to allow appropriately trained non-medical persons to have ready access to certain prescription-only medicines for use in emergency situations, while ensuring that medicines continue to be controlled in an appropriate manner. My Department has also consulted with a number of healthcare organisations and agencies to ensure that the various options for extending the availability of certain prescription-only medicines for use in emergency situations are fully explored.

The outcome of these discussions and feedback from the public consultation are currently being considered. I expect to receive a report and policy recommendations shortly. I will then consider the report and make a policy decision on the best way to proceed. The report of the consultation will be made available on my Department's website once this process is complete.

Disability Support Services Provision

307. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the percentage of assessments of need under the disability Acts that were delivered within the statutory timeframes, in counties Laois and Offaly, per year, in the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19401/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The particular issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Health Services Provision

308. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the extent of waiting lists for psychology assessments and for occupational therapy in counties Laois and Offaly, per year, in the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19402/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The particular

issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. Accordingly I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Services for People with Disabilities

309. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the current status of disability services in counties Laois and Offaly; his plans to re-arrange these services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19403/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Industrial Relations

310. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the specific arrangements that were made in industrial relations discussions in the health sector, in relation to pay, hours, and practice; the way they differed from the Haddington Road agreement; if it is envisaged that these will be changed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19404/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The first official engagement between public sector employers and ICTU took place on Tuesday 12th May and the unions were provided with a fiscal briefing on Thursday.

The approach to the discussions and the way in which it will differ from the Haddington Road Agreement process will become clearer as the talks progress.

Medical Card Administration

311. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Health the cost of increasing the medical card income thresholds by 20%; the estimated change in numbers eligible for a medical card as a result of this measure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19408/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Medical Card Data

312. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of medical card recipients, broken down by eligibility criteria, by income range in bands of €10,000, and by household type; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19409/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Medicinal Products Expenditure

313. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the estimated cost to the State of providing free access to all prescribed medicines for all citizens; the cost for 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19427/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As I outlined in my reply to you of the 4th of March, it is not possible to provide data on the full cost to the State of providing free access to all prescribed medicines for all citizens as neither the Department or the HSE collects data on the level of private spending that is incurred by individuals purchasing medications.

Data is however available on the cost to the State of providing medicines for the GMS and community drugs schemes. In 2014 the cost of medicines for these scheme was €1.702 billion which includes the ingredient cost and appropriate fees but is net of manufacturers rebate income. Additionally the revenue associated with the prescription charge would be foregone if free access to all prescribed medicines was provided for all citizens. In 2014 the prescription charge income is projected to be €120 million.

Health Services Funding

314. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the savings that would be made if all public subsidies for private health care were removed; the tax breaks there are for private hospitals; if a land gift scheme exists in any form, or it is planned to introduce one; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19428/15]

315. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if charges for use of all beds in public and voluntary hospitals, for the purpose of private medical practice, are currently based on the full economic cost of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19429/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I propose to take Questions Nos. 314 and 315 together.

Government policy has been to move towards charging the full economic cost for the provision of private acute in-patient services, while being sensitive to the need for continuing stability in the private health insurance market. In that context, the Government introduced the Health (Amendment) Act 2013, which provides for the charging of all private in-patients in public acute hospitals. The Government believes that the charge for private care in public hospitals should cover the hospitals' costs of providing the service, including the non-consultant hospital doctors, nursing staff, medical and surgical supplies, diagnostics, operating theatres, administration and support staff.

Section 55 of the Health Act 1970, as amended by the Health (Amendment) Act 2013, provides for the making available of private in-patient services and the charging for those private in-patient services. The charge relates to the provision of in-patient services, rather than the use of a bed in a hospital. Persons who opt to be treated on a private basis on admission to hospital are liable for the fees of all consultants involved in his or her care and for hospital charges under Section 55 for that episode of care. The charge is a per diem rate, which is a flat rate daily charge, dependent on the category of hospital treating the patient and on whether a person is accommodated in a single or multiple occupancy room or on a day case basis. The per diem charges set out in the 2013 legislation were informed by overall cost of the provision of the private in-patient services and the policy of moving towards the recovery of full economic cost. While a per diem charging system has the advantage of being relatively straightforward for the hospital, patient and insurer to understand, it does not directly relate to the cost of specific treatments provided to individual private patients, the level of complexity of a case or the costs of individual hospitals.

Regarding the Deputy's questions concerning tax breaks for private hospitals and a land gift scheme, these are matters for the Department of Finance and should be referred to that Department for reply.

Hospital Consultant Remuneration

316. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the various current level of salaries of hospital consultants; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19430/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): There are a broad range of consultant salaries depending on type of contract held. These can be found from pages 42 to page 58 within the current consolidated pay scales which are available to view or download here: <http://health.gov.ie/blog/publications/department-of-health-and-children-consolidated-salary-scales-clause-2-31-of-the-haddington-road-agreement/>.

Dental Services Expenditure

317. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the provision of primary dental care services; how they are funded; the costs to the general public; the procedures covered by medical cards; the cost for providing free at-the-point-of-care dental care to all citizens; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19431/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Dental Treatment Service Scheme (DTSS) provides access to dental treatment for medical card holders

over the age of 16. All medical card holders are entitled to specific dental treatments e.g., an annual dental examination, two fillings in each calendar year, extractions as necessary. Additional treatments are available to persons with specific medical conditions, including persons in receipt of care or services for a disability, persons on a register of disability and more vulnerable clients. The HSE prioritises for treatment patients with special needs, high risk patients and those who have greater clinical needs and will continue to monitor the operation of the DTSS to ensure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of available resources. The budget for the DTSS is €76 million this year. The Minister for Social Protection is responsible for the Dental Treatment Benefit Scheme (DTBS), which provides an annual dental examination to qualified people. The budget for the DTBS is approximately €11 million.

Dental services for children up to 16 years of age and persons of all ages with special needs are provided by the Public Dental Service of the HSE through its dental clinics. All HSE dental clinics prioritise emergency care for children up to 16 years of age, treatment for special needs patients and screening of children aged from 11 to 13 years, including referral for orthodontic services where necessary. Other services, including screening of children 6 to 8 years, are provided but may be deferred in clinics where there is pressure on resources. The budget for the PDS is estimated at €60 million.

The full cost to the State of providing free dental care for all citizens would depend on numerous factors, including the underlying oral health of the population, the level of take-up of dental services, the level of service provided, and the cost of contracting such services on behalf of the State. Neither the Department nor the HSE collects data on private spending that is incurred by individuals paying for dental care.

Future service provision will be informed by the National Oral Health Policy, which the Department of Health is currently developing.

Cancer Services Funding

318. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the current provision for radiation oncology, and other cancer services, by location; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19432/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Deputy's question relates to service delivery matters and accordingly I have asked the HSE to respond directly to him.

If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Mental Health Services Funding

319. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the overall percentage of health spend spent on mental health in 2014; the estimate for 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19433/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The funding issues raised by the Deputy are reflected in the relevant annual HSE Service Plans. Therefore, I have referred the question to the Executive for direct reply, in respect of the detailed information sought.

If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office

and they will follow up the matter with them.

General Practitioner Services Provision

320. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide the overall number of general practitioners; the number training each year at each level; the way Ireland's ratio of general practitioners to 1,000 patients compares internationally; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19434/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): On 30th April 2015, 2,404 GPs were contracted to provide services under the General Medical Services (GMS) Scheme. On that date, there were 3,067 medical practitioners registered on the Specialist Division of the Medical Council's Register in the Specialty of General Practice. Holding registration does not necessarily mean that the medical practitioner is in active practice in General Practice at this time. The above figure states the number of practitioners registered and entitled to practice as specialists in General Practice.

On 1st July 2010, the total GP trainee intake increased from 120 to 157 training places per year for the 14 GP Specialist (Vocational) Training Programmes. Currently all GP training programmes are of 4 years duration. The HSE has recently been in discussion with the Irish College of General Practitioners about the potential to increase this year's trainee intake. This has resulted in an additional four training places for the July 2015 intake.

The data for 2012 in respect of GPs per 1,000 head of population collated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that Ireland comes around mid-table with 0.72 GPs. This compares with France (top) with 1.56 GPs and Korea (bottom) with 0.12 GPs. Only four countries on the list exceeded one GP per 1,000 head of population. The United Kingdom had 0.8 GPs. OECD data for 2013 is not yet available but the ratio for Ireland has increased to 0.75 GPs per 1,000 for that year.

General Practitioner Services Provision

321. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of the number of areas that have been unable to attract a full-time general practitioner for periods of more than three months over the past four years; if these posts are filled with locum or agency staff; the cost of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19435/15]

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 (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

General Medical Services Scheme Data

322. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will reinstate the rural practice allowance; the amount this will cost; the criteria this is based on; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19436/15]

323. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he will consider extending the rural practice allowance to general practitioners who hold general medical service

contracts, and practice in a centre with a population lower than 700 persons, as opposed to the current 500 person limit, and where there is no town with a population of 2,000 persons, as opposed to the current limit of 1,500 persons or more, within a 4.83 km-three mile distance; the cost that this would entail; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19437/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 322 and 323 together.

The General Medical Services (GMS) Scheme, Circular 13/72, Appendix B (x) sets out the criteria for the awarding of a Rural Practice Allowance (RPA) to a GMS doctor. The circular states that “where a doctor lives or practises in a centre with a population of less than 500 and where there is not a town with a population of 1,500 or more within a 4.83 kilometre (three mile) radius of that centre the doctor will be entitled to special rural practice concessions”, including an RPA. The current annual RPA is €16,216.07.

Where a GP currently holds an RPA but the circumstances underpinning this have changed, i.e. the centre of population is now greater than 500 and/or there is a town with a population of 1,500 or more within a three-mile radius of that centre, then the GP retains the RPA while they practice. However, the requirement for an RPA for the area is determined afresh in respect of any new GP practice.

No GP had the Rural Practice Allowance withdrawn in 2014. The criteria for the allowance are reviewed on the retirement/resignation of a doctor who was in receipt of the allowance. Five GPs that retired in 2014 had been in receipt of an RPA. On retirement, these posts were reviewed and it was deemed that they no longer met the criteria for payment of an RPA.

Under the February 2015 Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive and the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO), talks have commenced on a new GMS GP contract. It is envisaged that the review of the GMS contract and other publicly funded health sector contracts with GPs will include consideration of how best to support General Practice in urban/deprived and rural areas so as to best meet the needs of patients with regard to the provision of general practitioner services. The Rural Practice Allowance, including any change to the existing criteria, will be considered as a part of these discussions.

Health Services Data

324. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the cost for the general practitioner based Heart Watch and Diabetes Watch programmes for the past three years, per year; the number of patients covered; if he will consider introducing such schemes for the entire population; the cost of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19438/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): Under the February 2015 Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive and the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO), talks have commenced on a new GP contract. A priority of these discussions will be the inclusion of chronic disease management for patients.

The negotiations with the IMO have already resulted in an agreement on the introduction of a Diabetes Cycle of Care. This will enable patients with a Medical/GP Visit Card and who have Type 2 Diabetes to avail of two annual visits to their GP practice for a structured review of their condition. This service will begin in Quarter 4 of this year. This initiative will help to improve clinical outcomes for patients and reduce complications often experienced with this

condition. The costs associated with the Diabetes Cycle of Care are estimated at approximately €4.5m in 2016.

The further introduction of Chronic Disease Management Programmes and the costs associated with same will be dealt with in the context of the above GP contract negotiations.

I have asked the HSE to reply directly to the Deputy in relation to the costs of the Heart Watch and Diabetes Programmes for the last three years.

Mental Health Services Provision

325. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the numbers on waiting lists not seen by the child and adolescent mental health service within three months, each year, for the past three years; the make-up of service teams; the cost of same, per year; the number of patients that teams see, per year; the overall number of patients that are seen by teams at present; the overall numbers of staff and teams in the scheme at present; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19439/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service issue this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

326. **Deputy Seán Conlan** asked the Minister for Health the reason a child (details supplied) in County Monaghan has been waiting three years for an operation to have her tonsils removed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19446/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Hospital Facilities

327. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide facilities to the acute hospitals that have not had major structural work undertaken in the past 30 years; his plans for these facilities; if he will refurbish, rebuild or replace the acute hospitals that need this work over the next 15 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19450/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Information, where it is available, relates to structural works completed. Records of the capital grants paid to health boards or voluntary hospitals prior to 01/07/1994 are paper based and the files are archived. Also, prior to the establishment of the HSE, block capital grants were paid to the Health Boards and to the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) from its establishment for distribution as authorised to the hospitals in their areas. As the very high level data in the following table is available, it is not

proposed to do the extensive search necessary to extract the requested data from the relevant archived files prior to 1996 as this exercise would require considerable staff resources.

The HSE will be requested to provide information on expenditure on acute hospital projects for the period since 2005 and to reply directly to you. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office who will follow up.

In the short term the available resources are determined by the Estimates process whereby my Department is advised of its capital allocation for a rolling multi-annual five year period. There will always be more projects than can be funded by the Exchequer. Therefore any further investment in acute care must be considered in the context of the establishment of hospital groups, within the overall acute hospital sector infrastructure programme and within the multi-annual capital envelope available to the health service. There is limited funding available for new projects over the next multi-annual period 2015-2019 given the level of commitments and the costs to completion already in place. In addition, the HSE cannot exceed or plan to exceed its approved commitment thresholds. It is concentrating on applying the limited funding available for capital works in the most effective way possible to meet acute care need now and in the future.

County	Acute	Year completed	Hospital	Project Cost (approx. figures)
Cork	Acute	1998/1999	Mercy Hospital, Cork	€18m
Cork	Acute	2002	Cork University Hospital	€15m
Cork	Acute	2004	Cork University Hospital	€27m
Donegal	Acute	2006	Letterkenny General Hospital	€2m
Dublin	Acute	1998	Tallaght Hospital - New Acute Teaching Hospital	€183m
Dublin	Acute	2000	St. Luke's & St. Anne's Hospital	€29m
Dublin	Acute	2000	Mater Hospital	€6m
Dublin	Acute	2001	Purchase of St. Joseph's Hospital, Raheny	€13m
Dublin	Acute	2002	St. James's Hospital	€5m
Dublin	Acute	2002	St. James's Hospital	€8m
Dublin	Acute	2002	Temple Street Children's Hospital	€3m
Dublin	Acute	2003	Connolly Hospital	€107m
Dublin	Acute	2003	Rotunda Hospital Development	€10m
Dublin	Acute	2004	St. Colmcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown	€6m
Dublin	Acute	2004	Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin	€31m
Dublin	Acute	2004	St. Vincent's Hospital	€5m
Dublin	Acute	2005	St. James's Hospital	€9m
Dublin	Acute	2005	St. James's Hospital	€39m
Dublin	Acute	2005	Coombe Women's Hospital	€2m
Dublin	Acute	2005	St. Vincent's University Hospital	€212m
Dublin	Acute	2006	Mater Hospital	€22m
Galway	Acute	2000	University College Hospital Galway	€26m
Galway	Acute	2001	Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe	€8m
Galway	Acute	2002	Purchase of Portiuncula Hospital	€12m
Galway	Acute	2004	University College Hospital Galway	€102m
Kildare	Acute	2003	Naas General Hospital	€75m
Kilkenny	Acute	2002	St. Luke's Kilkenny	€4m
Laois	Acute	2003	Midland Regional Hospital at Portlaoise	€34m

County	Acute	Year completed	Hospital	Project Cost (approx. figures)
Limerick	Acute	1997	Limerick Regional Hospital	€28m
Limerick	Acute	2000	Limerick Regional Hospital	€36m
Limerick	Acute	2005	Limerick Maternity Hospital	€4m
Louth	Acute	1997	Purchase of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital	€7m
Louth	Acute	2004	Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital	€2m
Mayo	Acute	2002	Mayo General Hospital	€47m
Roscommon	Acute	2004	Roscommon Co. Hospital	€7m
Tipperary	Acute	2003	St. Joseph's Hospital Clonmel	€41m
Westmeath	Acute	1997	Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar	€13m

Hospitals Data

328. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide the names and locations of non-teaching hospitals; the services that each provides; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19451/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Primary Care Centres Data

329. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the development of the primary care network; if he will provide details of the primary care centres in operation; the range of services that each provides; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19452/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE has responsibility for the development of Primary Care Networks and the provision, maintenance and operation of Primary Care Centres. Therefore, these matters have been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Question No. 330 answered with Question No. 277.

Mental Health Services Provision

331. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of the promised 251 positions for mental health practitioners in 2014 that have been filled to date; the number of these in the south-east region, and in County Wexford alone; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19464/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service issue this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Mental Health Services Provision

332. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health if he will consider opening an acute mental health unit in Wexford General Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19465/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service issue this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Mental Health Services Provision

333. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health his plans to open the Maryville Mental Health Centre, New Ross, County Wexford, on a 24-7 basis, in view of the fact that it provides a vital service to the community in an area that is severely under-resourced as regards mental health services, but is currently only operational on a five days per week basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19466/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service issue this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Mental Health Services Provision

334. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health his plans, prior to 2011, to establish an acute mental health unit within Wexford General Hospital; if so, the reasons these plans were not followed through; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19467/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service issue this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Procedures

335. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of computerised axial tomography, CT, scans that have taken place in Letterkenny General Hospital, County Donegal, from 1 January to 1 September 2014 and from 1 September 2014 to 1 May 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19468/15]

336. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of outpatient cardiac appointments which have been scheduled in the past 12 months in Letterkenny General Hospital, County Donegal; the number that have been cancelled by the hospital in the same period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19469/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I propose to take Questions Nos. 335 and 336 together.

As these are service matters, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Medical Card Administration

337. **Deputy Seán Conlan** asked the Minister for Health the reason an application for a medical card in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan cannot be processed until such time as her application for disability allowance has been fully processed, despite the fact that the maximum disability allowance payment is €188, which is below the eligibility rate for a medical card; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19483/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

338. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Health the reason a surgical procedure is not being facilitated in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19490/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Medical Records

339. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health the location of the medical records, including the birth registers and the maternity theatre registers, for each year from 1950 to 2007, relating to maternity and obstetric services formerly provided at the Erinville Hospital, County Cork, under arrangements pursuant to maternity services legislation. [19495/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Hospital Waiting Lists

340. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding an appointment for eye surgery at the mid-west regional hospital, County Limerick, in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19496/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

General Practitioner Services

341. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if he will confirm recent reports from the National Association of General Practitioners that 32 rural communities currently have no general practitioner service; if he will provide a breakdown of the communities concerned, and their location; the steps taken by his Department to address this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19509/15]

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 (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Medical Card Applications

342. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will examine and expedite an application for a medical card in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry, in view of the fact she has submitted all relevant information; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19515/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Patient Transport

343. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health the options available to enable a person (details supplied) in County Dublin to travel to and from hospital appointments, given that the person is wheelchair bound, has no family, has no means of transport, and accordingly has missed a number of appointments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19518/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Speech and Language Therapy

344. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if a care plan and course of speech and language therapy will be provided in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 17. [19552/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): 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. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Prescriptions Charges

345. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to reduce the prescription charges for elderly persons, in view of the fact that they have increased from €0.50 to €2.50 under this Government, despite promises to the contrary; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19560/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): Prescription charges are part of a set of measures introduced by Government in recent years to reduce pharmaceutical drugs expenditure. Medical card holders are required to pay a prescription charge of €2.50 per item for medicines and other prescription items supplied to them by community pharmacists, subject to a cap of €25 per month for each person or family. Prescription charges do not apply to children in the care of the Health Service Executive or to methadone supplied to patients participating in the Methadone Treatment Scheme.

There are no plans to amend the prescription charge, however, I am pleased that the prescription charge is frozen at the level set in 2014 as was announced as part of the packet of health measures in Budget 2015.

General Practitioner Services

346. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Health the estimated cost of providing free general practitioner care to the approximately 57,000 recipients of the carer's allowance. [19562/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Government is committed to introducing a universal GP service without fees on a phased basis. The first phase will be for all children aged under 6 years. This service will commence during the summer. In parallel with this, the second phase will extend universal GP care without fees to all persons aged 70 years and over, subject to the passing of the necessary legislation. These measures represent a major step on the way to universal health care. By this summer, approximately 800,000 people in Ireland will benefit from universal access to GP services.

The introduction of a universal GP service constitutes a fundamental element in the Government's health reform programme. The current Government is the first in the history of the State to have committed itself to implementing a universal GP service for the entire population. The principles of universality and equity of access mean that all residents in Ireland should be entitled to access a GP service.

Children under 6 will benefit from a new enhanced service under the proposed GP contract. This will involve age-based preventive checks focused on health and well-being and the prevention of disease. The contract will also cover an agreed cycle of care for children diagnosed with asthma. The costs of the enhanced GP service for all children under 6 years of age will be approximately €67 million.

Previously estimates of costs of providing a universal GP service were made on the basis of the existing scope of the service, rates of payments to GPs and eligibility. At this time, in the absence of a detailed analysis of the make-up of this cohort, it would not be possible to provide a valid estimate in respect of those in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

Health Services

347. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Health when a child (details supplied) in Dublin 3 may receive a diagnosis following his assessment of needs. [19565/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): 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. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

348. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Waterford will be provided with an appointment for surgery at University Hospital Waterford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19567/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Hospital Waiting Lists

349. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of persons waiting for bypass operations, nationally and by county; the average waiting time, nationally and by county; the percentage of patients, nationally and by county, for the past four years, who have died while on the waiting list; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19571/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Services for People with Disabilities

350. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health the issues being dealt with between his Department, the Health Service Executive and Camphill Communities of Ireland; if the funding issue will be resolved; and his plans in this regard. [19581/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Registration of Nurses

351. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite an application for registration with An Bord Altranais, in respect of a person (details supplied) in Scotland who is a qualified nurse starting work in County Kilkenny on 15 June 2015, and who applied for registration on 24 December 2014; and the reason for the delay in processing this application, in view of the fact that all of the information has been submitted. [19583/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I wish to thank the Deputy for the matter raised.

Given that this an operational matter, it is appropriate that it should be dealt with by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). Therefore, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NMBI for attention and direct reply.

If you have not received a reply from the NMBI within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Medical Card Applications

352. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Health when a decision on a medical card application will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19591/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Medical Card Applications

353. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Health when a decision on a medical card application will issue in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19592/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

354. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite an operation at Cork University Hospital in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19599/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the

Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Services for People with Disabilities

355. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health his plans to provide long-term care in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny, in view of the fact the person has been given 28 days notice of the termination of care, due to lack of funding; and if his Department and the Health Service Executive will resolve all of the issues, relative to the person's care at Camphill Community, County Kilkenny, in view of the fact she has lived there for the past 14 years, and any disruption of care at this location will have a negative effect on her health and well being; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19602/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Departmental Funding

356. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide funding for a project (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19603/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): My Department administers a National Lottery Discretionary Fund from which once-off grants are paid to community and voluntary organisations providing a range of health related services. Funding in 2015 amounts to €3.286m.

My Department has received an application for funding from the organisation in question. This is one of a large number of applications currently being assessed by my Department. The organisation will be informed of the outcome of the application as soon as a decision has been made.

Hospital Waiting Lists

357. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Donegal will receive an appointment from Mayo General Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19618/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The scheduling of appointments for patients is a matter for the hospital to which the patient has been referred. Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she should take the matter up with the consultant and the hospital involved. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Accident and Emergency Services Provision

358. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to deliver on promises made to the people of County Roscommon following the closure of the accident and emergency unit there, in view of criticism contained in correspondence from a consultant surgeon at the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19620/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): There have been significant improvements in ambulance services in the Roscommon area since 2011. Currently, three ambulances during the day and two at night provide emergency cover in Roscommon town. In addition, a rapid response vehicle, crewed by an advanced paramedic, provides cover on a 24/7 basis.

It is important to note that the model of ambulance service delivery is changing. The service is moving away from the model of care where services are provided to a local area from a fixed ambulance base located in that area, and moving to a model of strategic deployment. In this context, the general area of Roscommon can be supported from the north by services from Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon, to the east by crews in Longford and Mullingar and to the south from Athlone. Services are now coming on stream at Tuam and Mulranny stations which will enhance coverage across the region of north Galway, west Roscommon and east Mayo.

Refurbishment of the former Garda station at Loughglynn is now completed and discussions are under way in relation to the staffing of this facility. The Loughglynn station will allow for strategic placement of emergency ambulance resources during shifts, to ensure coverage across the region as required.

The Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS), operated from Athlone by the Air Corps and staffed by NAS advanced paramedics, is also providing support to the people of the western region. The EAS provides swift transfers of seriously ill or injured patients to appropriate hospitals. Almost 1,000 missions have been completed since June 2012. Roscommon and Mayo are the two counties which have benefited most from the availability of the EAS.

The Deputy can be assured that I intend to drive further improvements to the ambulance service. In the next few months the NAS will receive the report of an independent capacity review, which, I hope, will provide guidance on the optimum deployment of resources, including deployment in specific geographic locations.

Hospital Appointments Status

359. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a knee operation in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19627/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Services for People with Disabilities

360. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding funding of services for persons with a disability; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19628/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Government is committed to protecting frontline health and personal social services needs for people with disabilities. The Government currently provides funding of approximately €1.5 billion to the Disability Services Programme through the Health Service Executive's National Service Plan for 2015.

The HSE works with voluntary disability service providers to ensure that available resources are used in order to be responsive to the health and personal social services needs of people with a disability.

In 2015, the HSE is seeking to maximise the provision of services within available resources and to maintaining a consistent level to that provided in 2014, by providing the following specialist disability services:

- residential services to around 9,000 people with a disability;
- day services to over 22,000 people with intellectual and physical disabilities;
- respite residential support of 190,000 overnights for people with intellectual and physical disabilities;
- 3.9 million hours of Personal Assistant / Home Support Hours.

Additional funding of €6 million has been allocated in the HSE National Service Plan in 2015 to provide day places for an estimated 1,400 young people finishing school and rehabilitative (life-skills) training. €4m in additional funding has also been allocated in the Plan to deliver an increase in the services for children with disabilities and reduce waiting lists under the

Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18s) Programme.

As there are other issues raised in the details supplied in the Deputy's question that do not come within my remit, it is not appropriate for me to comment on these.

Hospital Services

361. **Deputy Gabrielle McFadden** asked the Minister for Health the progress on developing a consultant community geriatrician and elderly liaison team at Mullingar hospital, County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19634/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Immigration Policy

362. **Deputy Gabrielle McFadden** asked the Minister for Health if consideration will be given to introducing certain waivers for asylum seekers who have a medical card but who have to pay a standard prescription charge of €25 a month while their weekly allowance is just €19 per week; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19635/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The question of exempting asylum seekers living in direct provision from the prescription charge is being examined within the Department.

Health Services Data

363. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the location of the health care records archived library; the institutions whose records are stored in that library; and the way persons can access their medical records stored in that library. [19638/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I understand that the Deputy is referring to the Healthcare Records Archived Library associated with the Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore patient registers, including maternity registers.

As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Hospital Procedures

364. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Health the number of children who have undergone procedures for morbid obesity, including gastric reduction, in public hospitals in each of the past ten years; and the total cost of these procedures in each year. [19640/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to the Deputy directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the mat-

ter with them.

Tobacco Control Measures

365. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware that the international tobacco industry is developing new tobacco-based products, known as heated tobacco cigarettes, that carry the same cancer and other health risks as cigarettes, and that these products are being introduced into a number of European member states; if he has received any representations from tobacco companies on the introduction of these products into the Irish market; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19663/15]

366. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will confirm that the international tobacco industry will not be allowed to evade the regulation of cigarettes with new tobacco products, such as heated tobacco cigarettes; his plans to liaise with the Department of Finance to ensure a co-ordinated Government response to the regulation of heated tobacco cigarettes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19664/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I propose to take Questions Nos. 365 and 366 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, tobacco control has long been a priority in this country. Ireland has been in the forefront of tobacco control legislation in Europe, and ranked second of thirty-four European countries in relation to tobacco control initiatives. Officials in my Department monitor developments in the area on an ongoing basis. Existing and emerging evidence on the potential harms and potential benefits of tobacco products and related items is monitored in order to inform decisions around any future additional regulation in the area.

Products containing tobacco are subject to the provisions of the *Public Health (Tobacco) Acts 2002-2015*, the *Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Act, 1988* and their regulations.

In addition, all tobacco containing products will be subject to the provisions set out in the revised EU Tobacco Products Directive, which has been in force from 20 May 2014. Member States have two years to transpose the new rules into national law. My Department is working in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General to put measures in place to transpose the Directive into Irish law in time to meet the 20 May 2016 deadline.

HSE Staff

367. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, for the end of 2011, the end of 2012, the end of 2013 and the end of 2014 the latest figures available for the number of midwives in each public and voluntary hospital that provides maternity services. [19672/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on the matter. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Perinatal Data

368. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health if he will initiate an independent review of the latest reports of stillbirths following information received from a freedom of information request; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19674/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): While I would welcome the publication of perinatal data by hospital, it must be pointed out that perinatal mortality statistics are complex. Reporting on these rates has been hampered by different definitions of stillbirth both nationally and internationally. In Ireland, four difference agencies are involved in the compilation and reporting of perinatal mortality data. The analysis presented in the *Report of the Chief Medical Officer into Perinatal Deaths in Portlaoise Hospital (February 2014)* showed that there are weaknesses and inconsistencies in perinatal data collection, collation and reporting.

Perinatal death is a rare event in Ireland. Given the small numbers involved the use of perinatal mortality rates by hospital as an indicator of patient safety creates a risk of false reassurance and also can raise false alerts. It is, therefore, important to look at these in conjunction with, for example, confidence intervals per hospital and other methods in order to distinguish between the stability of estimates based on small versus large numbers. Therefore, caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of perinatal data by hospital for the reasons set out.

A number of actions are being taken to address these discrepancies as follows:

- The notification of stillbirths is a mandatory requirement in the Civil Registration Act (2004). This Act was amended in 2014 to make notification of early neonatal deaths mandatory. The General Registration Office is working on the commencement of this.

- In addition the HSE has agreed to progress agreement of definitions and reporting of perinatal statistics in Ireland. This would include systems such as the National Perinatal Reporting System and the National Perinatal Epidemiological Centre.

It should be noted, however, that national statistics on perinatal events are very important in benchmarking with other countries. Irish national perinatal data compare favourably with other OECD Member States which provides a level of reassurance on the quality of maternity services in Ireland.

National perinatal mortality data in respect of 2014 are still being collated and validated and it is not clear at this stage when these data will be ready for publication.

Patient Safety oversight in hospitals must take into account broader activity trends which can provide early warning of safety risks and early identification of safety issues. The Chief Medical Officer's Report identified the need to develop a more accurate and timely alert system. The Chief Medical Officer recommended that all maternity hospitals should develop a *Patient Safety Statement* which would be published and updated monthly and would be used with other available information to risk-rate services and to target quality improvement measures that enhance local ownership and capability. Ideally a *Patient Safety Statement* should be presented and discussed at the senior management team meetings every month, as a standing agenda item.

This should set out trends in relation to activity, interventions, complaints, adverse incidents, serious incidents, transfers, staffing and any other appropriate information from the perspective of patient safety and quality. This should be part of an on-going quality improvement cycle. The Health Service Executive is progressing the CMO's recommendation.

I would like to assure the Deputy that work in on-going to improve the data sources and the quality and safety of maternity units nationally.

Hospital Appointments Status

369. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Dublin will be admitted to St. James's Hospital in Dublin 8 for a hernia repair; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19682/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Drug Rehabilitation Clinics

370. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if the methadone clinic at Mountview Health Centre in Dublin 15 is the same as or separate from the one proposed at 37 Coolmine Industrial Estate in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19694/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Appointments Status

371. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding wrist operations for carpal tunnel syndrome in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 3; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19702/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

HSE Staff

372. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if dedicated Parkinson's disease

nurse specialists will be appointed for County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19714/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Medical Card Eligibility

373. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if Parkinson's disease patients will be automatically entitled to medical cards; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19715/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): In accordance with the Health Act 1970 (as amended), the assessment for a medical card is determined primarily by reference to the means, including the income and expenditure, of the applicant and his or her partner and dependants. There is no entitlement to a medical card for a person with a particular illness or medical condition.

The Deputy will be aware of the publication of the *Report of the Expert Panel on Medical Need for Medical Card Eligibility* and the *Medical Card Process Review* in November 2014. Key findings of the Expert Panel were that it would not be feasible, desirable or ethically justifiable to list medical conditions in priority order for medical card eligibility and that a person's means should remain the main qualifier for a medical card.

However, the Government recognises that the health service needs to be responsive to the circumstances of people with significant medical needs. Following publication of the two reports, in November 2014, the Minister for Health and I announced a series of measures to enhance the operation of the medical card scheme and make it more sensitive to people's needs, especially where serious illness is involved. Where deemed appropriate in particular circumstances, the HSE may exercise discretion and grant a medical card even though an applicant's means exceed the prescribed threshold. Where a person does not qualify for a medical card, they may be provided with a GP Visit Card, appropriate therapy or other community supports or drugs.

The medical card system is now operating in a more sensible and sensitive manner. The HSE is exercising greater discretion, as is evident in the increase in the number of discretionary medical cards in circulation - by over 63% from about 52,000 in mid-2014 to over 85,000 at the end of April this year.

The Long Term Illness (LTI) Scheme was established under Section 59(3) of the Health Act, 1970 (as amended) under which the HSE may make arrangements for the supply without charge of drugs, medicines or medical and surgical appliances to persons suffering from a prescribed disease or disability of a permanent or long-term nature. I can advise the Deputy that Parkinson's Disease is a condition covered under the LTI Scheme.

HSE Staff Training

374. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if there are any regular training

programmes to upskill nurses and staff in the care of Parkinson's disease patients in day care centres, community hospitals, nursing homes and so on; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19716/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I understand that should a specific service need for continuing professional development for nurses be identified, it would be addressed and delivered utilising a collaborative approach involving the registrant, health service provider/employer and educators. Stakeholders include the HSE-Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director, the Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Education and School of Nursing and Midwifery within the higher education sector.

HSE Staff

375. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the expected date by which the Health Service Executive medical workforce planning project (details supplied) will be concluded, and the respective workforce plans published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19717/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Medicinal Products Availability

376. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health with regard to the provision of Suboxone, if he will provide where it will be made available, that is through the Health Service Executive, general practitioners, etc; if legislative changes are necessary; if so, if he will provide the up-to-date position on its introduction; the amount of money that is going to be set aside for its provision; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19728/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): An Expert Group, set up by the Department of Health in 2006, examined the regulatory framework required to facilitate the prescribing, dispensing and supply of buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) and buprenorphine-only products as alternatives to methadone. In 2011, this Group concluded that methadone is the drug of first choice in the treatment of opioid dependency, but that Suboxone may be more appropriate for particular cohorts of clients. An Opioid Substitution Implementation Group was set up by the HSE to recommend the steps that need to be taken to ensure a safe service for the provision of Suboxone. The Group is expected to report back to the Minister for Health with recommendations shortly.

Changes to Regulations made under the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 to 2015 may be required to allow for the wider availability of Suboxone for the treatment of opiate dependence. The Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Act 2015 re-controlled substances which had been controlled by means of Government Order and also re-confirmed regulations made under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 as if they were an Act of the Oireachtas. A second Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Bill is currently being drafted to restore the Government's power to control new drugs and amend a number of other provisions under which regulations are made. It is intended that this second Bill will be enacted before the end of this year, following which it will be possible to amend existing Regulations.

Hospital Appointments Status

377. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when an operation will be provided in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19740/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, 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 particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Health Services

378. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health his views on a matter (detail supplied) regarding the diagnosis of mental illness; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19749/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE is committed to safeguarding vulnerable persons from abuse and a national policy *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* was launched in December 2014. The aim of this policy is to provide a consistent approach to protect persons at risk of abuse across, for example, older people and disability services. This new policy is for all HSE and HSE funded services, and builds upon and incorporates existing policies in this regard. As this policy is implemented in 2015 there will be changes to strengthen Safeguarding and Protection Teams in each Community Healthcare Organisation. Clear procedures are being developed at operational level where concerns arise relating to vulnerable persons.

Therefore, *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* now provides one overarching policy to which all agencies will subscribe and implement in their place of work ensuring:

- a consistent approach to protecting vulnerable people from abuse and neglect;
- all services have a publicly declared 'No Tolerance' approach to any form of abuse;
- a culture which supports that this ethos is promoted.

In addition, the Medical Council is responsible for the regulation of doctors in Ireland. One of its main responsibilities is to protect the public by promoting and ensuring the highest professional standards amongst doctors. If an individual is of the opinion that these standards have been breached, along the lines specified by the Deputy, then they may make a complaint to the Council about an individual doctor on the grounds of professional misconduct. It should also

be noted that it is open to any individual to contact either the HSE or the Gardaí to inform them of any suspicion of a crime of the nature raised, so that a proper investigation may be carried out by relevant agencies.

In the light of the above, I have referred the Deputy's question to the HSE for direct reply, in relation to a more detailed response on the specific operational issues raised as regards the provision of mental health care by the Executive.

Nursing Home Services

379. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he has acknowledged Nursing Homes Ireland's recent public pronouncements (details supplied) that the consistent failure to publish the costs of public nursing home care amounts to a cover-up; if he further acknowledges, in the interest of openness and transparency, that it is incumbent upon the Health Service Executive to publish immediately public nursing home costs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19750/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): It is true that costs for public nursing homes are higher than in the private sector and vary considerably even within the public system. There are valid factors for a difference, in that more complex and highly dependent residents are often catered for by the public system, and conditions of employment and tenure etc. are different too.

It is however, important that public facilities operate as efficiently and economically as possible, and towards that end, the HSE is already engaged in a comprehensive exercise to review and streamline the operation and cost structures of public facilities. The Department of Health will also be conducting a Value for Money Review of public nursing home costs to identify more fully the factors that may be increasing costs and any areas that require correction.

Medical Card Applications

380. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Health whether he is willing to take up an issue with the Health Service Executive in relation to its medical card processes, following an incident where an application was made (details supplied) in County Mayo to the medical card section of the executive and where, subsequently, on refusal of the application, this Deputy's office contacted the executive with a request for a review on behalf of the applicant, on 18 February 2015, and where, on following up on the matter again, this Deputy was informed that the review request had been received, but that the executive had now closed the file, as further information had not been provided, despite the fact that the executive admitted that it had not requested this information from the applicant or this Deputy's office; where now the executive is seeking a new application, despite its mistake; if he will insist on this decision being reconsidered by the executive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19760/15]

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

If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

Respite Care Services Availability

381. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 539 of 15 April 2015, the number of home-based respite hours granted in County Wexford, in 2012, 2013 and 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19775/15]

382. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 539 of 15 April 2015, if the Health Service Executive collects data on the number of respite hours provided in each county every year; the amount of money spent directly on respite services in each county; the number of daytime respite hours provided; the amount of home-based respite, as opposed to centre-based respite, granted; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19776/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 381 and 382 together.

The vision for the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Disability Services Programme is to contribute to the realisation of a society where people with disabilities are supported, as far as possible, to participate to their full potential in economic and social life, and have access to a range of quality personal social supports and services including respite care to enhance their quality of life.

Respite care for children and adults with disabilities is provided by the HSE directly in some instances, or by agencies funded by the HSE to provide services on its behalf. In many instances respite services are part of the overall suite of services provided by voluntary service providers to people with disabilities under their service level agreements with the HSE. The HSE remains committed to working with all voluntary disability service providers to ensure that all of the resources available for specialist disability services, including respite services, are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

The HSE's Social Care Operational Plan for 2015 aims to provide 190,000 overnight stays in centre-based respite services to almost 5,300 people. The HSE is also committed to continuing to explore methods of community respite care as an alternative to centre-based respite care, including advancing the Host Family Support Model.

In relation to the specific queries raised by the Deputy, as these are service issues, they have been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with the HSE.

Respite Care Services Availability

383. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 495 of 21 April 2015, which outlined the introduction of the disability composite template under schedule 3 of the service agreement, if he is satisfied that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure transparency, as regards all aspects of the budget allocation of the Health Service Executive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19777/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

Mental Health Services Provision

384. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Health his plans to instigate a renewal or review of a Vision for Change before 2016; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19780/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): *A Vision for Change* (2006) sets out a comprehensive framework for the development of all mental health services. It recommends, broadly, a move away from the traditional institutional based model of care to a more patient-centred, flexible and community based service, where the need for hospital admission is greatly reduced while still providing in-patient care, as appropriate. This Government has prioritised the reform and resourcing of our mental health services in line with *A Vision for Change*, and has significantly progressed this through the provision of €125 million since 2012, to underpin a range of new services initiatives to meet this widely agreed strategy objective. This sustained investment in mental health since 2012 has resulted in over 1,150 new staff for the sector.

A Vision for Change contained a commitment that it would be reviewed after 7 years. It was decided to give priority to the review of the Mental Health Act 2001, after which consideration would again be given to reviewing *Vision* and establishing independent monitoring arrangements. The Expert Group which I set up to review the Mental Health Act 2001 has now completed its work and I plan to shortly seek Government approval for the drafting of a General Scheme of a Mental Health (Amendment) Bill to incorporate the recommendations of the review in revised legislation.

Preliminary work on the development of a successor policy to *A Vision for Change* is under way and a review will commence as soon as possible.

Hospital Appointments Status

385. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if a hospital appointment may be urgently facilitated in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19792/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The scheduling of appointments for patients is a matter for the hospital to which the patient has been referred. Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she should take the matter up with the consultant and the hospital involved. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact

my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

Departmental Legal Costs

386. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Health the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013 and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20162/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Total legal fees for 2012 and 2013 for the Department are presented in the table. The Department in general, avails of legal services and advice from the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Chief State Solicitor. If there is a particular case that the Deputy requires details for, please contact me again and I will investigate further. I will revert to the deputy with the total legal costs for the Department for 2014 as soon as possible.

Year	Legal Costs
2012	€165,915
2013	€113,370

Northern Ireland Issues

387. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views regarding the increased violence in Northern Ireland and comments made (details supplied) regarding these events not being a positive development; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19146/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): There have been a number of security incidents in Northern Ireland in recent weeks that have put lives at risk. A man was murdered while his neighbours were going to work and to school. There were a number of bomb attacks in the Derry area and a device left in Ardoyne saw the public unable to attend mass in the Holy Cross monastery for the only time since its foundation in 1869.

I am conscious there were also a number of attacks and threats against elected representatives in Northern Ireland, including the deputy First Minister. Such acts are reprehensible at any time, but were particularly sinister in the context of the UK general election campaign.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland, whose officers may possibly have been a target, is investigating recent events. I support the PSNI in its work and encourage anyone with information on the attacks to bring it to the police.

There can be no justification for recourse to violence, which is an affront to the expressed will of the people of this island to build a reconciled and prosperous society true to the vision of the Good Friday Agreement.

I will continue to engage with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and with the Executive parties in our shared endeavour to move Northern Ireland forward. I stay in close and regular contact with Senator Hart, including this week. He has made a very valuable contribution to the negotiations of the Stormont House Agreement and to our collective efforts to ensure its full and faithful implementation.

Northern Ireland Issues

388. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide an update on the Stormont House Agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19153/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): We are now entering an important point in the implementation process of the Stormont House Agreement. A number of target dates over a range of the areas included in the Agreement will arise in the weeks ahead. To achieve these will require a concerted effort and an intensive political investment from the Northern Ireland Executive and from both Governments.

It is important to recall how far we have come already in terms of the collective achievement of getting the Stormont House Agreement over the line in December and the progress made since then in implementing it. Since the start of the year, the two Governments and the NI Executive Parties have held two comprehensive formal review meetings. In February, a report on new priorities for North/South cooperation was agreed at a North South Ministerial Council meeting in Belfast. Officials from Dublin, London and Belfast are preparing the groundwork for legislation to establish the new institutions for dealing with the past; and the Northern Ireland Party Leaders continue to meet regularly to take forward work across the broad areas of responsibility they undertook in Stormont House.

It is disappointing that difficulties have recently arisen around the welfare element of the Stormont House Agreement. The Government is committed to the implementation of the totality of the provisions of the Agreement and it is important to ensure that the developments around the welfare issue do not have a corrosive impact on the wider implementation of the Agreement.

Now that the Westminster elections are over and a new UK Government is in place, there is an opportunity and obligation to refocus our efforts to implement the next phases of the Agreement. I spoke with each of the NI Executive Party leaders in recent days and set out the Irish Government's views in this regard. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that politics delivers and to create a way forward on issues that have been a source of difficulty for far too long.

I will also discuss these issues with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when I meet her later today, following on from our constructive telephone conversation last week. There are challenges ahead, not least on the issue of welfare, but I am confident that working together in good faith the parties in the Executive can deliver the solutions that the people of Northern Ireland expect and deserve.

The next implementation and review meeting will take place in late June, when a six-month progress report will also be published by the two Governments. I will continue to keep this House informed of progress.

Common Security and Defence Policy

389. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade further to Parliamentary Question No. 169 of 30 April 2015, if there are Common Security and Defence Policy measures in North Africa he is opposed to, if proposed by High Representative Moghnerini; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19217/15]

401. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide details of discussions he has had with the Department of Justice and Equality, in relation to the European Union's new proposals regarding the migrant crisis, in particular the one calling for a Chapter 7 United Nations resolution authorising the use of force against traffickers operating out of Libya; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19489/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 389 and 401 together.

Along with the Minister for Justice, I attended a joint Council meeting on 20 April, the outcome of which informed the discussions of Heads of State and Government at the special European Council later that week. That European Council agreed a comprehensive strategy to respond to the humanitarian crisis, which includes tackling the root causes through continued provision of development assistance and supporting conflict resolution and capacity building in source countries in sub-Saharan Africa as well as measures to prevent further loss of life at sea. Ireland is actively participating in follow up discussions at EU level on various strands.

The strategy requires action across a range of Departments and consultation between Departments. One of the commitments agreed by the European Council concerns a possible CSDP mission. My Department has been taking the lead role in respect of this mission. As this will be a military mission, my officials have consulted closely with the Department of Defence. The Minister for Defence and I were both present for the discussion at the Joint Council meeting yesterday.

At the Council meeting Ministers adopted a Council Decision to establish a CSDP Mission, EUNAVFOR MED. The mission will implement its mandate in several phases.

The EU Political and Security Committee, acting under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, will decide on when to make the transition between the different phases, taking into account any applicable UN Security Council Resolution and consent by the coastal states concerned.

In discussions to date Ireland has insisted that the CSDP operation should be carried out in full accordance with international law. We have highlighted the need for appropriate UN Security Council authorization for measures which are not already permitted under international law. We have also placed particular emphasis on ensuring that any vessels assigned to the CSDP operation will be ready and equipped to perform Search and Rescue tasks as necessary.

The Department of Justice and Equality is leading on a number of other aspects of the European Council's comprehensive strategy, but consults with my Department, and with others, as appropriate.

Diplomatic Representation

390. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he requested the European Council, at its meeting in December 2014, to make representations to the Egyptian Government for the release of a person (details supplied), an Irish citizen, who has been designated a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. [15210/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): This issue was not on the agenda at the European Council meeting in December 2014.

I have discussed the matter at senior European level including with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The EU remains supportive of our position, and has expressed this support for our concerns at appropriate opportunities with the Egyptian authorities at a high level including by raising the matter with the Egyptian authorities through the EEAS delegation in Cairo.

It was disappointing that the application for bail made by this individual's lawyers, and sup-

ported by the Irish government, was rejected. An official from our Embassy in Cairo attended the hearing on 26 April, and will attend again at the next scheduled hearing on 3 June. My Department and I will continue to take any and all appropriate action that we believe to be in the best interests of our citizen.

Dublin-Monaghan Bombings

391. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his Department will continue to provide funding for the Justice for the Forgotten group, when it expires in June 2015; and if he will pay special attention to the long-standing issues, such as the lack of communication, in the process of the requests made to British authorities to release files on the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 1974. [19379/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The 41st anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings took place on Sunday, May 17th. The survivors of those terrible attacks, and the families of the victims, are now into the fifth decade of their search for answers. Commemorations took place last Saturday, 16th May, at which the Government was represented by Minister of State Aodhán Ó Ríordáin. I am conscious that anniversaries can be a particularly difficult time for families.

I welcome the continued all-party support for the campaign on behalf of the Dublin-Monaghan families. On Friday last, 15th May, I met with representatives of *Justice for the Forgotten*, which supports victims and survivors, including the Dublin and Monaghan families, to discuss how the Government can best support their efforts. In 2014, Justice for the Forgotten received a grant of €48,000 from my Department’s Reconciliation Fund to assist with its important work.

I understand that *Justice for the Forgotten* has applied for funding during the Reconciliation Fund’s current round of funding. All applications are currently under review and will be assessed according to criteria outlined in the Reconciliation Fund Strategy 2014-2017, which was launched in June 2014. The strategy outlines the priorities for the Reconciliation Fund, ensuring that it supports the Government’s vision of a reconciled Ireland and remains relevant, effective, and efficient in the coming years. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached in respect of all applications in June 2015, and that organisations will be informed of the outcome of their applications accordingly.

The Government fully supports the all-party Dáil motions of July 2008 and May 2011 urging the British Government to allow access by an independent international judicial figure to all original documents in their possession relating to the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. I have raised this issue with the British Government on a number of occasions and have received assurances from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that the British Government would consider afresh how it can respond to the Dáil motions.

Legal Advice

392. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will request the Department of the Taoiseach to address the case of a person (details supplied), in the same way the then Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Abbott, and the British Prime Minister, did to protect the rights of their citizens affected by fraudulent activities in Dubai, and by doing so, attempt to alleviate the suffering and hardship for the persons affected; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19380/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): My Department has been in regular contact with the family at the centre of this case over recent years, both in Dublin and through officials at the Irish Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

Our Embassy in Abu Dhabi has raised the case a number of times, most recently in March, with the UAE authorities. The Office of the Prosecutor has indicated that the competent national authority continues to have a criminal case registered against two persons on charges of fraud and ‘acquisition of capital’. In July 2013 an order was issued for their arrest, but it would appear that this order remains outstanding.

As the criminal case is still ongoing in Dubai, and the question of the enforcement of outstanding foreign arrest orders is strictly a matter for the local authorities, as things stand there is nothing further that the Embassy or Department can do to assist on this matter.

The Department of Foreign Affairs does not have a budget to appoint lawyers or pay for legal costs incurred by citizens involved in legal proceedings abroad. As you will appreciate, given the large numbers of Irish citizens travelling, doing business and entering into contracts overseas, it is simply not possible for my Department to maintain a budget for such legal representation. It would also be inappropriate for us to be in a position of making judgments on the merits of which specific cases we could or could not fund.

The difficulty and financial hardship that the family now find themselves in is clear from the correspondence my Department has received from them, but unfortunately it would appear that there is no further consular assistance that can be offered to them by my Department at the current time. This is a criminal case in the UAE based on a commercial legal dispute. Both criminal cases and commercial legal disputes abroad are subject to local law and legal/settlement proceedings and the Department cannot interfere in those local judicial processes. Similarly, for reasons outlined above, the consular assistance that we can offer to citizens does not include the provision of expert legal advice on foreign disputes, nor financial support to employ legal representation in respect of legal disputes abroad.

I regret to inform the Deputy that, following careful consideration of the case, it is the considered view of the Department that there is no further action that we can take to assist these individuals at this time.

Human Rights Issues

393. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the talks he has held at European Union level on the assassination of three civil society leaders in Colombia in September 2014; his views on the instability and corruption at government level in Colombia which results in that country being a dangerous one in which to be a member of a trade union; his plans to address these very serious issues of human rights in Colombia, and the resultant effects on any future trade deals, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, in empowering corporations, and corruption at government level, in Colombia; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19381/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The promotion and protection of human rights is a core principle of Ireland’s foreign policy and we have prioritised the protection of trades unionists, human rights defenders and others who are in immediate danger. I am concerned at reports of violence against civil society leaders in Colombia, including the cases to which I believe the Deputy refers, involving the murder of community leaders and victims’ rights representatives.

Human rights in Colombia, and in particular the slow pace in the decrease of impunity, are a major concern for the EU and for Ireland and are addressed in detail in the context of the EU-Colombia Human Rights Dialogue. Through this mechanism, which addresses the subject directly with the Colombian authorities at official level, the Union engages in a structured manner across the full range of human rights issues, including as regards human rights defenders and trade unionists, land restitution, environmental issues, and economic crimes. I believe that this policy of engagement, dialogue and scrutiny, which is ongoing, regular and structured, is the best way to promote human rights and the interests of labour in Colombia.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia has pointed out that an end to the longstanding armed conflict - now under negotiation between the government and the main guerrilla organisation in the context of the peace talks in Havana - has the potential to transform Colombia in terms of its level of respect for and enjoyment of human rights. As I noted at the Foreign Affairs Council on 20 April, the peace process in Colombia is potentially one of the most significant advances in conflict resolution the region has seen and we strongly support it.

The Embassy of Ireland at Mexico City is accredited also to Bogotá. The Ambassador and diplomatic staff regularly discuss human rights issues with government interlocutors during their visits to Colombia and meet with international and local civil society organisations working on human rights issues there, including on labour and environmental rights. The Embassy oversees Irish Aid funding in Colombia, which supports civil society organisations, with a focus on the protection of human rights defenders and raising awareness of violations. In addition, Irish Aid provides funding to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, focused on their work in support of human rights in south-west Colombia.

Negotiations on the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership - an international agreement among the EU, the US and Canada - are led by my colleague the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation.

Overseas Development Aid Expenditure

394. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the total contribution by Irish Aid to the Clinton Foundation, and in particular the health access initiative; if he will provide a breakdown on the source of this money, the Irish Government officials who are represented in the Clinton Foundation and the Clinton Health Access Initiative. [19382/15]

395. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the reason Irish Aid money is paid directly through the Clinton Foundation to the health Ministries of Mozambique and Lesotho; and the projects these state Ministries implement, with finance from Irish Aid. [19383/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Sean Sherlock): I propose to take Questions Nos. 394 and 395 together.

Ireland’s Policy for International Development, *One World, One Future*, reiterates our long-standing commitment to strengthening health systems in developing countries, as a critical element in the fight against poverty. Our work in Irish Aid’s key partner countries includes support for the training of health workers to oversee and deliver quality basic services and to increase coverage to reach those most in need. Ireland has also made a strong impact in investing globally, regionally and at national level to help overcome HIV and AIDS and other pandemics including Malaria, Tuberculosis and Ebola.

The Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) has been a valued partner of Irish Aid in this work in two of our partner countries, Mozambique and Lesotho. The Initiative has also been instrumental in re-shaping international pharmaceutical markets to dramatically reduce the cost of life-saving anti-retroviral drugs and diagnostics.

Over the period 2003-2015, Irish Aid has provided a total of over €162 million for the fight against HIV and AIDS in Mozambique and Lesotho, most of it channelled directly through the Ministries of Health in both countries. In the past five years, in the framework of our cooperation with the Clinton Health Access Initiative, €68.2 million has been provided directly to the Ministries of Health in Mozambique and Lesotho and €1.8 million to the Clinton Health Access Initiative for the provision of technical support. As most funding is channelled directly to the two Health Ministries, Ireland is not represented on the boards of the Clinton Foundation or the Clinton Health Access Initiative.

Details of funding in the period 2011 to 2015 are set out in the following table.

Year	Funding to CHAI Mozambique	Funding to Ministry of Health Mozambique	Funding to CHAI Lesotho	Funding to Ministry of Health Lesotho
2011	€295,000	€12,000,000	-	€4,150,000
2012	€200,000	€12,000,000	-	€3,860,600
2013	€250,000	€12,000,000	€343,077	€236,800
2014	€250,000	€12,000,000	€500,000	-
2015	-	€12,000,000	-	-
Totals:	€995,000	€60,000,000	€843,077	€8,247,400

As a result of this work, there has been a marked improvement in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Mozambique. Over 66,000 women are now being treated annually. Over 250,000 people in Mozambique are now receiving HIV treatment, up from less than 2,000 at the end of 2002.

In Lesotho, HIV counselling and testing services have been expanded to almost two-thirds of the population, compared to fewer than one-in-ten people in 2007. Irish Aid has also contributed to the improvement of the health of mothers, children and newborn babies in Lesotho through our support for health centres, the training of nurses and midwives and support for the use of routine vaccines.

Human Rights Issues

396. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if the human rights issues of Honduran people in the Aguan Valley in Honduras have been addressed, as requested by an organisation (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19384/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am aware of the organisation the Deputy mentions and officials from my Department have met with their representative to hear their experiences and concerns as human rights defenders in their part of Honduras. This meeting took place while we were in the process of considering our recommendations to Honduras for their Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council. As a matter of principle, Ireland is always open to, and welcomes consultation with, civil society as part of the UPR process.

Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council in March 2006, Ireland has engaged proactively with the Universal Periodic Review process. This allows for the review of the domestic human rights records of all 193 UN Member States, based on their international human rights obligations. It is aimed at improving the human rights situation on the ground and addressing human rights violations wherever they occur. Any UN Member State can take part in the interactive dialogue, and the process enables UN Member States to raise issues and to make recommendations about the protection and promotion of human rights in the State concerned.

In the case of Honduras, Ireland made two recommendations, on legislation to protect human rights defenders, and to guarantee the protection and the effective access to justice for women who are victims of violence.

Human Rights Issues

397. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views that all aspects of the free trade agreement, with regard to the requirement within the agreement of human rights being monitored, is being adhered to in Colombia; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19385/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): Respect for human rights is an essential element of the EU Free Trade Agreement with Colombia and Peru which contains, in addition, important provisions in the area of labour rights and protection of the environment. The EU-Colombia Human Rights Dialogue is the key mechanism for engagement on human rights issues with Colombia. Through this mechanism, which addresses the subject directly with the Colombian authorities at official level, the Union engages in a structured manner across the full range of human rights issues, including as regards human rights defenders and trade unionists, land restitution, environmental and economic crimes, and the slow pace in the decrease of impunity. I believe that this policy of engagement, dialogue and scrutiny, which is ongoing, regular and structured, is the best way to promote human rights in Colombia.

As regards the related areas of labour rights and the protection of the environment, the provisions of the Free Trade Agreement are a major innovation. In particular, the Agreement establishes a mechanism for oversight and monitoring of the implementation of labour laws involving the active participation by civil society actors, and establishes an obligation of transparency and public accountability regarding initiatives that could have consequences for labour and/or the environment. This process is overseen by a Trade Committee which will review the implementation of all aspects of the Agreement, including labour, environmental, and trade issues. The second annual meeting of the Trade Committee under the EU Colombia Peru Free Trade Agreement will take place in Bogotá next month. Ireland will be represented at that meeting by our Embassy at Mexico City, which is accredited also to Colombia. At the meeting, our representatives will have an opportunity to examine the implementation of the Agreement in detail, and hear the views also of Colombia civil society organisations.

Ireland will continue to engage with the Colombian government on human rights issues both directly, during visits by the Embassy when they meet with Colombian officials, international agencies and civil society organisations engaged in human rights promotion, and through the relevant EU and international mechanisms.

Consular Services Provision

398. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on

concerns for the well-being of an Irish citizen (details supplied) who was arrested in the Philippines in July 2013, given that the person and his family strongly maintain his innocence, and that he was sentenced to 12 years in prison, but is currently out on bail; if his Department is providing the person with consular assistance; and if he has discussed the issue with his Filipino counterpart. [19486/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): My Department is aware of this case and has been providing consular assistance to the citizen and his family since July 2013.

The Embassy of Ireland in Singapore, which is accredited to the Philippines, as well as the Honorary Consulate General in Manila have provided ongoing assistance to this citizen, including providing a list of lawyers; making representations to the prison service on the citizen's welfare after the person was detained; and facilitating the safe retrieval of personal belongings after the person's release on bail.

It is important to bear in mind the role of the Irish Government where citizens are imprisoned abroad. When an Irish citizen is charged with an offence under the law of a foreign country, it is the foreign law that applies and it is the relevant foreign court which decides matters such as bail. As the Deputy will be aware the Irish Government cannot intervene directly in matters before foreign courts.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will continue to provide consular assistance as necessary and to make appropriate representations to the government of the Philippines to request that the citizen's appeal be processed as soon as possible.

Israeli Settlements

399. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware that the Israeli Government has approved the building of 900 new illegal colonial settlement units in east Jerusalem, that this is in complete violation of international law, and that it is exacerbating the huge tension in the region, and is clearly working against a two-state solution; if he will raise concerns with his Israeli counterpart; and in view of continued expansion of illegal settlements, if he will officially recognise the State of Palestine. [19487/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I have very clearly expressed my condemnation of Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territory on a number of occasions, and I have also focused strongly on this issue in discussions at EU level and bilaterally. The issue informed our discussions at the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels yesterday. It is clear that continued settlement expansion is gravely damaging to the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. I will continue to raise this issue. Israeli authorities are in no doubt whatever of our strong views on the issue. The question of recognition of Palestine, or of any state, is an important issue to be considered on its own merits, and not as a punishment or reward for one side or the other.

Cyprus Reunification

400. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware of recent elections in northern Cyprus, and that the newly elected leader, Mr. Mustafa Akinci, has strongly stated that he wants reconciliation, and an agreement on the reunification of Cyprus; if he has spoken to his Cypriot counterpart on the issue; and if he will inform his Cypriot counter-

part of his support for the resumption of peace talks, which begin on 15 May 2015. [19488/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): Ireland fully supports the aim to find a solution that provides for a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus, based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Ireland remains supportive of all efforts to assist in the search for a mutually acceptable settlement to this long-standing problem. In this context, the resumption of the negotiations last Friday between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus is very much to be welcomed. I was pleased to see that President Anastasiades welcomed the choice of Mr Mustafa Akinci as the new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and that Mr Akinci has said that he is eager to bolster an atmosphere of trust between the two communities.

This, I hope, is an encouraging sign for the outcome of the negotiations ahead. As Special Adviser Eide, the UN facilitator, has said, the resumption of talks ‘is a unique opportunity’. I share his hope that it is ‘an opportunity that will be grasped’ and I understand that discussions have begun in an open and constructive way.

I wish both leaders well in their on-going negotiations, and hope that the goodwill expressed on both sides results in a sustainable, peaceful solution.

While I have not yet had the opportunity to discuss the issue directly with my Cypriot colleague, my officials have on-going dialogue with representatives of the Cypriot Government, including through our respective Embassies, and our support for the peace talks is long understood and appreciated.

Question No. 401 answered with Question No. 389.

Good Friday Agreement

402. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his views on plans to scrap the Human Rights Act in the United Kingdom, and the possibility of this breaching the Good Friday Agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19601/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The commitment of Ireland to the promotion and protection of human rights is an underlying principle of Ireland’s foreign policy and is a priority for the Government. Ireland is currently a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council and we pursue our human rights priorities in many international fora. Ireland is a firm supporter of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights system and liaises regularly with the UK in relation to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers’ supervision of states’ implementation of Court judgments. I should note clearly at the outset there is not at this time any legislation before the British Parliament at Westminster to repeal the 1998 UK Human Rights Act. Indeed the new British Government has not yet published its legislative programme for this parliamentary term, although it is expected to do so later this month. In the absence of any detailed proposal it is difficult to speculate on potential consequences. Obviously were any proposal to be made it would have to be carefully analysed. On the broad question of human rights and the Good Friday Agreement, the views of the Government are clear and unchanged. The protection of human rights in Northern Ireland law, predicated on the European Convention of Human Rights, is one of the key principles underpinning the Agreement. As a guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, the Government takes very seriously its responsibility to safeguard its institutions and principles. The fundamental role of human rights in guaranteeing peace and stability in Northern Ireland cannot be taken for granted and must be fully respected. The Good Friday

Agreement is clear that there is an obligation to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law and this is an ongoing obligation.

Placing human rights at the heart of the peace process in Northern Ireland has helped to ensure the participation and trust of all communities. A shared emphasis on human rights and all that this implies is part of what makes the peace process credible and effective. The Government will work closely with the UK Government and with the power-sharing Executive in Belfast to ensure that the protection of human rights remains at the heart of civic life, politics and ongoing societal change in Northern Ireland.

We will follow closely all developments in this regard. I plan to raise this matter with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when I meet her later today.

Human Rights Issues

403. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will support the release of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19809/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am aware of the advocacy work by a number of international NGOs in relation to this difficult case, including by Amnesty International. While we do not interfere in the internal judicial proceedings of other countries, we would of course urge that the case be resolved in accordance with Mexican law. The promotion and protection of human rights is a core principle of Ireland's foreign policy and we have prioritised the protection of trades unionists, human rights defenders and others who are in immediate danger. Our Embassy in Mexico participates actively in the EU-Mexico Human Rights Dialogue, which took place most recently in Mexico City on 15-16 April. In addition to consulting with civil society organisations, EU and Mexican human rights experts discussed a wide range of human rights issues, including challenges relating to the rule of law, the fight against impunity, and human rights defenders. The Embassy also maintains an active dialogue with international and local civil society partners in Mexico, including Amnesty, on a range of development and human rights issues.

Departmental Legal Costs

404. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20161/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): My Department has not incurred any expenditure on legal fees in appealing decisions taken by the High Court for any of the years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Apprenticeship Programmes

405. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Skills as the lead Minister for the Action Plan for Jobs, if she will provide details of all Government agencies that have apprenticeship schemes in place; the number of persons currently enrolled on these; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19264/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The SOLAS apprentice register indicates there are 17 state and semi state bodies, currently employing and supporting 449 apprentices through their apprenticeships. The data requested by the Deputy is set out below.

Employer Name	No of Apprentices
AER LINGUS LTD.	48
DUBLIN AIRPORT AUTHORITY	7
AIR CORPS	4
IRISH NAVAL SERVICES	22
PERMANENT DEFENCE FORCES(ARMY)	61
BORD NA MONA (LEABEG - T’MORE)	25
BUS ATHA CLIATH	31
BUS EIREANN	57
IARNROD EIREANN	24
CORK COUNTY COUNCIL	4
PORT OF CORK	2
ESB	133
HSE WEST, SLIGO LEITRIM MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	2
NATIONAL REHABILITATION HOSPITAL	2
ST JAMES HOSPITAL	3
OPW	22
UCD COLLEGE DUBLIN	2
Grand Total	449

Schools Building Projects Applications

406. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will examine an application in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Kerry for a general purpose room, which will finalise the development project, as per plans submitted to her Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19165/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): As the Deputy is aware the school was approved funding, on a devolved basis, in December 2014 last for the provision of three general classrooms, one resource room and ancillary accommodation to replace existing prefabs. Funding was also provided for the associated prefab removal costs. The school subsequently requested that the project approved would be reviewed to allow the provision of two specialist rooms instead of two general classrooms, as previously agreed. I wish to advise the Deputy that the revised application from the school did not include for a General Purpose room. The revised application is currently under consideration by my Department and a decision will be conveyed to the school, in question, in due course.

Schools Building Projects Status

407. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the Dublin South constituency, the new works sanctioned for schools since 9 March 2011; the funding provided, to date, for such works; the schools that received such funding; the new schools, school buildings and-or school extensions completed from March 2011 to date in 2015; the works currently being undertaken, and works expected to commence within the next 12 months; the position regarding school projects for which sanction has been sought; the current stage in

respect of each such project, and the schools concerned. [19248/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The records maintained by my Department in respect of large scale building projects are retained on a county basis. The first table provides a list of new schools and large scale extensions/refurbishments in Dublin that were completed in the period 2011 to 2014. The five year plan for new schools and large scale extensions was announced in March 2012 and information in respect of these schools is available on my Department’s website and this information is updated on a monthly basis. The most recent updates to the appropriate files are included in the tables numbered 1 to 7. Under the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Framework 2012-2016 announced in November 2011, a total of €1.5 billion funding is assigned to the delivery of new schools and large scale extensions.

Projects to go to construction in 2015 (announced 18-12-2014) updated beginning June 2015

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
1	Carlow	61130H	St Mary's College, Knockbeg	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Bluett & O'Donoghue	John Cuddy & Partners	EDPM	OLM Consultancy
2	Cavan	19608V	Mullagh Central (St Killians) NS, Mullagh	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Kenny Lyons & Associates	Gahan Surveyors	Moylan Consulting Engineers and Project Managers	Hayes Higgins Partnership
3	Clare	17583V	SN Cnoc an Ein, Ennis	Primary	Extension	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design				OPW	Tom McNamara		
4	Clare	70901K	St Anne's Community College	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Thompsons	John Cuddy & Partners	Thomas Garland	Matt O'Mahony & Assoc
5	Clare	81007U	Shannon Comprehensive School, Shannon	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Healy Partnership	Davis Langton Ltd	P Coleman & Assoc	Hayes Higgins Partnership
6	Cork	17103E & 18000W	Carriagwohill Amalgamation, Carriagwohill	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
7	Cork	19851H	Gaelscoil de hÍde, Fermoy	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
8	Cork	19881Q	Gaelscoil Charraig Uí Leighin	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				KOBW	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	Malachy Walsh	JODA
9	Cork	20107G	Gaelscoil Mainistir na Corann, Ionad an Phobail, Mainistir na Corann	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build HKTTT	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
10	Cork	20162O	Sonass, Carrigaline	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				KOBW	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	Malachy Walsh	JODA
11	Cork	20336V	Midleton ET, Market Green, Midleton	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
12	Cork	20440Q	Mallow CNS, Mallow	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build HKTTT	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
13	Cork	68263P	South Suburbs Post-Primary School	Post Primary	New School								
14	Cork	68264R	Carrigaline Post Primary, Carrigaline	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
15	Cork	76273O	Gaelcho-laiste Charraig Uí Leighin	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				KOBW	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	Malachy Walsh	JODA
16	Cork	76333G	Carrigwohill Post-Primary School	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
17	Donegal	20235P	Letterkenny ETNS, Balyliraine Halls, Letterkenny	Primary	New School	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers			
18	Dublin	17961E	SN Lusca, Rush	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	Rogerson Reddon & Associates	Hayes Higgins	Semple and McKillop
19	Dublin	19872P	Caitlin Maude, Tallaght	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
20	Dublin	20168D	Glasnevin Educate Together NS, Church Avenue, Glasnevin, D 9	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				OPW	O'Reilly Hyland Tierney	DBFL Engineers	JV Tierney
21	Dublin	20269J	Scoil Chormaic CNS, Castlelands, Stephenstown, Balbriggan	Primary	New School	linked to 68082L							
22	Dublin	20304I	St Francis of Assisi, Balgriffen Park, Belmayne, D 13	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Downes Associates	Varming Consulting Engineers
23	Dublin	20308Q	Belmayne Educate Together NS, Balgriffen Park, Belmayne, D 13	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Downes Associates	Varming Consulting Engineers
24	Dublin	20334R	Gaelscoil Ros Eo c/o St Maur's GAA, Rush	Primary	New School								
25	Dublin	20384J	Powerstown ETNS, Powerstown Rd, Tyrellstown, D 15	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

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Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
26	Dublin	20394M	Gaelscoil an Chuilinn, Mulhuddart, D 15	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
27	Dublin	20398U	Scoil Niamh, City West Community NS, Tallaght	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team							
28	Dublin	20401G	Stepaside ET, Stepaside	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team							
29	Dublin	20402I	City West ET, Tallaght	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team							
30	Dublin	20411J	Firhouse/Oldbawn ETNS, Tallaght, D 24	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
31	Dublin	20412L	Gaelscoil Oldbawn, Tallaght, D 24	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
32	Dublin	20422O	Scoil Aoife, Tallaght West CNS, D 24	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
33	Dublin	20426W	Scoil Oscar CNS, Lucan	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
34	Dublin	60660I	St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School, St Patrick's Close, D 8	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Quilligan Architects	David J Turner & Associates	Clifton Scannell Emerson Associates	Delap & Waller
35	Dublin	70120F	St. Finian's CC, Swords	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Reddy Architecture	McGahon	Fearon O'Neill Rooney	Hayes Higgins
36	Galway	05754G	SN Creachmhaoil, Craughwell	Primary	Extension	Stage 2a - Developed Design				OPW	McCauls QS	RPS	IN2
37	Galway	17668G	SN Na Bhforbacha, An Spidéal	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Kearns Niall J	Noel J Farrell & Associates	Tobin Patrick J & Co.	Heavey Kenny Associates
38	Galway	19994G	Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh, Knocknacurra	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
39	Galway	20123E	Gaelscoil Riabhach, Loughrea	Primary	New School	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers			
40	Galway	20211B	Claregalway ETNS, Claregalway	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
41	Galway	76233C	Claregalway Community College, Claregalway	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
42	Kildare	20428D	Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha, Kildare	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team				A & D Weichert	Brendan Merry & Partners	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny
43	Kildare	15040T	Mercy Convent Primary School, Naas	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				A & D Weichert	Brendan Merry & Partners	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny
44	Kilkenny	61520U	St Brigid's Girls Secondary School, Callan	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Bluett & O'Donoghue	Carron + Walsh	EDPM	Hayes Higgins
45	Laois	18547W	Faolan Naofa NS, Ballyroan	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action							
46	Leitrim	20212D	Gaelscoil Liatroma, St Mary's GAA, Attyfinlay, Carrickon-Shannon	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team							
47	Limerick	20175A	Limerick ET, Mungret	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
48	Limerick	20181S	Gaelscoil an Raithin, Doo-rad Doyle Road, Garryowen	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - KSN Project Management	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
49	Longford	20083S	Gaelscoil an Longfoirt, Fearann Uí Dhuagain	Primary	New School	Pre Design Team							
50	Louth	17949O	SN Padraig Naofa B, Drogheda	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Cooney Architects	McGahan Surveyors	Denis Williams Consulting	J. V. Tierney & Co.
51	Louth	18635T	SN Tigh An Iubhair, Tenure, Dunleer	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Van Dijk Architects	McGahan Surveyors	Moylan Consulting Engineers & Project Managers	Hayes Higgins M&E
52	Louth	20258E	Gaelscoil an Bhriadán Feasa, Mill Road, Mornington	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Van Dijk Architects	McGahan Surveyors	Hayes Higgins M&E	Seemple and Mc Killop
53	Mayo	20230F	Scoil Phadraig, Westport	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Simon J Kelly	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	RPS Consulting Engineers	Patrick McCaul Environmental Consulting Engineers
54	Mayo	91461C	Ballyhau-nis CS, Ballyhau-nis	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Hamilton Young Law-lor Ellison (Sligo Office)	Colm D'Arcy & Co.	Punch. Michael & Partners	Mr Edward Heavey
55	Meath	20082Q	Gaelscoil Tulach na nÓg, Dunboyne	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
56	Meath	20396Q	Ash-bourne ETNS, Ash-bourne	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

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Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
57	Meath	72010L	Beaufort Community College, Trim Road, Navan	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Opperman	McGahon	Malone O'Regan	McCaul's
58	Offaly	18057F	Scoil Mhuire, Tullamore, Co Offaly	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O Hora Associates	M J Turley & Associates	MRG consulting Engineers	Noel Lawlor Building Services and Energy Consulting
59	Offaly	20189C	Tullamore ETNS, Collins Lane, Tullamore	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
60	Roscommon	18395C	SN Cluain Na Cille, Clonakilla	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				John P Delaney Architects	McCauls	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny
61	Tipperary	16276H	Carrig NS, Nenagh	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Denis Byrne Architects	John J Casey & Company	Martin Peters Associates Ltd, T/A MPA Consulting Engineers	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny
62	Tipperary	18435L	Air Hill Convent, Roscrea	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McCarthy O Hora Associates	Lawlor & Partners	Martin Peters Associates Ltd, T/A MPA Consulting Engineers	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny
63	Waterford	18681D	Christ Church NS, Lower Newtown, Waterford City	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				C.J. Falconer	Leonard C.Healy & Associates	Malone O Regan	Horizon Consulting Engineers Ltd
64	Waterford	19885B	Gaelscoil Philip Barún, Tramore	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				DBH Architects	Nolan Construction Consultants	EDPM	Matt O'Mahony
65	Westmeath	17327D	Curraghmore NS, Mullingar	Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Gilroy McMahon	MJ Turley & Associates	Downes Associates	SNC Engineering
66	Westmeath	20188J	Mullingar ETNS, Rathgowan	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Dept. Education and Skills	McCauls	ORS Consulting Engineers	
67	Wexford	08221J	St Senans NS, Enniscorthy	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Conroy Architects			
68	Wexford	17450C	SN Mhaodhoig, Pulfour, Fethard-on-Sea, New Ross	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Duggan Mary & Partners	Mac-Minn O'Reilly Mahon Partnership	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny	Matt O'Mahony
69	Wexford	19240B	St Patrick's Special School, Bohreen Hill, Enniscorthy	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Dept. Education and Skills	Turley MJ	Garland Thomas & Partners	Semple and Mc Killop
70	Wicklow	20178G	Wicklow ETNS, Marine House, The Murrrough, Wicklow	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers			

Ongoing Projects from 2014 - updated beginning June 2015

Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
1	Carlow	11135K	St Mary's National School, Bagnelstown	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 4 - Construction	John Somers Construction Ltd	16/06/2014	12	Hamilton Young Architects	HKTT	Bowe Consulting Engineers	Ronan Meally Consulting Engineers
2	Carlow	91356F	Tullow CS, The Mullawn, Tullow	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart Tracey JV	06/03/2014	18	Simon J Kelly	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyer Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
3	Cavan	16083T	Virginia Mixed NS (St Marys), Virginia	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Brendan Sammon (Aughnasheelin) Ltd	23/06/2014	12	Samuel Stephens Architects	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	DBFL	BDP
4	Cavan	70380I	Breifne College, Cootehill Road, Cavan Town	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Quilligan Architects	McGahon Surveyors	McKenna Pearce	Semple & McKillop
5	Clare	62020F	St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	15	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop
6	Cork	13234W	Cloughduv NS, Cloughduv, Crookstown	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	10	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
7	Cork	13828F	Douglas BNS, Douglas	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Reddy O Riordan Staehli Architects	Brendan Merry & Partners	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Matt O'Mahoney & Partners
8	Cork	14052V/17087J	Kanturk BNS & SN an Chlochair, Kanturk	Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				OPW	Tom McNamara	PHM Consulting	OPW
9	Cork	16271U	Watergrasshill NS, Watergrasshill	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	14	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
10	Cork	17848I	SN Mhuire, Glenville	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 4 - Construction	Tom O'Brien Construction Ltd	15/09/2014	10	MRG Consulting	HKTT	Mott McDonald	EDC Engineering
11	Cork	18786R	Scoil Iosagáin, Farranree	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Murphy & O'Sullivan Ltd	09/04/2014	12	Coady Partnership	John J Casey & Co.	Downes Associates	N.J O'Gorman & Associates
12	Cork	19993E	Gaelscoil An Ghort Alainn, Aibinne Murmont, Gort Alainn	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Mahoney Architecture	Lawlor & Partners	Malone O'Regan & McGillacuddy	Mott MacDonald
13	Cork	62360G	CBS, Castleredmond, Middleton	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	20	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
14	Cork	62490T	Skibbereen CS	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	17	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop
15	Cork	62640M	St Angela's Secondary School, St Patrick's Hill	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	L & M Keating Ltd	10/03/2014	20	O'Donnell & Tuomey	John J. Casey & Company	Arup Consulting Engineers	Malachy Walsh & Partners
16	Cork	70990M	Coláiste an Chraoibhin, Duntaheen Rd, Fermoy	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Architects	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	PUNCH	Matt O'Mahony
17	Cork	71020G	Davis College, Summerhill, Mallow	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Wilson Arch	Kane Kavanagh Crowe	Horgan Lynch	Matt O'Mahony
18	Cork	71050P	St Colman's Community College, Youghal Rd, Middleton	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	ARUP Consulting	BDP

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Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
19	Cork	76064F	Glanmire Community College, Glanmire	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Purcell Construction	28/10/2014	15	Wilson Arch	Davis Langdon	JODA	JODA
20	Cork	76067L	Colaiste Mhuire, Buttevant	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	K&J Townmore	21/07/2014	17	KOBW Arch	Michael Barrett	Malone O'Regan	Matt O'Mahony
21	Cork	91499E	Kinsale CS, Kinsale	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Thompson Architects	Healy Kelly Turner & Townsend	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Mr Tom Semple, Semple & Mc Killop
22	Donegal	20150H	Holy Family National School, Carrickboy, Ballyshannon	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Dorrian Construction Ltd	14/04/2014	12	McGinley Doherty Deery	McGahon Surveyors	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	Gillespie & Cummings
23	Donegal	71230R	Deele College, Raphoe, Lifford	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Glebe Builders	12/01/2015	12	Halligan Brady	Albert Strain	Taylor & Boyd	Patrick McCaul Consultant Eng'
24	Dublin	12014D	St. Andrew's NS, Lucan	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Townmore Construction	19/08/2014	13	OPW	HKTT	OPW	OPW
25	Dublin	13217W	Holy Family NS, Rathcoole	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	17/11/2014	15	Mc-Cullough Mulvin Architects	Rogerson Reddan	Hayes Higgins	BDP
26	Dublin	13447Q	Scoil Mhuire, Lucan	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				John Martin Morris	John McK-inney	ONCE Civil & Structural	White Young Green
27	Dublin	16461C	Caislean Nua Li-amhna NS, Newcastle Lyons	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	ABM Design and Build	25/07/2014	12	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
28	Dublin	16567S/17279S	St Brigid's Convent NS & Scoil Mhuire NS, Haddington Road, D.4	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Coady Partnership	John J Casey & Co.	Downes Associates	N.J O'Gorman & Associates
29	Dublin	17914S	St Oliver Plunkett, Malahide	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Whelan Corcoran Smith	Kerrigan Shannon Newman	Doyle E J and Associates	McCaule Patrick
30	Dublin	18451J	Scoil Lorcain, Cearnóg Eaton, Baile na Manach	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Manley Construction Ltd	17/09/2014	24	Smith & Kennedy Architects	Brendan Merry & Partners	Michael Punch & Partners	JAK Consulting Engineers
31	Dublin	19355S	Ballyowen Meadows Special School, Beechpark, Stillorgan	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Duffy Gaffney Partnership	Horgan Lynch	Callaghan Engineering
32	Dublin	19624T	SN Caitriona NS, Kenure, Rush	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
33	Dublin	19727G	St Mary's Central NS, Belmont Avenue, Donnybrook, D4	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Donal Walsh & Associates	Basil Conroy & Co	EDPM	Abbott & Partners
34	Dublin	19819L	St. Laurence O'Tooles Special School, Seville Place, D1.	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Sean Harrington	McGahon Surveyors	Michael Punch & Partners	Delap & Waller

Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
35	Dublin	20012S	Griffith Barracks Educate Together NS, SCR, D 8	Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				OPW	Duffy Gaffney Partnership	DBFL	JV Tierney
36	Dublin	20015B	Gaelscoil Bhalla Munna, 187 Bóthar Choultraí, Baile Munna, BAC 9	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Coady Partnership Architects	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny	OLM Consultancy
37	Dublin	20028K	Setanta Special School, Beechpark, Stillorgan	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Duffy Gaffney Surveyors	Horgan Lynch	Callaghan Engineering
38	Dublin	20047O	Gaelscoil Bharra, Naomh Fionnbarra CLG, Ascal an Fhasaigh, An Chabhrach	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Michael Barrett Partnership	Downes Associates	Mr David Brennan	RPS Consulting Engineers
39	Dublin	20166W	Griffen Valley ETNS, Griffen Glen Boulevard, Lucan	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	04/02/2014	13	NMA Architects	Aecom	Nicholas O'Dwyer Consultant Eng ^r	Callaghan Engineering
40	Dublin	20425U	GS Sliabh Rua, Stepaside	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	27/05/2014	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
41	Dublin	60092K	Clonkeen College, Clonkeen Rd, Blackrock	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				O'Keefe Architects	Rogerson Reddan Associates	Horgan Lynch partnership	JAK Engineers
42	Dublin	60341P	Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	Nicholas O'Dwyer & Partners	J.V. Tierney & Co
43	Dublin	68082L	Colaiste Ghlór na Mara, Balbriggan/Stephinstown,	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	ARUP Consulting	BDP
44	Dublin	68083N	Mulhuddart Secondary School	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McCarthy O'Hara Architects	McGahon Surveyors	Thomas Garland & Partners	Matt Mahoney Associates
45	Dublin	68101M	Hansfield Educate Together Post-Primary School, Dublin 15.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	10/11/2014	18	Todd Architects	Bruce Shaw Surveyors	Homan O'Brien	Malone O'Regan
46	Dublin	76062B	Castleknock Community College	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	26/03/2014	15	A & D Weichert	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Lee McCullough & Partners	OLM Consultancy
47	Dublin	76129H	Ardgillan Community College, Balbriggan	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Purcell Construction Ltd	01/07/2013	18	Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects	Bruce Shaw Surveyors	DBFL	Mastercad T/A Noel Lawler Consulting Engineers
48	Dublin	76130P	Luttrellstown CC, c/o Institute of Horology, Mill Rd, Blanchardstown (Phase 2)	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Coady Partnership Architects	McGahon Surveyors	Downes Associates	Varming Consulting Engineers

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Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
49	Dublin	76152C	Clonburris Post-Primary School, Clonburris, Lucan,	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	31/03/2014	18	Mc-Cullough Mulvin	Brendan Merry	Fearon O'Neill Rooney	Hayes Higgins
50	Galway	12706J	SN Sailearna, Indreabhán	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Hamilton Young Architects	Peter F Costello & Partners	William Johnson & Associates	Heavy Kenny Associates
51	Galway	18089S	Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Oranmore	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	John McNamara & Sons Ltd	10/02/2014	12	Simon J Kelly	Davis Langdon	Malone O Regan	Semple & McKillop
52	Galway	20000L	Galway Educate Together NS, Thomas Hynes Road, Newcastle	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
53	Galway	71330V	Coláiste na Coiribe, Bóthar Thuama	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart Tracey JV	21/07/2014	12	Coady Architects	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Harewood Malone O'Regan	Malachy Walsh
54	Galway	91412M	Scoil Phobail, Clifden	Post Primary	Replacement School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				De Blacam & Meagher	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
55	Galway	63070C	St Raphaels College, Loughrea	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McCarthy O'Hara Architects	Carron & Walsh Quantity Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Hayes Higgins
56	Galway	63090I	Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Coolsivna Construction Group Ltd	06/08/2014	18	OKM Architects	McCauls	Tobin Consulting Engineers	Heavy Kenny Associates
57	Kerry	16898S	Blennerville NS, Blennerville	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sheaconn Construction Ltd	10/11/2014	12	Michael Williams & Associates	Declan O'Sullivan Quantity Surveyor	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Malachy Walsh & Partners
58	Kerry	20229U	Nagle Rice NS, Milltown, Killarney	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	14	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
59	Kerry	61410N	Presentation Secondary School, Milltown, Killarney	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	20	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
60	Kildare	09414C	St Laurence's National School, Crookstown	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 4 - Construction	Purcell Construction Ltd	26/03/2014	13	Todd Architects	MacGinn O'Reilly Mahon	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	MacArdle McSweeney
61	Kildare	11893G	St David's NS, Piper's Hill, Naas	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	K&J Townmore	22/10/2014	9	MCOH	MJ Turley	D O'Keeffe	J Geaney
62	Kildare	15957D	Rathangan Boys' NS, Rathangan	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	M.J Turley & Associates	PHM Consulting	T3 Partnership Ltd
63	Kildare	19675N	St Brigid's NS, Kilcullen	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart Tracey JV	06/03/2014	14	Simon J Kelly	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyer Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
64	Kildare	19797E	Scoil Naisiunta Bhríde (G), Prosperous Rd, Clane	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart Tracey JV	06/03/2014	18	Simon J Kelly	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyer Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
65	Kildare	19995I	North Kildare Educate Together NS, Celbridge	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart Tracey JV	06/03/2014	12	Simon J Kelly	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyer Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
66	Kildare	20257C	Scoil Naomh Padraig, Celbridge	Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS	Semple McKillop

Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
67	Kildare	20403K	Kildare ETNS, Kildare Town.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Glasgiven McAvoy JV Ltd	10/11/2014	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
68	Kildare	70680U	St Conleth's Voc School, Station Rd, Newbridge	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				MCOH	KSN	D O'Brien & D O'Keeffe	J Geaney
69	Kildare	70700A	Maynooth PP, Moyglare Rd, Maynooth	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				MCOH	MJ Turley	ARUP	Matt O'Mahony
70	Kildare	76193Q	New Maynooth Post Primary School	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				MCOH	MJ Turley	ARUP	Matt O'Mahony
71	Kildare	N/A	Celbridge PP	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS	Seamle Mc Killop
72	Kilkenny	76082H	Abbey Community College, Abbeyroad, Ferrybank	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Townmore Construction	13/04/2015	13	Sheridan & Tierney	Austin Reddy	MPA/EDPM	Mastercad
73	Laois	19747M	Scoil Bhride, Knockmay, Portlaoise	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Lawlor & Partners	O'Brien & O'Keeffe Associates	Homan Obrien & Associates
74	Laois	20270R	Portlaoise amalgamation, (St Paul's, Sacred Heart & Scoil Mhuire) Portlaoise Rd, Portlaoise	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	28/10/2014	15	McCarthy O'Hora	Healy Kelly Turner Townsend	Hayes Higgins	Malone Engineering
75	Limerick	20184B	Galvone NS/South-hill JS Amalgamation, Kennedy Park, Limerick City	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	07/03/2014	15	KOBW Arch	KMCS	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins
76	Limerick	20193C	Scoil Mocheallóg, Kilmallock	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				O'Donnell & Tuomey	Lawlor & Partners	Thomas Garland & Partners	Heavey Kenny Associates
77	Limerick	71840V	Coláiste Chiarain, Croom	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Healy Partnership	Davis Langdon	DBFL	JODA
78	Limerick	76070A	Coláiste Iosaf, Kilmallock	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Healy Partnership	John Cuddy & Partner	PUNCH	Overy & Associates
79	Longford	19429V	St Christopher's Special School, Battery Rd, Longford	Special School	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O'Hora Associates	Eamon Traynor	Hayes Higgins Kilkenny	Delap & Waller
80	Longford	20124G	Edgeworthstown NS	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	P.J. McLoughlin & Sons Ltd	28/05/2013	18	Kenny Lyons & Associates	Seamus Fagan & Associates	O'Keeffe Dermot	Burke Morrison
81	Louth	17195M	CBS Primary, Chapel Street, Dundalk	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				EML Architects	McGahon Surveyors	McMahon & Associates	Hayes Higgins
82	Louth	19479N	Rathmullan National Schools (St Johns & St Pauls), Drogheda	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 4 - Construction	Felix O Hare & Co. Ltd	28/10/2014	32	Coady Partnership	McGahon Surveyors	Malone O'Regan	BDP
83	Louth	19673J	St Joseph's NS, Avenue Road, Dundalk	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Kilcawley Building & Civil Engineering (Sligo) Ltd	02/03/2015		Coady Partnership	McGahon Surveyors	DBFL	Varming Consulting

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Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
84	Louth	20171P	Ar-dee Educate Together, Dundalk Road, Ardee	Primary	New School	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design							
85	Louth	63840C	St. Joseph's CBS, New-foundwell Rd, Drogheda	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	04/02/2014	14	NMA Architects	Aecom	Nicholas O'Dwyer Consultant Eng'	Callaghan Engineering
86	Louth	63890R	St Mary's College, Dundalk	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	16	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop
87	Louth	71780G	Scoil Ui Mhuiri, Barn Rd, Dunleer	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McGarry Ni Eanaigh	Austin Reddy	RPS	Varming Consultant Engineers
88	Louth	76195U	Cú Culainn Community College, Dundalk	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Newenham Mulligan & Associates	McGahan Surveyors	Malone O'Regan	Homan O'Brien
89	Louth	91573N	Ballymakenny College, Drogheda	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	O'Hare McGovern	28/02/2014	20	Coady Architects	Austin Reddy	DBFL	BDP
90	Mayo	64570E	Our Lady's Secondary School Belmullet	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Kilcawley Building & Civil Engineering (Sligo) Ltd	30/07/2013	18	Taylor Partnership Architects	McCauls	Concannon Healy Hefernan	Heavy Kenny Associates
91	Meath	02905J	SN Naomh Padraig, Enfield	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	21/08/2014	12	Opperman Associates	Sean McCann	Malachi Cullen Partners	SNC Engineering
92	Meath	17623H	Scoil Náisiunta Ui Gramhna, O'Growney St., Athboy	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Van Dijk Architects	Carron & Walsh	RPS Engineers	JAK Consulting
93	Meath	17705J	SN Cros Ban, Whitecross, Julianstown	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Gilroy McMahon	Brendan Merry & Partners	Hayes Higgins	BDP Dublin
94	Meath	17839H	SN Bheinn Naofa (B), Duleek	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	04/02/2014	14	NMA Architects	Aecom	Nicholas O'Dwyer Consultant Eng'	Callaghan Engineering
95	Meath	17840P	SN Bheinn Naofa (G), Duleek	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	04/02/2014	14	NMA Architects	Aecom	Nicholas O'Dwyer Consultant Eng'	Callaghan Engineering
96	Meath	20017F	Scoil an Spioraid Naomh, Laytown	Primary	New School	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design				Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
97	Meath	20164S	Navan Educate Together NS, Commons Rd, Navan	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatigan	04/02/2014	13	NMA Architects	Aecom	Nicholas O'Dwyer Consultant Eng'	Callaghan Engineering
98	Meath	20382F	Gaelscoil Na Mi, c/o Donaghmore Ashbourne GAA, Ashbourne	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
99	Meath	71950F	St Peter's College, Dunboyne	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Ann Blackwell	Fergal Coughlan	Hanley Pepper	OLM
100	Meath	71970L	St Fintina's PP School, Longwood, Enfield	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				MCOH	McGahan	DBFL	BDP
101	Meath	76088T	Ratoath Community College, Jamestown, Ratoath	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McGarry Ni Eanaigh	Fergal Coughlan	Hayes Higgins	Semple & McKillop

Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
102	Meath	76196W	New Post-Primary School, Ashbourne	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
103	Meath	91508C	Boyne Community School, Trim	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	C.F. Hoey Construction Ltd	12/09/2014	10	McKevitt Architects	JMQS	Doherty Finnegan Kelly	Burke Morrison
104	Monaghan	07751K	Monaghan Model School, Monaghan	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Francis Haughey Building & Civil Engineering Contractors	09/04/2014	12	Sean Harrington	McGahon Surveyors	CS Pringle	Semple & McKillop
105	Monaghan	72190N	Ardcoil Lorgan, Castleblayney	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson	Jan-15	18	Mahoney Architecture	Bruce Shaw	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Varmings
106	Offaly	20267F	Scoil Bride, Carrick Rd, Edenderry	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	06/01/2014	13	OPW	HKTT	OPW	OPW
107	Offaly	72560U	Tullamore College, Riverside, Tullamore	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Construction Ireland Ltd	01/09/2014	18	Butler Moffat	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	Hayes Higgins	BDP
108	Tipperary	65240L	Scoil Mhuire Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry, Thurles	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Kilcawley Building & Civil Engineering (Sligo) Ltd	04/07/2013	18	Bluett & O'Donoghue	McGarry Associates	Hayes Higgins	PBM Ltd
109	Tipperary	65440T	Our Lady's Secondary School, Templemore	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Duggan Brothers (Contractors) Ltd	04/09/2014	15	RKD Architects	Nollag MacCarthy	Hayes Higgins	Noel Lawlor
110	Tipperary	72400B	Comeragh CC, Carrick-on-Suir	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	15	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop
111	Waterford	20050D	Gaelscoil na Deise, Grace Dieu Road, Waterford	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd			Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
112	Waterford	20160K	Waterford Educate Together NS	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd			Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
113	Westmeath	17932U	Odhran Naofa NS, Slanemore, Mullingar	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Rathcorbally Construction Ltd	28/06/2014	12	John Madden & Associates	Nolan Construction	John Madden & Associates	John Madden & Associates
114	Westmeath	18640M	Naomh Iosef NS, Rath Guaire, Killucan	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	22/09/2014	15	Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	O'Connor Sutton Cronin	Douglas Carroll
115	Westmeath	18864L	Coosan NS, Castlequarter, Coosan, Athlone	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Department of Education and Skills	Brendan Merry & Partners	Hayes Higgins	BDP
116	Wexford	12372G 16741I 17457Q	Michael Street NS, Scoil na Mbraithre, Nmh Ioseph N.S., New Ross	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	13/04/2015	15	Newham Mulligan	HKTT	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Matt O'Mahoney & Associates

Questions - Written Answers

Project No	County	Roll No	School	Sector	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (in months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
117	Wexford	17217T/63640R	Scoil na mBraithre and CBS Thomas St., Wexford Town	Primary & Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				KBOW	D.L Martin & Partners	Malone O'Regan	N.J O'Gorman & Associates
118	Wexford	17913Q	SN Mhuire, Barntown	Primary	Replacement School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Mythen Construction Ltd	06/03/2014	12	Thompson Architects	Michael G. Mahon & Co.	Hayes Higgins	JAK
119	Wexford	20003R	St Aidan's Parish School, Enniscorthy	Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	01/09/2014	18	Conroy Architects	MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon	Hayes Higgins	MacArdle McSweeney
120	Wexford	71600B	Coláiste Abbain, Enniscorthy	Post Primary	Extension / Refurbishment	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	22/09/2014	15	Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	O'Connor Sutton Cronin	Douglas Carroll
121	Wicklow	19522L	St. Catherine's Special School, Newcastle	Primary	New School					Fleming John	Hogan, Joseph C.	JP Byrne and Partners Ltd	Jerry Geaney Building Services Ltd
122	Wicklow	20080M	Gaelscoil an tInbhir Mhoir, Fernbank Park, Cemetery Rd, An tInbhear Mhoir	Primary	New School	Pre Design Stage							
123	Wicklow	20208N	St Joseph's & St Ernan's, Wicklow Town	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Partnership	Henley Kavanagh McGowan Surveyors	Clifton Scannell Emerson	MacArdle McSweeney Associates
124	Wicklow	61790D	St Brendan's College, Bray	Post Primary	Replacement School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	16/07/2014	15	Smith & Kennedy Architects	O'Reilly Hyland Tierney	Nicholas O'Dwyer & Partners	Varming Consulting Engineers
125	Wicklow	68081J	Temple Carrig Secondary School, Greystones	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	12/05/2013	15	McCarthy O'Hara	McGahon Surveyors	Thomas Garland	Matt O'Mahoney & Associates
126	Wicklow	70740M	Arklow Community College, Coolgreaney Rd, Arklow	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	22/07/2014	18	Reddy Associates	Healy Kelly & Partners	JP Byrne	BDP

Projects to go to construction in 2014 (announced 29 November 2013) Current Status updated beginning June 2015

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
1	Carlow	91356F	Tullow CS, The Mullawn, Tullow, Co Carlow	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart-Tracey JV	06/03/2014	18	Simon J Kelly & Partners Ltd	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyers	Callaghan Engineering
2	Cavan	70380I	Breifne College, Cootehill Road, Cavan Town	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Quilligan Architects	McGahon Surveyors	McKenna Pearce	Semple McKillop
3	Clare	62020F	St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla, Co Clare	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	15	Miullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
4	Cork	13234W	Cloughduv NS, Cloughduv, Crookstown, Co Cork	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	9	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
5	Cork	16271U	Watergrasshill NS, Watergrasshill, Co Cork	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	13	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
6	Dublin	16461C	Caislean Nua Li-amhna NS, Newcastle Lyons, Dublin Sth	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	ABM Design and Build	25/07/2014	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
7	Cork	62360G	CBS, Castleredmond, Middleton, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	20	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
8	Cork	62640M	St Angela's Secondary School, St Patrick's Hill, Cork City	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	L & M Keating Ltd	10/03/2014	20	O'Donnell & Tuomey	John J. Casey & Company	Arup Consulting Engineers	Malachy Walsh & Partners
9	Cork	62690T	Skibbereen CS, Co Cork	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	17	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Seemple Mc Killop
10	Cork	70990M	Colaiste an Chraoibhin, Duntahen Rd, Fermoy, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Partnership	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	PUNCH Eng.	Matt O'Mahony & Assoc.
11	Cork	71020G	Davis College, Summerhill, Mallow, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Wilson Arch	Kane Kavanagh Crowe	Horgan Lynch	Matt O'Mahony & Assoc.
12	Cork	71050P	St Colman's Community College, Youghal Rd, Middleton, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Healy Partners Arch.	M Barrett partnership	JODA engineering	Malachy Walsh & Partners
13	Cork	76064F	Glanmire Community College, Glanmire, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Purcell Construction.	28/10/2014	14	Wilson Arch	Davis Langdon Ltd.	JODA engineering	JODA Engineering
14	Cork	76067L	Colaiste Mhuire, Buttevant, Co Cork	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	K&J Townmore Const.	21/07/2014	17	KOBW arch.	Michael Barrett Partnership	Malone O'Regan Cons.	Matt O'Mahony & Assoc.
15	Cork	91499E	Kinsale CS, Kinsale, Co Cork	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Thompsons Architects & Designers	HKTT	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Seemple & McKillop
16	Donegal	71230R	Deele College, Raphoe, Lifford, Co Donegal	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Halligan Brady	Albert Strain	Taylor & Boyd	Patrick McCaul
17	Galway	20000L	Galway Educate Together NS, Thomas Hynes Road, Newcastle, Galway City	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
18	Dublin	17055T	Naomh Mhuire NS, Saggart, Co Dublin	Primary	New School	Site acquisition ongoing				n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
19	Dublin	17914S	St Oliver Plunkett, Malahide, Co Dublin	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				WCA Architects	Kerrigan, Sheanon, Newman Associates	Patrick McCaul Engineers	Eamon Doyle Associates

Questions - Written Answers

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
20	Dublin	19355S	Ballyowen Meadows Special School, Beechpark, Stillorgan, Co Dublin	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Duffy Gafney Partnership	Horgan Lynch Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
21	Dublin	20012S	Griffith Barracks Educate Together NS, South Circular Rd, Dublin 8	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				OPW	Duffy Gafney Partnership	DBFL	J.V Tierney
22	Dublin	20015B	Gaelscoil Bhalla Munna, 187 Bóthar Choultraí, Baile Munna, BAC 9	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Coady Partnership Architects	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Hayes Higgins	Replacement exercise in progress
23	Dublin	20028K	Setanta Special School, Beechpark, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin	Special School	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Duffy Gafney Partnership	Horgan Lynch Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
24	Dublin	20047O	Gaelscoil Bharra, Naomh Fionnbarra CLG, Ascal an Fha-saigh, An Chabhrach	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				DoES in-house Architect	Michael Barrett Partnership	Downes Associates	BDP
25	Dublin	20166W	Griffen Valley ETNS, Griffen Glen Boulevard, Lucan, Co Dublin	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	04/02/2014	13	Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
26	Cork	20354A	Cara Special School, c/o Brothers of Charity, Administrative centre, Lota, Glanmire, Co Cork	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	Western Building Systems	20/12/2013	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
27	Dublin	60092K	Clonkeen College, Clonkeen Rd, Blackrock, Co. Dublin	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				O'Keeffe Architects	Rogerson Reddan Associates	Horgan Lynch partnership	JAK Engineers
28	Dublin	18451J	Scoil Lorcain, Cearnóg Eaton, Baile na Manach, Co Átha Cliath	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Manley Construction Ltd	17/09/2014	24	Smith & Kennedy Architects	Brendan Merry & Partners	Michael Punch & Partners	JAK Consulting Engineers
29	Dublin	20425U	GS Sliabh Rua, Ste-paside, Co Dublin	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	Western Building Systems	27/05/2014	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
30	Galway	19998O	Gaelscoil de hÍde, Oranmore, Co na Gail-limhe	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	Stewart	05/12/2013	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
31	Kerry	16898S	Blennerville NS, Blennerville, Co Kerry	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sheaconn Construction Ltd	10/11/2014	12	Michael Williams & Associates	Declan O'Sullivan Quantity Surveyor	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Malachy Walsh & Partners

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
32	Kerry	20229U	Nagle Rice NS, Milltown, Killarney, Co Kerry	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	13	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
33	Kerry	61410N	Presentation Secondary School, Milltown, Killarney, Co Kerry	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	20	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
34	Kildare	15957D	Rathangan Boys' NS, Rathangan, Co Kildare	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	M.J Turley & Associates	PHM Consulting	T5 Partnership Ltd
35	Kildare	19675N	St Brigid's NS, Kilculen, Co Kildare	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart-Tracey JV	06/03/2014	18	Simon J Kelly & Partners Ltd	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyers	Callaghan Engineering
36	Kildare	19797E	Scoil Naisiunta Bhríde (G), Prosperous Rd, Clane, Co Kildare	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart-Tracey JV	06/03/2014	18	Simon J Kelly & Partners Ltd	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyers	Callaghan Engineering
37	Kildare	19995I	North Kildare Educate Together NS, Celbridge, Co Kildare	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Stewart-Tracey JV	06/03/2014	11	Simon J Kelly & Partners Ltd	McGahon Surveyors	Nicholas O'Dwyers	Callaghan Engineering
38	Kildare	20257C	Scoil Naomh Padraig, Celbridge, Co Kildare	Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS	Semple Mc Killop
39	Kildare	70680U	St Conleth's Voc School, Station Rd, Newbridge, Co Kildare	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				MCOH	KSN	O'Brien & O'Keeffe	J Geaney & Assoc.
40	Kildare	70700A	Maynooth PP, Moyglare Rd, Maynooth, Co Kildare	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				MCOH	MJ Turley	ARUP	Matt O'Mahony
41	Kildare	76194S	Naas PP, Craddockstown, Co Kildare	Post Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account				Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	Ethos Engineering	patrick J Tobin & Co.
42	Kildare	76193Q	New Maynooth Post Primary School, Co Kildare	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				MCOH	MJ Turley	ARUP	Matt O'Mahony
43	Kildare	N/A	Celbridge PP, Co Kildare	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2a - Developed Design				Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS	Semple Mc Killop
44	Kilkenny	76082H	Abbey Community College, Abbeyroad, Ferrybank.	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	Townmore Construction	13/04/2015	13	Sheridan & Tierney	Austin Reddy & Co.	MPA/EDPM Eng.	Noel Lawlor Cons. Eng.
45	Laois	19747M	Scoil Bhríde, Knockmay, Portlaoise	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Moloney O'Beirne Architects	Lawlor & Partners	O'Brien & O'Keeffe Associates	Homan Obrien & Associates
46	Limerick	20184B	Galvone NS/South-hill JS amalgamation, Kennedy Park, Limerick City	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	07/03/2014	15	Kerry Barry O'Brien Whelan	Keogh McConnell Spence	Malone O'Regan	Hayes Higgins Partnership
47	Limerick	76070A	Coláiste Iosaf, Kilmallock, Co Limerick	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Healy Partnership	Davis Langdon	DBFL	JODA

Questions - Written Answers

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
48	Longford	19429V	St Christopher's Special School, Battery Rd, Longford	Special School	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McCarthy O'Hara Associates	Eamon Traynor & Company	Hayes Higgins	Delap & Waller
49	Louth	17195M	CBS Primary, Chapel Street, Dundalk, Co Louth	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				EML Architects	McGahon Surveyors	McMahon & Associates	Hayes Higgins
50	Louth	20171P	Ardee Educate Together, Dundalk Road, Ardee, Co Louth	Primary	New School	Pre stage 1				n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
51	Louth	63840C	St. Joseph's CBS, Newfoundwell Rd, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	04/02/2014	14	Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
52	Louth	63890R	St Mary's College, Dundalk, Co Louth	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	16	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS Engineers	Semple McKillop
53	Louth	71780G	Scoil Uí Mhuiri, Barn Rd, Dunleer, Co Louth	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				McGarry Ni Eanaigh	Austin Reddy	RPS Engineers	Varming
54	Meath	17623H	Scoil Náisiunta Uí Gramhna, o'Growney St., Athboy, Co Meath	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Van Dijk Architects	Carron & Walsh	RPS Engineers	JAK Consulting
55	Meath	17705J	SN Cros Ban, Whitecross, Julianstown, Co Meath	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Gilroy McMahon	Brendan Merry & partners	Hayes Higgins	BDP Ireland
56	Meath	17821L	St Mary's NS, Enfield, Co Meath	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	ABM Design and Build	04/12/2013	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
57	Meath	17839H	SN Bheinn Naofa (B), Duleek, Co Meath	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	04/02/2014	14	Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
58	Meath	17840P	SN Bheinn Naofa (G), Duleek, Co Meath	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	04/02/2014	14	Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
59	Meath	20017F	Scoil an Spioraí Naoimh, Laytown, Co Meath	Primary	New School	Stage 1 - Preliminary Design				Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
60	Meath	20164S	Navan Educate Together NS, Commons Rd, Navan, Co Meath	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	JJ Rhatican	04/02/2014	13	Newman Mulligan & Associates	Davis Langdon	Nicholas O'Dwyer	Callaghan Engineering Ltd
61	Meath	71950F	St Peter's College, Dunboyne, Co Meath	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Ann Blackwell & Assoc.	Fergal Coughlan & Assoc	Hanley Pepper Cons.	
62	Meath	71970L	St Fintina's PP School, Longwood, Enfield, Co Meath	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				MCOH	McGahon Surveyors	DBFL	BDP Ltd.
63	Meath	76088T	Ratoath Community College, Jamestown, Ratoath, Co Meath	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				McGarry Ni Eanaigh Arch.	Fergal Coughlan & Assoc	Hayes Higgins	Semple & McKillop

Project No.	County	Roll Number	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
64	Offaly	72560U	Tullamore College, Riverside, Tullamore	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Construction Ireland Ltd	01/09/2014	18	Butler Moffat	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	Hayes Higgins	BDP
65	Tipperary	72400B	Comeragh CC, Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	BAM	22/12/2014	15	Mullarkey Penderson	HKTT	RPS	Simple Mc Killop
66	Westmeath	18640M	Naomh Josef NS, Rath Guaire, Kilmacan, Co Westmeath	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - Construction	Kilcawley Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	04/11/2014	13	Coady Partnership	OLM Consultancy	OKS Consulting Engineers	SNC Engineering
67	Westmeath	18864L	Coosan NS, Castlequarter, Coosan, Athlone, Co Westmeath	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				DoES in-house Architect	Brendan Merry & Partners	Hayes Higgins Partnership	BDP
68	Wexford	17217T/63640R	Scoil na mBraithre and CBS Thomas St., Wexford Town	Primary & Post Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - Tender Action				KBOW	D.L.Martin & Partners	Malone O'Regan	N.J. O'Gorman & Associates
69	Wexford	12372G 16741I 17457Q	Michael Street NS, / Scoil na mBraithre, / Nmh Joseph N.S. St, New Ross, Co Wexford	Primary	New Schools	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Construction Ireland Ltd	13/04/2015	15	Newham Mulligan	HKTT	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Matt O'Mahoney & Associates
70	Wicklow	20208M	St Joseph's & St Ernan's, Wicklow Town	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Partnership	Henley Kavanagh McGowan Surveyors	Clifton Scannell Emerson	MacArdle McSweeney Associates

Projects to go to Construction 2013 (announced December 2012) - Current Status updated beginning June 2015

Project No.	County	Roll No	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
1	Cork	91388S	Carrigaline Community School, Waterpark Road, Carrigaline.	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Mythen Construction Ltd	11/02/2013	15	Kelly Barry O'Brien Whelan	Brendan Merry & Partners	Malone O'Regan	Michael J. Walshe & Co. Ltd
2	Cork	20310D	Carrigaline Educate Together NS.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	11/02/2013	7	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
3	Cork	19993E	Gaelscoil An Ghort Alainn, Aibinne Murmont, Gort Alainn, Corcaigh.	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Mahoney Architects	Lawlor & Partners	Malone O'Regan	Mott MacDonald
4	Cork	13828F	Douglas BNS, Douglas.	Primary	Extension	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Reddy O'Riordain Staehli Architects	Brendan Merry & Partners	Malachy Walsh & Partners	Mott O'Mahoney Associates
5	Cork	17600S	SN na Scairte Leithe, Saleen, Cloyne, Middleton.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Noel Regan & Sons	11/11/2013	10	Office of Public Works	Tom McNamara	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works

Questions - Written Answers

Project No.	County	Roll No	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
6	Cork	04572S / 14403B	St Joseph's NS & St John's NS, Kinsale (Now known as Scoil Eltin - New Roll 20435A)	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	MMD Construction	29/10/2013	9	Office of Public Works	Tom McNamara	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works
7	Cork	14052V / 17087J	Kanturk BNS & SN an Chlochair, Kanturk.	Primary	New School	Stage 2a Developed Design	N/A			Office of Public Works	Tom McNamara	PHM Consulting	Office of Public Works
8	Dublin	16567S/ 17279S	St Brigid's Convent NS & Scoil Mhuire NS, Haddington Road, Dublin 4.	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Coady Partnership Architect	John J Casey & Company	Downes Associates	NJ O'Gorman & Associates
9	Dublin	76213T	Lusk Community College, Lusk - Phase 1	Post Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Design and Build	05/11/12	9	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
	Dublin	76213T	Lusk Community College, Lusk - Phase 2	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	ARUP	BDP
10	Dublin	20137P	Mary Mother of Hope NS, Castaheaney.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	M & L Quinn Construction Ltd	15/07/2013	8	Opperman Associates	Rogerson Reddan & Associates	DBFL	VMRA
11	Dublin	20274C	Eske Educate Together NS, Lucan.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Design and Build	11/12/2013	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
12	Dublin	20307O	Skerries Educate Together NS, Barnageeragh Cove, Kellys Bay, Skerries.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Design and Build	20/11/12	7	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
13	Dublin	20241K	Scoil Choilm, Porterstown Rd, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	01/08/12	12	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
14	Dublin	20386N	Flemington-Balbriggan NS.	Primary	New School	Complete (Currently occupied on a temporary basis by Scoil Chormaic CNS Roll No 20269J)	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	Dublin	68083N	Mulhuddart Secondary School, Mulhuddart, Dublin 15.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			McCarthy O'Hara	McGahon Surveyors	Thomas Garland & Partners	Marr O'Mahony & associates
16	Dublin	68082L	Coláiste Glór na Mara, Stephenstown.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects	Kane Crowe Kavanagh	ARUP	BDP

Project No.	County	Roll No	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
17	Dublin	76130P	Phase 2 - Luttrellstown Community College, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 (See 2012 List of Projects for Phase 1)	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 2a Developed Design	N/A			Coady Partnership Arch.	McGahon Surveyors	Downes Associates	Varmings
18	Dublin	68101M	Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School, Dublin 15.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	10/11/2014	18	Todd Architects	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Malone O'Regan	Homan O'Brien
19	Dublin	81001L	Newpark Comprehensive, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock.	Post Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Duggan Brothers Ltd	09/07/2013	18	Edward N. Smith & Kennedy	Bruce Shaw Partnership	O'Connor Sutton Cronin	BDP Dublin
20	Dublin	13217W	Holy Family NS, Rathcoole.	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - On-Site	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	17/11/2014	15	McCulloch Mulvin Architects	Rogerson Reddan Associates	Hayes Higgins Associates	BDP
21	Dublin	19624T	SN Caitriona NS, Kenure, Rush.	Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Department of Education & Skills	Brendan Merry & Partners	HGL O'Connor	Varmings
22	Dublin	12014D	St. Andrew's NS, Lucan.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	K & J Townmore Construction	19/08/2014	12	Office of Public Works	Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works
23	Dublin	76152C	Clonburris Post-Primary School, Clonburris, Lucan.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	JJ Rhitigan	26/03/2014	18	McCullough Mulvin Ltd	Brendan Merry & Partners Ltd	Thomas Garland & Partners	Building Design Partners Ltd
24	Galway	17759J	Scoil Bhride, Menlo, Castlegar, Galway City.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Gildoc Ltd	11/11/2013	10	Office of Public Works	Tom McNamara	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works
25	Galway	71330V	Coláiste na Coiribe, Bóthar Thuaama, Co. na Gaillimhe.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	JSL Group/Stewart	21/07/2014	13	Coady Partnership Arch.	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Harewood Malone O'Regan	Malachy Walsh & Partners
26	Kildare	11893G	St David's NS, Piper's Hill, Naas.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	K & J Townmore Construction	22/10/2014	9	MCOH	MJ Turley	D O'Keefe	J Geaney & Assoc
27	Kildare	20403K	Kildare Educate Together NS, Kildare Town.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Glasgiven McAvoy JV Ltd	10/11/2014	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
28	Kilkenny	20255V	Bunscoil McAuley Rice, West St, Callan.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Mythen Construction Ltd	02/07/2013	15	John P Delaney Architects Ltd	MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon Partnership	Kilgallen & Partners Consulting	Noel Lawlor Building Services
29	Laois	20347D/20081D/14838N	Portlaoise Educate Together NS, Gaelscoil Phortlaoise, Maryborough NS, Portlaoise.	Primary	New Schools	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	19/11/12	9	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

Questions - Written Answers

Project No.	County	Roll No	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
30	Laois	20270R	Portlaoise Primary School (St Paul's, Sacred Heart & Scoil Mhuire) Portlaoise Rd, Portlaoise.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd.	28/10/2014	15	McCarthy O'Hara	Healy, Kelly Turner & Townsend	Hayes Higgins	BDP Dublin
31	Limerick	20148U	Gaelscoil Chaladh an Treoigh, Chaladh an Treoigh, Luimneach.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	T&J Townmore Construction	04/11/2013	10	Office of Public Works	Tom McNamara	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works
32	Limerick	71840V	Coláiste Chiarain, Croom.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Healy Partners Arch.	Davis Langdon Ltd.	DBFL Cons. Eng.	JODA Engineering
33	Louth	76195U	Cú Chulainn Community College, Dundalk.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 2b - (Detailed Design) in progress	N/A			Newenham Mulligan & Associates	McGahon Surveyors	Malone O'Regan	Homan O'Brien
34	Louth	19673J	St Joseph's NS, Avenue Road, Dundalk.	Primary	Extension	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Coady Partnership Architects	McGahon Surveyors	DBFL	Varming Consulting Engineers
35	Louth	91573N	Ballymakenny College, Drogheda.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	O'Hare & McGovern	17/02/2014	20	Cody Partnership	A.Reddy	DBFL	Building Design Partners LTd
36	Meath	76173K	Coláiste na Mí, Navan. (Phase 1)	Post Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Sammon Contracting Ltd.	20/12/12	10	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
37	Meath	20179I	St Stephen's NS, c/o St Martha's College, Johnstown.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Sammon Contracting Ltd.	20/12/12	10	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
38	Meath	76196W	Ashbourne Post Primary School, Ashbourne. (Phase 1)	Post Primary	New School	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
39	Meath	20382F	Gaelscoil Na Mí, c/o Donaghmore Ashbourne GAA, Ashbourne.	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
		20396Q	Ashbourne ETNS	Primary	New School	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
40	Monaghan	07751K	Monaghan Model School, Monaghan Town.	Primary	Extension	Stage 4 - On-Site	Francis Haughey Building & Civil Engineering Contractor	19/03/2014	12	Sean Harrington Architects	McGahon surveyors	CS Pringle	Semple & McKillop
41	Offaly	20267F	Scoil Bride, Carrick Rd, Edenderry.	Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Sammon Contracting Ltd.	06/01/2014	13	Office of Public Works	Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works

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Project No.	County	Roll No	School Name & Address	School Type	Brief	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
42	Offaly	20332N	Gaelscoil Éadan Doire, Club Sacair Bhaile Éadain Doire, Éadan Doire, Co. Uíbh Fáilil.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Sammon Contracting Ltd.	06/01/2014	9	Office of Public Works	Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend	Office of Public Works	Office of Public Works
43	Westmeath	19848S	St Etchen's NS., Kinnegad.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	K&J Townmore Construction	11/11/2013	12	Kenny Lyons & Associates	Eamonn Traynor & Company	Semple & McKillop	Eamonn Doyle Associates
44	Wexford	20057R	Gaelscoil Inis Corthaidh, Bothar Ros Mhic Thriuin, Inis Corthaidh, Co Loch Garman.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Design and Build	15/06/12	7	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
45	Wexford	20165U	Gaelscoil Moshíólóg, An Chraobhach, Bothar Charn an Bhua, Guaire, Co Loch Garman.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Stewart	31/10/12	7	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
46	Wicklow	20080M	Gaelscoil an tInbhir Mhóir, Fernbank Park, Cemetery Rd, An tInbhear Mhóir, Co. Chill Mhantain.	Primary	New School	Site acquisition on-going	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
47	Wicklow	20300A	Greystones Educate Together NS, Blacklion, Greystones.	Primary	New School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Stewart	31/01/13	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
48	Wicklow	20301C	Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Blacklion, Greystones.	Primary	Extension	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Stewart	31/01/13	8	Design & Build - Healy, Kelly, Turner & Townsend Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
49	Wicklow	68081J	Temple Carrig Secondary School, Greystones.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd.	12/05/2014	15	McCarthy O'Hara Architects	McGahon surveyors	Thomas Garland & Partners	Mathew O Mahony & Associates
50	Wicklow	70740M	Arklow Community College, Coolgreaney Rd, Arklow.	Post Primary	New School	Stage 4 - On-Site	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd.	22/07/2014	15	Reddy Associates	Healy Kelly & Partners	JP Byrne & Partners	BDP

Announced 19th December 2011 : Projects to go to construction in 2012 - Current Status Updated beginning June 2015

County	Roll Number and School Name	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
Carlow	20295K Carlow Educate Together NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Sammon Contracting Ltd	21/01/2013	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

Questions - Written Answers

County	Roll Number and School Name	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
Cavan	188570 S N Carraig A Bruis	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	O'Hanlon & Farrell Contracts Ltd	30/07/2012	15	Cooney (Cavan)	Seamus Fagan	Quinn, John V.	Semple & Mc Killop
Clare	15042A Ennis N S	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	JSL Group	07/06/2012	18	Dept. of Education & Skills	Lawlor & Partners	Punch, Michael & Partners	O'Malley Don & Partners
Cork City	20106E Grange Frankfield NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	MMD Construction Cork Ltd	24/06/2013	18	Reddy O Rior-dan Staehli Architects	Davis Langdon PKS	O'Connell Harley O'Dwyer	VMRA (Cork)
Cork City	62690E Scoil Mhuire, Sidney Place	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Midland Construction & Engineering Ltd	20/02/2012	26	O'Sullivan Declan	Henley & Kavanagh	Twomey, Paul	Matt O'Mahony & Associates
Cork City	81008W Ashton Comprehensive School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Duggan Brothers (Contractors) Ltd	23/04/2012	18	Newenham Mulligan	Healy Kelly & Partners,Co	EG Petit & Co.	Callaghan Engineering
Cork County	17609N Rathcormac N S	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Midland Construction & Engineering Ltd	28/03/2012	12	Thompson John & Partners	Cuddy, John	Garland Thomas & Partners	Matt O'Mahony & Associates
Cork County	19839R Gael Scoil Ui Riordain	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Glenman Corporation Limited	05/01/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Cork County	20006A Gael-scoil Chloich Na Coillte	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	04/02/2013	6	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Cork County	20335T Rochestown Primary School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	04/02/2013	6	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Donegal	16672P St Patricks N S	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Dorrian Construction	09/01/2012	12	McGinley Doherty & Deery	OLM Consultancy Ltd	HGL O'Connor & Company	White Young Green
Donegal	19971R Gaelscoil Adhamhnain	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Boyle Construction Ltd	03/09/2012	12	Donnelly & O'Neill	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	White Young Green (Derry)	White Young Green
Dublin City	09932B Stanhope St Convent	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Purcell Construction Ltd	29/04/2013	22	C. J. Falconer & Assoc.	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	T.J. O'Connor & Associates	J.V. Tierney & Co
Dublin City	20139T Inchicore NS. Sarsfield Rd., Dublin 10	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	K & J Townmore Construction	30/10/2012	12	Donaghy & Dimond Architects	Lawlor & Partners	Roughan & ODonovan	BDP
Dublin Fingal	16675V Mulhuddart NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	09/01/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dublin Fingal	18046A Scoil Bride B - Linked To 18047C	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Purcell Construction Ltd	07/08/2012	18	Reddy Architecture	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Moylan Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
Dublin Fingal	18047C Scoil Bride C - Linked To 18046A	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Purcell Construction Ltd	07/08/2012	18	Reddy Architecture	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Moylan Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
Dublin Fingal	20241K Scoil Choilm NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	01/08/2012	12	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)

County	Roll Number and School Name	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
Dublin Fingal	20269J Scoil Chormaic	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	16/04/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dublin Fingal	20302E Thornleigh ETNS, Swords	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Construction Ltd	10/01/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dublin Fingal	20348F Holywell ETNS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	ABM Construction Ltd	10/01/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dublin Fingal	20383H Blanchardstown West ETNS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	29/07/2013	14	HKTT Project Managers - Todd Architects	Bruce Shaw Partnership	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dublin Fingal	76129H Ardgillan Community College, Balbriggan	Stage 4 - On-Site	Purcell Construction Ltd	01/07/2013	18	Kennedy Fitzgerald LLP	Bruce Shaw Partnership	DBFL	Mastercad T/A Noel Lawler Consulting Engineers
Dublin Fingal	76130P Luttrellstown Community College -Phase 1 (See 2013 list of projects for Phase 2)	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	01/08/2012	12	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	20190T Holy Trinity National School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Mythen Construction Ltd	19/07/2013	18	Walshe Assoc.	Kerrigan Sheanon Newman	Muir Associates	VMRA
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	70030E Senior College Dunlaoghaire	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Collen Construction	30/07/2012	18	McCullough Mulvin	Kerrigan Sheanon Newman	Horgan Lynch	BDP
Galway City	19795A Tirellan Heights N S	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	P.J McLoughlin & Sons Ltd	05/06/2012	18	Healy & Partners	Patrick A. Butler & Partners	Patrick J. Newell	Don O Malley & Partners
Galway City	62970K Colaiste Iognaid SJ, Bothar na Mara	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Purcell Construction Ltd	07/08/2012	15	Taylor Partnership Architects	Peter F. Costello & Partners	HGL O'Connor & Company	Heavey Kenny Associates
Galway County	20199O Oughterard NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	J.J. Rhatigan & Company	18/06/2012	15	Simon J. Kelly	Peter F. Costello & Partners	Ryan Hanley	Heavey Kenny Associates
Laois	15556I Portllington Convent NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	06/01/2012	7	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Laois	17064U Scoil Padraig, Ballylinan, Athy	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Purcell Construction Ltd	09/07/2012	12	Reddy Architecture	Erinaceous	HGL O'Connor	Matt O'Mahony & Associates
Limerick	13026P Kilfinane NS	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	DPB Construction Ltd	23/04/2012	4	Dept. of Education & Skills	Nolan Ryan	ORS Consulting	Davis Associates
Limerick City	64201T Ard Scoil Ris, Nth Circular Rd.	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	L & M Keating Ltd	05/11/2012	12	Healy & Partners	Rogerson Reddan & Associated Ltd	Arup Consulting Engineers	Arup Consulting Engineers
Limerick City	64240G St Munchin's College	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	L & M Keating Ltd	13/02/2012	26	Healy & Partners	Rogerson Reddan & Associated Ltd	Thomas Garland and Partners	Arup & Partners(Cork)
Longford	20124G Edgeworthstown N.S..	Stage 4 - On-Site	PJ Mc Loughlin & Sons Ltd	28/05/2013	18	Kenny Lyons & Assoc.	Seamus Fagan and Associates	O'Keeffe, Dermot	Burke Morrison

Questions - Written Answers

County	Roll Number and School Name	Current Status	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
Longford	20128O St Matthews National School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Brendan Sammon Aughnasheelin Ltd	24/05/2013	12	O'Neill, Eugene G.	Colm D'Arcy and Company	Concannon Healy Heffernan	Delap & Waller
Louth	20259G St. Francis National School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Stewart	01/02/2013	6	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Mayo	64570E Our Lady's Secondary School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Kilcawley Building and Civil Engineering (Sligo) Ltd	30/07/2013	18	Taylor Partnership Architects	McCauls	Concannon Healy Heffernan	Heavey Kenny Associates
Meath	18762D S N Realt Na Mara (B), Mornington - Linked to 18767N	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Glasgiven Contracts Ltd	04/01/2013	18	HKR Architects	Lawlor & Partners	HGL O'Connor & Company	Homan O'Brien
Meath	18767N S N Realt Na Mara (C.) Mornington - Linked to 18762D	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Glasgiven Contracts Ltd	04/01/2013	18	HKR Architects	Lawlor & Partners	HGL O'Connor & Company	Homan O'Brien
Meath	71960I Dunshaughlin Community College	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	J.J. Rhatigan & Company	10/09/2012	18	Coady Partnership Architects	Fergal Coghlan & Associates	DBFL	Delap & Waller
Sth Dublin	19817H St Marys N S, Airlie Heights, Woodlawn, Lucan	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	14/05/2012	20	H.J. Lyons Architects	McNamara, Tom	O'Connor Sutton Cronin	J.V. Tierney & Co
Sth Dublin	19878E Ballycragh N S	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	26/11/2012	18	Mallon Architects	Kerrigan Sheanon Newman	Muir Associates	Ray Grimason
Sth Dublin	20223I Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Western Building Systems	06/01/2012	8	Design & Build - HKTT Project Managers	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)	(as for Architect)
Tipperary S.R.	65240L Scoil Mhuire Presentation Secondary School	Stage 5 - Handover to School (Substantial Completion)	Kilcawley Building and Civil Engineering (Sligo) Ltd	04/07/2013	18	Bluett & O'Donoghue	McGarry Associates	Hayes Higgins Consulting Engineers	PBM Limited
Waterford City	20050D Gaelscoil Na nDeise, Grace Dieu Rd., Waterford - Linked to 20160K	Stage 4 - On-Site	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	30/12/2013	16	Coady Partnership Architects	MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon Partnership	Malone O'Regan	Delap & Waller
Waterford City	20160K Waterford Educate Together NS - Linked to 20050D	Stage 4 - On-Site	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	30/12/2013	16	Coady Partnership Architects	MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon Partnership	Malone O'Regan	Delap & Waller
Wicklow	19522L St Catherine's Spec Sch	Stage 3 - At Tender Stage	N/A			Fleming John	Hogan, Joseph C.	JP Byrne and Partners Ltd	Jerry Geaney Building Services Ltd.

“Investing in Infrastructure & Jobs” Package 2013 updated beginning June 2015

-	Roll No	School Name	County	Brief	School Type	Stage	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
1	11135K	St Mary's National School, Bagnelstown	Carlow	Replacement School	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	John Somers Construction Ltd	16/06/2014	12	Hamilton Young Architects	HKTT	Bowe Consulting Engineers	Ronan Meally Consulting Engineers
2	16083T	Virginia Mixed NS (St Marys), Virginia	Cavan	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Brendan Sammon (Aughnasheelin) Ltd	23/06/2014	12	Samuel Stephens Architects	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	DBFL	BDP

-	Roll No	School Name	County	Brief	School Type	Stage	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
3	17848I	SN Mhuire, Glenville	Cork	Replacement school	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Tom O'Brien Construction Ltd	15/09/2014	10	MRG Consulting	HKTT	Mott McDonald	EDC Engineering
4	18786R	Scoil Iosagáin, Farranree	Cork City	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Murphy & O'Sullivan Ltd	09/04/2014	12	Boyd Barrett Murphy O'Connor	David McGrath & Associates	E G Pettit	Mott McDonald
5	19351K	SN Cill Criodain, Ladysbridge	Cork County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	MMD Construction (Cork) Ltd	24/02/2014	12	ABK Architects	Michael Barrett Partnership	Niall Fitzsimons & Company	Matt O'Mahony & Associates
6	20150H	Holy Family National School, Carrickboy, Ballyshannon	Donegal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Dorrian Construction Ltd	14/04/2014	12	McGinley Doherty Deery	McGahon Surveyors	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	Gillespie & Cummings
7	60341P	Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham	Dublin	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	Nicholas O'Dwyer & Partners	J.V. Tierney & Co
8	13447Q	Scoil Mhuire, Lucan	Dublin Belgard	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				John M Morris Architect	John McKinney	Once Civil & Structural	under remit of John M Morris
9	19727G	St Mary's Central NS, Belmont Avenue, Donnybrook, D4	Dublin City	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Donal Walsh & Associates	Basil Conroy & Co	EDPM	Abbott & Partners
10	19819L	St. Laurence O'Tooles Special School, Seville Place, D1.	Dublin City	Replacement School	Primary	Stage 2b - Detailed Design				Sean Harrington	McGahon Surveyors	Michael Punch & Partners	Delap & Waller
11	76062B	Castletknock Community College	Dublin Fingal	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	26/03/2014	15	A & D Weichert	Henley Kavanagh McGowan	Lee McCullough & Partners	OLM Consultancy
12	91412M	Scoil Phobail, Clifden	Galway	Replacement school	Post Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				De Blacam & Meagher	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	Callaghan Engineering
13	12706J	SN Sailearna, Indreabhán	Galway	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Hamilton Young Architects	Peter F. Costello & Partners	Malone O'Regan	Heavey Kenny Associates
14	63070C	St Raphaels College, Loughrea	Galway	Replacement school	Post Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				Niall J Kearns	Peter F. Costello & Partners	O'Brien & O'Keeffe Associates	Heavey Kenny Associates
15	63090I	Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew	Galway	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Coolsivna Construction Group Ltd	06/08/2014	18	OKM Architects	McCauls	Tobin Consulting Engineers	Heavey Kenny Associates
16	18089S	Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Oranmore	Galway	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	John McNamara & Sons Ltd	10/02/2014	12	Simon J Kelly	Davis Langdon	Malone O'Regan	Semple & McKillop
17	09414C	St Laurence's National School, Crookstown	Kildare	Replacement School	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Purcell Construction Ltd	26/03/2014	13	Todd Architects	MacGinn O'Reilly Mahon	Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers	MacArdle McSweeney
18	20193C	Scoil Mochallóg, Kilmallock	Limerick	Replacement School	Primary	Stage 3 - Tender Action				O'Donnell & Tuomey	Lawlor & Partners	Thomas Garland & Partners	Heavey Kenny Associates

Questions - Written Answers

-	Roll No	School Name	County	Brief	School Type	Stage	Contractor Name	Contract Start Date	Duration (In Months)	Architect	Quantity Surveyor	Structural Engineer	Building Services Engineer
19	19479N	Rathmul-lan National Schools (St Johns & St Pauls), Drogheda	Louth	Replacement school	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Felix O Hare & Co. Ltd	28/10/2014	32	Coady Partnership	McGahon Surveyors	Malone O Regan	BDP
20	02905J	SN Naomh Padraig, Enfield	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	21/08/2014	12	Opperman Associates	Sean McCann	Malachi Cullen Partners	SNC Engineering
21	91508C	Boyne Community School, Trim	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	C.F. Hoey Construction Ltd	12/09/2014	10	McKevitt Architects	JMQS	Doherty Finnegan Kelly	Burke Morrison
22	72190N	Ardscioil Lorgan, Castleblaney	Monaghan	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	14/01/2015	18	Mahoney Architecture	Bruce Shaw Partnership	Nicholas O' Dwyer & Partners	Varming Consulting Engineers
23	65440T	Our Lady's Secondary School, Templemore	Tipperary N.R.	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Duggan Brothers (Contractors) Ltd	04/09/2014	15	RKD Architects	Nollag MacCarthy	Hayes Higgins	Noel Lawlor
24	17932U	Odhran Naofa NS, Slanemore, Mullingar	Westmeath	Replacement School	Primary	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	Rathcorbally Construction Ltd	28/06/2014	12	John Madden & Associates	Nolan Construction	John Madden & Associates	John Madden & Associates
25	71600B	Coláiste Abbain, Enniscorthy	Wexford	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	22/09/2014	15	Coady Partnership	Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners	O'Connor Sutton Cronin	Douglas Carroll
26	17913Q	SN Mhuire, Barntown	Wexford	Replacement school	Primary	Stage 5 - Handover and Final Account	Mythen Construction Ltd	06/03/2014	12	Thompson Architects	Michael G. Mahon & Co.	Hayes Higgins	JAK
27	20003R	St Aidan's Parish School, Enniscorthy	Wexford	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Ganson Building & Civil Engineering Ltd	01/09/2014	18	Conroy Architects	MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon	Hayes Higgins	MacArdle McSweeney
28	61790D	St Brendan's College, Bray	Wicklow	Replacement School	Post Primary	Stage 4 - Construction	Sammon Contracting Ireland Ltd	16/07/2014	15	Smith & Kennedy Architects	O'Reilly Hyland Tierney	Nicholas O' Dwyer & Partners	Varming Consulting Engineers

Projects in Architectural Planning - not on the 5 Year Programme or Investing In Infrastructure & Jobs Package - Updated beginning June 2015

	Roll No	School Name	Town / Area	County	Brief	Level	Stage
1	07546J	Goldenbridge Convent	Inchicore, Dublin 8	Dublin City	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
2	12954F	SN Bhríde	Turloughmore	Galway County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
3	13815T	Howth Road Mixed National School	Clontarf Road, Clontarf D3	Dublin City	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
4	14069P	Dun Dealgan National School	Dundalk	Louth	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
5	14386E	Stonepark National School	Stonepark	Longford	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
6	14839P	Clondrohid National School	Macroom	Cork County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
7	16208N	Termonfeckin Mixed National School	Termonfeckin	Louth	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
8	17444H	SN Seosamh Naofa	Carrabane	Galway County	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
9	17472M	Baile Falbach	Hedgestown, Lusk Co Dublin	Dublin Fingal	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design

	Roll No	School Name	Town / Area	County	Brief	Level	Stage
10	17807R	SN Cathair Geal	Cahergal	Galway County	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
11	18106P	SN Na Trionoide Naofa	Lismullen	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
12	18625Q	Scoil Choilmcille	Letterkenny	Donegal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
13	18778S	SN Naomh Mochta	Clonsilla	Dublin Fingal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
14	19032R	Stewarts Hospital Special School	Palmerstown	Dublin Belgard	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
15	19336O	Scoil Phoil Naofa	Dooradoyle	Limerick County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
16	19415K	Scoil An Athar Tadhg	Carrignavar	Cork County	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
17	19542R	Esler National School	Lucan	Dublin Belgard	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
18	19545A	Corduff National School	Blanchardstown, D 15	Dublin Fingal	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
19	19813W	Kildalkey Central National School	Kildalkey	Meath	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
20	20042E	Scoil An Chroí Naofa	Ballinasloe	Galway County	New School	Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
21	64660F	Sancta Maria College	Louisburgh	Mayo	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 2b Detailed Design
22	01554B	Baile an Phusta National School	Ardee	Louth	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
23	08490N	St Clare's Primary School	Cavan	Cavan	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
24	16908S	Six MileBridge NS	Sixmilebridge	Clare	New School	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
25	18505G	Naomh Clar NS	Tobberclair	Westmeath	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
26	18746F	SN Muine Mhea	Athenry	Galway County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
27	19215C	SN Ard Mhuire C	Marymount, Drogheda	Louth	New School	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
28	19313C	Glenswilly National School	Glenswilly	Donegal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
29	19439B	Holy Family Special School	Cootehill	Cavan	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
30	19535U	Brackenstown Senior National School	Swords Co Dublin	Dublin Fingal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
31	19660A	Rush National School	Rush Co Dublin	Dublin Fingal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
32	19927O	Scoil Mhuire	Stranorlar	Donegal	New School	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
33	19967D	Scoil Iosagain	Buncrana	Donegal	New School	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
34	20032B	Dunboyne Junior National School	Dunboyne	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
35	20033D	Dunboyne Senior National School	Dunboyne	Meath	New School	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
36	20116H	Glor na Mara	Convent Hill, Tramore	Waterford County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
37	20187H	Divine Mercy Senior NS	Lucan	Dublin Belgard	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
38	76085N	Colaiste Reachrann Donaghmede	Donaghmede	Dublin City	New School	Post Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
39	81002K	Mount Temple Comprehensive	Clontarf Road, Clontarf D3	Dublin Fingal	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 2a Developed Design
40	12077E	Illistrim No 1 National School	Illistrim, Letterkenny	Donegal	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
41	15769C	Monasterevan Convent	Monasterevan	Kildare	New School	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
42	15781P	Ballintemple National School	Ballintemple	Cork City	New School	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
43	16100Q	Mercy Convent National School	Navan	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
44	18671A	St Michael's House Special School	Rathgar	Dublin City	New School	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
45	20170N	Kilmacthomas	Kilmacthomas	Waterford County	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design
46	71980O	O'Carolan College	Nobber	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Stage 1 Preliminary Design

Questions - Written Answers

	Roll No	School Name	Town / Area	County	Brief	Level	Stage
47	07054L	Cullen NS	Ballina	Mayo	New School	Primary	Design Team Appointment
48	20007C	Gaelscoil Cluain Meala	Clonmel	Tipperary	Extension / Refurbishment	Primary	Design Team Appointment
49	20070J	Rosedale Special School	Rosedale	Galway City	New School	Special School	Design Team Appointment
50	64520M	St Mary's Secondary School	Ballina	Mayo	New School	Post Primary	Design Team Appointment
51	91508C	Boyne Community School	Trim	Meath	Extension / Refurbishment	Post Primary	Design Team Appointment

New Primary Schools completed 2011-2014

-	County	Roll No	School	Year
1	Dublin	09932B	Stanhope Street Convent Primary school	2014
2	Dublin	17055T	Naomh Mhuire NS, Saggart	2014
3	Dublin	18047C	Scoil Bhride C, Blanchardstown	2014
4	Dublin	19474D	St. Colmcille's Junior NS, Knocklyon, Templeogue, Dublin 16	2014
5	Dublin	19742C	St. Colmcille's Senior NS, Knocklyon, Templeogue, Dublin 16	2014
6	Dublin	19878E	Ballycragh NS, Ballycragh, Firhouse, Tallaght, Dublin 24	2014
7	Dublin	20190T	Holy Trinity NS	2014
8	Dublin	20274C	Esker ETNS, Lucan, Co. Dublin.	2014
9	Dublin	20383H	Blanchardstown West ETNS	2014
10	Dublin	18046A	Scoil Bhride B, Blanchardstown	2013
11	Dublin	16675V	Mulhuddart National School	2012
12	Dublin	19373U	St. Michael's House Special School, Kish House, Greendale Road, D5	2012
13	Dublin	20223I	Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada, Lucan	2012
14	Dublin	20348F	Holywell ET, Swords	2012
15	Dublin	20269J	Scoil Chormaic, Balbriggan	2012
16	Dublin	19898K	Gaelscoil an Duinnigh, Feltrim, Swords	2011
17	Dublin	20161M	Donabate/Portrane Educate Together	2011
18	Dublin	20201V	Tyrrelstown Educate Together	2011
19	Dublin	20274C	Esker ET, Adamstown, Lucan	2011
20	Dublin	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroimhe	2011
21	Dublin	20145O	Swords Educate Together NS	2011

Large Scale Primary Extensions/Refurbishments completed 2011-2014

-	County	Roll No	School	Year
1	Dublin	19817H	St. Mary's NS, Airlie Heights, Woodlawn, Lucan	2014
2	Dublin	20137P	Mary Mother of Hope NS, Castaheaney.	2014
3	Dublin	20139T	Inchicore NS, Sarsfield Road, Dublin 10	2014
4	Dublin	20241K	Scoil Choilm, Diswellstown,Porterstown (see also 76130P)	2013
5	Dublin	20307O	Skerries Educate Together NS, Kelly's Bay	2013
6	Dublin	00697S	St. Brigid's NS, Castleknock, Dublin 15	2012
7	Dublin	17936F	Scoil Eoin Baisde Snr, Clontarf (see also 19006Q)	2012
8	Dublin	18324C	Scoil Bride C, Palmerstown	2012
9	Dublin	19006Q	Scoil Eoin Baisde B Sois, Clontarf (see also 17936F)	2012
10	Dublin	19374W	Garran Mhuire, Goatstown, Dublin 14	2012
11	Dublin	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together NS, Thornleigh Green, Swords	2012
12	Dublin	15315J	St. George's NS, Naul Road, Balbriggan, Dublin 15	2011
13	Dublin	16964F	Scoil Mhuire Ogh 1, Crumlin Rd, Dublin 12	2011
14	Dublin	20252P	GS Bhaile Brigin, Castlelands, Balbriggan	2011
15	Dublin	20282B	Bracken Educate Together, Castlelands, Balbriggan	2011
16	Dublin	20303G	Lucan East Educate Together, Clonburris	2011

New Post-Primary Schools completed 2011-2014

-	County	Roll No.	School	Year
1	Dublin	76130P	Luttrellstown CC	2013
2	Dublin	76213T	Lusk Community College	2013
3	Dublin	60450U	Coláiste Mhuire na mBráithre, Cabra	2012
4	Dublin	76098W	Pobail Scoil Setanta, Phibblestown	2011
5	Dublin	76104O	Donabate Community College	2011

Large Scale Post-Primary Extensions/Refurbishments completed 2011-2014

-	County	Roll No.	School	Year
1	Dublin	70030E	Senior College, Dún Laoghaire, Eblana Avenue, Dún Laoghaire	2014
2	Dublin	81001L	Newpark Comp, Blackrock	2014
3	Dublin	60010P	Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	2012
4	Dublin	60860Q	Our Lady's School, Templeogue Road, Terenure, Dublin 6W	2011

School Enrolments Data

408. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to Dublin South constituency, the number of pupils currently attending primary school or secondary school in 2015, compared to 2010; in respect of each school, the enrolment numbers expected in September 2015; in respect of each school, as compared to 2011, the current number of teachers, resource teachers, and special needs assistants; and in respect of each school, the numbers sanctioned for the next school year. [19249/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Data on the number of pupils enrolled in each school are available on the Statistics Section of my Department's website at <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/>. The most recent published information is provisional data for the 2014/2015 school year. Final data in relation to the 2014/15 school year will be published later in the current school year. The teacher allocation and redeployment process for the 2015/16 school year is currently underway in my Department. The allocation processes at both primary and post primary level also include an appeals mechanism under which schools can appeal against the allocation due to them under the staffing schedules. The Appeal Boards operate independently of the Department and their decisions are final. The final staffing position for all schools at primary and post primary level will ultimately not be known until the Autumn. At that stage the allocation process will be fully completed and any appeals to the Staffing Appeal Boards will have been considered.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOS), for allocating resource teaching and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support to schools to support children with special educational needs and additional care needs respectively. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such support. As part of Budget 2015, I announced that an additional 365 Special Needs Assistant (SNA) posts are being provided for in 2015, as well as an additional 480 Resource Teachers, to take into account increased demand and demographic growth and to ensure that children can continue to have access to additional supports in school. This is the highest number of Resource Teaching and SNA support that we have ever had.

These increases, building on increases which have already been provided in recent years, will ensure that children with special educational needs can continue to participate in education and be supported in a manner appropriate to their needs.

Details of resource teaching and SNA allocations which have been made to each school for

2014/15 are available on the NCSE website www.ncse.ie.

The NCSE is currently processing applications from schools for resource teaching and SNA support for the coming school year. Schools will be notified of their 2015/16 allocations shortly.

I will arrange to have the Deputy's question forwarded to the NCSE for their direct reply in respect of information which has been requested regarding allocations to schools in 2011.

Equality Issues

409. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she is aware that SIPTU has advised its members on the National University of Ireland Galway campus not to co-operate with the university's gender task force, as it was not engaged in consultations regarding its establishment; that there are concerns that the task force lacks transparency, and was not independently constituted, and no assurances have been provided with regard to confidentiality; and her plans to urgently address these matters. [19250/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The very serious shortcomings identified by the Equality Tribunal in its ruling last November in the case of Dr. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington must be acknowledged. Discrimination against women in the workplace is unacceptable in any setting and the issues brought to light in that case are of serious concern to me. For that reason, I have welcomed the response of NUI Galway in unreservedly accepting the ruling of the Tribunal and in establishing a Task Force to address related issues. However, it is important that this taskforce has the confidence of both the student body and the staff. I am aware of concerns about the proposed composition of the taskforce in Galway. I want to repeat my view that having the broadest possible support for the taskforce at the outset is central to its important work, and I would urge NUIG to ensure that every effort is made to achieve that goal. More broadly, the Higher Education Authority is actively considering how best to support the improvement of gender equality across the Irish higher education system as a whole and is developing a database of staff employed in the sector, so that we can ensure gender-equality at all levels within the academic profession in Ireland becomes a reality.

SOLAS Funding

410. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of reinstating the SOLAS training allowance. [19270/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The payment of an additional training allowance of €31.80 per week for the long term unemployed was introduced during a period of high employment levels as an incentive for the long term unemployed to participate in former-FÁS training courses and VTOS courses. The payment of this allowance was later extended to those persons in receipt of social welfare disability payments to introduce equality of treatment for all people in training. The payment was reduced from €31.80 per week to €20 per week as part of Budget 2011 and as part of Budget 2014 it was decided to cease this payment for all SOLAS participants commencing courses after 1st January 2014. The cost of re-instating this long term bonus payment is estimated at €6.7 million in a full year.

Teacher Recruitment

411. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of employing an additional 1,000 resource teachers. [19271/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that the cost of employing an additional 1,000 resource teachers would be approximately €60 million per year, based on current average salary rates.

Teacher Recruitment

412. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the projected recruitment of additional teachers, additional resource teachers, and additional special needs assistants, over the next five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19272/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my focus in Budget 2015 was on obtaining the additional funding that was necessary to provide for demographic growth. The last Budget included an increase in spending on education for the first time in recent years, amounting to additional funding of €60m during 2015. This funding will be used to provide 1,700 additional teachers and SNAs for our schools, as well as to fund prioritised reforms, such as implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategy, reform of junior cycle, and the introduction of education focussed pre-school inspections. The improvements in the Primary Staffing Schedule for small schools which I announced in February last are the only changes that I will be making to the staffing arrangements for schools for the 2015/16 school year.

I also wish to advise the Deputy that an additional 365 Special Needs Assistant (SNA) posts have been provided for in 2015, as well as an additional 480 Resource Teachers, which takes into account increased demand and demographic growth.

11,300 SNA posts are available for allocation in 2015. 6705 resource teaching posts are also available to the NCSE to allocate to schools. This is the highest number of Resource Teaching and SNA support that we have ever had and has ensured that children can continue to have access to additional supports in school.

The number of posts which will be required for allocation in futures years will be considered as part of the annual budgetary and estimate process which takes place each year.

The Deputy will also be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has recommended the development of a new model for delivering teaching resources to schools to support students with special needs.

Through consultations, there was a broad welcome for the proposed new model from Parents, disability groups, schools and stakeholders. However, there has not been sufficient time to address all of the concerns which have been raised in advance of the 2015 school year.

My Department is, however, continuing to develop the new allocation model for schools and is currently working to devise a pilot of the new model. Issues regarding the number of resource teachers which will be required in future years will therefore be considered in the context of the development of a new allocation model.

The Government's approach to restoring the economy has helped Ireland to return to a position where we are seeing economic growth. It is a continuing improvement in our economic growth over a sustained period that will enable us to move to a point where we can look again at providing for additional teacher resources in schools which could bring about further improve-

ment in PTR, class size and support for classroom teachers.

Capitation Grants

413. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of reversing cuts to the capitation grants for primary and post primary schools. [19273/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The last Budget included an increase in spending on education for the first time in recent years, amounting to additional funding of €60 million during 2015. That increase has provided funding for 1,700 additional teachers and SNAs to be recruited for our schools, as well as funding important reforms. However, it was not possible to secure the funding which would be required to also increase the rates of capitation paid to our schools. The school funding measures introduced in Budget 2011 provided for a 5% reduction in funding for capitation and related grants to primary and second level schools. This was applied to schools by a 5% reduction across the range of per capita grants. The multi annual school funding measures introduced in Budget 2012, provided for a 6% overall reduction in the funding for capitation and related grants to primary and second level schools. The reduction was introduced on a phased basis and applied by a 2% reduction in 2012 and 2013 and a further reduction of 1% in 2014 and 2015. In total these measures have resulted in capitation and related funding to the primary and second level school sector being reduced by 11%. Increasing overall funding at present would cost approx. €3.7m per percentage point. I am determined that education will be prioritised for further investment in future years, and I believe that increasing the staffing and funding of our schools should be priorities for such investment.

Capitation Grants

414. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of reversing cuts to the capitation grants for the vocational training opportunities scheme, the Youthreach scheme, the back to education initiative, post-leaving certificate courses and adult literacy centres. [19274/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The estimated cost of reversing the reductions in capitation grants over the last four years to VTOS, Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative, Post Leaving Certificate and Adult Literacy programmes is €2 million.

Private Schools

415. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the value of the State subsidy to private schools. [19275/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The latest figures available are for the 2012/2013 school year and are included in the following table.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PAID FEE CHARGING SCHOOLS January - December 2013

€4,004,291.19

SALARIES - FEE CHARGING SCHOOLS 2012 - 2013 (SCHOOL YEAR)

Teacher - Gross	Clerical - Gross	SNA - Gross
€96,981,176.20	€246,266.13	€2,000,829.88

Schools Refurbishment

416. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide funding for the replacement of windows in a school building (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19292/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The management authority of the school referred to by the Deputy submitted an application for funding under my Department’s Emergency Works Scheme to replace windows at their school. As replacement of windows is outside the terms of the scheme it cannot be considered for funding. The school authority has been requested to submit a revised application to address immediate health and safety issues only. As soon as this application is received it will be assessed and the school authority notified of the outcome.

School Accommodation

417. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide funding to replace temporary accommodation in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Kildare, that has been in place for over thirty years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19293/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department has no record of receiving an application from the school to which he refers for funding to replace temporary accommodation. It is open to the school management to submit an application to my Department for consideration. Any application received will be considered in the context of competing demands on my Department’s capital budget and other competing priority projects.

Education and Training Boards Funding

418. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will ensure that capital funding is provided to Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board to enable it establish a training centre in Kildare south and surrounding area which has high levels of unemployment; and the way it proposes the board will address its remit in view of the lack of infrastructure; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19294/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The Government decisions underpinning the reform of the ETB/SOLAS sector envisage a key role for the ETBs in relation to the future delivery of further education and training in an integrated manner under the reforms that will be driven by SOLAS. The Education and Training Boards Act 2013 recognises this in providing that the general functions of an ETB include to “plan, provide, coordinate and review the provision of education and training, including education and training for the purpose of employment”. While each of the 16 ETBs, therefore, has training functions under the 2013 Act, 5 ETBs, including Kildare and Wicklow ETB have not had a training centre transferred to them. An interim approach was adopted in 2014 which pro-

vided for ETBs with or receiving training centres to retain primary responsibility for training and to continue to be accountable to SOLAS. This approach is still in operation.

The Reform Programme for the sector is actively supported and overseen by a Programme Board chaired by my Department's Secretary General and including members of the Department's senior management team and representatives from the sector. In March 2014, the ETB/SOLAS Programme Board agreed that a project should be established to examine the most likely options for a longer-term solution for 2015 and beyond for the 5 ETBs without a training centre. Accordingly, my Department engaged with the chief executives of these 5 non-training centre ETBs and with SOLAS in relation to how these ETBs would deliver on their training remit for 2014 and beyond. As part of its consideration of this issue, the Board agreed that the establishment of new training centres should not form part of these considerations.

Following consultation with the sector, the ETB/SOLAS Programme Board has decided that each ETB without a training centre should be allocated staffing and resources to deliver Contracted/Community Training and manage the Apprenticeship Employers in its area. Work is now progressing on moving this project into a detailed planning phase.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

419. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of schools involved in the pilot scheme for the new special educational needs model; if she will commit to ensure no new model is introduced until all concerns with regard to any new model have been addressed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19304/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The Deputy will be aware that I recently announced that I am not proposing to change the way resource teachers are allocated to schools to support children with Special Educational Needs for the coming school year.

Through consultations, there was a broad welcome for the proposed new model from Parents, disability groups, schools and stakeholders. However, there has not been sufficient time to address all of the concerns which have been raised in advance of the 2015 school year.

I have asked my Department to design a pilot of the new model, which schools could opt into on a voluntary basis.

My Department, in conjunction with the National Council for Special Education and the Educational Research Centre, is currently designing a pilot, which could consider the impact of the proposed new model on schools.

Consultation will take place with education partners in the near future, following which the number of schools involved and the timeframe for the establishment of the pilot will be established.

Following the conclusion of the Pilot and in advance of the introduction of the New Model my Department will again consult with Management Bodies and other stakeholders.

State Examinations Exemptions

420. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will consider an exemption for persons with epilepsy and narcolepsy who have frequent seizures when sitting State examinations. [19306/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The State Examinations Commission has statutory responsibility for operational matters relating to the certificate examinations. In view of this I have forwarded your query to the State Examinations Commission for direct reply to you.

School Meals Programme

421. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will consider introducing hot meals in primary schools either through State provisions or privately provided in the interests of children’s health, learning and concentration; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19356/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): As the Deputy may be aware, the School Meals Programme is administered by the Department of Social Protection and schools must apply to that Department for inclusion in the programme.

DEIS schools are prioritised for funding in accordance with the National Policy Framework for Children, Young People - Better Outcomes Brighter Futures. At present, 97% of DEIS schools with the highest levels of educational disadvantage participate in the programme.

Despite pressure on the social protection budget, the Government has allocated an additional €2 million for the school meals programme in 2015, providing a total allocation of €39 million. I understand that this additional funding will be used by the Department of Social Protection to increase payments to existing schools which are part of my Department’s DEIS Programme, with a focus on the provision of breakfast clubs.

My Department is currently finalising guidance for schools on measures to promote healthy lifestyles. This guidance encompasses measures to promote healthy eating, healthy vending, as well as the promotion of P. E. and Physical Activity. The guidance has been drafted in consultation with the Department of Health and the HSE. In co-operation with schools my Department is also promoting physical activity in schools through the P.E. curriculum, supporting extra-curricular physical activities, and through initiatives such as the Active Schools Flag. The emphasis on physical activity is an important complement to the measures in place to promote healthy eating among our students.

School Accommodation Provision

422. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of companies or other entities her Department entered into lease agreements with for the provision of prefabricated units to primary and secondary schools; the identity of these companies or other entities; the length of the lease with the five largest providers; the value of these leases; when these leases were last negotiated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19386/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): Currently four prefab suppliers have prefab rental contracts with my Department with a combined annual value of €1.2m. The four companies are Roankabin Manufacturing Ltd, Western Building Systems Ltd, Instaspace, and Extra Space Solutions Ltd.

The most recent contract was put in place in October 2014 and is due to expire in September 2017. All other contracts are due to expire prior to September 2017. In general prefab rental contracts range from six months to three years with an option to renew at the end of each con-

tract.

In addition to the above, a number of school authorities are renting prefab units from these and other suppliers. Generally, where schools require temporary accommodation, the school authority is responsible for acquiring this accommodation and the rental contract is between the school authority and the supplying contractor.

As the rental grant-aid is devolved to schools, my Department does not hold records of all contracts held by school authorities for rental of temporary accommodation.

Teachers' Remuneration

423. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will address the concerns raised in correspondence (details supplied) regarding special needs assistants; her views that such a situation is neither acceptable nor fair; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19400/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The taxation of payments made as compensation for a reduction in hours by an employee is governed by the tax regulations and this Department has no discretion in the matter.

The Revenue Commissioners have advised this Department that if compensation for a reduction in hours is paid and the employee is continuing in employment, the payment is treated as additional emoluments and taxed accordingly. Tax relief may be claimed in respect of any payment chargeable to tax under Schedule E made to the holder of an office or employment to compensate for a reduction or a possible reduction of future remuneration.

The relief from tax given is in all cases granted by way of repayment after the end of the tax year during which the payment was made. The employer making any such compensation payment is required to deduct income tax from the full amount of the payment under the normal PAYE procedure. The individual in receipt of the payment is then entitled, on making a claim and proving the relevant facts to the satisfaction of the inspector, to have his /her total income tax liability for the tax year reassessed.

School Accommodation Provision

424. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she is aware of the current difficulties being experienced by the board of management of a school (details supplied) in County Dublin in securing alternative accommodation for its school; that a representative from her Department told the school that it must submit a proposal in writing for an alternative site, despite the board of management having done so already; her plans to address this matter; if her Department will meet with representatives from the school; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19411/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department remains committed to providing permanent accommodation for the school to which he refers. The Deputy is aware that it is intended that the school will relocate to a premises currently occupied by a special school pending the construction of a new school for the latter. The major building project for the special school is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning.

The Design Team are currently preparing the Stage 2(b) Detailed Design documentation for

submission to the Department for review and approval. Assuming no issues arise in the review of the Stage 2(b) submission, the project will then be authorised to proceed to tender.

The proposal submitted by the school suggested earlier access to the proposed permanent accommodation than is possible in the context of the estimated timeframe for the completion of the building project for the special school and is therefore not feasible.

My Department considers that a meeting with the school would not be beneficial at this time. However, it is open to the school to submit an application for additional temporary accommodation, should this be required, pending the availability of its long term accommodation.

School Accommodation Provision

425. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a temporary premises is being sought by her Department to facilitate the building of a new school (details supplied) in County Dublin, a special needs school in Dublin Rathdown. [19442/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The school referred to by the Deputy has been in contact with my Department regarding the issue of temporary accommodation to provide for the decanting of the school during the construction stage of the school building project.

My Department does not source interim accommodation for decant purposes. This is normally a matter for the school authority to deal with in conjunction with its Design Team. A school is best placed in its community and locality to make the necessary arrangements where a decant is required. My Department will, where required, provide advice and support to a school, including funding the cost of such temporary accommodation for decant purposes to facilitate the progression of a school building project. It is, however, the school authority itself which must make the necessary arrangements.

Teacher Training Provision

426. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of providing continual professional development for teachers annually for the past ten years; the number of teachers and principals in each of the past ten years attending; the way the development is structured; if there is a set number of hours to be attended; the difference between teacher and principal development; if she will provide details of the new leadership centre recently announced; if her Department provides financial support to teachers participating in additional educational qualifications (details supplied); if her Department’s inspectorate plays a role in this regard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19458/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The following table gives detail on the number of participants in CPD and expenditure for the period 2006-2015. CPD is provided by Department funded support services in a variety of formats including seminars, workshops, online and in school support in key priority areas for schools in the primary and post primary sector.

CPD is not currently compulsory, however, the Teaching Council Act 2001 is being amended in the Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill 2015 which is currently progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas. It is intended that the remaining sections of the Act, including section 39, which deals with CPD for teachers, will be commenced as soon as practicable after enact-

ment of the Bill. Following commencement of section 39, requirements to be met for renewal of registration may include satisfactory completion of programmes of continuing education and training accredited under section 39.

Currently, training for school leaders is provided as an integral part of any curricular reform programme. In addition, school leaders avail of opportunities and supports provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers, the Irish Primary Principals Networks (IPPN) and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD).

I recently announced the establishment of the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) which is a partnership between my Department, IPPN and NAPD. I have set out a number of key objectives for the CSL and will make available €3m over the first three years of the project. The CSL is intended to become a centre of excellence for school leaders, and the partnership will have many benefits for the profession in terms of the quality of training programmes, coordination of provision, and increased accessibility. The Centre will be headed by a Director who will be an experienced school principal. He or she will be supported by two other experienced school leaders, one each from the primary and post-primary sectors. The team will be recruited in the coming weeks. The Centre's responsibilities will cover the range of leadership development for school leaders, from pre-appointment training and induction of newly appointed principals, to continuing professional development throughout careers.

My Department also funds a Teacher Fee Refund Scheme for teachers and principals. The Scheme currently provides funding towards the cost of course participation and examination fees on successful completion of professional development courses that are directly relevant and of benefit to schools. While this scheme is administered on behalf of my Department by Marino Institute of Education, my Department's Inspectorate play a role in determining which courses meet the criteria for the Scheme.

Year	Expenditure (€m)	Participants*
2015(Budget)	25.1	
2014	23.404	170,719
2013	23.34	167,939
2012	23.721	129,702
2011	23.455	130,679
2010	23.573	122,385
2009	26.221	146,862
2008	36.189	163,180
2007	44.199	192,249

* this is the total number of attendees at a range of events rather than the number of teachers

Educational Projects

427. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 487 of 6 May 2015 the cost of implementing a digital strategy; if this will include broadband in all primary schools; the cost of this alone; the number of primary schools that already have broadband; if capital funding has been allocated for the implementation of the digital strategy; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19459/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The Digital Strategy for Schools which will be finalised shortly will set out an ambitious plan for the further integration of technology in the classroom over the next 5 years. The enhancement of the current broadband

provision to primary schools will be a priority under the strategy. In this regard my Department will collaborate with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

My Department currently offers broadband connectivity to all primary schools through the Schools Broadband Access Programme. This programme comprises three elements - local connectivity to schools, a national broadband network and a national service desk. Security and filtering of content/websites, in addition to email and web hosting and blog services are also provided.

Costings relating to implementation of the strategy are currently being prepared. It is intended that a set of funding priorities will be developed annually over the lifetime of the Digital Strategy. These plans will take cognisance of the economic climate and the availability of public funds.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

428. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 475 of 6 May 2015 the flexibility school management has in its staffing schedule should a principal wish to place priority on junior over senior classes, for example; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19461/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The criteria used for the allocation of teaching posts is published annually on the Department website. The key factor for determining the level of staffing resources provided at individual school level is the staffing schedule for the relevant school year and pupil enrolments on the previous 30 September. The staffing arrangements for the 2015/2016 school year are set out in Circular 0005/2015 which is available on the website. At primary level the staffing schedule operates in a clear and transparent manner and treats all similar types of schools equally. The primary staffing schedule currently operates on the basis of a general average of 1 classroom teacher for every 28 pupils, with lower thresholds for DEIS Band 1 schools.

The configuration of classes and the deployment of classroom teachers are done at local school level. My Department’s guidance to schools is that the number of pupils in any class is kept as low as possible taking all relevant contextual factors into account (e.g. classroom accommodation, fluctuating enrolment etc.). School authorities are also requested, where possible, to use their autonomy under the staffing schedule to implement smaller class sizes for junior classes.

The Government’s approach to restoring the economy has helped Ireland to return to a position where we are seeing economic growth. It is a continuing improvement in our economic growth over a sustained period that will enable us to move to a point where we can look again at providing for additional teacher resources in schools which could bring about further improvement in PTR, class size and support for classroom teachers.

The challenge for all schools is to ensure that they utilise their allocated resources to best effect to maximise teaching and learning outcomes.

School Accommodation Provision

429. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide an update on the need for a sports hall in a school (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if

she will make a statement on the matter. [19473/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department’s focus in recent years has been on prioritising the funding available for the provision of essential classroom accommodation to meet demographic need.

As the Deputy will be aware, due to the competing demands on my Department’s capital budget imposed by the need to prioritise the available funding in this manner, it is not possible at this point to provide an indicative timeframe for the provision of funding towards a PE hall for the school concerned.

Schools Site Acquisitions

430. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide a progress report from her Department on the efforts to secure a site of adequate dimensions in Buncrana, County Donegal, to facilitate a three-school campus for schools (details supplied); and if she will allocate the necessary funding for this project to proceed. [19476/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): I can confirm that a joint technical inspection of a number of potential site options for a proposed campus development in Buncrana has recently been conducted by officials from my Department and officials from Donegal County Council.

A technical report is currently being compiled by the professional and technical staff from my Department. When the technical report has been completed, the recommendations will be considered by my officials with a view to advancing the site acquisition process.

Once a suitable site has been acquired the project will progress into the architectural planning process.

School Transport Appeals

431. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the appeals made by a number of this Deputy’s constituents (details supplied) to the school transport appeals board; if their appeals will be considered valid; if consideration has been given to the need for a mechanism, whereby a common sense approach can be applied by Bus Éireann, in situations such as the one regarding Mamore Gap; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19516/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The Deputy will be aware from my previous reply that the School Transport Appeals Board is independent of my Department.

The Appeals Board will inform the families in question directly of their determination on the matter.

Foirne Scoile

432. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna an bhfuil sé i gceist aici athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar líon na múinteoirí a chuirtear ar fáil do scoileanna dara

léibhéal oileánda, lena chinntiú go mbeidh cothromas ag scoláirí ar na hoiléain ó thaobh rogha ábhair de agus chun go mbeidh na scoileanna inmharthana agus go dtiocfaidh fás agus forás ar na cúig oileán a bhfuil scoil dara léibhéal orthu; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [19542/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): Tugann mo Roinnse faomhadh do na leithdháiltí múinteoirí ar na scoileanna dara leibhéal ar fad de réir rialacha seabhunaithe atá bunaithe ar an líon daltaí aitheanta ar an rolla. Cuirtear na critéir do phoist a leithdháileadh in iúl do lucht bainistíochta na scoileanna gach bliain agus tá siad ar fáil ar shuíomh idirlín na Roinne. I dteannta le leithdháiltí múinteoirí atá bunaithe ar an mórchoir ar chóimheasa daltaí le múinteoir, leithdháiltear aon phost múinteoireachta amháin lasmuigh den chuóta ar scoileanna Oileáin.

De réir na socruithe foilsithe foirnithe ceanglaítear ar gach aon údarás bainistíochta scoile a chuid roghanna ábhair a eagrú laistigh dá leithdháileadh faofa múinteoirí. Faoi údarás bainistíochta scoile atá sé sa chéad ásc foireann múinteoireachta a imlonnú sa scoil, cinneadh ar an raon ábhar a thairgtear agus faoi dheoidh freagracht a ghlacadh as an gcaighdeán múinteoireachta agus foghlama sa scoil.

Ag an iar-bhunleibhéal agus de réir na socruithe atá ann faoi láthair, áit nach mbíonn údarás bainistíochta scoile in ann a chuid tiomantas curaclaim a chomhlíonadh laistigh dá leithdháileadh faofa, breithníonn mo Roinnse iarratais ar thacaíocht bhreise ghearrthearma i.e., lamháiltais churaclaim. Bíonn gá le tacaíocht ghearrthearma (ar feadh bliana amháin de ghnáth ach gan dul thar 2/3 scoilbhliain) chun cur ar chumas an údaráis scoile freagairt ar dheacracht atá sainaitheanta le freastal ar na tiomantais churaclaim fíor-riachtanacha i leith na ndaltaí laistigh den ghnáth-leithdháileadh foirne.

Leagtar amach mionsonraí ar phróiseas an lamháiltais churaclaim in éineacht leis na critéir leithdháilte post agus tá siad seo ar fáil chomh maith ar an suíomh idirlín.

Tá sás achomhairc san áireamh sa phróiseas leithdháilte chomh maith faoina féidir le scoileanna achomharc a dhéanamh in aghaidh an leithdháilte atá ag dul dóibh faoi na sceidil foirnithe. Tá na nósanna imeachta maidir le hachomharc leagtha amach sna socruithe foilsithe foirnithe chomh maith. Feidhmíonn an Bord Achomhairc go neamhspleách ar an Roinn agus ní bhíonn dul thar a bhreith.

Leis an gcur chuige atá ag an Rialtas i leith an gheilleagar a athshlánú tá Éire tagtha ar ais chuig staid ina bhfuil fás geilleagrach le feiceáil. Is de bharr feabhsaithe leanúnaigh ar an bhfás geilleagrach againn thar tréimhse mharthanach a bheimid in ann gluaiseacht ar aghaidh chuig pointe ag a bhféadfaimid machnamh arís ar acmhainní breise múinteoireachta a chur ar fáil i scoileanna, lena bhféadfaí tuilleadh feabhsúchán ar an gcóimheas daltaí le múinteoir, méid na ranganna agus tacaíocht do mhúinteoirí rangsheomra a chur i gcrích.

Is é an dúshlán atá roimh na scoileanna go léir ná a chinntiú go mbaineann siad leas as na hacmhainní atá leithdháilte dóibh a fheabhas is féidir chun na torthaí múinteoireachta agus foghlama a uasmhéadú.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

433. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the criteria her Department seeks in order for a person to qualify for resource hours; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19625/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) allocates additional resource teaching hours to schools for children who have been assessed within the low incidence, or more complex, category of special educational need. The NCSE operates within my Department’s established criteria for the allocation of Special Education supports and the staffing resources available to my Department.

In addition, all schools receive general allocations of resource teaching/learning support in order to provide for pupils within their school who may have high incidence special educational needs, or learning support needs. These resources are provided under the General Allocation Model (GAM) at primary school level or through an allocation for learning support or high incidence special educational need at post primary school level.

My Department’s policy in relation to the provision of resource teaching support for primary school pupils is set out in my Department’s Circular Sp Ed 02/05 and for post primary school pupils it is set out in Circular 0010/2012.

All schools have been asked to apply to the NCSE for resource teaching support for the 2015/16 school year by 18th March, 2015. Details of the application process are provided on the NCSE website at www.ncse.ie.

The NCSE will consider all applications for resource teaching support which have been made by schools. Schools will be advised of their resource teaching allocations for the 2015/16 school year, prior to the end of the current school year.

All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENO. Parents may also contact their local SENO directly to discuss their child’s special educational needs, using the contact details available on www.ncse.ie.

Language Schools

434. **Deputy Jonathan O’Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a regulatory impact assessment for English language schools has been prepared for the new regulations due to be introduced in a few weeks; and the role the accreditation and co-ordination of English Language Services and Quality and Qualifications Ireland had in preparing them. [19644/15]

435. **Deputy Jonathan O’Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if protections for teachers in English language schools have been included in the proposed regulatory impact assessment to address their worsening working conditions, including being forced to work as contractors, the issue of zero-hour contracts, and the requirement for unsalaried teachers to work substantial extra hours unpaid. [19645/15]

436. **Deputy Jonathan O’Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if regulation for English language schools will now be subject to primary legislation and stated objective standards with required wind-down procedures for schools that close. [19646/15]

437. **Deputy Jonathan O’Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a graduated system of removal of accreditation of English language schools will be introduced that may allow schools six weeks to get up to code and be subject to re-inspection before removal of accreditation. [19647/15]

438. **Deputy Jonathan O’Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if new regulations address the need for a form of learner protection or in any way assess the financial viability

ity of a school receiving visas of one year's duration. [19648/15]

439. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills her plans to bring the accreditation and co-ordination of English language services under the auspices of the Ombudsman. [19649/15]

440. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will be required to approve any regulations prepared by the accreditation and co-ordination of English language services; and if the accreditation will be required to publish explanations for rules introduced, including evidence of assessment of the economic impact of such regulations on the sector. [19650/15]

441. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if an assessment has been carried out as to whether the accreditation and co-ordination of English language services is fit for purpose, in view of the obvious regulatory failure that has resulted in the closure of 16 schools in the past 18 months, in many cases due to removal of accreditation. [19651/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 434 to 441, inclusive, together.

I wish to clarify in the first instance the function of the ACELS (Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services) recognition scheme. ACELS is a voluntary national scheme responsible for the development and management of the recognition and inspection of English language teaching organisations. It is not a regulatory body, as suggested by the Deputy in a number of his questions. ACELS therefore has no role in preparing regulations for the international education sector or in conducting either a regulatory impact assessment or an economic impact assessment of the sector.

The objective of ACELS is to establish and maintain standards in English language teaching organisations. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the State agency which operates ACELS, is under the remit of the Ombudsman.

As ACELS is a voluntary scheme, English language providers can operate in Ireland without having ACELS recognition. Equally, ACELS does not close English language providers or stop providers from operating and ACELS recognition is not compulsory for providers wishing to recruit international students. Many of the English language colleges that have closed over the last year have been operating in the State for a number of years without ACELS recognition.

With regard to the Deputy's question in relation to the working conditions of teachers, the relationship between teachers and private colleges is based on a private contract so issues such salary and working hours are a matter between the two parties. The regulations governing ACELS recognised schools specify a requirement that all obligations relating to national employment legislation are complied with. If teachers have a concern about their terms and conditions of employment they should contact the National Employment Rights Authority in this regard.

My Department and the Department of Justice and Equality have produced a package of reforms to the student immigration system for international education which will be brought to Government for its approval shortly. These reforms were prepared by the two Departments, rather than by ACELS or QQI. While it is not possible to provide specific details of the reforms prior to their approval by Government as requested in a number of the Deputy's questions, I wish to inform the Deputy that the reforms are designed to improve the overall quality of offering to international students, improve protection for learners, enhance Ireland's reputation and

diminish negative impacts on the Irish labour market and social protection costs, strongly in line with the goals of Ireland's international education strategy.

Finally, there are no plans at present to introduce primary legislation for this sector.

Schools Building Projects Status

442. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the progress of a new school building in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Dublin; the reason there is such a delay in sanctioning the go-ahead for the school to move into the new building in view of the fact that the school was advised of this in 2005; if a meeting can be organised between the school management and her Department's schools capital appraisal team; if not, the reason for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19662/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department remains committed to providing permanent accommodation for the school to which he refers. The Deputy is aware that it is intended that the school will relocate to a premises currently occupied by a special school pending the construction of a new school for the latter. The major building project for the special school is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning.

The Design Team are currently preparing the Stage 2(b) Detailed Design documentation for submission to the Department for review and approval. Assuming no issues arise in the review of the Stage 2b submission, the project will then be authorised to proceed to tender.

My Department considers that a meeting with the school would not be beneficial at this time. However, it is open to the school to submit an application for additional temporary accommodation, should this be required, pending the availability of its long term accommodation.

School Patronage

443. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if any deeds of variation have been signed for national schools. [19697/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): A small number of deeds of variation were signed prior to 2006. Since that time there have been ongoing discussions with the relevant patron bodies in relation to the wording of the Deeds of Variation, and no deeds have been signed in the interim.

State Examinations Oversight

444. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the grounds on which the decision was made not to grant a person (details supplied) in County Sligo a reader for the leaving certificate in 2015 in view of the fact that during the appeal the person included an up-to-date psychologist report which had a standard score of less than 85, which satisfies the qualifying conditions for approval for a reader; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19700/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The State Examinations Commission has statutory responsibility for operational matters relating to the certificate ex-

aminations. In view of this I have forwarded your query to the State Examinations Commission for direct reply to you.

School Transport Administration

445. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 184 of 7 May 2015, the tendering system that was in place between Bus Éireann and her Department in relation to school transport at the time the complaint to the European Commission was made; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19724/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The school transport scheme, which is in existence since 1967, is operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department. The scheme continues to be operated on the basis of a 1975 Summary of Accounting Arrangements between the Department and Bus Éireann.

Schools Building Projects Status

446. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills in view of a school (details supplied) in County Leitrim that recently received grant approval for a new 16 sq. m. learning support room by her Department, if she will re-examine this allocation in view of the fact it was expected by the school that it would have received a much larger unit to cater for increased enrolment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19729/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): As the Deputy is aware, the school referred to was recently approved a devolved grant to build a 16sqm learning support room to meet its accommodation needs. This additional learning support accommodation is considered adequate to meet the school needs having regard to the school’s current level of staffing, pupil enrolments and extent of existing accommodation.

School Staff

447. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding a permanent teaching post in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19747/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The core function of the re-deployment arrangements is to facilitate the redeployment of all surplus permanent/CID holding teachers to other schools that have vacancies. Thereafter, schools are required under the panel arrangements to fill permanent vacancies from supplementary panels comprised of eligible fixed-term (temporary/substitute) and part-time teachers. Arrangements for panel access for fixed-term (temporary), substitute and part-time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2015/16 school year are set out in Circular 0072/2014 which is available on the Department website.

Applicants must meet all of the published criteria in order to gain access to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel.

The teacher referred to by the Deputy failed to meet the Teaching Council registration and the Scale Point criteria and is therefore ineligible to be included on the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2015/16 school year.

English Language Training Organisations

448. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the responsibility her Department has to students of English language colleges which close down owing money to students who are denied the services they came here to obtain and for which they have paid; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19756/15]

449. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the steps her Department has taken to ensure that English language colleges are efficiently run; if she will provide the services that have been advertised and paid for by foreign students; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19757/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 448 and 449 together.

Provision of private education, including English language training, is not subject to mandatory regulation in the State. The majority of English language schools in Ireland are privately run. Education providers are subject to unannounced inspection by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service and the Garda National Immigration Bureau for immigration control purposes. English language training organisations registered for quality purposes with ACELS (Accreditation and Co-ordination of English Language Services) on a voluntary basis are inspected as part of the ACELS scheme.

While I have every sympathy for the genuine affected students who lost money when the colleges closed, the relationship between students and private colleges is based on a private contract so there is no obligation on my Department or the State to provide refunds, or to pay for alternative provision. For that reason, the Task Force which I established jointly with the Minister for Justice and Equality to assist affected students has worked closely with the representative bodies of the high-quality private sector providers to develop solutions that could provide alternative courses at a significantly discounted rate for students impacted by the closures who were not covered by learner protection arrangements.

I am aware that liquidation proceedings are underway in certain cases, and students are pursuing claims as creditors through this process, including with the support of the Irish Council for International Students. Students may also be entitled to a refund from their agent or credit-card company.

My Department and the Department of Justice and Equality have produced a package of reforms to the student immigration system for international education which will be brought to Government for its approval shortly. These reforms will drive a restructuring in the sector designed to improve the overall quality of offering to international students, improve protection for learners, enhance Ireland’s reputation and diminish negative impacts on the Irish labour market and social protection costs, strongly in line with the goals of Ireland’s international education strategy.

Schools Building Projects Status

450. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide an update on the new school building project for a school (details supplied) in Dublin 13; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19768/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O’Sullivan): The major building project

referred to by the Deputy is currently at Stage 2A of Architectural Planning. The ETB and its Design Team are finalising the Stage 2A report for presentation to my Department.

Upon completion of stage 2A and subject to no issues arising, this project will then be authorised to proceed to Stage 2B - Detailed Design Stage which includes applications for Planning Permission, Fire Safety Certification, Disability Access Certification and the preparation of tender documents.

Due to competing demands on the Department's capital budget imposed by the need to prioritise the limited funding available for the provision of additional school accommodation to meet increasing demographic requirements it was not possible to include this project in the 5 year construction programme announced in March 2012.

School building projects, including the project referred to by the Deputy, which were previously initiated but not included in the current five year construction programme will continue to be progressed to final planning stages in anticipation of the possibility of further funds being available to the Department in the future

School Accommodation Provision

451. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of prefabricated mainstream classrooms in Dublin North, including in Portmarnock and in south Swords, in tabular form, for each of the past ten years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19769/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Information on the number of rented prefab units in Primary and Post-Primary schools in Dublin city and county for the years 2011 to date is set out in the following table for the Deputy's attention. My Department does not hold information in the sub-county format as requested. Data prior to 2011 is not available. Please note that a prefab unit may consist of one or more classrooms and/or ancillary accommodation.

My Department's over-riding objective is to ensure that every child has access to a physical school place and that our school system is in a position to cope with increasing pupil numbers. To ensure that this is achieved, the delivery of major school projects to meet significant demographic demands nationally will be the main focus for capital investment in schools in the coming years.

Under my Department's Prefab Replacement Initiatives 2012 and 2013, 34 school authorities in the Dublin area were allocated funding totalling €11.1m to replace rented prefabs with permanent accommodation.

Prefabricated accommodation in Primary & Post Primary schools in Dublin city and county - 2011 to date

Year	No of schools	No of units
2011	96	285
2012	84	249
2013	81	217
2014	66	163
2015 (to date)	66	161

Educational Disadvantage

452. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 460 and 461 of 6 May 2015, the reason a school (details supplied) in County Dublin is unable to enter the delivering equality of opportunity in schools scheme's rural band. [19778/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Following an independent identification process in 2005, and a subsequent appeal process in 2006, the school to which the Deputy refers was not deemed to meet the criteria for inclusion in the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Programme.

As the Deputy may be aware, I have recently announced a process for the review of DEIS, which will include the development of a new identification process for schools during the next school year. While this process is underway, I do not propose to make any changes to current policy regarding the inclusion of additional schools in the DEIS Programme.

Departmental Legal Costs

453. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the amount spent by her Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20159/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): My Department has not incurred any legal fees in appealing decisions of the High Court during the years 2012-2014 inclusive.

Legal costs incurred by the State in cases before the courts are generally not met directly by my Department. In accordance with financial procedures in cases involving damages or compensation against the State, costs are generally charged to the Chief State Solicitor's Office Vote as sanctioned by the Attorney General.

Dormant Accounts Fund Administration

454. **Deputy Seamus Kirk** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a full breakdown on the disbursement of dormant account funding over the past five years, by county and by project basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19347/15]

455. **Deputy Seamus Kirk** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to release dormant account funding to community groups; the grant schemes available regarding same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19348/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Ann Phelan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 454 and 455 together.

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.

Since its establishment in April 2003 to the end of 31 March 2015, the transfers to the Dormant Accounts Fund have totalled some €781m, which includes interest earned of approximately €41.86m. Funds reclaimed in that period by account holders amounted to approximately €299m. €301m of disbursements have been approved, with €254m already expended by a large number of community groups and organisations under a range of measures administered by Pobal on behalf of a number of Government Departments and agencies. Further data in relation to the Dormant Accounts Fund are available on my Department's website at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/DormantAccounts/>.

A full breakdown on the disbursement of Dormant Account Funding measures, over the past five years, by county and by project basis from my Department's Vote is set out at Table 1.

In accordance with the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012, a new Disbursement Scheme was approved by Government in December 2013. The 2012 Act also provides for the preparation of an Action Plan to give effect to the Scheme. The current Plan includes some €26 million of measures across a range of Government Departments and Agencies that will provide diverse supports for disadvantaged communities, including measures under my Department to promote social enterprise and innovation, both urban and rural, and measures to promote youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship.

Pobal will administer a number of measures on behalf of my Department which are scheduled to be open for applications in July 2015. These will be publicly advertised and details will be available on Pobal's website. Measures will include social enterprise development initiatives, supports for vulnerable groups of young people, young people in disadvantaged areas and for work to promote youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship on behalf of my Department.

Pobal will also administer the training and support services for home carers on behalf of the Department of Social Protection and a range of measures on behalf of the Department of Health. A complete listing of all measures included in the current Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan is set out at Table 2. Measures not administered by Pobal are being rolled out by the relevant lead Department.

Table 1

Summary of Dormant Accounts Measures paid through the vote of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government 2010 - 2015

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	County	2015	Total
€106,377	€82,562	€3,030	€7,762	€29,600	Carlow	€0	€229,332
€129,328	€52,650	€4,580	€6,037	€14,473	Cavan	€0	€207,068
€116,633	€14,383	€16,332	€0	€12,000	Clare	€0	€159,348
€766,370	€275,477	€53,061	€26,101	€42,297	Cork	€0	€1,163,305
€0	€12,000	€5,048	€0	€12,000	Donegal	€0	€29,048
€2,451,961	€689,186	€309,786	€115,405	€370,374	Dublin	€0	€3,936,713
€342,496	€68,311	€31,608	€15,088	€12,000	Galway	€0	€469,503
€76,745	€24,600	€126,955	€1,231,446	€139,500	Kerry	€0	€1,599,246
€155,960	€20,054	€22,239	€8,257	€12,000	Kildare	€0	€218,511
€87,632	€79,032	€7,200	€220	€12,000	Kilkenny	€0	€186,083
€496	€0	€0	€0	€12,000	Laois	€0	€12,496
€0	€0	€0	€0	€12,000	Leitrim	€0	€12,000
€484,359	€157,665	€124,882	€13,156	€1,095,630	Limerick City	€137,760	€2,013,453
€20,782	€22,736	€6,350	€77,746	€12,000	Longford	€0	€139,614
€175,947	€28,580	€7,565	€400	€12,000	Louth	€0	€224,492

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2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	County	2015	Total
€0	€0	€85,706	€2,295	€12,000	Mayo	€8,400	€108,400
€46,363	€1,310	€11,372	€0	€12,000	Meath	€0	€71,045
€0	€0	€0	€0	€12,000	Monaghan	€0	€12,000
€0	€17,416	€250	€4,342	€12,000	Offaly	€0	€34,008
€0	€0	€0	€0	€12,000	Roscommon	€0	€12,000
€70,799	€16,026	€5,200	€0	€12,000	Sligo	€0	€104,024
€228,677	€120,697	€13,792	€15,178	€12,000	Tipperary	€0	€390,345
€112,364	€27,164	€104,200	€30,380	€12,000	Waterford	€0	€286,108
€49,539	€54,345	€122,967	€0	€12,400	Westmeath	€0	€239,251
€149,315	€40,524	€100,380	€550	€20,909	Wexford	€0	€311,678
€73,997	€1,880	€9,614	€0	€12,000	Wicklow	€8,400	€105,891
€5,646,139	€1,806,599	€1,172,116	€1,554,363	€1,941,183	Total	€154,560	€12,274,960

Table 2

Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014

The following table provides a summary of measures and maximum amount of moneys to be disbursed under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014 under the relevant Government Department/Agency

Lead Department/Agency responsible for measures under the 2014 Dormant Accounts Action Plan	Maximum funding	Description
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government DECLG	€5,000,000	Social Innovation Fund 50 per cent contribution (with the other 50 per cent of costs being met from philanthropic sources)
DECLG	€1,000,000	Social Enterprise development initiatives
DECLG	€500,000	Supports for vulnerable groups of young people, young people in disadvantaged areas and for youth work to promote youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship
DECLG	€400,000	To facilitate the implementation of the new PPN structures across the Local Government Sector during 2014
DECLG	€150,000	Community Partnership Media Campaign
Department of Justice and Equality DJE	€1,700,000	Establishment of a new Garda Youth Diversion Project and the provision of additional supports for existing projects
DJE	€1,000,000	Establishment of Mentoring Programme
DJE	€60,000	Additional Intervention Training for Youth Justice Workers
DJE	€50,000	Emergency Support Services Training towards pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people
DJE	€400,000	Expansion of services to work towards engaging hard to reach young people in the Limerick City and Mid-west area
DJE	€120,000	Measure to address the social, economic and educational disadvantages of victims of trafficking and persons/groups at risk of human trafficking
DJE	€50,000	Helpline Services for victims of crime
DJE	€50,000	Specialist Services to victims attending court
Irish Prison Service	€189,275	Community Based Health and First Aid in Irish Prisons
DJE	€166,666	Supports services to immigrants to access employment
Department of Social Protection DSP	€1,000,000	Training and support services for home carers
Department of Children and Youth Affairs DCYA	€775,000	Big Brother Big Sisters Programme
DCYA	€600,000	Youth Employability Initiative
DCYA	€7,000,000	Evidence based programme targeted at children's experiences of poverty and poorer social outcomes
DCYA	€100,000	Development of a phone app for young people in care
DCYA	€30,000	Aftercare information packs for young persons
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport DTTS	€728,474	Community Sports Physical Activity Hubs
DTTS	€1,535,700	National Sports Education and Training Hubs
Department of Education and Skills DES	€500,000	Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Years Settings
Department of Health DH	€1,200,000	Substance misuse/prevention – development of drug and alcohol awareness campaigns
DH	€600,000	Local area co-ordination initiatives
DH	€600,000	Advanced best practice in meeting HIQA Disability Standards
DH	€400,000	Health-related supports to assist young people with disabilities and autism to make the transition from second level education to further education, training and employment
DH	€400,000	Person-centre innovations in the delivery of non-centre based respite services

Control of Dogs

456. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he is aware that the current breed-specific regulations under the Control of Dogs Act 1998, which comes within the remit of his Department, make it legally impossible for the listed dog breeds to be used in autism assistance and disability support work, including therapeutic roles, either within Ireland or for persons travelling here, who may use these breeds in those roles; the potential implications of this in disability law; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19349/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): There is no prohibition on the use of the breeds listed in the Control of Dogs Regulations 1998 for autism assistance, disability support work, or other therapeutic roles.

The requirements in the 1998 Regulations for dogs of certain breeds to be securely muzzled in a public place and be led by a sufficiently strong chain or leash, by a person over the age of sixteen years who is capable of controlling the dog, do not apply in any place other than a public place, and do not apply to dogs, trained by a bona fide training establishment, being used for the purpose of guidance by persons unable to find their way without guidance.

Other than the specific exemptions listed in the 1998 Regulations, the restrictions apply to all dogs in the restricted breeds while in a public place, including those brought by people travelling to Ireland.

Referendum Campaigns

457. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views that the more limited powers of the Referendum Commission, since the enactment of the Referendum Act 2001, have resulted in that body providing inadequate explanations of facts, and lack of assistance, to the public, to assist it in understanding the arguments for and against a referendum proposal; that this has resulted in serious flaws in the conduct of referendums; and if he will take steps to remedy this situation. [19788/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The principal change to the Referendum Act 1998 provided for in the Referendum Act 2011 was to repeal the provision requiring a Referendum Commission to set out the arguments for and against a referendum proposal. That change was made following the recommendation of the All-Party Committee on the Constitution. Since that change was enacted 11 referendums have been held and a Referendum Commission was established for each of them. The report of each Referendum Commission, in relation to the performance of its functions, is laid before each House of the Oireachtas no later than six months after the completion of its work.

Section 2(3) of the Referendum Act 1998 provides that a Referendum Commission shall be independent in the performance of its functions. The publication of the report of the Referendum Commission that I established in January 2015 for the forthcoming referendums will provide an opportunity for further consideration by the Oireachtas of the issues referred to in the Question.

Homeless Persons Supports

458. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and

Local Government the position regarding the allocation his Department has made to Cork City Council to deal with the homelessness issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19159/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): During 2014, my Department provided €4.3 million in Exchequer funding to Cork City Council, as the lead authority for the South-West Region, towards the operational costs of homeless accommodation and related services under 'Section 10' funding arrangements. Housing authorities also contribute to the funding costs for their areas from their own resources.

I have made an additional €10.5 million available nationally for homeless accommodation and related services in 2015. This is an increase in funding of over 20%, bringing the Exchequer contribution to €55.5 million. The 2015 regional allocations are currently being finalised with a view to their confirmation shortly.

Homeless Persons Supports

459. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he has received letters from Cork Simon Community regarding homelessness; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19160/15]

460. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he has received letters from Simon Communities Ireland regarding its concerns in respect of the increased number of persons who are homeless; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19161/15]

461. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he has received letters of concern from Focus Ireland regarding homelessness; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19162/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 459 to 461, inclusive, together.

My Department liaises with a range of stakeholders on an ongoing basis in relation to issues of homelessness, including non-governmental service providers such as Focus Ireland and the Simon Communities of Ireland. Such liaison includes written correspondence, direct communication, participation at a variety of fora and bilateral meetings.

My Department has had recent bilateral meetings with both Focus Ireland and a Simon Communities' delegation, which included representation from Cork Simon, during which information was shared on both national and local homelessness issues.

EU Directives

462. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if Directive 95/46/EC, in particular those principles outlined in Article 6, was deemed to be compatible with the legislation allowing third parties share data with Irish Water. [19199/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Under the Water Services Acts 2007-2013, Irish Water has statutory powers to request its customers and certain specified persons or bodies to provide it with information so that Irish

Water can perform its functions under these Acts including the collection of data to develop its customer database. In particular, section 26 of the Water Services Act 2013 provides Irish Water with the power to obtain information on its customers from other third parties as listed in the section. This legislation is in full compliance with Article 6 of Directive 95/46/EC. Furthermore, Irish Water is required to manage all personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Irish Water has an on-going engagement with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner which has worked closely with Irish Water to agree the process for the capture, storage and usage of customer data.

Construction Industry Register Ireland

463. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to review the membership of the Construction Industry Register Ireland, and to remove construction companies (details supplied) which have failed to deal with substantial breaches in planning regulations. [19215/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) has been established by the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) as a register of builders and contractors. Participation in the register is voluntary at present. Any concerns in relation to firms on the register should be raised directly with CIF/CIRI. I have no direct role in relation to this aspect of the matter.

The Government has signalled its commitment in the Construction 2020 Strategy to placing the Construction Industry Register Ireland on a statutory footing. Legislative proposals in this regard are currently being prepared by my Department with a view to their being presented to Government for consideration in the near future.

Responsibility for planning enforcement under the Planning and Development Act 2000 is a matter for individual local planning authorities and I am satisfied that adequate arrangements are in place to allow for failures to comply with planning requirements to be addressed in a reasonable and appropriate manner.

Planning Issues

464. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to require local authorities to refuse planning permission to developers who have been responsible for serious breaches of planning regulations previously; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19216/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): Section 35 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides that a planning authority may refuse planning permission in a case where having regard to any information available to it, it is satisfied that the planning applicant or a connected person is not in compliance with a previous permission, has carried out a substantial unauthorised development, or has been convicted of an offence under the Planning Acts, and the planning authority consequently forms the opinion that there is a real and substantial risk that the development in respect of which permission is sought would not be completed in accordance with such permission.

The applicant may apply to the High Court for an order annulling the planning authority's

decision and on the hearing of such application, the High Court may, as it considers appropriate, confirm the decision of the authority, or annul the decision and direct the authority to consider the applicant's application for planning permission.

Pyrite Remediation Programme Implementation

465. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will report on the progress of the pyrite remediation scheme; the number of homes that have been remediated to date; and the time frame for the completion of remediation work on all affected properties. [19219/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): Since the pyrite remediation scheme was first published in February 2014, the Pyrite Resolution Board has received approximately 720 completed applications and applications continue to be received at a rate of circa 5 per week. A total of 498 dwellings have now been accepted into the scheme of which 352 have technical consultants assigned to them and the necessary preparatory work, tendering or remediation is either under way or imminent. The remaining applications are being progressed through the initial application and validation stage or the assessment and verification process of the scheme.

As matters stand, 15 dwellings have been completed to date, i.e. the pilot project of 5 dwellings completed in late 2014 plus another 10 dwellings completed recently. A further 6 projects, comprising 94 dwellings, are on site at present. Tender proposals have been received, or are due, in respect of another 5 remediation projects which will involve some 82 dwellings. It is anticipated that an additional 4 remediation projects, in respect of 119 dwellings, will go out to tender shortly.

The Board estimates that approximately 200 dwellings will be remediated under the scheme by the end of 2015. Ultimately, the timeframe for completion of remedial works to all affected dwellings will largely be influenced by the final number of applications that will be received under the scheme; in this regard, the scheme is open-ended.

Commercial Rates

466. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he or his departmental officials have discussed increasing business rates; even if this is a sole matter for the councils if he agrees with any increase in the business rates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19244/15]

467. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he or his Department have completed a cost-benefit analysis for businesses in the event that business rates are increased; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19245/15]

468. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he or his officials were consulted regarding increasing business rates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19246/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 466 to 468, inclusive, together.

Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for

commercial purposes in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority.

The annual rate on valuation (ARV), which is applied to the valuation for each property determined by the Valuation Office to obtain the amount payable in rates, is decided by the elected members of each local authority in the annual budget and its determination is a reserved function.

I am aware of the continued need to restrain the costs on businesses. My Department has in recent years requested local authorities to exercise restraint in setting, and where possible to reduce, ARVs and they have responded positively in this regard. The national average ARV decreased each year from 2010 to 2014; 2015 is not directly comparable due to the local authority mergers and the necessity to harmonise rates across new local authority areas.

Following the reorganisation of local government structures arising from the Local Government Reform Act 2014 there are now just 31 local authorities that adopt an Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV). This is a reduction from the 88 rating authorities which existed prior to the Act.

Because of the wide variances in ARVs within counties, it is not possible to achieve a single ARV per county without some ratepayers benefiting and others losing as a consequence. Moving rates downwards as a general policy would result in a very significant loss of income to the local government sector which would negatively affect the provision of services by local government. The challenge was to identify a solution that balanced these conflicting interests.

The local government reform programme requires authorities to harmonise ARVs across former rating authorities within each of the restructured 31 local authorities within a 10 year period, generally. This will ultimately result in one ARV being in place for each of the 31 authorities. The 10 year timeframe was put in place to ensure that there would be a gradual adjustment to all businesses affected and also to minimise the impact on local authorities' funding levels.

I will continue to keep the approach to rates by local authorities under active review, and am determined that every avenue will be pursued to optimise efficiency and contain costs in the local government sector.

Commercial Rates Calculations

469. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he has examined introducing one uniform mechanism for calculating commercial rates; if the exemption of crèches from rates has been examined; his views on allocating a proportion of rates for the mentoring of new local enterprise start-ups and entrepreneurs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19258/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Act 2001. The Commissioner of Valuation has sole responsibility for all valuation matters, including the method of valuation. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority. The Valuation Act 2001 is a matter for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The annual rate on valuation (ARV), which is applied to the valuation for each property determined by the Valuation Office to obtain the amount payable in rates, is decided by the elected members of each local authority in the annual budget and its determination is a reserved function.

It is important to acknowledge that commercial rates, as a local tax, and the rating system generally are deeply embedded in the local government system. A large body of case law is well established and local authorities and ratepayers are, in the main, very familiar with, and generally accepting of, the operation and practice of the rating system. Rates are also a stable source of financing for local government which is not affected unduly by short-term changes in economic circumstances.

I will continue to keep the approach to rates by local authorities under active review, and am determined that every avenue will be pursued to optimise efficiency and contain costs in the local government sector.

An amendment to the law has been included in the recently enacted Valuation (Amendment) Act 2015 to provide for changes to the valuation of certain child care facilities. This is a matter for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

It is a matter for each local authority to determine its own spending priorities in the context of the annual budgetary process having regard to both locally identified needs and available resources.

Social and Affordable Housing Data

470. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of vacant social housing units in each housing area; and the percentage of total housing stock made up of vacant properties in each area. [19297/15]

471. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number and location of social housing voids which are planned to be removed from housing stock and are due to be demolished; if he will provide details on any cost estimates of making these voids active; and if he will provide an indicative time frame for the demolition of these voids. [19298/15]

474. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the funding that has been allocated to each local authority for refurbishing void social houses; the amount of money that has been provided to date to each local authority for refurbishing void social houses; the number of void social houses each local authority is expected to refurbish using the allocated funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19354/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 470, 471 and 474 together.

General statistics on local authority housing stock, including vacant social housing units, are published annually by the Local Government Management Agency. The most recent statistics are the Service Indicators in Local Authorities 2013 which are available on the following website www.lgma.ie.

The table shows the number of units returned to productive use in 2014 and the funding provided to local authorities by my Department for this work. I will announce details shortly of the 2015 funding for local authorities to address vacant social housing units, including the breakdown of the targets and funding for each authority.

In relation to the consideration of the demolition of vacant social housing units, it is a matter in the first instance for local authorities to identify units that might be derelict and where demo-

lition may be an appropriate option. Demolition of social housing units would be an unusual step and would normally only arise in the context of an overall approach – such as regeneration of an area - agreed with my Department. There is no programme or policy to deal with vacant units by way of demolition.

-	Local Authority	Number of Units returned in 2014	Funding Provided in 2014
1	Carlow	42	€325,111
2	Cavan	23	€349,137
3	Clare	65	€995,829
4	Cork City	212	€2,872,027
5	Cork County	155	€1,539,364
6	Donegal	167	€919,797
7	Dublin City	467	€6,163,464
8	Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown	5	€89,896
9	Fingal	165	€1,938,780
10	Galway City	24	€474,050
11	Galway County	76	€958,263
12	Kerry	79	€718,938
13	Kildare	49	€503,463
14	Kilkenny	25	€484,430
15	Laois	43	€257,013
16	Leitrim	15	€229,072
17	Limerick	98	€915,969
18	Longford	16	€313,250
19	Louth	18	€113,620
20	Mayo	80	€464,508
21	Meath	59	€1,037,501
22	Monaghan	21	€92,751
23	Offaly	35	€514,000
24	Roscommon	34	€224,028
25	Sligo	29	€311,648
26	South Dublin	92	€627,408
27	Tipperary	86	€935,801
28	Waterford	42	€605,428
29	Westmeath	56	€396,518
30	Wexford	20	€316,307
31	Wicklow	35	€650,204
	TOTAL	2,333	€26,310,575

Private Rented Accommodation Costs

472. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on the report by daft.ie on rental costs and supply (details supplied), which indicates the lowest availability of private rented accommodation since 2006 and a rise in the cost of rents particularly in Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19346/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The Daft.ie Rental Report for Quarter 1 2015, which was published last week, reported that year-on-year inflation in rents continued to ease slightly in the first three months of 2015. It reported that rents nationally were 8.2% higher than in the first quarter of 2014, down from the 10.4% annual increase recorded in mid-2014. While the report recorded a slow-down in rent inflation in Dublin, this was offset by an increase in the surrounding counties. These trends are broadly in line with the most recent data from the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) whose rent index is based on actual rents paid as opposed to the asking price. The PRTB data shows that in the fourth quarter of 2014, rents were 5.8% higher nationally than in the same quarter of 2013. Dublin, however, was seeing the highest rates of increase nationally with rents there higher by 9.6% over the same period although the rate of annual increase was down slightly.

The daft.ie report notes that a shortage of supply is at the heart of rising rents and the Government is addressing this on a number of fronts. Construction 2020 A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector, published last year, is aimed at addressing issues in the property and construction sectors and ensuring that any bottlenecks that might impede the sector in meeting residential and non-residential demand are addressed. Construction 2020 also commits to identifying and implementing further improvements to the planning system to facilitate appropriate development. The General Scheme for a Planning and Development (No. 1) Bill aimed primarily at addressing the current housing supply shortage situation was published in November 2014. The main provisions in this Bill are:

- the revision of the Part V arrangements on social and affordable housing;
- retrospective application of reduced development contribution charges, and
- the introduction of a vacant site levy to incentivise urban regeneration and the provision of housing in central urban areas.

It is estimated that the revised Part V arrangements will contribute in the region of 4,000 housing units to the delivery of the output targets included in the Social Housing Strategy. The Bill is currently being drafted in consultation with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel with a view to publication in the coming weeks and enactment before the summer recess.

Addressing the supply shortfall in housing will take time but in the period since the publication of Construction 2020, some welcome signs of recovery in the sector have become evident. Particularly notable in this regard is the increase in the number of house completions in 2014 to 11,016 units nationally – an increase of 33% on the 2013 figure. The latest figures for new house completions show that 2,629 units were completed in the first three months of 2015, up 26% on the corresponding figure for the first quarter 2014.

Social housing is a key priority for the Government, evidenced by the additional €2.2 billion in funding announced for social housing in Budget 2015 and the publication of the Social Housing Strategy 2020 in November 2014. The total targeted provision under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 of 110,000 social housing units includes the delivery of 35,000 new social housing units through Pillar 1. The private rental sector, through Pillar 2 of the strategy, will accommodate up to 75,000 eligible low-income households primarily through the new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme. Social housing targets have been set for each local authority out to 2017 and are available on my Department's website at the following link: <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/Housing/News/MainBody,41016,en.htm>.

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) report Ireland's Rental Sector: Pathways to Secure Occupancy and Affordable Supply which was published last week, is a wel-

come and timely contribution to the debate around the rental sector. The report calls for more secure occupancy for tenants, including greater rent certainty as well as measures to increase the supply of rental housing. The recommendations put forward in this report will be considered carefully in the context of framing any measures in relation to the rental market.

Planning Issues

473. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of planning applications granted in each county in 2013 and 2014 for new nursing home developments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19351/15]

483. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of planning applications granted in each county in 2013 and 2014 for extensions to existing nursing homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19407/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 473 and 483 together.

While my Department collates and publishes a wide range of housing and planning statistics, it does not collect information on the number of planning applications for new nursing homes nor applications for extensions to existing nursing homes.

Question No. 474 answered with Question No. 470.

Homelessness Strategy

475. **Deputy Tom Barry** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a progress report on the implementation of the housing first programme; and if he will provide details of the funding set aside for same. [19392/15]

476. **Deputy Tom Barry** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he and the Minister of State have been working together on the national implementation of the housing first programme. [19393/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 475 and 476 together.

The Government's Homelessness Policy Statement, which was published in February 2013, outlines the Government's aim to end long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. The Statement also emphasises a housing-led approach which is about accessing permanent housing as the primary response to homelessness. Such an approach to addressing homelessness is sometimes referred to as a 'housing-first' model. Given the significance of housing-led/housing-first approaches to homelessness, both in Ireland and internationally, homelessness service providers often use these descriptions when identifying the ultimate objective of their services.

My Department's role in relation to homelessness involves the provision of a national framework of policy, legislation and funding to underpin the role of housing authorities in addressing homelessness at local level. Statutory responsibility in relation to the provision of accommodation and related services for homeless persons rests with the housing authorities.

A range of measures are being taken to secure a ring-fenced supply of accommodation to house homeless households and mobilise the necessary supports in order to deliver on the Government's target of ending involuntary long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. These measures have been identified in the Government's Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness (May 2014) and in the Action Plan to Address Homelessness (December 2014). Progress in implementing these plans is reported through the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. The plans and progress reports are available on my Department's website at the following link: <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/Housing/SpecialNeeds/HomelessPeople/>.

Social and Affordable Housing Data

477. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of the 1,700 social housing units to be directly built up to the end of 2017 that will reach completion in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. [19394/15]

478. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of social housing units to be directly built in 2015 using the €312 million funding allocation for direct builds up to the end of 2017 that had received planning permission by 1 May 2015. [19395/15]

479. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of social housing units to be directly built in 2015, using the €312 million funding allocation for direct-builds up to end 2017, that were, on 1 May 2015, under construction. [19396/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 477 to 479, inclusive, together.

On 5 May 2015, I announced a major social housing construction investment programme of €312 million, covering all 31 local authorities and with over 1,700 housing units to be built across some 100 separate projects. That announcement followed proposals made by local authorities on their planned delivery of new social housing units out to 2017.

The projects approved were those deemed most suitable to go ahead at this time. This was the first such announcement under the Social Housing Strategy and further announcements will be made as local authority proposals for the delivery of social housing units are evaluated. Information supplied by the local authorities on their proposals shows that 32 of the projects approved by me already have Part VIII planning approval. As this was an announcement of newly approved projects, it did not include any projects that are already under construction.

The process for new build construction involves a number of stages, such as the appointment of consultants, design and planning stages, contractor procurement and ultimately the site build and sign-off period. In a social housing context, each of these stages must comply with the requirements of the Capital Works Management Framework, including in relation to the procurement elements of the process. Taking each of these stages into account, a minimum realistic timeline from inception to completion for a standard new build scheme on a serviced site would be 14-16 months, assuming no issues with planning or site vacancy exist.

Given the foregoing, it is not possible at this stage to state the number of units that will be delivered each year from 2015 to 2017. However, I expect that all the projects involved will be advanced as quickly as possible and will be delivered by the end of 2017.

Social and Affordable Housing Provision

480. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 537 of 6 May 2015, if he will provide a breakdown of the length of the lease terms of the social housing units delivered, between 1 January 2015 and 1 May 2015, through the social housing current expenditure programme via local authority units, leased or rented, and approved housing body units, leased. [19397/15]

481. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if social housing units delivered through the social housing current expenditure programme via local authority units, leased or rented, and approved housing body units, leased, are leased by local authorities and approved housing bodies on an ad hoc, unit by unit, basis, in response to individual housing needs, as they arise. [19398/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 480 and 481 together.

The Social Housing Strategy 2020, published in November 2014, sets out clear, measurable actions and targets to increase the supply of social housing, reform delivery arrangements and meet the housing needs of all households on the housing list. Under this Strategy a target of 3,000 units has been set for delivery in 2015 under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP). Within this overall target each individual Local Authority has a target for delivery under this Programme.

It is a matter for each Local Authority to determine the most appropriate mechanism for reaching their target under SHCEP. Under SHCEP, units can be acquired directly by Local Authorities through rental or leasing arrangements. They can also be sourced by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) through construction, purchase or leasing arrangements and can be leased by both AHBs and local authorities from the NAMA special purpose vehicle.

There is no specific breakdown of the individual local authority targets between these delivery mechanisms. However, it is expected that some 1,000 units of the 3,000 national SHCEP target will be delivered by Approved Housing Bodies in 2015. Each Local Authority is best placed to determine how best to meet their individual SHCEP targets using all the delivery mechanisms available to them, taking account of the particular housing circumstances in their area.

There are a wide variety of possible rental and lease terms available depending on the delivery mechanism used. Units acquired by local authorities through rental agreements are in general in place for up to 10 years and under lease arrangements for up to 20 years. Arrangements put in place by AHBs range from a minimum of 10 years up to 30 years, with units delivered through the NAMA SPV (whether by a local authority or an AHB) having lease terms in place for just over 20 years.

To the end of April 2015, 406 units have been delivered for social housing purposes under SHCEP in 2015. Of that number 60% of the units have agreements for 20 years or more and a further 12% have agreements for between 10 and 20 years. The remainder have agreements in place for less than 10 years.

Housing Finance Agency

482. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Lo-

cal Government if negotiations are under way to bring more investment vehicles like the one announced in February 2015, jointly backed by the Housing Finance Agency and the European Investment Bank, into operation between now and the end of 2017. [19399/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): In November 2014 the Government approved the Social Housing Strategy 2020 which sets out a strategic framework for meeting the State's social housing needs to the end of the decade. The Strategy includes a commitment to commence work on a financial vehicle, to be known as the Strategic Housing Fund, to raise funding for the social housing sector. Work on the development of this new funding model has commenced and is currently ongoing in my Department. This work is being progressed under the oversight of a group which has been put in place to develop the financial aspects of the Social Housing Strategy. This group - the Finance Work Stream - comprises a range of key stakeholders including the Housing Finance Agency, the National Development Finance Agency and the Departments of Finance and of Public Expenditure & Reform.

Arising from the opportunity offered by the Strategy, a range of developers, investors, financiers and others expressed interest in being involved in the provision of social housing. A protocol was put in place in March 2015 under the auspices of the Finance Work Stream to facilitate individuals and entities seeking to engage with the State to provide investment for the delivery of social housing. A single point of contact for submitting proposals has been established - the Social Housing Proposals Clearing House Group - which operates through my Department, under the oversight of the Finance Work Stream. Interested parties are invited to contact the Clearing House at newfundingmodels@environ.ie.

Question No. 483 answered with Question No. 473.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme Funding

484. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of community groups that availed of the social inclusion budget administered by Meath Partnership in 2014; if all successful applications have been drawn down in full; and if he will, on the awarding of the social inclusion and community activation programme tender, administer social inclusion money in County Meath for 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19419/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Ann Phelan): My Department's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the successor programme to the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), was rolled out across communities from 1 April 2015. During 2014, a total of €346,264 was provided to Meath Partnership under the LCDP, who in turn supported some 40 community groups and a range of community activity during that period. All LCDP funding was fully expended.

I am advised that the Meath Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has not as yet finalised the SICAP tendering process and my Department is currently considering a mechanism to ensure the continued delivery of community and social inclusion services in County Meath. The primary focus of my Department is to ensure that front-line services, particularly those focused on the needs of the most socially deprived communities, are protected.

Flood Relief Schemes Expenditure

485. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide details of the amount of money paid out to businesses not households in County Cork under the flood relief fund established in response to the flood event in June 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19477/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): On 28 June 2012, severe flooding, as a result of heavy rain, affected the Cork area and caused damage to homes and businesses in a number of areas. While my Department co-ordinates the national level response to several types of severe weather emergencies, including flooding, it has no role in relation to the development, establishment or operation of any flood relief fund for households or businesses.

Social and Affordable Housing Provision

486. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in view of his recently announced capital programme, the crisis in the social housing sector and the public service embargo, the steps that have been taken by his Department to ensure that the housing departments of local authorities are adequately staffed to meet the pressures arising from the need to sustain tendencies, to secure properties for the rental accommodation scheme or long-term leasing, to plan or undertake a building programme, to identify and purchase suitable properties, to engage meaningfully with the voluntary housing sector, to deal constructively with housing applicants presenting themselves at local authorities offices and to support the placement of homeless persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19480/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Since the publication of the Social Housing Strategy, and indeed beforehand, my Department has engaged with local authorities, with a view to ensuring their capacity and preparedness for delivery of the ambitious targets to 2020. My Department works closely with all local authorities and all have been invited to submit staffing sanction requests to facilitate the delivery of the Government's Social Housing Strategy. Each staffing sanction request is examined on a case by case basis having due regard to the continued delivery of key services in the context of staffing and budgetary constraints. To date, my Department has received in excess of 300 staffing requests and has already approved the majority of these.

Under section 159 of the Local Government Act 2001, each Chief Executive is responsible for staffing and organisation arrangements necessary for carrying out the functions of the local authorities for which he or she is responsible.

Voluntary Sector Funding

487. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his Department has concluded a review into the funding mechanism of national health and disability organisations reliant on the scheme to support national organisations funding, as announced by his Department on 18 July 2014; the outcome of the review; the funding to be provided to the organisations in question; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19503/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Ann Phelan): The funding Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) in the community and voluntary sector aims to provide multi-annual funding to na-

tional organisations towards core costs associated with the provision of services. Applications for a new round of funding, which commenced on 1 July 2014, were subject to an appraisal process. 55 applications were approved for funding for the two-year period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2016. A number of previously funded organisations were not approved for funding on this occasion. Pobal were asked to undertake the management of the scheme and, in that context, put in place a dedicated team to deal with any inquiries from applicants and to provide detailed feedback. Furthermore, an appeals process was put in place, on foot of which Pobal submitted a report, which is currently being considered.

On 18 July 2014, it was announced that bridging funding of €1.4 million would be allocated for a twelve month period to a number of previously funded health, disability and other organisations that were not approved for funding under the new scheme, pending the carrying out of a review of the public funding of national organisations in the health and disability sector. This bridging funding in 2014/2015 will enable organisations to plan for their future, whether with or without State support, such as that provided under the SSNO. Details of the bridging funding provided are set out in the table below.

The review process is well under way and is being advanced in consultation with the Department of Health. The review is designed to rationalise the funding of these organisations to ensure efficiency in the use of public money and avoidance of duplication, while providing appropriate support to organisations working in the sector. The Health Service Executive and Pobal are also participating in the review. All organisations in receipt of bridging funding have been contacted to make submissions as part of the review process. A number of meetings have also taken place with representative organisations. I intend to complete and publish the outcome of the review in the coming weeks.

Bridging Funding Provided 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

National Organisations	Funding Scheme
Arthritis Ireland	53,882
Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland Ltd	41,448
Asthma Society of Ireland	41,448
Breaking Through Limited	58,028
Chronic Pain Ireland Limited	37,304
Dyslexia Association of Ireland	62,172
Genetic and Inherited Disorders Organisation Ltd	16,580
GROW in Ireland	16,580
Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland Limited	19,066
Irish Deaf Society The National Association of the Deaf Limited	62,172
Irish Heart Foundation	41,448
Irish Mountain Rescue Association	58,028
Irish National Council of Attention Deficit Disorder Support (INCADDS)	33,158
Irish Stammering Association	24,868
Migraine Association of Ireland Ltd	29,014
Motor Neuron disease Association	24,868
MOVE Ireland	41,448
Muintir na Tíre	70,462
Muscular Dystrophy Ireland	37,304
National Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Ireland Limited	37,304
National Association for Youth Drama Ltd	29,014
New Communities Partnership (NCP) Ltd	74,606

National Organisations	Funding Scheme
Peter Bradley Foundation Limited	41,448
Post Polio Support Group Limited	24,868
Safe Ireland	74,606
Show Racism The Red Card Limited	29,014
Suas Educational Development	37,304
The Alzheimer Society of Ireland	62,172
The Carers Association Limited	62,172
The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland	49,738
The Neurological Alliance of Ireland	49,738
The Union of Voluntary Organisations of People with Disabilities	45,592

Foreshore Licence Applications

488. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of foreshore licences that have been granted by his Department in the past four years; the number of these that are commercial, private, or awaiting processing by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19504/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The number of foreshore leases and licences granted since May 2011 is set out in the following table.

Category	Foreshore Lease (Section 2)	Foreshore Licence (Section 3)
No. of Commercial	9	68
No. of Private	1	1
Total	10	69

During the same period Ministerial approval in principle has been given to a further 65 commercial and private lease and licence applications, as set out in the following table.

Category	Foreshore Lease (Section 2)	Foreshore Licence (Section 3)
No. of Commercial	10	47
No. of Private	2	6
Total	12	53

The following table outlines the current position for 288 foreshore consent applications currently on hand.

-	CSSO 1	On Hold / Dormant 2	Live 3	ORE 4
No. Cases	129	85	61	13

1. 129 applications have received Ministerial approval in principle and are with the Chief State Solicitor's Office for finalisation of the relevant legal documentation.

2. Some 85 applications have been progressed administratively as far as possible and require either further information from the applicant or resolution of issues beyond the direct control of my Department.

3. 61 live applications are at varying stages of processing and have yet to be brought to Ministerial determination.

4. There are 13 lease applications on hand for offshore renewable energy projects. These are currently under review in light of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan.

Private Residential Tenancies Board

489. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the position regarding a matter (details supplied) in relation to the Private Residential Tenancies Board; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19520/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): I have no function in the operational matters of the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB), an independent statutory body established under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, to operate a national tenancy registration system and to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. Having regard to the quasi-judicial nature of the work of the PRTB, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics of any individual case. The PRTB may be contacted directly by phone at 0818 30 30 37 or by emailing disputes@prtb.ie.

Leader Programmes Administration

490. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will release the letter dated 29 April 2015 from the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development on the implementation of the Leader programme. [19523/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Ann Phelan): The correspondence in question is, I understand, between the European Commission and a Member of the European Parliament.

As this letter did not issue directly to my Department, I am not in a position to release it without the consent of the European Commission and the MEP concerned. My Department is in the process of seeking those consents and if the European Commission and the MEP concerned have no objections to releasing the letter, I will of course arrange for a copy to be sent to the Deputy.

Foreshore Licence Applications

491. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when a decision will be finalised regarding a foreshore licence application in respect of a person (details supplied), in view of the urgency of the particular case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19525/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): I refer to the reply to Question No. 576 of 20 January 2015 which sets out the position in this matter. My Department continues to await advices from the Chief State Solicitor's Offices with respect to the legal complexities that have arisen on the assignment of the foreshore leasehold interest in this case.

Social and Affordable Housing Expenditure

492. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to introduce a scheme whereby local authorities, which sold houses under the affordable housing scheme a number of years ago, may qualify for funding for insulation works in line with the funding that is currently being provided for social housing and in view of the fact that many of the affordable housing properties are in the same estate as the social houses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19566/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): My Department's support to local authorities for their programmes of insulation retrofitting applies to local authority owned houses only and is not available in respect of private houses.

Water Services Provision

493. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the reason new builds are now being charged €2,882 for a water connection when the charge for a connection by Tipperary County Council was just €800; the reason for this massive increase, particularly when planning contributions have already been paid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19595/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): With effect from 1 January 2014, Irish Water is responsible for public water services. The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides that Irish Water shall collect charges from its customers in receipt of water services provided by it in accordance with a water charges plan to be approved by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER).

Section 22(5) of the Act provides that a water charges plan may provide for charges in respect of the provision of a service connection (within the meaning of the Water Services Act 2007) to, or in respect of, a premises. In its decision on Irish Water's Water Charges Plan, published in October 2014, the CER stated that, until it made a decision on Irish Water's new connection charges, Irish Water should continue to apply the rates which were charged by the local authorities at 31 December 2013. Although Tipperary County Council is now the amalgamation of North Tipperary County Council and South Tipperary County Council, including Clonmel Borough Council, all of these entities were still in place as of 31st December 2013 and as such the various fees at that date still apply. Irish Water has informed my Department that there is not a single set fee for either a water or wastewater connection in Tipperary and the calculation for each composite connection charge (connection works fees plus development contribution fees) is calculated separately, depending on the location of the connection.

The CER has recently reviewed its 2015 work plan with Irish Water and has published, in its Water Charges Plan Decision Paper of 5 March 2015, the areas that it will be progressing in 2015, which includes the development of Connection Charging Policy. Later this year, the CER will publish a detailed work plan in relation to connection charges and will consult widely as part of that plan.

If the Deputy has queries about the fees charged in relation to a particular property, Irish Water has established a dedicated team to deal with representations and queries from public representatives. The team can be contacted via email to oireachtasmembers@water.ie or by telephone on a dedicated number, 1890 578 578.

Electoral Reform

494. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 587 of 12 May 2015, the way he plans to end the discrimination faced by women who are due to be hospitalised to give birth on polling day, in view of the fact that it is not an illness and does not qualify them for a postal vote, in the context of his reply that he has no plans to extend existing arrangements for postal votes. [19608/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The categories of persons who may vote by post at elections and referendums has evolved incrementally in the context of electoral amendment legislation. As outlined in response to Parliamentary Question No. 587 of 12 May 2015, the Government, in responding to the recommendation of the Constitution on the Convention in their fourth report that there should be greater access to postal voting, proposed that an Electoral Commission be tasked in due course with considering the issue. They should advise in detail on the electoral and operational implications, including costs, of implementing change in this area. Any proposals for change that emerge from this process will be considered in the context of future electoral amendment legislation.

Building Regulations Compliance

495. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the measures his Department has in place to assist small and medium sized steel fabricators with the implementation of the compliance requirements under I.S. EN 1090; if his Department has any grants in place, or envisages helping to offset the financial burden involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19665/15]

496. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his Department plans to follow the example set by the United Kingdom and introduce compliance assistance grants in order to assist small and medium sized enterprises working in steel fabrication with their compliance obligations under I.S.EN 1090, which came into effect on 1 July 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19666/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 495 and 496 together.

Grant assistance is not available from my Department to assist particular sectors of industry to meet their statutory obligations under the Construction Products Regulation nor is this proposed. However, I understand that Local Enterprise Offices in association with the National Standards Authority of Ireland and Enterprise Ireland hosted a series of regional workshops for fabrication, engineering and construction companies and other interested parties on requirements under the harmonised European standard for structural steel, EN 1090-1:2009 Execution of steel structures and aluminium structures - Part 1: Requirements for conformity assessment of structural components.

A suite of supporting documentation, including an assessment checklist and a pre-audit questionnaire, were disseminated to all participants at these regional workshops and are also available on the National Standards Authority of Ireland's website at <http://www.nsai.ie/our-services/certification/product-certification/ce-marking-en-1090.aspx>. In addition, the primary standards I.S. EN 1090-1 and I.S. EN 1090-2 are now being made available, through the Local Enterprise Offices, to industry at a discounted packaged rate. Furthermore, I understand that the

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Education and Skills are in the process of identifying the training providers/courses that are available locally to facilitate small and medium sized fabricators in achieving compliance with the requirements of I.S. EN 1090-1.

My Department, working through Building Regulations Advisory Body structures, and in conjunction with the National Standards Authority of Ireland, the National Roads Authority, the Office of Public Works and the Building Materials Federation, prepared an information paper setting out the implications for manufacturers, importers and distributors in relation to placing construction products on the market arising from the introduction of the Construction Products Regulation on 1 July 2013.

This information paper was widely circulated, firstly in mid-2012, again in mid-2013 and also as part of the information pack provided at the regional workshops for steel fabricators, to stakeholders throughout the construction sector by the Department, local authorities and by each of the participating organisations. My Department has also proactively promoted awareness of the Construction Products Regulation at key industry conferences and workshops. In addition, a comprehensive three-month public consultation was held as an integral part of the development of the supporting European Union (Construction Products) Regulations 2013 which set out the framework for market surveillance in Ireland under the Construction Products Regulation.

It is understood that the number of steel fabricators operating in the State who have already established, or are in the process of establishing, the systems necessary to comply with their obligations under the Construction Products Regulation and I.S. EN 1090-1 continues to increase. All other fabricators of structural steel are encouraged to put in place the systems necessary for compliance at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mortgage Arrears Proposals

497. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the solution the Government will provide regarding the housing need of a person (details supplied) in County Meath, who is in mortgage distress, and has fully engaged with the bank, and who fulfils the criteria for mortgage to rent, but due to the capacity of the social housing providers, will not be able to avail of the scheme. [19670/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Under the Approved Housing Body (AHB) Mortgage to Rent Scheme (AHB-mortgage-to-rent) an AHB can acquire ownership of a property with an unsustainable private mortgage, enabling the household to remain in their home as a social housing tenant. To be eligible for the Approved Housing Body (AHB) mortgage-to-rent scheme a household must have had their mortgage position deemed unsustainable under the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process, agree to the voluntary surrender of their home, be in negative equity, and be deemed eligible for social housing in accordance with section 20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009.

A single independent open market valuation is commissioned by the Housing Agency to determine the value of the property upon which the purchase price is based. Once a case comes within the above criteria and the householder has provided consent to the lender to share information, the Housing Agency seeks an Approved Housing Body to complete the transaction and prepares a submission to my Department for funding approval.

In relation to the specific case mentioned, I understand that the Housing Agency sought an

Approved Housing Body to complete the transaction, but it received no expressions of interest. In general where this happens the transaction cannot progress, as it must be feasible for all stakeholders involved, including the Approved Housing Body.

The Government has recently announced changes to the mortgage to rent scheme as part of a broader package of measures to deal with mortgage arrears. The changes being made are designed to enable more properties to qualify for the scheme and in that context may facilitate a review of cases such as this that previously were not viable.

Local Authority Funding

498. **Deputy Seán Conlan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the application that has been made by Monaghan County Council or Castleblayney Town Council to his Department for funding for the Court House-Market House, Castleblayney, County Monaghan, since 2009; when such an application was made; the outcome of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19677/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): My Department has not received an application from Monaghan County Council, or the former Castleblayney Town Council, for funding for the Court House/Market House, Castleblayney, County Monaghan since 2009.

Water Charges Exemptions

499. **Deputy Helen McEntee** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the concessions that are being made for pensioners, especially those living alone, whose sole income is a State pension, regarding payment of their Irish Water bills; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19678/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): A new water charging regime was announced by the Government on 19 November 2014. The capped annual charges will be €160 for single adult households and €260 for all other households until the end of 2018. All households will know what their capped bills will be until the end of 2018, which is particularly important for larger households or those with high usage due to medical needs. In addition, a water conservation grant of €100 per year will be available to qualifying households. The Department of Social Protection will administer the grant on behalf of my Department, which will be available to households (principal private dwellings) that complete a valid response to Irish Water's customer registration process.

The water conservation grant replaces the tax rebate and social protection measures previously announced and is a more straightforward means of addressing water issues for all households on equal terms and will reduce households' outlay on water services both now and in the future.

The charges structure was revised with a view to making it simpler and fairer, providing more clarity and certainty to households. The overall cost for those who register with Irish Water, net of the €100 water conservation grant, is either €1.15 a week for single adult households or €3 a week for all others. Water supply will not be reduced under any circumstance.

When it comes to payment, a range of easy pay options will be in place, including direct debits, electronic funds transfer, payment by cash at any retail outlet with a paypoint or payzone

sign or a post office where a bill can be paid in full or part payments of a minimum of €5 can be made. Irish Water also intends participating in the Household Budget scheme. This facility, operated by An Post on behalf of the Department of Social Protection, provides customers with a facility to have their household utility bills and social housing rents deducted directly from their weekly social welfare payment.

Water Charges Exemptions

500. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if householders whose water is undrinkable due to lead pipes running from the water mains to their taps are exempt from paying a water supply charge to Irish Water and only have to pay for wastewater; if this should amount to a 50% reduction in their bill; if they are required to provide Irish Water with test results specific to their home in order to qualify for this reduced charge, or if it suffices that Irish Water is aware of a general problem with lead pipes in their estate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19679/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, a copy of which is available in the Oireachtas Library, suppliers of drinking water are required to ensure that the water supplied complies with the chemical and microbiological parameters set out in the Regulations. Details of monitoring requirements along with the procedures to be followed and the roles of water suppliers, the EPA and the HSE, where there is non-compliance with the parametric values set out in the Schedules to the Regulations, are clearly laid out in the Regulations. The Water Services Act 2007 provides that the owner of a premises is responsible for the maintenance and renewal of the internal water distribution system. Responsibility for replacing lead pipes from the main stopcock to the house and within the house therefore rests with the homeowner. In a joint position paper on lead published by the EPA and HSE in 2013, it is recommended that all lead pipes and plumbing in public and private ownership should be replaced over time. The position paper contains advice for property owners and can be downloaded from: http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/hl/water/drinkingwater/lead/HSE_EPA_JointPositionPaperLeadInDrinkingWater.pdf.

The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides that Irish Water can collect charges from each customer in receipt of water services provided by it. The Act also provides that responsibility for the independent economic regulation of the water sector is assigned to the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) and the CER has been given statutory responsibility for protecting the interests of customers. The Water Charges Policy Direction issued to the CER in July 2014 referred to a number of matters relating to domestic water charges, including where the quality of water services provided by Irish Water to its customers is impaired or where services are reduced or restricted. Where customers are subject to a drinking water restriction notice, affected customers will receive a 100% discount to the water supply portion of their bill for the duration of the restriction.

My Department is developing a national strategy for lead, in consultation with the Department of Health, Irish Water, the HSE and the EPA, in order to map the scale of the problem and identify measures to mitigate any risks to human health posed by lead in drinking water. However, there are no plans to exempt householders with lead pipes from water charges.

Environmental Protection Agency Funding

501. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the amount that has been spent and is anticipated to be spent on the Environmental Protection Agency unconventional gas exploration and extraction research programme; and the amount of same that is to be strive funding, central Government funding and Northern Irish Government funding. [19699/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a statutory role for the co-ordination of environmental research in Ireland, and receives an annual allocation from the Environment Fund for this purpose. The decision on the budget to be provided is made each year on the basis of balancing the indicative research requirements of the Agency, and the availability of funding. For example, in 2014, a research budget of €12.98 m was approved for the EPA. Ultimately, the final distribution of the research budget allocated from the Environment Fund is a matter for the Agency.

I understand that, following an announcement in November 2013, the EPA is coordinating a multi-agency trans-boundary programme of research on the potential Impacts on the environment and human health from Unconventional Gas Exploration & Extraction projects/ operations. This UGEE Joint Research Programme (JRP) is funded by the EPA, the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). The research is being undertaken by a consortium of independent organisations comprising CDM Smith, British Geological Survey, University College Dublin, Ulster University, Queens University Belfast, AMEC Foster Wheeler and Philip Lee Solicitors. The research, which began in August 2014, is anticipated to take place over approximately 24 months.

As it is the EPA which is the independent body leading on this research project, further information, if required, can be obtained directly from the Agency.

Planning Issues

502. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if there is planning legislation in place that governs the use of signage over a premises; if there are regulations in place regarding a business having to use a particular language, that is if a sign over a shop may be displayed in any language, or if there are regulations in place that a sign must be in Irish or English only. [19719/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The planning regulations do not impose language restrictions on commercial business signage. I have no plans to introduce such a restriction.

Housing Assistance Payments Implementation

503. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide an update on the roll-out of the housing assistance payment; when it is envisaged it will be available in County Kildare, to ensure that landlords receive rental payments directly; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19755/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a key Government priority and a major pillar of the Social Housing Strategy 2020, which I published on 26 November

2014. The HAP scheme will bring all social housing supports provided by the State under the aegis of local authorities. The scheme will remove a barrier to employment by allowing recipients to remain in the scheme if they gain full-time employment. HAP will also improve regulation of the rented accommodation being supported and provide certainty for landlords as regards their rental income. Further to the enactment of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 on 28 July 2014, the first phase of the HAP statutory pilot commenced with effect from 15 September 2014 in Limerick City and County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Cork County Council. HAP commenced in Louth, Kilkenny, South Dublin and Monaghan County Councils from 1 October. Subsequently, on 18 December, Dublin City Council became part of the statutory HAP pilot, with a specific focus on accommodating homeless households. Dublin City Council is implementing the HAP pilot for homeless households in the Dublin region on behalf of all 4 Dublin local authorities.

There are now over 1,800 households in receipt of HAP across the local authority areas taking part in the statutory pilot scheme.

During the legislation's passage through the Oireachtas in July 2014 an undertaking was given that a progress report would be prepared for the relevant Oireachtas Committee. Data from the pilot sites has been gathered and I submitted a report to the Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht last month. Consideration is currently being given to the sequencing of a further cohort of local authorities to commence HAP on an incremental basis this year. While no implementation date has yet been confirmed, my Department is working with Kildare County Council to make the necessary arrangements for their inclusion in the next phase of the pilot.

Under the HAP scheme, local authorities will make the full rent payment on behalf of the HAP recipient directly to the landlord. The HAP recipient will then pay a rent contribution to the local authority. The rent contribution is a differential rent – that is, a rent based on income and the ability to pay. The landlord will receive prompt payments directly from the local authority on a monthly basis, subject to the HAP recipient paying the local authority their rent contribution and all payments will be made electronically.

Tenant Purchase Scheme Eligibility

504. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the proposed tenant purchase scheme will provide additional funding for local authorities, which could be ring-fenced to assist them in replenishing their housing stock, in view of the current shortage of houses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19758/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): Part 3 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 provides for a new scheme for the tenant purchase of existing local authority houses along incremental purchase lines. The Government's Social Housing Strategy 2020 includes a commitment to make the Regulations necessary for its introduction, in the second quarter of 2015, which will set out the full details of the new scheme. It is expected that the new scheme will commence at the earliest possible date following the making of the Regulations.

Under section 13 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, as amended, housing authorities may, with my prior approval, use sales receipts and moneys received from tenant purchasers in respect of incremental purchase charges under the new tenant purchase scheme for the provision, refurbishment or maintenance of housing or related purposes.

Water Charges Administration

505. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the person responsible for water charges, where persons live in homes owned by a trust; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19779/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): With effect from 1 January 2014, Irish Water is responsible for public water services. The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides that Irish Water can collect charges from its customers in receipt of water services provided by it. The Act defines the customer as the occupier of the premises in respect of which the water services are provided.

Urban Renewal Schemes

506. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will introduce a new urban and village renewal scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19785/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): A number of initiatives aimed at contributing to the renewal of urban centres have been taken by my Department in recent years, as follows: local authorities were requested to exercise restraint, or where possible, to reduce commercial rates and local charges to assist local businesses in the current economic climate – the vast majority of local authorities have responded positively to this request; revised development contribution guidelines were introduced in January 2013 requesting planning authorities to put in place reduced development contributions to support town centre development and incentivise activity in the areas prioritised for development in the relevant core strategy; the publication of new guidelines on retail planning in April 2012 aimed at promoting and supporting the vitality and viability of city and town centres. These guidelines retained the previous caps on store size in less populated and smaller towns, and were aimed at striking the right balance to ensure that local monopolies are not created in smaller towns which would be detrimental to competition.

In terms of Government action other than by my Department in providing assistance to retail businesses and stimulating economic activity in local communities, a number of measures have been introduced since 2011, including

- the introduction of the 9% rate of VAT on certain goods and services,
- the halving of the lower rate of employers' PRSI,
- the introduction of the Microenterprise Loan Scheme and Credit Guarantee Scheme, both of which schemes have had take-up from the retail sector, and the extension of seed capital and the employment and investment incentive scheme to the retail sector.

My Department remains committed to working with other Government Departments, with local government and with other community development and enterprise stakeholders with a view to providing a clear framework for addressing urban centre decline and its impacts on the retail sector, and will continue to explore all relevant options for further action in this regard.

Furthermore, Ireland has been allocated €1.2 billion of Structural Funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) for the period 2014 – 2020. The new ERDF regulation requires an increased focus on sustainable urban development and urban regeneration. In its Partnership Agreement with the European Commission on

the new ERDF regulation, the Government has agreed that an urban development fund with a total value of €80 million will be available over the duration of the programme. Local authorities will be invited to bid for this ERDF support for projects that will contribute to the social, economic and environmental development of their urban areas. The first call for proposals will be made shortly, and it will be a matter for the local authorities to nominate appropriate projects for such funding.

A new tax relief scheme entitled the Living City Initiative was launched by the Minister for Finance earlier this month. This initiative is a targeted pilot tax incentive scheme which aims to encourage people back to the centre of Irish cities to live in older buildings (residential element), and to encourage the regeneration of central business districts (commercial element). Tax relief is available on qualifying expenditure related to the refurbishment or conversion of residential and commercial premises within the special regeneration areas of six cities (namely Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Kilkenny and Waterford). Further information on the scheme can be obtained from the Department of Finance.

Departmental Legal Costs

507. Deputy Dominic Hannigan asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20160/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): My Department has not incurred any expenditure in appealing decisions taken by the High Court for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Inland Fisheries

508. Deputy Ciara Conway asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide an update on the work that is under way in reviewing Ireland's eel management plan; the timeframe and the nature of the engagement that will be undertaken with stakeholders; if he will provide details as to the way the stocks will be monitored scientifically, and by whom; if he will undertake to look at a special hardship fund or initiative, perhaps in conjunction with another Government Department, to assist those who have lost their livelihoods and have no means of earning income as a result of the ban on eel fishing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19296/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Joe McHugh): Ireland's eel management plan (EMP) was accepted by the EU in 2009 under the EU Eel regulation 1100/2007. Under the Regulation Member States must report to the European Commission on the measures adopted in their EMP's. Ireland's first report was submitted in June 2012 and the next reporting date is 30 June next. A Standing Scientific Committee for Eel (SSCE) was established under the Inland Fisheries Act 2010. The SSCE comprises scientists from the Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), the Loughs Agency, the Agriculture, Food and Biosciences Institute for Northern Ireland (AFBNI) the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and the Marine Institute (MI). The advice from the SSCE is independent of the parent agencies.

Documents relating to the latest review of the EMP measures, including monitoring of stocks, have been made available on the IFI website, www.fisheriesireland.ie, to coincide with

the opening of the public consultation process which was advertised and commenced yesterday (Monday 18 May). These documents are:

- SSCE activity report;
- IFI's three year monitoring report -2012 to 2014; and
- Ireland's Eel Regulation Report to the EU 2015.

The documents are intended to stimulate an exchange of views within the public consultation for the 2015 review which will be a comprehensive process during which it is expected that a range of issues will be raised and considered.

Every stakeholder and interested party now has the opportunity to make their views known in writing before the closing date for the receipt of submissions on 17 June 2015. Full details of the outputs of the public consultation will be made available when this process concludes.

The latest advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) in 2014 states that "The status of eel remains critical. ICES also advises that all anthropogenic mortality (e.g. recreational and commercial fishing, hydropower, pumping stations, and pollution) affecting production and escapement of silver eels should be reduced to – or kept as close to – zero as possible.

The annual recruitment to Europe has increased over the last 3 years from 5% to 12% of historic levels, however recruitment is still well below the reference levels of 1960-1979 and the status of the European Eel remains defined by the United Nations as critically endangered.

While I recognise fully the difficulty facing eel fishermen, there is no property right attaching to public eel licences. The current review advances an opportunity for further consultation with, and submissions from, stakeholders.

Broadband Service Provision

509. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding broadband; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19561/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The information contained in the reply to Question No. 450 of 28 April last is the up-to-date situation in relation to the planned commercial investment in Dingle, Co. Kerry as my Department understands it. Dingle is coloured Blue on our national coverage map (www.broadband.gov.ie) and according to publicly available information on eircom's website (www.eircom.net) the company expects to have its efibre connectivity installed in the town by the autumn of this year.

National Broadband Plan Implementation

510. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will clarify, in relation to the national broadband plan, if new private planned next generation access investments may be added to the map at any time between now and 31 December 2020; if further public consultations will be carried out on foot of the consequent amendments to the map; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19584/15]

511. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he is satisfied that the development of the regulatory framework to underpin the national broadband plan is making sufficient progress to allow him and potential bidders to meet the plan's procurement schedule of late 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19585/15]

512. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the role he envisages for community co-funding in the access network of the national broadband plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19586/15]

513. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his plans to meet the requirements of the strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment directives in relation to the national broadband plan; if any necessary reports or submissions under those assessments will be published, either with, or in advance of, the forthcoming public consultation on the plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19587/15]

514. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in relation to the invitation on his Department's website to potential bidders for the national broadband plan to contact his Department, if he will specify the deadline for such a contract; if bids will be disadvantaged by failure to contact his Department in advance of the issuing of a formal invitation to tender; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19588/15]

515. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he is satisfied with the level of co-operation from industry in relation to information on infrastructure sharing; if the limited information database proposed by his Department is capable of lowering costs, as envisaged by section 3(4) (details supplied) of the State aid guidelines; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19589/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): I propose to take Questions Nos. 510 to 515, inclusive, together.

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every citizen and business, regardless of location, has access to a high quality, high speed broadband service. This will be achieved through a partnership between Government and commercial telecommunications companies.

The commercial telecommunications sector is currently investing approximately €2.5 billion in network upgrades and enhanced services with approximately 1.6 million of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland expected to have access to commercial high speed broadband services over the next two years. These very significant investments represent a step change in the quality of broadband services available.

Last November, I published a national high speed coverage map for 2016. This map is available at www.broadband.gov.ie. The areas marked BLUE represent those areas that will have access to commercial high speed broadband services by end 2016.

The AMBER areas show the target areas for the State intervention. All premises within the AMBER areas will be included in the State's intervention.

New private planned next generation access investments may be added to the national high-speed coverage map, once it is established that these plans are definitive and meet the relevant criteria required to be put on the map. i.e. that they will deliver high speed broadband service to end users. It is envisaged that the map will be updated on an ongoing basis from now until the award of a contract or contracts relating to the State intervention. How the map will develop beyond the contract award has yet to be determined.

Good progress is being made on all of the different elements of this complex project and we remain on track to publish the draft Intervention Strategy for public consultation in July. We are also on track to submit a State Aid Pre-Notification to DG Competition in June. Once the public consultation has been completed, I expect to move quickly into the formal procurement phase towards the end of the year.

As the draft Intervention Strategy is not yet fully finalised, I am not in a position at this time to comment in detail on whether the intervention will include any role for community co-funding in the access network. Based on my Department's on-going interaction with industry, it is clear that there is very significant interest in this project from several commercial operators so it is reasonable to expect a very competitive procurement process. The Intervention is also being designed on a wholesale basis with built-in assurances that it will be on a fully open access basis for all retail service providers who wish to use the new network to provide services to customers.

My Department is fully aware of the legal obligations in place under the relevant environmental impact assessment legislation and we are continuing to consider and address the application of this legislation to the State intervention.

There is no formal deadline in relation to contacting my Department as a potential bidder and bids will not be disadvantaged by not having contacted the Department in advance of the formal procurement process.

In relation to infrastructure sharing, last week my Department published a register of owners of infrastructure, as notified to us. The purpose of this register is to give potential bidders recourse to information on infrastructure which could be used as part of their bid. The register will remain open to any interested party should they wish to have their details included. Indeed, since publication, my Department has received further details for inclusion, and we will continue to engage with various organisations to ensure the maximum level of infrastructure re-use. The sharing of existing telecommunications infrastructure is considered a key enabler in reducing the overall cost of the project and in ensuring value for money to the State.

I expect the physical build of the network to begin in late 2016, and it will take between three and five years to fully complete – depending on the details of the bid or bids that we select.

This complex and ambitious project is a key priority for Government and aims to conclusively address current broadband connectivity issues in mainly rural parts of the country.

Television Licence Fee Payments

516. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the arrangements in place for persons who are currently on social protection payments and on very low income and are having difficulty making ends meet to pay their television licence on a weekly basis, where an official has called to the house in connection with the unlicensed television; if an instalment arrangement can be made to avoid the matter going to court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19600/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The sale of TV licences and the associated inspection process is an operational matter for An Post as the Minister's statutorily appointed Agent under the Broadcasting Act 2009. In general, there are instalment options available to TV licence customers in arrears. The applicability of such a process is dependent on the specific circumstances. Accordingly, the Deputy may wish to bring the circumstances of the case in question to the attention of An Post.

Prospecting Licences

517. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the amount of finances lost to his Department due to his predecessor's decision not to require the holding of petroleum prospecting licences, contrary to the Licensing Terms for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Development and Production 2007, which formed part of the terms and conditions of the onshore options licences, granted in 2011, to companies (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19607/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Joe McHugh): The three companies referred to were awarded onshore Licensing Options in February 2011 for a period of two years from 1 March 2011 to 28 February 2013. In the absence of a specific set of licensing terms for the onshore area, applicants in the 2010 Onshore Licensing Round were advised that any licensing option granted under the licensing round would be subject to the offshore licensing terms. The licensing terms set down in some detail the regulatory framework applying to applicants and holders of petroleum authorisations, most of which are equally applicable to the offshore and onshore areas.

While the holders of the three onshore licensing options granted under the 2010 licensing round each applied for a petroleum prospecting licence, the Department did not process the applications as the work programmes being progressed did not involve interventions that would require a petroleum prospecting licence under the 1960 Act.

The fee to be paid on submission of an application for a petroleum prospecting licence is €1,520 and an annual fee of €7,601 per licence also applies.

Better Energy Homes Scheme Data

518. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide a breakdown, by county, of money awarded under the better energy homes scheme since 2009. [19624/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The Better Energy Homes Scheme is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) under the Better Energy Programme. Better Energy Homes provides a financial incentive to private homeowners who wish to improve the energy performance of their homes. Fixed grants are provided towards the cost of a range of measures including attic insulation, wall insulation, heating systems upgrades, solar thermal panels and accompanying BER. In March of this year I announced increases of between 25% and 50% in the grant levels awarded to householders under the scheme. In addition, a bonus payment has been introduced for householders that complete three or more energy efficiency improvements.

The importance of improving our energy efficiency for reducing our harmful emissions cannot be overstated. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) yesterday published its report on Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2014-2035. The report finds that significant additional effort is required by Ireland to meet our 2020 emissions targets, particularly in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Currently, emissions from the residential sector account for 10% of our total emissions. The report highlights the importance of the Better Energy Programme in delivering the emissions reductions necessary in the residential sector to 2020.

A breakdown on the amount of grants awarded under the Better Energy Homes Scheme on a county by county basis from 2009 is provided in the following table:

County	Total Amount Spent
Dublin	€40,649,542.16
Cork	€24,503,987.74
Limerick	€13,072,441.40
Galway	€11,031,468.88
Kerry	€8,344,621.40
Clare	€7,962,888.51
Tipperary	€7,932,038.57
Waterford	€7,040,037.15
Wexford	€5,202,341.54
Kildare	€4,750,920.01
Mayo	€4,666,536.19
Meath	€4,426,834.30
Wicklow	€4,301,676.94
Donegal	€4,138,553.85
Louth	€3,699,502.33
Kilkenny	€3,110,023.03
Monaghan	€3,063,718.04
Cavan	€2,808,210.52
Westmeath	€2,487,613.68
Roscommon	€2,263,739.55
Laois	€1,880,960.57
Sligo	€1,879,561.56
Offaly	€1,720,753
Carlow	€1,463,406.01
Longford	€1,234,148.05
Leitrim	€887,380
Grand Total	€174,522,904.98

Postal Codes

519. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide an update on the proposed postal codes; when the postcode will be operational; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19639/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): Eircodes, the national postcode system for Ireland, is currently in the implementation phase and is on target to be launched this summer. Every Irish address, residential and business, will be sent a notification by post this summer with the eircode enclosed.

Legislation in order to address data protection elements of the project has been published and will be initiated in the Dáil shortly.

I will announce the actual launch date for Eircodes in the next few weeks.

Pension Provisions

520. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the position regarding Electricity Supply Board pensions (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19671/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White):

I refer to the replies to Questions Nos 469 of 27 April, 2015, 208 of 7 May, 2015 and 201 and 202 of 12 May, 2015. The position is unchanged.

Broadband Service Provision

521. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources when an area (details supplied) in County Meath can expect next generation broadband; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19698/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White):

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every citizen and business, regardless of location, has access to a high quality, high speed broadband service. This will be achieved through a combination of commercial investments and a State led intervention in areas where commercial services will not be provided.

The commercial telecommunications sector is currently investing approximately €2.5 billion in network upgrades and enhanced services with approximately 1.6 million of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland expected to have access to commercial high speed broadband services over the next two years. These very significant investments represent a step-change in the quality of broadband services available.

Last November I published a national high speed coverage map for 2016. This map is available at www.broadband.gov.ie. The areas marked BLUE represent those areas that will have access to commercial high speed broadband services by end 2016.

The AMBER areas show the target areas for the State intervention and includes The Ward, Co Meath. All premises within the AMBER areas will be included in the State's intervention.

More generally I can confirm that next generation broadband services have been rolled out to over 28,000 premises to date in Co Meath with a further 23,000 expected to be served over the next 18 months. The remaining 31,000 premises in Co Meath are the target for the proposed State intervention under the National Broadband Plan.

Intensive design and planning work is underway in my Department to produce a detailed intervention strategy for the AMBER area. Following a public consultation process on the draft Intervention Strategy this summer, I hope to move to formal procurement phase towards the end of this year in order to select a preferred bidder or bidders.

I expect the physical build of the network to begin in late 2016, and it will take between three and five years to fully complete – depending on the details of the bid or bids selected.

This complex and ambitious project is a key priority for Government and aims to conclusively address current broadband connectivity issues in mainly rural parts of the country.

Broadband Service Provision

522. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will provide an update on the investment in broadband in an area (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19781/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White):

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every citizen and business, regardless of location, has access to a high quality, high speed broadband service. This will be achieved through a combination of commercial investments and a State led intervention in areas where commercial services will not be provided.

The commercial telecommunications sector is currently investing approximately €2.5 billion in network upgrades and enhanced services with approximately 1.6 million of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland expected to have access to commercial high speed broadband services over the next two years. These very significant investments represent a step-change in the quality of broadband services available.

Last November I published a national high speed coverage map for 2016. This map is available at www.broadband.gov.ie. The areas marked BLUE represent those areas that will have access to commercial high speed broadband services by end 2016.

The AMBER areas show the target areas for the State intervention and includes Calverstown, County Kildare. All premises within the AMBER areas will be included in the State's intervention.

More generally I can confirm that next generation broadband services have been rolled out to over 54,000 premises to date in Co Kildare with a further 13,600 expected to be served over the next 18 months. The remaining 20,536 premises in Co Kildare are the target for the proposed State intervention under the National Broadband Plan.

Intensive design and planning work is underway in my Department to produce a detailed intervention strategy for the AMBER area. Following a public consultation process on the draft intervention Strategy this summer, I hope to move to formal procurement phase towards the end of this year in order to select a preferred bidder or bidders.

I expect the physical build of the network to begin in late 2016, and it will take between three and five years to fully complete – depending on the details of the bid or bids selected.

This complex and ambitious project is a key priority for Government and aims to conclusively address current broadband connectivity issues in mainly rural parts of the country.

Fishing Industry

523. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources further to Parliamentary Question No. 447 of 28 April 2015, if funding has been allocated to any sector of the eel fishing community under any European Union directive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19789/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Joe McHugh): As outlined in my response to Question No. 447 on 28 April last, no funding was provided by the European Union, in the context of EU regulation 1100/2007, for the provision of a hardship scheme and no property right attaches to public eel licences.

The position has not changed.

Legal Costs

524. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and

Natural Resources the amount spent by his Department in legal fees in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in appealing decisions taken by the High Court; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20158/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): My Department has not incurred any legal fees in appealing decisions taken by the High Court during the years in question.

Tourism Promotion

525. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reason for the exclusion of Youghal, County Cork, as a heritage town from Ireland's Ancient East; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19305/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): While my Department provides the capital funding for investment in tourism offerings such as Ireland's Ancient East, it is not directly involved in developing or managing these. The development of Ireland's Ancient East is an operational matter for Fáilte Ireland. Accordingly I have referred the question to the agency for direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

However, the Deputy may wish to note that despite any misconceptions which may have arisen since its launch, Youghal is not only included in Ireland's Ancient East but will have a significant role to play in the initiative. Ireland's Ancient East extends from Carlingford to Cork and Cavan to Carnsore and is based on 5,000 years of history, heritage and culture all located in that relatively compact region. This new touring region will seek to attract international visitors by building on the wealth of historical and cultural assets in the region – including East Cork.

I understand that tourism operators from East Cork and indeed the Deputy attended an initial Ireland's Ancient East stakeholder workshop in The Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel last week on 13 May, to learn more about the new initiative and to discuss how this will be brought to life in the East Cork area. I would urge tourism operators and communities to embrace this new tourism initiative and capitalise on the opportunities it will present to generate more visitors and tourism revenue, as those communities and operators along the Wild Atlantic Way have embraced that initiative.

Motor Insurance Coverage

526. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on persons under 20 years of age obtaining car insurance, when they are on provisional licences; if all insurance companies operating here will quote for this business, or if there is a restricted market; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19741/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The provision of insurance cover and the price at which it is offered is a commercial matter for insurance companies, operating in an open and competitive market, and is based on an assessment of risk, including the cost and frequency of claims, and adequate provisioning to meet such risk and it is not a matter in which the Government can intervene. I have no role in the regulation of insurers.

An Garda Síochána accident statistics for 2014 show that 25% of drivers killed on our roads last year were between the ages of 18 and 25. Because of the higher risk of collisions, deaths and injuries among learner drivers, since 2006, we have progressively introduced Graduated Driver Licensing measures for such drivers (stronger rules on being accompanied by full licence holders, compulsory driving lessons, lower blood alcohol limits, etc.) that are designed to protect them until they have built up enough experience.

At present there are over 30 insurers writing motor insurance business in Ireland, as listed on the Motor Insurers' Bureau of Ireland (MIBI) website. However, some motor insurance companies may not quote or may be more reluctant to quote for persons in higher risk categories such as persons not on a full licence or persons with a high number of penalty points. The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (consumerhelp.ie/car-insurance) advise that consumers should get their full licence as soon as possible so as to reduce the cost of their insurance.

Road Network

527. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the position regarding the proposed Cork to Limerick motorway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19156/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. The planning, design and implementation of individual road projects is a matter for the National Roads Authority (NRA) under the Roads Acts 1993 to 2007 in conjunction with the local authorities concerned.

Given the national financial position, there have been very large reductions in roads expenditure over the past number of years. The reality is that the available funds do not match the amount of work which could be undertaken. For this reason it has not been possible to progress a range of worthwhile projects and the main focus has to be on the maintenance and repair of roads and this will remain the position in the coming years. The scope for progressing new major road improvement projects will be very much dependent on the availability of funding in the future as the economy recovers further.

In 2011 my predecessor indicated to the NRA that it should withdraw its application to An Bord Pleanála for the M20 Cork to Limerick route. I understand Minister Varadkar was concerned that to proceed any further with the scheme to build the M20 would have exposed the NRA to significant costs arising from a consequent requirement to purchase the CPO'd land within a limited timeframe. This would have had to be done without the reasonable prospect of proceeding to the construction stage quickly.

Given continuing budget constraints and the need to focus on road maintenance and renewal, I do not currently plan to review this decision.

State Airports

528. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on the future of Cork Airport. [19157/15]

529. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the posi-

tion regarding his meetings with Cork Airport management; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19158/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 528 and 529 together.

As the Deputy is aware, national policy in relation to the future of Cork Airport was decided by Government in May, 2012 in the context of the decision to separate Shannon Airport from daa. The Government decided at that time that the existing ownership of Cork Airport by DAA would be maintained for the present.

The draft National Aviation Plan (NAP), which is now at an advanced stage and will be published shortly, restates Government Policy in relation to Cork. It also recognises Cork Airport's role as a key tourism and business gateway for the region, its strategic importance serving Ireland's second city and its hinterland, and identifies the potential for the airport to stabilise and grow traffic.

Cork Airport is the second largest airport in Ireland and vital for business and tourism in the Cork region. Last year some 2.1 million passengers used the Airport. Cork Airport has 42 scheduled routes and offers excellent award winning passenger facilities and connectivity into three major European hub airports.

Of course we are all concerned at the fall in passenger numbers at Cork Airport. However, following my visit to the Airport and meetings with DAA and Cork Airport management, I believe there are opportunities to increase passenger numbers particularly in the area of incoming tourists. Accordingly, I have engaged with Tourism Ireland on the matter and significant co-operative marketing activity has been undertaken with carriers serving Cork Airport to promote flights to Cork and boost travel to the wider regions.

However, these marketing activities have to be underpinned by a cohesive product brand for the Cork region, providing a clear selling point for Cork as a destination in itself and as a gateway to other attractive destinations in Ireland. I am pleased that a Task Force comprising the two local authorities, the Chamber and the Tourism agencies along with DAA and the Irish Tourism Operators Association, is now working on delivering just such a destination brand for Cork, as well as a strategy and implementation plan for maximising inbound tourism growth opportunities.

I urge everybody with an interest in securing the future of Cork Airport to work together to develop and exploit these opportunities.

Road Improvement Schemes

530. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if funding will be made available to Cork County Council to carry out works to the viewing area at a location (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19197/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads (such as the R634) is the statutory responsibility of Cork County Council, 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 the local authority.

My Department has provided funding of €1.2m since 2012 (including an allocation of €255,750 in 2015) to the Youghal Road Wall Collapse, broken down as follows;

Year	Payment
2012	€127,696
2013	€486,649
2014	€383,330
2015	€255,750*
Total	€1,253,425

*Allocation

Any further funding associated with a viewing platform/area is a matter for Cork County Council.

Tourism Promotion

531. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reason an area (details supplied) in County Mayo, that is situated along the Wild Atlantic Way, has been excluded from the maps and marketing of the route; if he will officially include this area on the route; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19233/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): While my Department provides the capital funding for investment in tourism offerings such as the Wild Atlantic Way, it is not directly involved in developing or managing these. The development of the Wild Atlantic Way is an operational matter for Fáilte Ireland. Accordingly I have referred the question to the agency for direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

The Deputy should be aware that the route of the Wild Atlantic Way was developed using a collaborative approach; regional steering groups were convened to inform route development. The steering groups comprised Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities, local LEADER and Development companies and other key agencies such as Údarás na Gaeltachta, the Western Development Commission and others as relevant to each particular region.

For those communities that are not on the route it is important to note that the actual route is not simply a touring route but is rather a means to guide and attract visitors, and that all villages, businesses and geographic areas within close proximity of the route are in essence part of the geography of the Wild Atlantic Way. The purpose of the Wild Atlantic Way is to give guidance to visitors as to what there is to see on our western coast, and provide easy access to a range of experiences along the route and so enable local businesses to take advantage of the benefits of the Wild Atlantic Way. My advice to communities on and near to the Wild Atlantic Way is to focus on how to use the route to generate more tourism revenue and not to focus on specific details of the route.

Sports Capital Programme Applications

532. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide a sports capital grant to finalise Cordal Gaelic Athletic Association's project (details supplied) in County Kerry, in view of the fact this is the second and concluding part of transforming its previously unplayable pitch, with the aid of the sports capital grant and local fundraising; if he will prioritise this application to enable this progressive club to have fully devel-

oped inclusive community grounds; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19299/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring): I can confirm that an application has been submitted by the organisation referred to by the Deputy under the 2015 Sports Capital Programme and the Deputy's support for the project is noted.

I expect to announce allocations later this year.

Rail Services

533. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reason the proposed non-stop morning route by Iarnród Éireann, from Cork to Dublin, is not going ahead as planned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19389/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The issue raised is a matter for Iarnród Éireann and I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the company for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

Sports Capital Programme Expenditure

534. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the amount of funding that has been awarded to basketball clubs in the Dundalk area, County Louth, excluding schools, in the years 2011 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19406/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring): Details of all allocations made under the Sports Capital Programme are available on the Department's website www.dttas.ie.

No applications were received from organisations in County Louth that identified their main sport as basketball in the period referred to by the Deputy.

Bus Éireann Services

535. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide a breakdown of each of the Bus Éireann routes that are proposed to be privatised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19508/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): No services are being privatised. What is being proposed is a tender process, under the aegis of the National Transport Authority (NTA), in respect of a small segment of the overall number of publicly-subsented bus routes. The routes will continue to be provided through public subvention and under the supervision of the NTA. Both Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus will be able to bid in the tendering process when it starts in mid-2015.

The actual breakdown of each of the Bus Éireann routes to be tendered out is a matter for the NTA and I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

Disability Services Provision

536. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he is aware that, despite many hotels being advertised as being disability accessible, there are often many difficulties inside hotel bedrooms for persons with disabilities, in areas such as bed height and bathroom access; his views that it would be beneficial for persons with disabilities who look to book specific hotels, to provide a new categorisation system on this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19514/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Matters in relation to the formal regulation of accommodation are operational matters for the Board and management of Fáilte Ireland. Accordingly, I have referred the Deputy's question to Fáilte Ireland for further information and direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

More generally, matters in relation to access for people with disabilities are matters for the National Disability Authority, which falls under the aegis of the Minister for Justice and Equality, and it may be wise to raise this matter with that Minister as well.

Taxi Data

537. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of valid hackney licences in circulation for each of the past five years. [19574/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including the issue and renewal of SPSV licences, is a matter for the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013.

I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.

Tourism Promotion

538. **Deputy Gabrielle McFadden** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide, in tabular form, the specific marketing and advertising budget Fáilte Ireland allocated to developing the tourism product in counties Longford and Westmeath during the years 2010 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19632/15]

539. **Deputy Gabrielle McFadden** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide, in tabular form, the specific marketing and advertising budget Fáilte Ireland allocated to developing the tourism product in counties Dublin and Galway and in Westport in County Mayo, during the years 2010 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19633/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 538 and 539 together.

The matter raised is an operational matter for the tourism agencies. Fáilte Ireland is responsible for the development of tourism product and the marketing and promotion of domestic tourism. Tourism Ireland is responsible for the overseas promotion of the island of Ireland as

a tourist destination. Accordingly, I have referred the Deputy's question to both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland for further information and direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

Cycling Facilities Provision

540. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans and the progress to date to facilitate a cycle route between Leixlip, County Kildare, and Mullingar, County Westmeath, inclusive of Maynooth, County Kildare, with particular reference to the obvious benefits to the local communities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19693/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The cycle route to which the Deputy is referring is part of the proposed 276km Dublin to Galway Greenway. For the purpose of progressing this work the proposed route has been broken up into two sections, the National Transport Authority (NTA) are dealing with the Dublin-Maynooth section and the National Roads Authority (NRA) are overseeing the Maynooth to Galway section.

Planning approval has been received for the 38km section between Maynooth and the Meath/Westmeath county boundary and construction can commence once funding becomes available. All Department funding for the development of greenways is fully committed up to 2016, however, I would expect that when funding becomes available that this project will be in a position, amongst many other projects, to avail of that.

A leaflet produced by the NRA which sets out the aims and benefits of this flagship project to local communities is available at the following link:

[Leaflet][

Taxi Regulations

541. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to accede to the request of the taxi industry to allow branding currently applied to taxi doors to be replaced by magnetic signage, that may be removed when taxis are not in public use. [19720/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The regulation of the taxi industry, including signage and branding, is a matter for the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Taxi Regulation Act, 2013.

I have referred your question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Sports Capital Programme Applications

542. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the position regarding a sports capital grant in respect of a group (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [19743/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring): I can confirm that an application has been submitted by the organisation referred to by the Deputy under the 2015 Sports Capital Programme and the Deputy's support for the project is noted.

I expect to announce allocations later this year.

Sports Capital Programme Applications

543. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if favourable consideration will be provided to the sports capital programme grant application by Fingal County Council for the refurbishment of Slaugh Hall, on behalf of the Swords Boxing Club and Fingallians Gaelic Athletic Association club, County Dublin, a project which the council will co-fund. [19784/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring): I can confirm that an application has been submitted by the organisation referred to by the Deputy under the 2015 Sports Capital Programme and the Deputy's support for the project is noted.

I expect to announce allocations later this year.

Irish Language

544. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the discussions being held with the European Union over the procedures to continue the derogation against the Irish language; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19521/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh): The Irish language was given full official and working language status in the EU from 1 January 2007 under Regulation 920/2005. The Regulation included a partial derogation to be reviewed every five years with the first period lasting until 31 December 2011. Following a review, the partial derogation was extended for a second period until 31 December 2016 under Regulation 1257/2010. Under the terms of the derogation in place since 2007, only legislation adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly the co-decision procedure) must be translated into Irish.

In order to achieve the required timelines, a decision is required by Government in 2015 on the optimal approach to the derogation, following which the Council of the European Union will review its operation. A unanimous decision by Council is required before the end of 2015 on whether to extend, amend or end the derogation. The action agreed by Council would then be implemented from 1 January 2017.

Officials from my Department and the Department of An Taoiseach have been actively engaging with the EU institutions and other relevant stakeholders for some time in order to formulate the optimal approach to the derogation. In this context, the legislative and non-legislative services which are currently provided through Irish and the potential to expand these services are under consideration. Preparatory work on a draft Regulation is underway in advance of a draft memorandum being brought to Government.

In logistical and reputational terms, it is important to note that the approach adopted by Ireland in relation to the derogation is seen to be a balanced and rational response that will have

regard to prevailing circumstances and challenges, particularly in relation to issues such as the timely recruitment of the requisite personnel and the actual usage of Irish in the EU institutions.

Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge

545. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to Parliamentary Question No. 518 of 28 April 2015, if she will bring forward proposals for increased funding of existing scholarships, and the introduction of new scholarships, for Gaeltacht language courses, in order that the targets in the Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030 are met. [19343/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh): Under Scéim na bhFoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge (the Irish Language Learners Scheme), my Department provides grants to Gaeltacht households which accommodate students while attending Irish colleges in the Gaeltacht. My Department does not provide scholarships for students to attend Irish colleges in the Gaeltacht.

There are no plans at present to increase the grants paid to Gaeltacht households under Scéim na bhFoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge or to introduce a scholarship scheme for students to attend Irish colleges in the Gaeltacht.

As I indicated in my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 518 of 28 April 2015, I am aware that scholarships are provided from time to time by various Irish language, cultural and sports organisations, as well as by several local authorities. I am also aware that some of the Irish colleges themselves offer part scholarships.

Hare Coursing Regulation

546. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the reason she intervened in the case of two hare coursing clubs (details supplied), and did not apply any sanctions, following alleged breaches of conditions of their licences. [19344/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): Licences were issued by my Department in August 2014, under the Wildlife Acts, to the Irish Coursing Club on behalf of their affiliated clubs to facilitate the tagging and capturing of hares for the purpose of hare coursing for the 2014/15 coursing season.

Where resources allow, officials of my Department attend coursing meetings, on a spot-check basis, to monitor compliance with conditions on the licences granted by my Department. Veterinary officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine also attend some meetings on an annual basis.

The reports of officials from my Department who attended the two coursing meetings in question in September and October 2013 indicated that there was a lack of co-operation with them in the course of their duties, an issue which I take very seriously.

Following engagement with the clubs in question and the Irish Coursing Club, the body that oversees individual coursing clubs, written assurances were provided to my Department that both clubs would fully co-operate with officials of the Department at all times and that they would adhere to all licence conditions. On the basis of these assurances, I decided not to impose sanctions against the clubs on this occasion. At the same time, both clubs were issued with written warnings that any further transgressions, especially relating to lack of co-operation

with officials of my Department, would result in my Department imposing future sanctions against the clubs.

Officials from my Department monitored the meetings of both clubs during the 2014/15 coursing season. The Conservation Rangers who attended the meetings reported that there was full co-operation forthcoming.

Special Areas of Conservation Management

547. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if her Department or the National Parks and Wildlife Service has written to landowners in the Slieve League area (details supplied) advising them to discontinue turf cutting in the area of the special area of conservation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19445/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): Slieve League, County Donegal, is a candidate special area of conservation. Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, certain activities within a candidate special area of conservation may not be undertaken, without my prior written consent, as Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

I am advised that, in March 2013, my Department wrote to 57 landowners or users in the Slieve League candidate special area of conservation informing them of the activities within or affecting the site that require my prior consent, as Minister. In May 2014, my Department wrote to a further 7 landowners or users.

The cutting of turf from intact (uncut) blanket bog areas for domestic use is one of the activities which may not be carried out within or affecting the site without my prior consent, as Minister. However, my prior consent is not required for the cutting of turf from existing blanket bog banks for domestic use.

Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme Applications

548. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of applications for relocation under the turf cutting compensation scheme that have been received by her Department; the number of these that have been processed; have been successful; have been unsuccessful; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19499/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): 745 applicants under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme, applicable to raised bog special areas of conservation, have expressed an interest in relocation to a non-designated bog. 8 of these applicants have been informed by my Department that it has been decided that they do not fulfil the qualifying criteria of the scheme. These applicants have been provided with the opportunity to appeal against the decisions of my Department to the Peatlands Council. Relocation is a complex process in terms of

- investigating suitable sites for turf quality and quantity;
- the infrastructure/drainage works required;
- establishing the number that can be accommodated on the site;
- the cost and feasibility of land purchase or lease; and

- possible planning and Environmental Impact Assessment requirements.

Notwithstanding the complexity involved, progress in relocating turf cutters to non-designated bogs is being achieved in a number of cases and arrangements have been made as regards:

- Clara Bog special area of conservation in County Offaly, where 25 qualifying turf cutters have been accommodated on Killeranny Bog; and
- Carrownagappul Bog and Curraghlahanagh Bog special areas of conservation in County Galway, where 23 qualifying turf cutters have been accommodated on the Islands Bog and Killasolan Bog.

A further 7 qualifying turf cutters from Carrownagappul Bog and Curraghlahanagh Bog are being accommodated at Cloonabricka Bog in County Galway where turf cutting is scheduled to commence next year.

Works have been undertaken on Lemanaghan Bog in County Offaly with a view to facilitating 12 qualifying turf cutters from Moyclare Bog special area of conservation. Progress has been made to relocate a small number of individual turf cutters to bog plots in County Westmeath and County Galway.

When relocation sites have been assessed as suitable, my Department has been seeking expressions of interest from turf cutters with a view to them moving to these sites. In this regard, my Department has written to almost 300 turf cutters from 18 special area of conservation bogs seeking expressions of interest in relocation to specific sites. The Department is moving forward in the relocation process where sufficient interest has been received in relocation to particular sites.

While the various stages in the relocation process are on-going, turf cutters may avail of €1,500, index-linked, or 15 tonnes of cut turf per annum under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme.

Potential relocation sites have been identified for each of the remaining raised bog special areas of conservation where relocation may be required. For a number of these special area of conservation sites, the relocation site identified may not be suitable or may not have the capacity to cater for the number of turf cutters who may wish to relocate there. In such cases, and in the context of the finalisation of the National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan, my Department is considering the available options in terms of relocation and the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive.

Beit Collection

549. **Deputy Anne Ferris** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if her attention has been drawn to the fact that the intended beneficiaries of the Alfred Beit Foundation are the citizens of Ireland, and that the trust was established with the charitable objective of education in fine arts, her views regarding the risk that further sale of trust assets could be contrary to achieving the overall public benefit objective of the trust; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19524/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The administration of the Beit Foundation, which owns and operates Russborough House, is a matter for the trustees and my Department has no role in the matter.

Scéim na bhFoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge

550. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil sé i gceist aici cur le líon na scoláireachtaí do scoláirí ón mhórthír chun freastal ar mheánscoileanna ar na hoileáin i bhfianaise an tionchair atá ag an scéim seo ar iompar teanga na scoláirí; cén cúnamh a thugtar leis an scéim chun na scoileanna oileánda a choinneáil ar oscailt agus chun pobal inmharthana a choinneáil ar na hoileáin; an mó éileamh atá déanta ar an scéim; ós rud é go mbeidh comóradh céad bliain Éirí Amach na Cásca 1916 ar siúl in 2016 agus go raibh cur chun cinn na Gaeilge lárnach don Éirí Amach; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [19543/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh): Faoi Scéim na bhFoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge, íoctar deontas laethúil de €27 le teaghlach cháilithe ar oileáin Ghaeltachta chun daltaí ó cheantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht a choinneáil ar iostas fad a bhíonn siad ag freastal ar mheánscoileanna ar na hoileáin sin. Cuidíonn an scéim le hinmharthanacht na meánscoileanna sin ar na hoileáin Ghaeltachta.

Tá scoileanna ar Árainn, Inis Meáin agus Inis Oírr i nGaillimh páirteach sa scéim agus 12 theaghlach ag cur lóistín ar fáil do na daltaí ar na hoileáin sin. Is iad na scoileanna a dhéanann earcaíocht ar na daltaí, a roghnaíonn na tithe lóistín agus a chuireann na daltaí ar iostas sna tithe lóistín. Is iad na scoileanna fosta atá freagrach as na daltaí fad a bhíonn siad ar na hoileáin.

Nuair a cuireadh tús leis an scéim seo sa bhliain 2007, d'íoc mo Roinn deontas i leith 13 dalta an bhliain sin. Tá deontas á íoc ag mo Roinn i leith 34 dalta in 2015. Dá bhrí sin, is léir go bhfuil an t-éileamh ar an scéim ag méadú i rith an ama.

Déantar athbhreithniú ar an scéim go rialta. Cuirtear nithe éagsúla san áireamh mar chuid de na hathbhreithnithe sin, lena n-áirítear an t-éileamh ó na meánscoileanna ar na hoileáin agus an tionchar a d'fhéadfadh líon iomarcach daltaí ó cheantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht a imirt ar theanga phobal na meánscoileanna agus ar theanga phobal na n-oileán féin.

Tugtar sonraí sa tábla thíos faoin líon daltaí agus an caiteachas go dáta ó cuireadh tús leis an scéim:

Bliain	Caiteachas	Líon daltaí - Árainn	Líon daltaí - Inis Meáin	Líon daltaí - Inis Oírr	Líon iomlán daltaí
2007	€68,460	0	8	5	13
2008	€65,110	2	8	3	13
2009	€62,870	4	8	1	13
2010	€77,340	3	10	2	15
2011	€91,950	4	10	4	18
2012	€125,340	11	12	1	24
2013	€159,741	5	12	9	26
2014	€127,953	10	13	12	35
2015*	€65,745	10	13	11	34

*Íochta go dáta

Heritage Schemes

551. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the County Mayo heritage buildings and projects that were put forward by Mayo County Council for funding to her Department, under the structures at risk fund 2015; and if she will make a

statement on the matter. [19643/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The Structures at Risk Fund 2015, with an allocation of €624,000, will enable conservation works to twenty-eight heritage structures, in both private and public ownership, throughout the country, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended. This Fund is being administered by the local authorities and was open to two applications per local authority, of which one application may be in respect of a privately-owned building. Mayo County Council submitted two applications, one of which was successful. Details of structures awarded funding are available on my Department's website www.ahg.gov.ie. Details of the other applications may be obtained directly from the relevant local authority.

Judicial Reviews

552. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she had an opportunity to consider the decision in respect of a judicial review (details supplied); the steps she will take to avoid costs that may attach to her Department, by not dealing with this matter; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19739/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I am aware of the outcome of this Judicial Review. The content of the recent lengthy judgment of the High Court is presently being reviewed by my Department.

Commemorative Events

553. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the provision that has been made for the commemoration of the 182 persons from the Ballina area of County Mayo who served with the Allied forces, and were killed during the First World War; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19764/15]

554. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the provision there are in the Government's plans for commemorative events, monuments and other tributes, at local level, to the Irish men and women who died in the First World War; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19765/15]

555. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the events and activities that have been undertaken by her Department to commemorate Irish men and women who served with the Allied forces during the First World War; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19766/15]

556. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the amount of money that has been allocated and spent for the commemoration of Irish men and women who served with the Allied forces during the First World War; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19767/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 553 to 556, inclusive, together.

My Department continues to assist with and support a range of commemorative events and initiatives to remember the Irish men and women who served during World War 1. The Government has been represented at many national and international events since the centenary of the outbreak of the War in August 2014. Many of these events and activities are detailed in the

www.decadeofcentenaries.com website supported by my Department.

Some highlights in 2014 included the following:

- The dedication jointly by President Higgins and the Duke of Kent of the Cross of Sacrifice in Glasnevin Cemetery in July 2014. This was a welcome addition to the comprehensive and inclusive representation of Irish history in Glasnevin and was brought forward in partnership between Glasnevin Trust and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- Government representation at war memorial ceremonies in Northern Ireland on Armistice Day and at the anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July.
- Government representation, alongside the representatives of the British Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, at the annual commemorations on the Somme – a sequence of engagements which acknowledge our shared heritage.
- A National Museum of Ireland conference at Collins Barracks on 1 February 2014 on *Remembering World War One in Europe, 1914-2014*.
- A National Gallery of Ireland programme of events commencing on 1 March 2014 with a *Study Day on War Artists*, followed on 2 March 2014 by a consideration of *War Poetry and Images of the First World War*.
- A National Library of Ireland exhibition on World War 1, entitled *World War Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience*.

With regard to 2015, my Department supported a very successful dramatisation of the Gallipoli experience, entitled PALS, which was presented at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks to popular acclaim over a 3 month period in early 2015.

On 25-26 April, a series of events related to the 100 anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign were initiated in association with the Australian Embassy and the New Zealand Ireland Association. At Glasnevin Cemetery, 8 recipients of the Victoria Cross (VC) were honoured, with participation from British, Australian and New Zealand diplomatic corps, as well as veterans of the British Legion and a descendent of one VC recipient from the Royal Munster Fusiliers. This presentation followed similar ceremonies in 2014/15 in respect of earlier VC recipients.

History Ireland has organised a “hedge school” in the National Library supported by my Department.

My Department also provided financial support to the local authorities in Cork towards the recent substantial programme of events arranged to commemorate the 100 anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

For more local events, my Department seeks to provide advice and guidance to local communities. Local authorities can also help with practical advice and assistance. My Department does not generally fund local memorials.

In terms of overall expenditure by my Department for activities relating to the Decade of Centenaries, including World War 1, a sum of the order of €300,000 was provided in 2014. A budget of the order of €350,000 is envisaged in respect of 2015. These sums would include the supports from my Department for the Decade of Centenaries website at www.decadeofcentenaries.com and the Century Ireland website at www.rte.ie/centuryireland/, which deal with all aspects of the period in question.

19 May 2015

Departmental Bodies

557. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will support a matter (details supplied) regarding the sale of old paintings; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19810/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): My Department has no role in relation to the sale of the artwork referred to in the Deputy's Question, which is a matter for the trustees of the foundation that owns and operates the facility in which the artwork is housed.

