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 5, inclusive, answered orally.

Patient Data

6. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health the reason the data relating to breast cancer patients at University Hospital Waterford for February 2015 was not available; if the breast cancer unit at UHW was fully staffed in the months January to April 2015; the percentage of people with symptomatic breast cancer that were seen within the two week target at UHW in January and February 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20785/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The HSE Performance Report for February 2015 did not contain data for symptomatic breast cancer services for University Hospital Waterford due to data collection issues. However, the relevant data has since been collated and data from Waterford will be included in future reports. University Hospital Waterford has seen 100% of patients triaged as urgent within the two week target timeframe each month from January to April this year. This exceeds the national performance target of seeing 95% of urgent referrals within two weeks.

I want to thank the staff and management in Waterford for this achievement.

University Hospital Waterford had three Consultant Breast Surgeons in the Symptomatic Breast Disease unit in the period in question, the full allocation of posts.

Ambulance Service Provision

7. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Health his proposals to improve the ambulance service in 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20770/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The National Ambulance Service has undergone significant reform and modernisation in recent years and this continues in 2015. Key to the reform is the development of a single national control system and the rationalisation of control centres to one national centre. This project is introducing better technology and improving response times. Developments such as national digital radio, computer aided dispatch, mobile data and electronic patient care reporting, will allow the National Ambulance Service to deploy resources more effectively and efficiently, on a national rather than a small geographic basis.

A landmark was reached in January when the Townsend Street control centre, the National Ambulance Service command and control headquarters, moved seamlessly to the new National Emergency Operations Centre in Tallaght. In April Tullamore control centre and the National Aeromedical Coordination Centre transferred successfully to the National Centre. Wexford, the only remaining regional centre, will transfer later this year. Work is also underway with Dublin Fire Brigade to integrate ambulance call taking and dispatch for the Dublin area and make best use of HSE and Dublin Fire Brigade ambulance resources on a real-time basis.

A €5.4m budget increase in 2015 will help address service gaps, particularly in the west, by reforming rostering and staffing additional stations. Tuam and Mulranny stations have now commenced operations and discussions are underway concerning staffing of a newly refurbished facility at Loughglynn. The number of community first response teams is expanding, with 123 teams now operating. The Emergency Aeromedical Support Service continues to provide rapid access to appropriate treatment for very high acuity patients.

I am confident that all of these measures will further improve our ambulance service in 2015.

Questions Nos. 8 to 11, inclusive, answered orally.

Mental Health Services Provision

12. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Health the steps being taken to improve assessment and services for children with autism in counties Laois and Offaly. [20540/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE is currently engaged in a major reconfiguration of existing therapy resources for children with disabilities, including those with autism, into multi-disciplinary geographically based teams. The key objective of the Progressing Disabilities Programme is to bring about equity of access to disability services and consistency of service delivery across the country. This involves the creation of a clear pathway to services for children with disabilities, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of the individual child's difficulties.

A number of HSE Community Healthcare Organisations across the country are successfully implementing the programme. It requires significant preparatory work in engaging with families, schools, voluntary providers and local communities and the development of new procedures and protocols in respect of multidisciplinary and multiagency working. Once this preparatory work has been completed additional posts are being provided to support the implementation of the new model of service.

In the Laois/Offaly area considerable work has been done to put in place the required governance structure which will allow for additional posts to be provided in 2015. A total of 120 new therapy posts will be provided across the country from an additional €4 million allocated this year (equating to €6 million in a full year). The HSE is currently finalising details of the allocation of additional therapy posts and it has informed me that Laois/Offaly will be prioritised.

The allocation of additional resources to Laois/Offaly to support the implementation of the Progressing Disabilities Programme will help address waiting times under the statutory Assessment of Need in the area. Research done by the National Disability Authority has demonstrated that where the Progressing Disabilities Programme has been successively implemented it has had a very positive impact on reducing waiting times for the Assessment of Need.

In addition the HSE is planning a waiting list initiative in Laois/Offaly shortly utilising spare

capacity across public, voluntary and private providers to seek to reduce waiting times for the assessment and treatment of children pending the allocation and filling of the additional posts.

HSE Governance

13. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to enforce greater accountability by management of the Health Service Executive and his Department officials, in view of recent quality issues in hospitals, nursing homes and care homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20541/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): At my request, the HSE developed and set out a considerably enhanced and strengthened Accountability Framework in its 2015 National Service Plan. The Framework makes explicit the responsibilities of all managers to deliver on the 2015 Service Plan targets across a balanced scorecard covering the four vital areas of:

- Quality and Safety

- Access

- Finance and

- Human Resources.

The Framework describes in detail the means by which the HSE and in particular the Hospital Groups and Community Health Organisations will be accountable in 2015 for performance across these four areas and allows for a level of transparency in the process of accountability which has not been there in the past.

A key feature of the Accountability Framework is the introduction of formal Performance Agreements between the Director General and each National Director and between the National Directors and the newly appointed Hospital Group CEOs and Community Health Organisation Chief Officers.

A set of Key Performance Indicators are in place to assess performance on an ongoing basis. A formal escalation and intervention process has been introduced for under-performing services which includes a range of sanctions for significant or persistent underperformance. The escalation process requires supports, interventions and sanctions to be applied. Sanctions fall to be considered at a later stage if supports and interventions do not lead to sufficiently improved performance. The response to underperformance will be differentiated and includes limitation of autonomy in relation to staffing decisions, close monitoring of remedial actions, restrictions in access to additional development and capital funding and restrictions to participation in non-core activities.

My Department engages with HSE senior management on a monthly basis to review performance across the areas of quality and safety, access, finance and HR and detailed performance information on these areas is published on a monthly basis.

The recent HIQA report on Portlaoise highlighted the need for greater accountability across all levels of the health service. The report raised serious questions and issues relating to the appropriateness and effectiveness of managerial actions. These matters will be addressed through HSE internal disciplinary procedures. The Director General of the HSE has confirmed that two review processes will be set up and will involve external reviewers from outside of the HSE in order to guarantee full independence and transparency. One of these reviews will investigate

managerial decision making and risk management issues raised in the HIQA report. It will be open to this review to recommend that the disciplinary procedure is commenced in respect of particular staff.

The accountability of officials of my Department is governed by the Public Service Management Act. My Department has recently published its Strategy Statement 2015-2017 which sets out a range of commitments and against which performance will be evaluated over the period.

Ambulance Service Provision

14. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Health if he has considered any improvement to the ambulance service in rural County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20547/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The National Ambulance Service is currently reviewing its resources in both urban and rural parts of the country. A €5.4m budget increase in 2015 will help address service gaps, by reforming rostering and staffing additional stations. A recruitment campaign is currently underway for paramedic resources, which once recruited will enhance the service provision in County Limerick. The number of community first response teams is expanding, with 123 teams now operating across the country. The National Ambulance Service has ongoing communication and engagement with community first responder groups in conjunction with CFR Ireland to enhance the capacity of communities to respond to emergency cardiac calls.

The Emergency Aeromedical Support Service, which has been very successful with over 980 missions completed, will continue to provide rapid access to appropriate treatment for very high acuity patients where this might be difficult to achieve by road. The Intermediate Care Service is now providing transport for lower acuity, non-urgent, inter-hospital patient transfers. This service frees up emergency vehicles for more urgent calls. I am confident that all of these measures will further improve our ambulance service in 2015.

Hospital Waiting Lists

15. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Health the current waiting time for new referrals for an outpatient orthopaedic appointment in Letterkenny General Hospital, County Donegal, compared to the national target time; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20538/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Reducing long waiting times for hospital treatment is a key priority for Government. Last January, taking into account current pressures on acute hospital services, I directed the HSE to ensure maximum permissible waiting times for in-patient and day case treatment or a first consultant-led outpatient appointment of 18 months by mid year and 15 months by year end.

Over the last 7 weeks, the number of people waiting for an outpatient appointment has reduced by 7,773. The HSE, in conjunction with Hospital Groups, is focused on this requirement through maximising the use of internal capacity within and across Hospital Groups in the first instance, in addition to validating waiting lists and facilitating additional clinics where capacity exists to do so.

Letterkenny General Hospital advises that the average waiting time for patients to receive

an orthopaedic appointment, based on recent attendance data, is 39 weeks.

In April 2015 Letterkenny General Hospital introduced physiotherapy-led musculoskeletal outpatient clinics to address the needs of those referred with lower back pain. It is anticipated that this clinic will provide significant additional capacity for this cohort of patients, contributing to a spectrum of care which supports the efficient use of hospital resources.

As well as initiatives at local level, it is recognised that judicious outsourcing may be required to address prolonged waiting times.

Disability Services Provision

16. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health his views on the Disability Federation of Ireland's recent statement that the disability community has not been protected throughout the previous budgets; his further views on the introduction of a package of measures to increase supports for those with disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20756/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Disability Federation of Ireland statement raises a wide range of issues relating to people with a disability. The Government values the role which people with disabilities play in Irish society and is committed to facilitating the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the life of the community through access to individualised personal social supports and services. My response will refer specifically to health service supports.

In 2015, we will continue to support the major transformation programme underway in disability services, and in particular, the reconfiguration of residential services, including moving people from institutions to homes in the community and reconfiguring adult day services based on individualised and person-centred supports. Continued emphasis will also be maintained on enhancing quality and safety, especially through implementation of the HIQA standards for residential settings, reform of adult day services and children's therapy services, planning for emergency places and changing needs, maximising efficiencies and further development of enhanced governance and accountability arrangements. Our focus is to bring about reforms that will positively impact on the way in which people with disabilities are supported to live the lives of their choice.

Funding of almost €1.5 billion will be provided for health and personal social services through the HSE's National Service Plan for 2015. Residential services are provided by almost 60 agencies to around 9,000 people with disabilities at over 1,200 locations. Day services are provided to around 22,000 people with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities and autism at 850 different locations by 80 organisations. Approximately 1,400 young people who are due to leave school and Rehabilitative Training programmes in 2015 will receive new placements. In 2015, an additional €6 million has been allocated to provide places for these school leavers and graduates. Respite residential support totalling 190,000 overnights will be provided. The target for provision of personal assistant/home support in 2015 is 3.9 million hours.

In addition, work is advanced on the re-configuration of therapy services for children aged up to 18 years as part of the HSE's *Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (0-18 years) Programme.* An additional €4 million was allocated in 2014 to assist in implementing the Programme, equating to approximately 80 additional therapy posts. A further investment of €4 million will also be made to support the development of therapy services in 2015 (equating to €6 million in a full year).

Maternity Services Provision

17. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to a survey carried out by the INMO (details supplied) that points out that the internationally recommended midwife-to-birth ratio of one midwife for every 29.5 births, 1:29.5, is not in place in any hospitals or midwifery units here; the measures he has taken to tackle the issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20768/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): My attention has been drawn to the findings of this survey. One of my priorities for 2015 is the publication of a National Maternity Strategy. This will provide a roadmap to better maternity services. It will ensure that women have access to safe, sustainable, well staffed maternity care in a setting most appropriate to their needs.

An extra €2 million has been included in the HSE National Service Plan 2015 to address current pressures within the Maternity Service. The measures proposed by the HSE include the appointment of 7 consultant obstetricians, 3 sonographers and additional senior midwives and midwives, the numbers of which will be informed by the Birthrate Plus study, which will be completed in June. A benchmarking exercise is being undertaken to establish baseline midwifery and maternity care assistant staffing levels in all maternity units.

Ireland has a relatively low ratio of staff per birth in our maternity services. However, the numbers of obstetricians and midwives are increasing. In 2015, we have 123 whole time equivalent consultant obstetricians, compared with 116 in 2011, when this Government came into office. Midwife numbers have increased significantly from 1,189 whole time equivalents in 2011 to 1,424 in 2015. This on-going increase in staffing came at a time when the country was in a financial emergency. This is significant and shows that government and the HSE protected maternity services during the toughest financial environment. Increasing staff numbers, coupled with a falling birth rate, means that, although there is a way to go, the ratio of obstetric and midwifery staff to births is improving and will continue to do so.

While staffing levels and expertise form part of the service delivery, resources are not the only issue. Guaranteeing better outcomes for patients is a fundamental principle of our health reform programme. We all continue to strive to ensure that patients receive the best care possible when they need to access health and social care services.

Action 46 of Future Health commits the Department of Health to work with the HSE to implement an approach to workforce planning and development that achieves the objectives of: recruiting and retaining the right mix of staff; training and upskilling the workforce; providing for professional and career development; and creating supportive and healthy workplaces. This approach will include the development by my Department of a national integrated strategic framework for health workforce planning during 2015.

A cross-sectoral Working Group will be convened to develop the framework in the near future. The Group's deliberations will take into account any relevant considerations from the development of a national maternity strategy and consultation with key stakeholders will form part of the Group's work.

Air Ambulance Service Provision

18. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health the progress to date in the examination of proposals to establish the emergency aeromedical support service on a permanent basis; and if discussions have taken place with the Department of Defence on this issue. [20762/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The EAS provides dedicated aeromedical support to the NAS in the west, specifically where land ambulance transit times would not be clinically appropriate. One third of these have involved STEMI-type heart attack patients, who need time-critical transfers to specialist primary PCI units for treatment.

The EAS Establishment Group was set up to examine how to place the EAS on a permanent footing. I have received the Group's report and, along with my colleague, the Minister for Defence, I am considering its contents.

Question No. 19 answered orally.

Hospital Staff Recruitment

20. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the recruitment of additional midwives and nurses at the Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath. [20761/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have made enquiries to the HSE concerning the recruitment of additional midwives and nurses at Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar. It was agreed that 10 additional nursing posts would be provided for the Emergency Department in the Midland Regional Hospital. The HSE has advised that these ten posts were offered to nurses on relevant recruitment panels and six nurses have expressed an interest in applying for the posts. Fifteen general nursing posts were offered to nurses on the relevant recruitment panel with eight expressions of interest to date. There have been 8 midwifery posts accepted to date. Those who have expressed an interest in the posts above are now proceeding through the pre-employment recruitment process with the HSE's National Recruitment Service.

Hospital Services

21. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health the reason the amount of day cases handled at University Hospital Waterford so far in 2015 is down 15% on the same period in 2014; the reason elective admissions at UHW are down 9% in the same period; if there are any plans to reopen the second operating theatre at the hospital which was closed in 2013/2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20784/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): There were 7,491 day cases at University Hospital Waterford to the end of April 2014 and 7,237 for the same period in 2015, a reduction in day case activity of 3.4%. This was mainly due to a reduction in dermatology day case activity. In 2014, dermatology services for pigmented lesion clinics were temporarily transferred to the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital,Cork, pending the filling of two consultant dermatologist vacancies and the return of one consultant from maternity leave.

In the first four months of 2015, with the exception of dermatology, overall day case activity increased by 3.3% over 2014, due to increased activity in general surgery, ophthalmology, ENT and orthopaedics.

There were 1,514 elective admissions at Waterford to the end of April 2015, compared to 1,508 in the same period in 2014 - an increase of 0.4%.

There are eight operating theatres at Waterford, seven of which are functioning at this time. In 2011, two theatres closed for cost containment purposes. One of those theatres reopened in January 2015, to provide additional emergency theatre access. Reopening of the remaining

theatre will be kept under review in the context of resource and operational considerations.

Patient Forums

22. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to introduce an independent patient advocacy service; its terms of reference and if it will cover all patient services nationwide; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20542/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the strength and courage of the families who spoke out about their experiences in Portlaoise Hospital. Motivated by the desire to ensure that other families would not suffer as they had, they voiced their concerns. We must ensure that the opportunity provided by the HIQA Investigation Report on Services at Portlaoise Hospital to learn from the mistakes of the past, and to put things right for the future, is not missed. That is the least we owe to the families who spoke out.

I am strongly of the view that any new patient advocacy service should be set up independent of the HSE from the outset. I do not think that people would trust a patient advocacy service to advocate on their behalf to the HSE, if the people working in it were employees of the HSE. My view has been supported by the recommendation made in the HIQA Investigation Report for the need to establish an independent patient advocacy agency.

I am keen to get an independent national patient advocacy service up and running as soon as possible. The scope, role and functions of the independent advocacy service needs to be considered along with the appropriate structural, governance and funding arrangements that need to be put in place. My Department will be consulting widely on the best way to get the service up and running in the shortest possible timeframe.

Misuse of Drugs

23. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health the steps being taken to address the growing addiction to tablets, prescription and otherwise; if he will consider adding the drugs known as Z drugs to the list of controlled drugs; if he will address the need for clinical guidelines in relation to recovery from benzodiazepines and the short detox time required before accessing treatment. [20536/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): Government's response to the problem of drug misuse in our society is set out in the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016.

I am aware that in recent years, the nature and scale of drug misuse has changed, with an increased prevalence of polydrug use, as well as use of benzodiazepines, and other prescription or non-prescription tablets. Treatment figures indicate an increase in the number of people seeking treatment for benzodiazepine use.

The Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Act 2015, as well as controlling substances decontrolled as a result of a Court of Appeal decision, reconfirmed existing Ministerial regulations and orders made under the 1977 Act. These regulations and orders may now only be amended by primary legislation. While it is intended to bring forward regulations to impose additional controls on benzodiazepines and z-drugs, a second Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Bill must first be enacted in order to provide the Minister with the necessary powers in this regard. It is

my intention to have this Bill published and enacted within the current year.

Clinical guidelines are set out in the Department of Health's "Good Practice Guidelines for Clinicians" for the prescribing of benzodiazepines. The HSE addiction services provides a comprehensive substance treatment service orientated towards those with polydrug issues. Consequently, problem drug users attending such services and who are dependent on benzodiazepines or other z-drugs have this addressed as part of their treatment. I am advised by the HSE that clinical protocols in relation to benzodiazepine treatment are currently under consideration by the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee, and that some HSE addiction services are piloting these protocols.

The Department of Health is beginning work on the development of a new National Drugs Strategy for the period after 2016. The process will include a comprehensive consultation with key stakeholders and the public on the current national drugs policy and future priorities, including treatment. It will also take account of evidence-based research, information and data sources on the extent and nature of problem drug use in Ireland. As Minister with lead responsibility for drugs policy, I will play an active role in the development of the new Strategy and I would urge all interested parties to engage in the process.

Hospital Services

24. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health his plans for the Midland Regional Hospital, Portlaoise, County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20764/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The future of the hospital is as a constituent hospital within the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. That Group also includes St James's; Tallaght; Tullamore; Naas and the Coombe Hospitals.

Any change to services at Portlaoise Hospital will be undertaken in a planned and orderly manner. This will be guided by what is best in terms of patient safety and outcomes and will take account of existing patient flows, demands in other hospitals and the need to develop particular services at Portlaoise in the context of overall service reorganisation in the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group.

The timing and scope of such changes will have regard for the capacity and capability of other services within the Group particularly in the short term. This work will be overseen by a Joint Steering Group comprised of representatives from Portlaoise and other hospitals in the Group, including the Group CEO, Dr. Susan O'Reilly.

Tobacco Control Measures

25. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Health in view of the alarming rate of consumption of e-cigarettes and also the rate of expansion of new e-cigarette retail outlets that is occurring here, and whilst also understanding the potentially serious harm being done by these mentioned items, when he will bring the new public health (retail licensing of tobacco products) Bill before Dáil Éireann for debate, which will seek to introduce a much needed licensing system for e-cigarettes here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20586/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As the Deputy knows, although e-cigarettes and other non-medicinal nicotine delivery systems do not contain tobacco, they do contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. I am aware that there has been a significant rise in their

popularity in the past number of years. In order to ensure that these products are sold in a responsible manner and to protect children, Government has approved the drafting of legislation in relation to the sale of tobacco products and non-medicinal nicotine delivery systems. My Department is currently drafting the General Scheme of a Bill which includes provisions for the licensing system and the prohibition of the sale of non-medicinal nicotine delivery systems by and to persons under the age of 18 years. I expect that the General Scheme will be published this year.

In addition to this legislation, my Department is working in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General to put measures in place to transpose the new Tobacco Products Directive into Irish law by the 20th May 2016 deadline. The revised Directive regulates a number of aspects of e-cigarettes, including mandatory safety and quality requirements, labelling and packaging, ingredients and emissions, and stricter rules on advertising and monitoring of marketing developments.

My Department will continue to monitor existing and emerging evidence on the potential harms and the potential benefits of these products, so as to inform decisions around any future additional regulation in this area.

Cancer Screening Programmes

26. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Minister for Health if he will include in the new national cancer strategy an objective to broaden the campaign for early detection of and screening for all cancers, as opposed to the current campaign which focuses solely on high incidence cancer types, so as to increase the chances of other more rare cancers being detected at an early stage, leading to more successful outcomes for sufferers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20544/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Cancer Strategy Steering Group, which I have established to advise my Department on developing a new National Cancer Strategy for 2016-2025, met for the first time yesterday, 27 May.

Early detection and screening will be among the issues that will be considered by the Steering Group. However, screening for all cancers is unlikely to be introduced and any proposals for additional screening programmes would have to be assessed in the light of international evidence.

I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Steering Group later this year.

Nursing Education

27. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health if he will approve the Royal College of Surgeons proposed competency assessment model for non-EEA trained nurses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20543/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I would like to thank the Deputy for the question raised.

The Deptuy will recall my answer of 6 May 2015 to his question in relation to this matter. My answer indicated that as this is an operational matter, I have referred this question to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) for direct reply to the Deputy.

If you have not received a reply from the NMBI, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Surgical Symphysiotomy Payment Scheme

28. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health his views regarding the payment scheme to which survivors of symphysiotomy may apply, in terms of its failure to address the concerns of the UN Human Rights Committee, and his proposals to make this scheme compatible with our human rights obligations [20565/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Surgical Symphysiotomy Payment Scheme commenced on 10 November 2014. It was estimated that 350 women would apply to the Scheme, but in fact 576 applications were accepted. Applications are being assessed by former High Court Judge Maureen Harding Clark. The Scheme has in the region of €34 million available and participants will receive awards at three levels - €50,000, €100,000 and €150,000. The Scheme was designed to be simple, straightforward and non-adversarial, and aims to minimise the stress for all women concerned. It was designed following meetings with all three support groups, two of which have welcomed its establishment. It was established to give women who do not wish to pursue their cases through the courts an alternative, simple, non-adversarial option in which payments are made to women who have had a surgical symphysiotomy whether or not negligence is proven.

Judge Clark has informed my officials that as at 22 May 2015, 206 offers have been made to women including 1 offer that was rejected. 194 of those offers had been accepted with 11 offers awaiting a response. Of the 194 offers accepted by applicants, 118 were assessed at €50,000, 71 at €100,000 and 5 at €150,000. A large number of applications have been made without medical records or evidence of symphysiotomy and this information is being sought by Judge Clark in order to progress the applications. Where there was a delay arising in the compilation of a woman's supporting documentation due to difficulty in obtaining medical records, applications were accepted by the Scheme, provided the application was received within the time period set out in the Scheme, with a written explanation of the reasons for the absence of the documentation.

The Scheme is voluntary and women do not waive their rights to take their cases to court as a precondition to participating in the Scheme. Women may opt out of the Scheme at any stage in the process, up to the time of accepting their award. It is only on accepting the offer of an award that a woman must agree to discontinue her legal proceedings against any party arising out of a symphysiotomy or pubiotomy. The Deputy may be aware of a High Court Judgment that was delivered on 1 May 2015, where the Judge dismissed the claim for damages by a 74 year old woman who had a symphysiotomy 12 days before the birth of her baby at the Coombe Hospital in 1963. The Judge ruled that even though the woman has suffered since the operation, the practice of prophylactic symphysiotomy *"was not a practice without justification"* in 1963. The Judge also stated in his judgment that *'Though I would in the words of Sir Ranulph Crewe, Chief Justice of England, "take hold of a twig or twine-thread" to uphold the plaintiff's case, I must find that this remarkable lady whose story indeed deserves to be told must fail in her case against the defendants'.*

While the Government is aware of the comments made by the UN Human Rights Committee, it believes that the provision of the ex-gratia scheme, together with the ongoing provision of support services by the HSE, including medical cards, represents a fair and appropriate response to this issue.

Hospital Waiting Lists

29. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health the number of children and adults in County Waterford that are awaiting assessment by a primary care occupational therapist; if he will provide in tabular form the length of time each of these children and adults have been waiting; the number of occupational therapist posts that currently exist in County Waterford's public system; the number of these posts that are currently vacant; the number of additional posts that will be allocated nationally in 2015, and of these the number that will be allocated specifically to County Waterford in 2015; in relation to a specific case (details supplied) if he will clarify the way a child of five years of age who is currently being seen by the early intervention team will, following the child's sixth birthday, be assessed and receive eight weeks of treatment and then be placed on a waiting list for up to three years on the six to 18 age group bracket; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20787/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The particular issues raised by the Deputy are service matters 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.

Mental Health Services Provision

30. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Health the number of posts he has sanctioned for child mental health; the number that have been filled providing a breakdown of the staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [18262/15]

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 a reply has not been issued within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

National Carers Strategy Implementation

31. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health his views on the reason that of the national carers strategy's 42 objectives, only one objective has been achieved to date, with 19 showing only initial progress, ten showing no progress and, most worryingly, eight having regressed; whether the 19% cut to the respite care grant in budget 2012 will now be reversed; if the halving of funding for housing grant schemes will be reversed and if the current poor discharge planning and lack of consultation with family carers when their loved one moves from hospital to home care will be addressed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20774/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The National Carers' Strategy was published in July 2012 and sets the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports provided by Government Departments and agencies for carers.

It sets out a vision to work towards and an ambitious set of National Goals and Objectives to guide policy development and service delivery to ensure that carers feel valued and supported to manage their caring responsibilities with confidence and are empowered to have a life of their own outside of caring.

The Strategy also contains a Roadmap for Implementation with a suite of actions and associated timelines, and identifies the Government Department responsible for their implementation. It is important to note that the actions in the Roadmap for Implementation are those that can be achieved on a cost neutral basis.

The National Carers' Strategy committed to the production of an Annual Report on progress which would be published on the websites of relevant Departments. The first Annual Report on implementation of the Strategy was published in November 2013 and the second in January 2015, both of which are available on my Department's website. These Annual Reports will provide the Deputy with a list of actions that were identified in the Strategy and what progress has been made on each one since the Strategy's publication.

While The Carers Association's recently published *Family Carers Scorecard* raises concerns over the pace of implementation, much work has been done and the report acknowledges achievements such as:

- The development of a single assessment tool for older people containing a detailed Carers Needs Assessment;

- The imminent release of one million euro funding from Dormant accounts for training and information provision for family carers;

- The hosting of an Annual Carers Forum by the Department of Social Protection and in particular the positive engagement around the structure of this forum to meet the needs of family carers.

I acknowledge that the pace of implementation of the Carers' Strategy has been slower than we would have wished. At my Department's request, the HSE has set up a multi-disciplinary working group to bring forward implementation of the health aspects of the Strategy.

With regard to discharge planning, in 2014 the HSE published a guide called 'Integrated Care Guidance: A practical guide to discharge and transfer from hospital'. The guide sets out nine steps for effective discharge planning and transfer from hospital to community healthcare settings. Steps 8 and 9 detail the discharge arrangements and the communication process to include the carers/family and relevant personnel in the community to be communicated with during the discharge process.

In relation to the Respite Care Grant and the Housing Grant Schemes, these are a matter for my colleagues the Minister for Social Protection and the Minister for Environment and Local Government respectively.

Hospital Waiting Lists

32. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Health the steps that have been taken to reduce the waiting lists for operations on children with scoliosis of the spine; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20545/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Spinal conditions, including scoliosis, in children and young people are predominantly managed at Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin (OLCHC). It is acknowledged that the waiting times for spinal surgery services at Our Lady's Hospital Crumlin are unsatisfactory and must be addressed as a priority. Accordingly, funding was allocated in the HSE Service Plan for 2015 for the appointment of an orthopaedic surgeon, anaesthetist and support staff at Crumlin. This will maximise the use of available the-

atre sessions in the hospital. The first of these additional staff is now in post, and recruitment for the remaining posts is in process. In addition, capital funding has been agreed for a new theatre on site at Crumlin, which will expand theatre capacity further. As a further measure, available capacity is being identified in other hospitals and some children are being transferred for their surgery, where it is considered clinically appropriate for them.

The Children's Hospital Group, OLCHC and the HSE are working together on an ongoing basis to identify all options to increase capacity further.

National Carers Strategy Implementation

33. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health his views on the recently published "Family Carers Scorecard" of the national carers strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20779/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The National Carers' Strategy was published in July 2012 and sets the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports provided by Government Departments and agencies for carers.

It sets out a vision to work towards and an ambitious set of National Goals and Objectives to guide policy development and service delivery to ensure that carers feel valued and supported to manage their caring responsibilities with confidence and are empowered to have a life of their own outside of caring.

The Strategy also contains a Roadmap for Implementation with a suite of actions and associated timelines, and identifies the Government Department responsible for their implementation. It is important to note that the actions in the Roadmap for Implementation are those that can be achieved on a cost neutral basis.

The National Carers' Strategy committed to the production of an Annual Report on progress which would be published on the websites of relevant Departments. The first Annual Report on implementation of the Strategy was published in November 2013 and the second in January 2015, both of which are available on my Department's website. These Annual Reports will provide the Deputy with a list of actions that were identified in the Strategy and what progress has been made on each one since the Strategy's publication.

While The Carers Association's recently published *Family Carers Scorecard* raises concerns over the pace of implementation, much work has been done and the report acknowledges achievements such as:

- The development of a single assessment tool for older people containing a detailed Carers Needs Assessment;

- The imminent release of one million euro funding from Dormant accounts for training and information provision for family carers;

- The hosting of an Annual Carers Forum by the Department of Social Protection and in particular the positive engagement around the structure of this forum to meet the needs of family carers.

I acknowledge that the pace of implementation of the Carers' Strategy has been slower than we would have wished. At my Department's request, the HSE has set up a multi-disciplinary working group to bring forward implementation of the health aspects of the Strategy.

I am determined that this Strategy will be applied in a way that makes a real and positive difference to the lives of carers, their families, and those that they care for.

HIQA Remit

34. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Health his plans to extend the inspection role of the Health Information and Quality Authority to the provision of private care for elderly persons and vulnerable adults in their own homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20546/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): *Government for National Recovery, 2011-2016* commits to developing and implementing national standards for home support services which will be subject to HIQA inspection. Primary legislation and resources will be required for the introduction of a statutory regulation system for home care services. This will be considered by Government on a prioritised and phased basis as resources, legislative and planning processes allow. In the meantime the HSE is progressing a range of measures to improve Home Care provision overall, to standardise services nationally and to promote quality and safety.

Mental Health Services Provision

35. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the deterioration in the relationship between staff and management in the psychiatric unit of University Hospital Galway, resulting from serious concerns over the physical condition of the unit, staffing levels, and the effect of both on the welfare of patients in the unit [20767/15]

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 a reply has not been issued within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospitals Inspections

36. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if he is satisfied that adequate health and safety guidelines and precautions apply in all hospitals throughout the country without exception, including maternity hospitals and nursing homes in the public and the private sectors; the extent to which such guidelines are updated on a regular basis; the issues that have been brought to the attention of his Department which might impact on the well-being of patients or staff; the steps taken to address these issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20758/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Since 2009 all nursing homes - public, voluntary and private - have been registered and inspected by the Health Information and Quality Authority.

The Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations, 2013 (SI 415/2013) contain comprehensive provisions for the purpose of ensuring that proper standards are in place in designated centres for older people. Schedule 5 to these Regulations lists the policies and procedures that a registered provider must have in place including, for example, health and safety (to include infection control and food safety);

risk management; prevention, detection and response to abuse; staff training; responding to emergencies; fire safety management; handling of complaints; medications management.

National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People are also in place. These standards outline what is expected of a provider of services and what a person, his or her family, and the public can expect to receive from residential care services.

In June 2012 the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare were approved by the previous Minister for Health. The National Standards are aimed at protecting patients and they provide a strategic approach to improving safety, quality and reliability in our health services. They describe high quality safe healthcare services. Such services deliver care which is safe, effective, person centred and which promotes better health for service users. The National Standards also describe what capacity and capability factors service providers require to implement these standards. Service providers, including the private (independent) service providers, can use the National Standards as a framework to organise, manage and deliver their services safely. It is envisaged that the proposals being developed for the licensing of healthcare providers will be based on key concepts within the National Standards.

HIQA continues to monitor the quality and safety of healthcare services with the National Standards through the delivery of a programme of thematic monitoring reviews based on identified priorities and consultation with stakeholders. HIQA also carries out a programme of announced and unannounced infection prevention and hygiene inspections in hospitals in line with the *National Standards for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections.*

The National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) was established in 2010. Clinical effectiveness is a key component of patient safety and quality. The integration of national and international best available evidence in service provision through utilisation of clinical effectiveness processes promotes healthcare that is up to date, effective and consistent.

Clinical effectiveness incorporates the utilisation of quality assured National Clinical Guidelines, National Clinical Audit and general clinical practice guidance. This is a quality improvement approach which promotes cost-effective healthcare that is evidence-based, with subsequent improved clinical decision-making and clinical outcomes. Clinical effectiveness will underpin the models of care for the HSE's national clinical programmes.

To date, the NCEC has quality assured 6 National Clinical Guidelines which have been endorsed by respective Ministers and mandated for implementation in the Irish health system. These include:

1. National Early Warning Score (NEWS);

2. Prevention and Control of MRSA;

3. Clostridium difficile;

4. Irish Maternity Early Warning System (IMEWS);

5. Clinical Handover in Maternity Service; and

6. Sepsis Management.

Their implementation will be monitored through the HSE Assurance Reports, compliance with HIQA's National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare and increased alignment with the Clinical Indemnity Scheme.

National Drugs Strategy Implementation

37. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health the role of the national drug rehabilitation implementation committee in the drugs strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20537/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): The National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 is a cross cutting area of public policy and service delivery. A core objective of the National Drugs Strategy is the development of a national integrated treatment and rehabilitation service that provides drug free and harm reduction approaches for problem substance users.

The National Drug Rehabilitation Implementation Committee (NDRIC) is chaired by the HSE and includes representation from relevant Government departments and agencies and the community and voluntary sectors. Its role includes overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation, developing national protocols to facilitate the level of inter-agency cooperation needed to implement shared care plans, and overseeing case management and care planning processes.

The committee has developed a National Drugs Rehabilitation Framework to provide a 'continuum of care' for the recovering drug user through promoting a more integrated and client-centred approach based on shared care planning and inter-agency working. The rollout of the framework is currently being advanced through the HSE's Addiction Services and the Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces. As part of this rollout, NDRIC is developing competency based training to be provided to all treatment providers and relevant agencies in Drug & Alcohol Task Force areas.

The Department of Health has commenced work on the development of a new National Drugs Strategy for the period after 2016. Extensive consultation with key stakeholders and the public will take place as part of this process.

Mental Health Services Provision

38. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health if he is satisfied that the current mental health provision in County Wexford is adequate, particularly in view of the county's relatively high suicide rates which according to the last census were almost twice the national rate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20548/15]

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 a reply has not been issued within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Home Help Service Provision

39. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if the target for the provision of home helps in 2015 is being met specifically in CHO4; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20783/15]

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.

Pharmacy Services

40. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Health his views on removing the right of pharmacists to have a conscientious objection to providing Norlevo or the morning after pill; if he believes this is a barrier to access; if his attention has been drawn to the number of the pharmacists that do not sell Norlevo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20778/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): Since 2011, a number of levonorgestrel products, including Norlevo, have been reclassified from 'prescription only' to 'pharmacy only' supply for use as emergency contraception.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the practice and profession of pharmacists, and the operation of pharmacies, in Ireland in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of patients and the public.

As healthcare professionals, practising pharmacists are required to display full technical competence in their chosen profession, behave with probity and integrity and to be accountable in this regard for their actions. These qualities of competence, probity, integrity and accountability, which a pharmacist must demonstrate, are underwritten by a statutory Code of Conduct. All pharmacists must subscribe to this Code.

The Code states that the practice by a pharmacist of his/her profession must be directed toward maintaining and improving the health, well-being, care and safety of the patient. The Code also requires pharmacists to ensure that, in instances where they are unable to provide services to a patient (e.g. in situations where they have a conscientious objection to such a provision), they take reasonable action to ensure those medicines/services are provided and that the patient's care is not jeopardised. In practice, this means facilitating the patient in accessing the information or service required to meet their needs from another pharmacist/pharmacy.

In addition to the Code, the PSI issued a guidance document to pharmacists 'PSI Guidance for Pharmacists on the Safe Supply of Non-Prescription Medicinal Products Containing Levonorgestrel 1500mcg for Emergency Hormonal Contraception', which provides guidance in fulfilling their professional responsibilities in the supply of these medicines. The guidance document was reviewed, updated and circulated to the profession in February 2015 and is available on the PSI website www.thepsi.ie.

No statistics are available on the number of pharmacists/pharmacies that supply/do not supply Norlevo.

Medical Aids and Appliances Provision

41. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a medical device, Medtronic's i-port advance injection device, and the primary care reimbursement scheme; if the substantially less invasive nature of the device and the easier method of treatment for young persons with diabetes has been taken into account regarding its introduction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20763/15]

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 un-

der the community drug schemes in accordance with the provisions of the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. The decisions on which medicines are reimbursed by the taxpayer are made on objective, scientific and economic grounds by the HSE on the advice of the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics. They are not political or ministerial decisions.

The HSE received an application for the inclusion of the product, i-port Advance™, to be added to the List of Reimbursable Items in the GMS and community drugs schemes. The application was considered in line with the procedures and timescales agreed by the Department of Health and the HSE with the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association for the assessment of new medicines.

An Expert Group, chaired by the Clinical Lead of the HSE Diabetes Programme, was convened by the HSE to (i) assess the clinical evidence to support the use of the product, (ii) consider whether the product is appropriate for reimbursement status under Schemes and (iii) assist in the determination of the 'value' that the innovation presents. The Group also considered the quality of life dimension from using the product.

The Expert Group did not find that the product was either clinically effective or cost effective, and therefore did not recommend that the product should be reimbursed. The Director of Primary Care accepted the recommendation of the Expert Group and the company was informed of the HSE's decision on the 20 April 2015.

HSE Waiting Lists

42. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Health his proposals to reduce waiting lists for a range of disability-specific services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20766/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): 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 aims to ensure that the resources available are used to best effect, in order to provide assessment and ongoing therapy to children and adults in line with their prioritised needs. However, it is acknowledged that current waiting lists for some therapeutic supports are high.

In 2013, additional funding of €20m was provided to strengthen primary care services. This comprised of €18.5m for the recruitment of over 260 primary care team posts and over €1.4m to support community intervention team development.

In 2014, the roll out of the *Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme* entailed targeted investment of €4m and the provision of 80 additional therapy staff to improve services for children with all disabilities. At 30th April 2015, 47 of the 2014 posts have been filled, a further 20 are at the stage of 'post accepted' and the process is on-going for the remaining posts. A further €4m allocation was announced in 2015 to continue work on this Programme.

I am confident that the additional resources being invested into both primary care and disability services will have a positive impact on the provision of clinical services to all children with disabilities, including those who may currently be on waiting lists to access therapy inputs.

Ambulance Service Response Times

43. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Health if he is satisfied with the proportion of patient carrying vehicles that are answering Echo and Delta calls on target; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20771/15]

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 Services

44. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health his plans to enhance long stay facilities in St. Joseph's Hospital, County Longford and in St. Mary's Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath. [20760/15]

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.

Treatment Abroad Scheme

45. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health his views on the case of an Irish citizen (details supplied), a cancer victim whose surgery here was not a success and who has opted for alternative treatment in a medical centre overseas; if he will, in recognition of the serious situation applying for this person and of the great generosity of this person's adopted community (details supplied) in County Cavan, seek to secure some level of financial assistance towards the overall cost of the treatment and any other practical supports that he may identify; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20775/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The HSE operates the Treatment Abroad Scheme (TAS) for persons entitled to treatment in another EU/EEA member state or Switzerland under EU Regulation (EC) No. 883/2004, as per the procedures set out in EU Regulations (EC) No. 987/2009, and in accordance with Department of Health Guidelines. Patients have the ability to apply to the HSE TAS seeking access to public healthcare outside the state through model form E112. The application requires the patient's Irish based public referring hospital consultant, following clinical assessment, to certify, among other things, that the treatment is medically necessary and will meet the patient's needs. The treatment must not be available within the State or not available within a time normally necessary for obtaining it.

There is no statutory framework for referral of patients outside the EU/EEA member states. In the instance that a consultant wishes to refer a patient to a non-EU/EEA country, the HSE TAS applies the TAS administrative process and documentation for the purposes of such applications. Such applications for treatment in non-EU/EEA countries are required to provide evidence that the treatment is not available within the EU/EEA.

National Positive Ageing Strategy Implementation

46. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the progress on the implementation of the national positive ageing strategy which was published on 24 April 2013, but on which there has been little sign of progress since, given that work on developing the

original strategy began in 2007 and older persons have been waiting more than eight years for progress on this issue; whether an implementation plan to deliver the Government's commitments on positive ageing will be introduced and when; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20773/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The 2011-2016 Programme for Government committed to completing and implementing the National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS) so that older people are recognised, supported and enabled to live independent full lives. In our statement of Health priorities for 2015, the Minister for Health and I have reiterated our commitment to implementing the Strategy.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy provides a vision for an age-friendly society and includes four National Goals and underpinning Objectives to provide direction on the issues that need to be addressed to promote positive ageing. As Minister of State with responsibility for older people, I am driving implementation at the political level. The Strategy is a cross-Departmental one and my Department has an overall coordinating and collating role and a more direct role for the health-related objectives.

A key objective of this Strategy is to change the mindsets of decision makers across Government agencies and to raise the priority that is given to the concerns of older people. The first step in doing this is to establish a system of regular reporting on actions and initiatives that impact on older people, and these reports are regularly sought and collated by my Department. The fact that such reports are already and will continue to be required will in itself increase the focus that is given to older persons' issues, and these reports will be submitted for consideration by the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Sector Reform chaired by An Taoiseach. Implementation is accordingly an ongoing process.

It is important to point out the many initiatives already in train which contribute to the Strategy's goals. For example, in the health sector, in the area of older people's services and supports, the Review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme will be completed shortly. The Single Assessment Tool, which will allow for a systematic assessment of need and allocation of services to older people, is being developed by the HSE; measures are being taken to ensure integrated care for older patients, and palliative care services are being improved. The Deputy will also be aware that €25m was allocated in Budget 2015 to support services that provide alternatives to, and relieve pressures on acute hospitals. In April 2015, an additional €74m was allocated to further tackle the ongoing issue of delayed discharges in acute hospitals. The majority of these patients are older people, and these funds are being applied across both long term and short term residential services and at community level. As a result the waiting time for funding of approved patients under the Nursing Home Support scheme has fallen to four weeks now from eleven weeks in March.

A Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) has also been established to implement the research objective of the National Positive Ageing Strategy. It is a joint initiative between the Department of Health, the HSE's Health and Wellbeing Programme and the Atlantic Philanthropies and will run from October 2014 to December 2017, with a commitment to Department of Health funding for a further two years. The Initiative will monitor changes in older people's health and wellbeing linked to the Goals and Objectives of the Positive Ageing Strategy. This will be done primarily through the development of positive ageing indicators to be published every two years. A preliminary positive ageing report will be published shortly. The HSE will also develop a physical activity communications campaign under the Initiative.

Disability Services Provision

47. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Health the steps being taken by the Health Service Executive and his Department to ensure that children in counties Laois and Offaly who may be autistic will receive an early diagnosis and assessment; if he will provide a timeframe in which this will take place; and the likely waiting times for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy for children who are assessed as being autistic. [20585/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE is currently engaged in a major reconfiguration of existing therapy resources for children with disabilities, including those with autism, into multi-disciplinary geographically based teams. The key objective of the Progressing Disabilities Programme is to bring about equity of access to disability services and consistency of service delivery across the country. This involves the creation of a clear pathway to services for children with disabilities, regardless of where they live, what school they go to or the nature of the individual child's difficulties.

A number of HSE Community Healthcare Organisations across the country are successfully implementing the programme which requires significant preparatory work in engaging with families, schools, voluntary providers and local communities and the development of new procedures and protocols in respect of multidisciplinary and multiagency working. Once this preparatory work has been completed additional posts are being provided to support the implementation of the new model of service.

In the Laois/Offaly area considerable work has been done to put in place the required governance structure which will allow for additional posts to be provided in 2015. A total of 120 new therapy posts will be provided across the country from an additional €4 million allocated this year (equating to €6 million in a full year). The HSE is currently finalising details of the allocation of additional therapy posts and it has informed me that Laois/Offaly will be prioritised.

The allocation of additional resources to Laois/Offaly to support the implementation of the Progressing Disabilities Programme will help address waiting times under the statutory Assessment of Need in the area. Research done by the National Disability Authority has demonstrated that where the Progressing Disabilities Programme has been successively implemented it has had a very positive impact on reducing waiting times for the Assessment of Need.

In addition the HSE is planning a waiting list initiative in Laois/Offaly shortly utilising spare capacity across public, voluntary and private providers to seek to reduce waiting times for the assessment and treatment of children pending the allocation and filling of the additional posts.

HSE Funding

48. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health his views on the recent assertion that the Health Service Executive received none of the funding it sought from the Government to develop services in the Midland Regional Hospital, Portlaoise, County Laois, at the time that its senior doctors were warning about safety risks in the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20765/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Requests for additional posts and funding are considered by the HSE as part of the annual estimates process. Requests for additional resources made in 2011 had to be considered in the context of competing demands for funding, and against the backdrop of the worst financial crisis ever to fall on the State. In 2010 and 2011 the HSE had total budget reductions of €1.75bn and staff levels were further reducing. The reality is that all services were under pressure and there were frequent requests for additional funding.

The Clinical Programmes were in their infancy and a lot of issues and services, which were in need of development, were being identified. Many meetings were held with clinicians, all of whom were, understandably, very vocal about perceived funding and resource needs in their own facilities and specialties. The priority at the time was to deliver the maximum level of safe services possible with the reduced funding and staffing levels. The budgetary challenges continued in 2012. However, I am advised that in applying the cost reduction measures required, the then Dublin Midlands Region afforded a level of protection to paediatric and maternity services.

Following the publication of the HIQA report earlier this month, I will, together with my Department, engage with the HSE to ensure that the report's very serious findings are addressed, and that the recommendations are fully implemented and all other issues arising are dealt with appropriately.

Since the Chief Medical Officer's report on Portlaoise last year, much has been done to strengthen services in the hospital. New management is in place, there is significantly improved clinical governance and additional key clinical staff have been appointed. Portlaoise is now part of the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group. The hospital will be supported to ensure that patients receive their treatment and care in the most appropriate setting within the Group.

Accident and Emergency Department Waiting Times

49. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health the reason one in four patients requiring emergency hip fracture surgery at University Hospital Waterford in February 2015 had their procedure delayed for more than 48 hours; if he will provide specific details of the levels of trolley and waiting times in UHW's emergency department in February 2015; if he acknowledges that these patients were mainly elderly persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20786/15]

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

50. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health his proposals in instances where general practitioners have invested heavily in providing their own accommodation and cannot afford to move to a centre to provide primary health care centres; if consideration will be given to providing centres for the support team of a primary care team without a GP; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20757/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): International research indicates that shared premises are a key enabler for successful team working in the primary care setting. Primary Care Centres (PCCs) create an environment for improved access, facilitating structured approaches to chronic disease management, enhanced multidisciplinary team working, improved diagnostic capabilities in Primary Care and the integration of services between primary and secondary care.

To-date, there are 87 PCCs in operation, 44 of which have opened since March 2011. There are currently 54 locations where primary care infrastructure is under construction or at an advanced planning stage under three methods of delivery, where completion is expected by Q2,

2017:

- 15 Direct Build;

- 14 Public Private Partnership; and

- 25 Operational Lease.

In November 2014, the HSE advertised an additional 73 locations for delivery of Primary Care Centres by Operational Lease. The HSE is reviewing all Expressions of Interest received to determine which are suitable for more detailed consideration and progression to the next stage of the process.

The HSE continues to provide appropriate accommodation for Primary Care Team staff, taking into account the existing infrastructure from which GPs operate. GPs, not co-located with Primary Care Teams, continue to link and work with the Team through structured team meetings or direct contact with individuals.

A research project has been commissioned by my Department to identify and assess the various options available to Government to encourage the provision, including the upgrading and refurbishment, of primary care centres in areas where they are needed. External consultants have been engaged to carry out this work and I expect to receive a report on the matter later this year.

Orthodontic Services Waiting Lists

51. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Health the number of children on the waiting lists for an outpatient orthodontic appointment and for orthodontic day surgery in Letterkenny General Hospital, County Donegal, and in Sligo General Hospital, respectively, together with the waiting times for same; the reason for any significant difference between the two hospitals, in view of the fact that they are delivered by the same surgical team; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20539/15]

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

52. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an explanation for the delays at University Hospital Waterford that resulted in three persons waiting more than 28 days for an urgent colonoscopy in January 2015; the reason almost two thirds of patients at UHW who required a routine colonoscopy in 2015 were not seen within the target time of 13 weeks; the number of patients at UHW that were waiting longer than 12 months for a routine colonoscopy; the number that were waiting over two years; if the unit at UHW is fully staffed; if the roll-out of the national bowel cancer screening programme resulted in the lengthening of waiting lists in Waterford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20788/15]

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

53. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which adequate resources continue to be made available to his Department to address the issue of waiting lists in all hospitals throughout the country; the extent to which the precise contributory factors have been identified, isolated and costed with a view to early and satisfactory resolution; when he expects such resolution to be achieved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20759/15]

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.

Disability Services Provision

54. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health his proposals for service users with severe physical and intellectual disabilities who have reached 18 years of age and are in their last year of school for their transition to adult services; whether it is the case that despite the date of transition from one service to another being known far in advance, there has been no joined-up planning for services when these young persons leave school; whether clarity on residential, respite and transport needs will be provided; if he will provide a breakdown of funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20772/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): Preparations are at an advanced stage in respect of all school-leavers and rehabilitative training (RT) graduates to ensure that appropriate services are provided to all young people with disabilities. To ensure this, additional funding of €6 million (at a full year cost of €12 million) was allocated by the HSE this year to meet the needs of around 1,500 young people who will require continuing health-funded supports. The HSE has assured me that all service providers will be informed of their funding allocation by the end of May.

The HSE, through its Occupational Guidance Service, continues to work with schools, service providers, young people with disabilities and their families to identify training needs and explore suitable options.

The provision of services to school-leavers and RT graduates is challenging each year as the number of individuals requiring health funded supports continues to increase year on year. Last year, the HSE implemented a coordinated and streamlined approach to manage the process of providing services to young people based on their individually expressed preferences and assessed needs. As a result, almost 1,400 young people with disabilities who finished school or rehabilitative training received placements which fully met their needs. This year, the HSE is committed to building on last year's efforts and I understand that the HSE is on target to notify all young people and their families by the end of June of the placement that will be available to them from September.

One of the most significant projects being progressed by the HSE this year within the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services framework is the implementation of the person-centred approach to day services as outlined in "*New Directions - Report on the National Working Group for the Review of HSE funded Adult Day Services"*. The New Directions policy proposes that health-funded day services for adults with disabilities should be based on the principles of person-centredness, community inclusion, active citizenship and high quality service provision. This projects demonstrates the HSE's commitment to providing services in a more individualised and person-centred way to all people availing of day services including

school-leavers and RT graduates whose service should in future take the form of individualised and personally chosen outcome-focused supports.

Health Services Staff Data

55. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Health the number of staff that have been allocated to mental health services; the number that have been sanctioned; the number of posts that have been filled; the number of posts unfilled; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [18261/15]

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 a reply has not been issued within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Staff Recruitment

56. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Health further to Question No. 448 of 31 March 2015, if he will report on the recruitment of theatre nurses and consultant anaesthetists in Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9; his views on fewer operations and procedures taking place in the hospital in the first quarter of 2015 compared to the first quarter of 2014; his further views on the staffing situation in the emergency department of the hospital and the notice of industrial action by the INMO due to these shortages; and the steps he will take to increase staffing in Beaumont Hospital and other hospitals. [20777/15]

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.

HSE Expenditure

57. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update on the Health Service Executive's financial situation; the extent of the supplementary budget that is likely to be required for 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20780/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): In the recently published HSE Performance Report for March, the HSE reported year to date net expenditure of €3.073 billion against a budget of €2.982 billion, leading to a variance of €91m. The Income and Expenditure data confirms that the key financial risks are in demand-led areas as well as in the Acute and Social Care areas.

Acute hospitals in particular will require very close management using the measures specified in the HSE's Accountability Framework. Under this new Framework, escalation procedures have been initiated by the HSE in respect of financial underperformance in both the Acute Hospitals and Social Care areas. Amongst the actions taken, remedial action plans and financial recovery plans have been requested in respect of individual underperforming hospitals and the social care area, with the HSE management response to underperformance differentiated, in order to target areas that are over budget. All Hospital Groups are required to prepare cost containment plans.

It is too early, at this stage, to assess the effect of action taken under the Accountability Framework and as such, to take a view on either the requirement for, or the quantum of, a supplementary estimate. My Department continues to work closely with the HSE to ensure that the greatest degree of budgetary control is exercised.

Carer's Allowance Applications

58. **Deputy Noel Coonan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when an application for a carer's allowance will be finalised in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21068/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The application for carer's allowance in respect of the person concerned was awarded on 19th May 2015 and the first payment is due to issue to the bank on 18th June 2015. Any arrears of allowance due (less any overlapping social welfare payment and/or outstanding overpayment) will issue in due course. The person in question was notified of this decision on the 19th of May 2015.

Question No. 59 withdrawn.

Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals

60. **Deputy Michelle Mulherin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal in respect of a jobseeker's allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21073/15]

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, has decided to partially allow the appeal of the person concerned by way of a summary decision. The person concerned has been notified of the Appeals Officer's decision.

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

Rent Supplement Scheme Administration

61. **Deputy Tom Barry** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when rent supplement is granted, if the given property is properly inspected in terms of health and safety requirements; and if proof of registration with the Private Residential Tenancies Board is required. [21074/15]

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 a total of over €298 million for in 2015.

Under the Residential Tenancies legislation, landlords are legally obliged to register tenancies with the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) within one month of the start date of

the tenancy or at a later date on payment of an increased fee. For this reason, it is not practicable for the Department to insist that a tenancy be registered with the PRTB before payment of rent supplement can be made. Not all tenancies are required to be registered with the PRTB as the relevant legislation, the Residential Tenancies Act, provides for certain exceptions.

The Department works closely with the PRTB to help ensure that rent supplement tenancies comply with the statutory system of tenancy regulation and safeguards. The Department advises the PRTB, on a quarterly basis, of all new rent supplement tenancies to assist them in implementing tenancy regulations and co-operates in any initiatives taken by the PRTB to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act.

Responsibility for setting and enforcing housing standards rests with the Local Authorities. However, accommodation occupied by rent supplement tenants should at least meet minimum housing standards. Social Welfare legislation provides that rent supplement can be terminated where the Department is notified by a housing authority regarding the non-compliance with standards.

The Department's strategic policy direction is to return rent supplement to its original purpose of being a short term income support by transferring responsibility for persons with long term housing needs to the local authorities under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP). HAP is being designed so as to bring all of the social housing services provided by the State together under the local authority system and is currently being rolled out to almost 2,000 recipients in selected local authority areas.

Treatment Benefit Scheme Eligibility

62. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if a person (details supplied) in County Kerry is eligible for a hearing aid grant under the treatment benefit scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21132/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): In order to qualify for a hearing aid grant under the treatment benefit scheme a person is required to have 260 reckonable contributions paid since commencing employment and also have at least 39 such contributions paid or credited in the governing tax year relevant to the claim, which is currently 2013. PRSI paid at class A, E, H, or P count towards qualification for treatment benefits.

As the person concerned does not have any reckonable contributions at Class A, E, H, or P recorded, he does not qualify for a hearing aid grant under the treatment benefit scheme. However, if he has a Medical Card he should contact his local HSE Office, who will advise him of the options available to him under their scheme.

Rent Supplement Scheme Payments

63. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection the reason rent support has been terminated in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21176/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The entitlement to rent supplement in the case of the person concerned is currently under review. The payment of the supplement has been suspended while this review is in progress. The person concerned has been requested to submit certain documentation. The Designated Person will contact the

person concerned within the next week to finalise the review as soon as possible.

Pensions Legislation

64. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection her plans to introduce legislation to place an onus on employers to adequately fund their pension schemes and keep pension promises made to workers. [21211/15]

65. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection her plans to introduce legislation to require employers to fund pension protection schemes. [21212/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 64 and 65 together.

Defined benefit pension schemes in Ireland are set up and maintained by employers on a voluntary basis. There has never been a statutory obligation on employers under Irish law to contribute to their pension scheme. Rather, when a defined benefit scheme is set up, the level of employer and employee contributions is agreed and established in contract in each schemes Trust Deeds and Rules. The Trust Deeds and Rules differ from scheme to scheme, and as with any contractual situation, reflect the parameters on the level of obligation of the parties involved.

You will be aware that a range of legislative measures have been put in place in recent years to assist employers and the trustees of pension scheme address the funding difficulties encountered by many defined benefit pension schemes. The imposition of a debt on employers or the provision for a pension protection fund were considered during the deliberation process leading up to introduction of these legislative changes. However, given the uncertainties as to the overall impact and potential for unintended consequences of applying debt on the employer selectively or otherwise and having regard to the small size of the defined benefit sector, and given the administrative complexities and costs associated with a pension protection fund, these measures were not progressed

I am satisfied that the measures put in place in recent years take an approach which will support schemes with funding difficulties to gradually move to a more sustainable funding position.

Question No. 66 withdrawn.

Respite Care Grant Eligibility

67. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if a person (details supplied) will be entitled to the respite care grant in June 2015. [21218/15]

Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The respite care grant (RCG) is paid automatically in June of each year (usually on the first Thursday of the month), to carers getting carer's allowance, carer's benefit, domiciliary care allowance or prescribed relative's allowance from the Department.

Carer's allowance is not payable when the carer or care recipient is outside of the State. However carer's allowance may be paid for up to 3 weeks if the recipient is abroad on a respite break. If this payment period includes the first Thursday of June then the RCG is paid automatically. As the care recipient in question will be abroad on a respite break, and the 3 weeks holiday payment period will include the first Thursday of June, the person in question will be

automatically paid the RCG.

Youth Guarantee

68. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection if she will provide an update on the Youth Guarantee, including the pilot scheme, and delivery under the scheme to date, and the impact on youth unemployment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21223/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Kevin Humphreys): The Government's primary strategy to tackle youth unemployment is through policies to create the environment for a strong economic recovery by promoting competitiveness and productivity. However, the Government recognises that as the recovery takes hold, there is a need for additional measures to ensure that as many as possible of the jobs created are taken up by unemployed jobseekers, and by young jobseekers in particular. This is the rationale behind the Government's Pathways to Work strategy and the Youth Guarantee.

The Youth Guarantee sets a medium-term objective of ensuring that young people receive an offer of employment, education or training within four months of becoming unemployed. The main plank of the guarantee is assistance to young people, who become unemployed, in finding and securing sustainable jobs. For those who do not find employment, additional offers are provided for. Most such offers (over 70%) are in further education or training. Others are in community-based employment programmes such as CE, Gateway and Tús, or through the JobsPlus employment subsidy for private employment. There are additional planned measures that have not yet been implemented (International Work and Experience Training, County Enterprise Board Youth Entrepreneurship and Mentoring Supports). Those under 18 are offered second chance education, e.g., through Youthreach.

Table 1 at the end of this reply shows places taken up in 2014 on the programmes for unemployed young people that were included in the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.

Reflecting the impact of government policy, and the overall improvement in the labour market, youth unemployment continues to fall (with a rate of 21.1% in March 2015 estimated by Eurostat, as compared to 25.9% in March 2014 and with a peak of over 30% in 2012).

The purpose of the Ballymun Youth Guarantee (BYG) pilot project was to test key elements to inform the national roll-out of the Youth Guarantee. The project officially finished on the 31st December 2014. It will take time to see whether the opportunities taken up by young people through the BYG project have had a positive impact in terms of improved employment and other outcomes. The local Intreo office continues to work with participants (through the Ballymun Job Centre Guidance Counsellors) to progress them towards employment opportunities that continue to emerge as the economy recovers.

It is clear that the project has been highly successful in building the participants' confidence and ability to move towards employment. From the perspective of both the participants and the staff involved in the delivery of the service, the BYG approach has contributed towards the development of career identities, improved self-esteem and human and social capital.

Table 1. Youth Guarantee uptake in 2014 (under 25 participants)

Programme	Expected full-year intake	2014**	Note
Community Training Centres	1,500	1,778	

Programme	Expected full-year intake	2014**	Note
Youthreach	1,800	1800	
JobBridge (including developmental internship)	5,000	3,138	First Steps developmental internship commenced in Q1 2015
Tús	1,000	1410	
JobsPlus (JobPlus Youth)	1,500	639	JobPlus Youth variant launched February 2015
Momentum	2,000	631	
Back to Education Allowance (excluding Momentum)	3,300	3545	
Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	200	139	
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme	500	672	
FAS/Solas	9,500	8,659	Specific Skills Training, Traineeship, Bridging & Local Training Initiative
County Enterprise Boards Youth Entrepreneurship Training and Mentoring supports	700	N/A	
County Enterprise Boards/Microfinance Ireland - micro-loans for young people	150	10	
International Work Experience and Training	250	N/A	Commencing quarter three 2015
Gateway	450	192	
Community Employment	500	600	
Total	28,350	23,213	

**Updated from previously supplied data on the basis of final 2014 figures

N/A Not Available

Invalidity Pension Appeals

69. **Deputy Noel Coonan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection when an appeal in respect of an invalidity pension by a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary will be finalised; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21225/15]

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 including that adduced at the oral hearing, has decided to allow the appeal of the person concerned. The person concerned has been notified of the Appeals Officer's decision

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

Financial Irregularities

70. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views that customers

of Irish pension funds and insurance funds, and other Irish-based investments, were likely to have been at a loss as a result of manipulation of the foreign exchange market, which has resulted in multi-billion euro fines being imposed by five regulators on six international banks; if compensation will be payable to these investors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21079/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I do not have role in investigating specific instances of alleged market manipulation whether in this jurisdiction or another nor can I comment on the redress available in other jurisdictions.

I am advised by the Central Bank of Ireland that it is not aware of a complaint against an Irish authorised financial services firm alleging manipulation in FX markets and it has been following the activities of the UK and US regulatory authorities in respect of manipulation in global foreign exchange (FX) market. The Central Bank recommends that Irish investors who believe they may have suffered loss due to manipulation in FX markets should contact the regulated financial service provider with whom they dealt (which may be operating in Ireland or elsewhere) to get further information and should seek legal advice (which is appropriate to the jurisdiction in which they received these services). With regard to complaints concerning financial services providers authorised by the Central Bank of Ireland or subject to the terms of the Consumer Credit Act 1995, consumers and small businesses may also contact the Financial Services Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has the power to award compensation of up to a maximum of €250,000 or a €26,000 annuity where a complaint is upheld.

IBRC Liquidation

71. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Finance further to Question No. 285 of 12 May 2015, if he will provide details of the competitive sales process devised by the special liquidators; if performing borrowers were allowed to bid on their loans as part of the liquidation process; the number of the successful bids that were for less than 100% of the value of the loans; the difference, in millions of euro, between the value of these loans and the amount paid by the successful bidders in the liquidation process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21087/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As the Deputy is aware, for operational reasons the loan assets (totalling €21.7 billion) of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited (in Special Liquidation) (IBRC) were originally divided into six portfolios: Evergreen, Sand, Rock, Salt, Stone & Pebble.

Prior to establishing the sales processes the Special Liquidators corresponded with borrowers and sought representations regarding how their loans should be sold. The Special Liquidators then gave due consideration to the representations made by the borrowers and professional advice received in devising each of the sales processes. The first sales process of these portfolios completed in July 2014. Following instructions from the Minister for Finance, NAMA were no longer obliged to purchase the unsold IBRC assets at their individual valuation as previously envisaged, as the expected proceeds to be raised from the sale of the IBRC loan assets were to be sufficient to fully repay the IBRC debt to NAMA.

The Special Liquidators then devised a further sales process in respect of the final €2.5 billion worth of loans left unsold from the first process (as well as IBRC s stake in the IBRC Assurance Company and the NAMA subordinated bonds) which was initiated in August 2014. Again, the Special Liquidators corresponded with those borrowers of the unsold loan assets and sought representations of how their loans should be sold. Having given due consideration to the rep-

resentations made by the borrowers of the remaining loan assets and the professional advice received, the Special Liquidators divided the remaining loan assets into four portfolios: Quartz, Pearl, Amber and Amethyst. Project Opal was the sale IBRC's stake in IBRC Assurance Company and Project Jade was the sale of IBRC holding of NAMA subordinated bonds. The sale of each of these portfolios completed in March 2015.

No IBRC borrower was provided with an exclusive opportunity to buy back their loan(s) at a discount or was offered an incentive discount on their loans to refinance their loans. However, as per my answer to Parliamentary Question No. 285 of 12 May 2015, following the Special Liquidators' due process and as part of the competitive sales processes devised by the Special Liquidators, it was possible for some borrowers to bid for their own loans.

The Special Liquidators can confirm that no loans were sold for less than their valuation price (as per the Ministerial Instruction) however they will not be providing information on the prices achieved in the sale process as this is commercially sensitive information.

I would also point out that the progress reports on the Special Liquidation of IBRC, published in June 2014 and March 2015, are available on the Department of Finance website which provide further detail around the sales processes and the progress of the special liquidation more generally.

Banking Sector

72. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he will increase the bank levy on specific banks as opposed to a general increase; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21091/15]

75. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if the representatives of all six banks he met in relation to variable mortgage rates have committed to an actual reduction in the standard variable rates; the time frame for this to happen; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21220/15]

76. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views that a bank which offers its variable mortgage rate customers a fixed rate which is lower than the current standard variable rate, but is not actually reducing its standard variable rate, is meeting the objective he has set in relation to mortgage rates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21221/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 72, 75 and 76 together.

As the Deputies are aware, I met with senior management of Ireland's six main mortgage lenders last week. The meetings focused on the mortgage market and specifically the comparatively high standard variable rates currently being charged by the banks.

I outlined my view, that Standard Variable Rates being charged in the Irish market are too high. There was agreement from all lenders that customers should have access to more competitive mortgage products as per my recommendation.

The banks agreed to review their rates and products and, by the beginning of July, to have simple options to reduce monthly mortgage payments for SVR customers. Some of the potential products include lower standard variable rates for existing and new customers, competitive fixed rate products and lower variable rates taking account of loan to value for new and existing customers.

In addition to the issue of rates I also outlined the need for greater competition in the market and the need for a more active and well-resourced campaign by the individual banks. This should focus on promoting awareness of their best offering and how easy it is for customers to take up new products and switch between different institutions if they wish to avail of better rates.

The position of home owners who are in negative equity was also discussed and assurances were sought and received that these homeowners will be able to avail of options to reduce their monthly repayments.

Officials in my Department will review progress over the coming weeks and a follow up set of meeting with each of the six banks will take place in September in advance of the Budget. The issue of a penal banking levy in the Budget or powers for the Central Banks to regulate interest rates will be considered at that time if sufficient progress is not made.

IBRC Operations

73. **Deputy Colm Keaveney** asked the Minister for Finance if he was aware, at the time, that a significant shareholder in Siteserv was acting as a mediator between the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation and a person (details supplied) in the months after the sale of Siteserv to that person and another person; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21095/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by my officials that they are not aware of it being brought to the attention of either me or my officials that the person referred to in the question was acting as a mediator between IBRC and the other person whose details have been supplied in the question in the months after the sale of Siteserv.

Property Tax Collection

74. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Finance the way the non-payment of local property tax will be recovered; the level of interest and penalties that may apply; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21204/15]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by Revenue that compliance rates of 96% in respect of Local Property Tax (LPT) were achieved for both 2013 (Half Year) and 2014. The compliance rate for 2015 (year to date) is 94%, which is ahead of target at this point.

The minority of property owners who failed to meet their LPT obligations can be subjected to a range of debt collection/enforcement options as provided for by Section 120 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act (as amended). These options include:

- Mandatory deduction from salary, pension or certain Government payments.

- Referral of the outstanding debt to a Sheriff for collection.

- Referral of the outstanding debt to a solicitor for action through the Courts

- Attachment of a bank account or 3rd party debt (owing to the defaulting property owner).

- A surcharge on Income Tax, Corporation Tax or Capital Gains Tax Returns.

- Withholding Tax Clearance certification.

- Offset of any refunds due in other taxes to outstanding LPT/ HHC liabilities.

Interest at a rate of 8% per annum may also be charged on outstanding or late payments as provided for by Section 149 of the Act.

Part 14 of the Act provides for the imposition of penalties, to a maximum of €3,000, where a property owner does not submit an LPT Return, fails to complete a Return, does not amend a Return when requested to do so (by Revenue) or knowingly makes a false statement for the purposes of reducing the liability.

The total outstanding liability (including tax, interest and penalties) automatically attaches as a charge on the property which as a consequence can not be sold or transferred until the debt is paid.

Finally Revenue has assured me that before any debt collection/enforcement action is started in respect of any tax, including LPT, the defaulting taxpayer is given at least one opportunity to engage and agree mutually acceptable payment arrangements. The debt collection process only starts when there is no meaningful engagement by the taxpayer or where the terms of any agreement are not adhered to.

Questions Nos. 75 and 76 answered with Question No. 72.

Office of Public Works Properties

77. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the Office of Public Works plans to sell its mobile telecommunications assets; the office's plans to invest in, develop, expand or dispose of these assets; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21203/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Simon Harris): The Commissioners of Public Works are committed to maintaining/increasing the income stream from mobile phone operators as part of their overall property asset management arrangements.

The assets that generate this income form an integral part of the State Property Portfolio managed by the Commissioners, e.g. State owned buildings, Garda masts, etc., and therefore they have no plans to dispose of these assets at this time.

Indeed, the Commissioners are assessing the future use of the State Property Portfolio in the telecommunications sector including an assessment of the potential for new sites to be brought to the market. In response to the consolidation in the telecommunications market, my Office is engaging with the mobile phone operators to address matters arising from this development.

Job Retention

78. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the actions he has taken to protect jobs at a company (details supplied) in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21059/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Gerald Nash): I understand that the closure of the supermarket in question related to a private commercial dispute between the supermarket and the owner of the shopping centre in which it is

located. I understand further that the employees of the supermarket had been informed that they should report for work in the normal way as rostered and that they would continue to be paid. I welcome the fact that the supermarket has now re-opened. While I have no function in matters of private commercial dispute, I would urge all concerned to ensure that the matters of dispute are resolved in a lasting way, in the interests of all of the businesses affected, their employees and their customers. Finally, in the interests of good workplace relations, I would encourage the company in question to keep its employees fully informed of developments in the matter.

Job Retention

79. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the actions he has taken to protect jobs at a supermarket (details supplied) in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21071/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Gerald Nash): I understand that the closure of the supermarket in question related to a private commercial dispute between the supermarket and the owner of the shopping centre in which it is located. I understand further that the employees of the supermarket had been informed that they should report for work in the normal way as rostered and that they would continue to be paid. I welcome the fact that the supermarket has now re-opened. While I have no function in matters of private commercial dispute, I would urge all concerned to ensure that the matters of dispute are resolved in a lasting way, in the interests of all of the businesses affected, their employees and their customers. Finally, in the interests of good workplace relations, I would encourage the company in question to keep its employees fully informed of developments in the matter.

Employment Appeals Tribunal

80. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the procedures with regard to the making of transcripts at the employment tribunal hearings; if stenographer's records are taken and maintained in all cases; the procedure for making these records available to participants in cases and to the general public; and the location where these records are maintained. [21089/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Employment Appeals Tribunal is independent in the exercise of its quasi-judicial function and I have no direct involvement in its day to day operations.

I am informed by the Employment Appeals Tribunal that it does not engage the services of stenographers at its hearings. Parties to a hearing may, however, engage such services for the purpose of making transcripts and all costs in relation to this are borne by the party who engages the service providers. There are no provisions in relation to making such records available to participants or the general public. However, if a party seeks to introduce any part of a transcript in evidence, the ordinary rules which apply when a document is being used in cross examination apply and in such circumstances the Tribunal would normally request that the relevant extract be made available to the Tribunal and the parties concerned. In the event of transcripts being made available to the Tribunal, these records would normally be maintained by the Employment Appeals Tribunal, 65A Adelaide Road, Dublin, 2.

Employment Appeals Tribunal

81. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will provide a list of all of those who were employed by the Employment Appeals Tribunal in the past ten years; and the roles that they occupied. [21090/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Employment Appeals Tribunal is independent in the exercise of its quasi-judicial function and I have no direct involvement in its day to day operations.

In relation to the personnel involved in the Tribunal, a secretariat carries out the administrative functions and Members are appointed to hear and decide on cases lodged with it under the various employment rights Acts that come under the Tribunal's remit.

In accordance with the provisions of the Redundancy Payments Acts, I appoint the Members of the Tribunal. The Members include: the Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Employer Members and Employee Members. A list of the Members of the Tribunal for each of the years 2005 to date is set out in the following Appendix. I would like to point out that the list of Members is also contained in the Tribunal's Annual Report each year. The Annual Report is available on the website from 2007 to date – see www.workplacerelations.ie.

In addition to the Members of the Employment Appeals Tribunal, the Tribunal is supplemented by the assignment of an allocation of civil servants of my Department. Staffing numbers of both my Department overall, and assigned to the Tribunal, have changed over the period in line with changes to public sector numbers in general. The specific grades and numbers of these civil servants over the ten year period requested by the Deputy are set out in tabular format as follows.

DJEI staff assigned to the Employment Appeals Tribunal

Year	Total	Assistant Principal	Higher Executive Officer	Executive Officer	Staff Officer	Clerical Officer
end-2014	28.5	0.7	2.0	15.8	1.8	8.1
end-2013	37.3	0.7	3.0	18.6	1.8	13.1
end-2012	38.6	1.0	3.0	18.7	1.8	14.1
end-2011	44.6	1.0	3.0	20.7	1.8	18.1
end-2010	35.2	1.0	2.0	16.1	1.0	15.1
end-2009	35.4	1.0	2.0	16.1	1.0	15.3
end-2008	33.6	1.0	2.0	17.6	1.0	12.0
end-2007	29.0	1.0	2.0	15.0	1.0	10.0
end-2006	25.8	1.0	1.0	11.8	1.0	11.0
end-2005	27.9	1	1	13	1	12

Appendix

2015 Members of the Tribunal

	VICE-CHAIRMEN continued	EMPLOYERS' PANEL continued	EMPLOYEES' PANEL continued
CHAIRMAN	Jeremiah O'Connor	Tadg O'Sullivan	Maire Mulcahy
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	Neil Ormond	Helen Murphy
VICE-CHAIRMEN	Moya Quinlan	Dermot Peakin	Phil Ni Sheaghdha
Sinead Behan B.L.	Joe Revington S.C.	Pat Pierce	Owen Nulty
Kieran Buckley	Nicholas Russell	Peter J Pierson	Seamus O'Donnell

	VICE-CHAIRMEN continued	EMPLOYERS' PANEL continued	EMPLOYEES' PANEL continued
Pamela Clancy	Tom Ryan	William Power	Michael O'Reilly
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Jeremiah Sheedy	John Reid	Ciaran Ryan
Eithne Coughlan (CR)	Joseph Smith (CR)	Máire Sweeney	Dave Thomas
Ann-Marie Courell B.L.	Tony Taaffe	Liam Tobin	Paddy Trehy
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Patrick Wallace (CR)	Jean Winters	Owen Wills
Emile Daly B.L.	EMPLOYERS' PANEL	EMPLOYEES' PANEL	Paddy Woods
Dorothy Donovan B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Frank Barry	
Catherine Egan B.L.	Joe Browne	Tom Brady	Secretary to the Tribunal
John Fahy B.L.	Michael Carr	Eveta Brezina	Ms Frances Gaynor
James Flanagan B.L.	Frank Cunneen	Al Butler	
Veronica Gates B.L.	Moss Flood	Finbarr Dorgan	
Myles Gilvarry	Angela Gaule	James Dorney	
Bernadette Glynn	Tom L Gill	Noel Dowling	
Dara Hayes B.L.	James Goulding	Patsy Doyle	
Graham Hanlon	Eamon C Handley	John Flannery	
Eamon Harrington	Don Hegarty	John Flavin	
David Herlihy	James Hennessy	Tom J Gill	
Patrick Hurley	John Horan	Noirin Greene	
Elva Kearney B.L.	Ben Kealy	Helen Henry	
Margaret Levey B.L.	J J Killian	Thomas A Hogan	
James M Lucey	Con Lucey	James Jordan	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	Gerry McAuliffe	Hilary Kelleher	
Orna Madden B.L.	Cyril McHugh	Suzanne Kelly	
Roderick Maguire B.L.	Finbar Moloney	Frank Keoghan	
Sean Mahon	Don Moore	Rosabel Kerrigan	
Mary McAveety	Desmond Morrison	Sean Mackell	
Jeananne McGovern B.L.	Roger F Murphy	Michael McGarry	
Penelope McGrath B.L.	Michael Noone	Alice Moore	
Saundra McNally	William O'Carroll	Joe Maher	
Fintan J Murphy (CR)	Tom O'Grady	Mary Maher	
Eamonn Murray	Aidan O'Mara	Dominic McEvoy	
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	James O'Neill	Jim Moore	

2014 Members of the Tribunal

	VICE-CHAIRMEN continued	EMPLOYERS' PANEL continued	EMPLOYEES' PANEL continued
CHAIRMAN	Jeremiah O'Connor	James O'Neill	Mary Maher
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	Tadg O'Sullivan	Dominic McEvoy
		EMPLOYERS' PANEL continued	EMPLOYEES' PANEL continued
VICE-CHAIRMEN	Moya Quinlan	Neil Ormond	Jim Moore
Sinead Behan B.L.	Joe Revington S.C.	Dermot Peakin	Maire Mulcahy
Kieran Buckley	Nicholas Russell	Pat Pierce	Helen Murphy
Pamela Clancy	Tom Ryan	Peter J Pierson	Phil Ni Sheaghdha
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Jeremiah Sheedy	William Power	Owen Nulty
Eithne Coughlan (CR)	Joseph Smith (CR)	Robert D E Prole	Seamus O'Donnell
Ann-Marie Courell B.L.	Tony Taaffe	John Reid	Michael O'Reilly

	VICE-CHAIRMEN continued	EMPLOYERS' PANEL continued	EMPLOYEES' PANEL continued
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Patrick Wallace (CR)	Máire Sweeney	Ciaran Ryan
Emile Daly B.L.	EMPLOYERS' PANEL	Liam Tobin	Dave Thomas
Dorothy Donovan B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Declan F Winston	Paddy Trehy
Catherine Egan B.L.	Joe Browne	Jean Winters	Owen Wills
John Fahy B.L.	Michael Carr	EMPLOYEES' PANEL	Paddy Woods
James Flanagan B.L.	Pat Casey	Frank Barry	
Veronica Gates B.L.	Frank Cunneen	Tom Brady	
Myles Gilvarry	Moss Flood	Eveta Brezina	Secretary to the Tribunal
Bernadette Glynn	Angela Gaule	Al Butler	Ms Frances Gaynor
Dara Hayes B.L.	Tom L Gill	Finbarr Dorgan	
Graham Hanlon	James Goulding	James Dorney	
Eamon Harrington	Eamon C Handley	Noel Dowling	
David Herlihy	Don Hegarty	Patsy Doyle	
Patrick Hurley	James Hennessy	John Flannery	
Elva Kearney B.L.	John Horan	John Flavin	
Margaret Levey B.L.	Ben Kealy	Tom J Gill	
James M Lucey	J J Killian	Noirin Greene	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	Con Lucey	Helen Henry	
Orna Madden B.L.	Gerry McAuliffe	Thomas A Hogan	
Roderick Maguire B.L.	Cyril McHugh	James Jordan	
Sean Mahon	Finbar Moloney	Hilary Kelleher	
Mary McAveety	Don Moore	Suzanne Kelly	
Jeananne McGovern B.L.	Desmond Morrison	Frank Keoghan	
Penelope McGrath B.L.	Roger F Murphy	Rosabel Kerrigan	
Saundra McNally	Michael Noone	Sean Mackell	
Fintan J Murphy (CR)	William O'Carroll	Michael McGarry	
Eamonn Murray	Tom O'Grady	Alice Moore	
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	Aidan O'Mara	Joe Maher	

2013 Members of the Tribunal

Chairman	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers' Panel continued	Employees' Panel continued
	Leachlain S O Catháin	Aidan O'Mara	Alice Moore
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Jeremiah O'Connor	James O'Neill	Joe Maher
Vice Chairmen	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	Tadg O'Sullivan	Mary Maher
Sinead Behan B.L.	Moya Quinlan	Neil Ormond	Dominic McEvoy
Kieran Buckley	Joe Revington S.C.	Dermot Peakin	Jim Moore
Pamela Clancy	Nicholas Russell	Pat Pierce	Maire Mulcahy
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Tom Ryan	Peter J Pierson	Helen Murphy
Eithne Coughlan (CR)	Jeremiah Sheedy	William Power	Phil Ni Sheaghdha
Ann-Marie Courell B.L	Joseph Smith (CR)	Robert D E Prole	Owen Nulty
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Tony Taaffe	John Reid	Seamus O'Donnell
Emile Daly B.L.	Patrick Wallace (CR)	Máire Sweeney	Michael O'Reilly
Dorothy Donovan B.L.	Employers' Panel	Liam Tobin	Ciaran Ryan
Catherine Egan B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Declan F Winston	Dave Thomas
John Fahy B.L.	Joe Browne	Jean Winters	Paddy Trehy

Chairman	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers' Panel continued	Employees' Panel continued
James Flanagan B.L.	Michael Carr	Employees' Panel	Owen Wills
Veronica Gates B.L.	Pat Casey	Frank Barry	Paddy Woods
Myles Gilvarry	Frank Cunneen	Tom Brady	
Bernadette Glynn	Moss Flood	Eveta Brezina	
Dara Hayes B.L.	Angela Gaule	Al Butler	Secretary to the Tribunal
Graham Hanlon	Tom L Gill	Finbarr Dorgan	Ms Frances Gaynor
Eamon Harrington	James Goulding	James Dorney	
David Herlihy	Eamon C Handley	Noel Dowling	
Patrick Hurley	Don Hegarty	Patsy Doyle	
Elva Kearney B.L.	James Hennessy	John Flannery	
Margaret Levey B.L.	John Horan	John Flavin	
James M Lucey	Ben Kealy	Tom J Gill	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	J J Killian	Noirin Greene	
Orna Madden B.L.	Con Lucey	Helen Henry	
Roderick Maguire B.L.	Gerry McAuliffe	Thomas A Hogan	
Sean Mahon	Cyril McHugh	James Jordan	
Mary McAveety	Finbar Moloney	Hilary Kelleher	
		Suzanne Kelly	

2013 Members of the Tribunal

Vice Chairmen continued	Employers' Panel continued	Employees' Panel continued
Penelope McGrath B.L	Desmond Morrison	Tony Kelly
Saundra McNally	Roger F Murphy	Frank Keoghan
Fintan J Murphy (CR)	Michael Noone	Rosabel Kerrigan
Eamonn Murray	William O'Carroll	Sean Mackell
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	Tom O'Grady	Michael McGarry

2012 Members of the Tribunal

Chairman	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
	Leachlain S O Catháin	Aidan O'Mara	Alice Moore
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Jeremiah O'Connor	James O'Neill	Joe Maher
Vice Chairmen	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	Tadg O'Sullivan	Mary Maher
Sinead Behan B.L.	Moya Quinlan	Neil Ormond	Dominic McEvoy
Kieran Buckley	Joe Revington S.C.	Dermot Peakin	Jim Moore
Pamela Clancy	Nicholas Russell	Pat Pierce	Maire Mulcahy
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Tom Ryan	Peter J Pierson	Helen Murphy
Eithne Coughlan (CR)	Jeremiah Sheedy	William Power	Phil Ni Sheaghdha
Ann-Marie Courell B.L.	Joseph Smith (CR)	Robert D E Prole	Owen Nulty
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Tony Taaffe	John Reid	Seamus O'Donnell
Emile Daly B.L.	Patrick Wallace (CR)	Máire Sweeney	Michael O'Reilly
	Employers Panel		Employees Panel continued
Dorothy Donovan B.L.		Liam Tobin	Ciaran Ryan
Catherine Egan B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Declan F Winston	Dave Thomas
John Fahy B.L.	Joe Browne	Jean Winters	Paddy Trehy

Chairman	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
James Flanagan B.L.	Michael Carr	Employees Panel	Gerry Whyte
Veronica Gates B.L.	Pat Casey	Frank Barry	Owen Wills
Myles Gilvarry	Frank Cunneen	Tom Brady	Paddy Woods
Bernadette Glynn	Moss Flood	Eveta Brezina	
Dara Hayes B.L.	Angela Gaule	Al Butler	Secretary to the Tribunal
Graham Hanlon	Tom L Gill	Finbarr Dorgan	Mr David Small
Eamon Harrington	James Goulding	James Dorney	
David Herlihy	Eamon C Handley	Noel Dowling	CR – County Registrars
Patrick Hurley	Don Hegarty	Patsy Doyle	
Elva Kearney B.L.	James Hennessy	Mary Finnerty	
Margaret Levey B.L.	John Horan	John Flannery	
James M Lucey	Ben Kealy	John Flavin	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	J J Killian	Tom J Gill	
Orna Madden B.L.	Con Lucey	Noirin Greene	
Roderick Maguire B.L.	Gerry McAuliffe	Helen Henry	
Sean Mahon	Cyril McHugh	Thomas A Hogan	
Mary McAveety	Finbar Moloney	James Jordan	
Jeananne McGovern B.L.	Don Moore	Hilary Kelleher	

2012 Members of the Tribunal

Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
Penelope McGrath B.L.	Desmond Morrison	Suzanne Kelly
Saundra McNally	Michael J Murphy	Tony Kelly
Patrick Meghen (CR)	Roger F Murphy	Frank Keoghan
Fintan J Murphy (CR)	Michael Noone	Rosabel Kerrigan
Eamonn Murray	William O'Carroll	Sean Mackell
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	Tom O'Grady	Michael McGarry

2011 Members of the Tribunal

	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
Chairman	Leachlain S O Catháin	William O'Carroll	Sean Mackell
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Mark O'Connell B.L.	Tom O'Grady	Michael McGarry
Vice Chairmen	Jeremiah O'Connor	Aidan O'Mara	Alice Moore
Sinead Behan B.L.	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	James O'Neill	Joe Maher
Kieran Buckley	Moya Quinlan	Tadg O'Sullivan	Mary Maher
Pamela Clancy	Joe Revington S.C.	Neil Ormond	Dominic McEvoy
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Nicholas Russell	Dermot Peakin	Jim Moore
Eithne Coughlan (CR)	Tom Ryan	Pat Pierce	Maire Mulcahy
Ann-Marie Courell B.L.	Jeremiah Sheedy	Peter J Pierson	Helen Murphy
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Joseph Smith (CR)	William Power	Phil Ni Sheaghdha

2011 Members of the Tribunal

Vice Chairmen continued	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel	Employees Panel
Emile Daly B.L.	Tony Taaffe	Robert D E Prole	Owen Nulty
Dorothy Donovan B.L.	Patrick Wallace (CR)	John Reid	Seamus O'Donnell
Catherine Egan B.L.	Employers Panel	Máire Sweeney	Michael O'Reilly
John Fahy B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Liam Tobin	Ciaran Ryan
James Flanagan B.L.	Joe Browne	Declan F Winston	Dave Thomas
Veronica Gates B.L.	Michael Carr	Jean Winters	Paddy Trehy
Myles Gilvarry	Pat Casey	Employees Panel	Gerry Whyte
Bernadette Glynn	Frank Cunneen	Frank Barry	Owen Wills
Dara Hayes B.L.	John G Flanagan	Tom Brady	Paddy Woods
Graham Hanlon	Moss Flood	Eveta Brezina	
Eamon Harrington	Angela Gaule	Al Butler	Secretary to the Tribunal
David Herlihy	Tom L Gill	Finbarr Dorgan	Mr David Small
Patrick Hurley	James Goulding	James Dorney	
Elva Kearney B.L.	Eamon C Handley	Noel Dowling	
Margaret Levey B.L.	Don Hegarty	Patsy Doyle	
James M Lucey	James Hennessy	Mary Finnerty	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	John Horan	John Flannery	
Orna Madden B.L.	Ben Kealy	John Flavin	CR – County Registrars
Roderick Maguire B.L.	J J Killian	Tom J Gill	
Sean Mahon	Con Lucey	Noirin Greene	
Mary McAveety	Gerry McAuliffe	Helen Henry	
Jeananne McGovern	Cyril McHugh	Thomas A Hogan	
	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued	
Penelope McGrath B.L.	Finbar Moloney	James Jordan	
Saundra McNally	Don Moore	Hilary Kelleher	
Patrick Meghen (CR)	Desmond Morrison	Suzanne Kelly	
Fintan J Murphy (CR)	Michael J Murphy	Tony Kelly	
Eamonn Murray	Roger F Murphy	Frank Keoghan	
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	Michael Noone	Rosabel Kerrigan	

2010 Members of the Tribunal

	Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
Chairman	Jeremiah O'Connor	Tadg O'Sullivan	Joe Maher
Kate T O'Mahony B.L.	Peter J O'Leary B.L.	Neil Ormond	Mary Maher
Vice Chairmen	Moya Quinlan	Dermot Peakin	Dominic McEvoy
Sinead Behan B.L.	Joe Revington S.C.	Pat Pierce	Jim Moore
Kieran Buckley	Nicholas Russell	Peter J Pierson	Maire Mulcahy
Pamela Clancy	Tom Ryan	William Power	Helen Murphy
Charles Corcoran B.L.	Jeremiah Sheedy	Robert D E Prole	Phil Ni Sheaghdha
Ann-MarieCourell B.L.	Tony Taaffe	John Reid	Owen Nulty
Fiona Crawford B.L.	Employers Panel	Máire Sweeney	Seamus O'Donnell
Emile Daly B.L.	Gerry Andrews	Liam Tobin	Michael O'Reilly

2010 Members of the Tribunal

Vice Chairmen continued	Employers Panel continued	Employers Panel continued	Employees Panel continued
Dorothy Donovan B.L.	Joe Browne	Declan F Winston	Ciaran Ryan
Catherine Egan B.L.	Michael Carr	Jean Winters	Dave Thomas
John Fahy B.L.	Pat Casey	Employees Panel	Paddy Trehy
James Flanagan B.L.	Frank Cunneen	Frank Barry	Gerry Whyte
Veronica Gates B.L.	John G Flanagan	Tom Brady	Owen Wills
Myles Gilvarry	Moss Flood	Eveta Brezina	Paddy Woods
Clodagh Gleeson B.L.	Angela Gaule	Al Butler	*Mr King resigned
Bernadette Glynn	Tom L Gill	Finbarr Dorgan	during 2010
Dara Hayes B.L.	James Goulding	James Dorney	
Graham Hanlon	Eamon C Handley	Noel Dowling	Secretary to the Tribunal
Eamon Harrington	Don Hegarty	Patsy Doyle	Mr David Small
David Herlihy	James Hennessy	Mary Finnerty	
Patrick Hurley	John Horan	John Flannery	
Elva Kearney B.L.	Ben Kealy	John Flavin	
Margaret Levey B.L.	J J Killian	Tom J Gill	
James M Lucey	Con Lucey	Noirin Greene	
Dermot MacCarthy S.C.	Gerry McAuliffe	Helen Henry	
Orna Madden B.L.	Cyril McHugh	Thomas A Hogan	
Roderick Maguire B.L.	Finbar Moloney	James Jordan	
Sean Mahon	Don Moore	Hilary Kelleher	
Mary McAveety	Desmond Morrison	Suzanne Kelly	
Jeananne McGovern B.L.	Michael J Murphy	Tony Kelly	
Penelope McGrath B.L.	Roger F Murphy	Frank Keoghan	
Saundra McNally	Michael Noone	Rosabel Kerrigan	
Eamonn Murray	William O'Carroll	Patrick King*	
Niamh O'Carroll Kelly B.L	Tom O'Grady	Sean Mackell	
Leachlain S O Catháin	Aidan O'Mara	Michael McGarry	
Mark O'Connell	James O'Neill	Alice Moore	

2009 Members of the Tribunal

-	Members
Chairman:	Kate T. O'Mahony, Barrister-at-Law
Vice-Chairmen:	Sinead Behan, Barrister-at-Law
	Olive Brennan, Barrister-at-Law
	Kieran Buckley, Solicitor
	David Cagney, Barrister-at-Law
	Pamela Clancy, Solicitor
	Emile Daly, Barrister-at-Law
	John Fahy, Barrister-at-Law
	James Flanagan, Barrister-at-Law
	William Benedict Garvey, Barrister-at-Law
	Myles Gilvarry, Solicitor
	Clodagh Gleeson, Barrister-at-Law
	Bernadette Glynn, Solicitor
	Dara Hayes, Barrister-at-Law
	Patrick Hurley, Solicitor

-	Members
	Elva Kearney, Barrister-at-Law
	Margaret Levey, Barrister-at-Law
	Dermot MacCarthy, Senior Counsel
	Desmond Mahon, Barrister-at-Law
	Sean Mahon, Solicitor
	Mary McAveety, Solicitor
	Penelope McGrath, Barrister-at-Law
	Saundra McNally, Solicitor
	Eamonn Murray, Solicitor
	Niamh O'Carroll Kelly, Barrister-at-Law
	Leachlain S. Ó Catháin, Solicitor
	Mark O'Connell, Barrister-at-Law
	Jeremiah O'Connor, Solicitor
	Rachel O'Flynn, Barrister-at-Law
	Peter J. O'Leary, Barrister-at-Law
	Sean O'Riordáin, Barrister-at-Law
	Marian Petty, Solicitor
	Moya Quinlan, Solicitor
	Pat Quinn, Barrister-at-Law
	Tom Ryan, Solicitor
	Jeremiah Sheedy, Solicitor
	Tony Taaffe, Solicitor

Employers Panel	Members	Members	Members	Members
	Joe Browne	Pat Casey	Frank Cunneen	T.P. Flood
	Michael Forde	Angela Gaule	Tom Gill	James Goulding
	Eamon C Handley	Don Hegarty	James Hennessy	John Horan
	Ben Kealy	Mel Kennedy	J J Killian	Gerry McAuliffe
	Cyril McHugh	Finbar Moloney	Don Moore	Desmond Morrison
	Michael J Murphy	Roger F Murphy	Michael Noone	William O'Carroll
	Aidan O'Mara	James O'Neill	Neil Ormond	Tadg O'Sullivan
	Gerry Phelan	Pat Pierce	Peter J Pierson	William Power
	Robert D.E. Prole	Jim Redmond	John Reid	Eamonn Ryan
	Máire Sweeney	Liam Tobin	Declan F Winston	Jean Winters

Employees Panel	Members	Members	Members	Members
	Frank Barry	Eveta Brezina	Nick Broughall	Al Butler
	Brendan Byrne	Catherine Byrne	Paul Clarke	Anne Clune
	James Dorney	Patsy Doyle	Mary Finnerty	Kay Garvey
	Noirin Greene	Helen Henry	George Hunter	Hilary Kelleher
	Tony Kennelly	Rosabel Kerrigan	George Lamon	Joe LeCumbre
	Sean Mackell	Joe Maher	Mary Maher	Peter McAleer
	John McDonnell	Dominic McEvoy	Michael McGarry	Bernard McKenna
	Alice Moore	Jim Moore	Maire Mulcahy	Owen Nulty
	Phil Ni Sheaghdha	Kevin O'Connor	Seamus O'Donnell	Ciaran Ryan
	Patrick Trehy	Catherine Warnock	Gerry Whyte	Paddy Woods

2008 Members of the Tribunal

-	Members
Chairman:	Kate T. O'Mahony, Barrister-at-Law
Vice-Chairmen:	Sinead Behan, Barrister-at-Law
	Olive Brennan, Barrister-at-Law
	Kieran Buckley, Solicitor
	David Cagney, Barrister-at-Law
	Pamela Clancy, Solicitor
	Emile Daly, Barrister-at-Law
	John Fahy, Barrister-at-Law
	James Flanagan, Barrister-at-Law
	William Benedict Garvey, Barrister-at-Law
	Myles Gilvarry, Solicitor
	Clodagh Gleeson, Barrister-at-Law
	Bernadette Glynn, Solicitor
	Dara Hayes, Barrister-at-Law
	Patrick Hurley, Solicitor
	Elva Kearney, Barrister-at-Law
	Kevin P. Kilrane, Solicitor*
	Margaret Levey, Barrister-at-Law
	Dermot MacCarthy, Senior Counsel
	Desmond Mahon, Barrister-at-Law
	Sean Mahon, Solicitor
	Mary McAveety, Solicitor
	Penelope McGrath, Barrister-at-Law
	Saundra McNally, Solicitor**
	Eamonn Murray, Solicitor
	Niamh O'Carroll Kelly, Barrister-at-Law
	Leachlain S. Ó Catháin, Solicitor
	Mark O'Connell, Barrister-at-Law
	Jeremiah O'Connor, Solicitor
	Rachel O'Flynn, Barrister-at-Law
	Peter J. O'Leary, Barrister-at-Law
	Seán O'Riordáin, Barrister-at-Law
	Marian Petty, Solicitor
	Moya Quinlan, Solicitor
	Pat Quinn, Barrister-at-Law
	Tom Ryan, Solicitor
	Jeremiah Sheedy, Solicitor
	Tony Taaffe, Solicitor

Employers Panel:

Joe Browne, Pat Casey, Frank Cunneen, T. P. Flood, Michael Forde, Angela Gaule, Tom Gill, James Goulding, Eamonn Handley, Don Hegarty, James Hennessy, John Horan, Ben Kealy, Mel Kennedy, JJ Killian, Gerry McAuliffe, Cyril McHugh, Finbar Moloney, Don Moore, Desmond Morrison, Michael J. Murphy, Roger Murphy, Michael Noone, William O'Carroll,

Aidan O'Mara, James O'Neill, C. A. Ormond, Tadg O'Sullivan, Gerry Phelan, Pat Pierce, Peter Pierson, William Power, Robert Prole, Jim Redmond, John Reid, Eamonn Ryan, Máire Sweeney, Liam Tobin, Declan Winston, Jean Winters.

Employees Panel:

Frank Barry, Eveta Brezina, Nick Broughall, Al Butler, Brendan Byrne, Catherine Byrne, Paul Clarke, Anne Clune, Jim Dorney, Patsey Doyle, Mary Finnerty, Kay Garvey, Noirin Greene, Helen Henry, George Hunter, Hilary Kelleher, Tony Kennelly, Rosabel Kerrigan, George Lamon, Joe LeCumbre, Sean Mackell, Joe Maher, Mary Maher, Peter McAleer, John McDonnell, Dominic McEvoy, Michael McGarry, Bernard McKenna, Alice Moore, Jim Moore, Maire Mulcahy, Owen Nulty, Phil Ni Sheaghdha, Kevin O'Connor, Seamus O'Donnell, Emer O'Shea*, Ciaran Ryan, Paddy Trehy, Catherine Warnock, Gerry Whyte, Patrick Woods.

* Resigned

** Appointed 14th November 2008

2007 Members of the Tribunal

-	Members
Chairman:	Kate T. O'Mahony, Barrister-at-Law
Vice-Chairmen:	Sinead Behan, Barrister-at-Law
	Olive Brennan, Barrister-at-Law
	Kieran Buckley, Solicitor
	David Cagney, Barrister-at-Law
	Pamela Clancy, Solicitor
	Emile Daly, Barrister-at-Law
	John Fahy, Barrister-at-Law
	James Flanagan, Barrister-at-Law
	William Benedict Garvey, Barrister-at-Law
	Myles Gilvarry, Solicitor
	Clodagh Gleeson, Barrister-at-Law
	Bernadette Glynn, Solicitor
	Tony Halpin, Barrister-at-Law *
	Dara Hayes, Barrister-at-Law
	Patrick Hurley, Solicitor
	Elva Kearney, Barrister-at-Law
	Kevin P. Kilrane, Solicitor
	Margaret Levey, Barrister-at-Law
	Dermot MacCarthy, Senior Counsel
	Desmond Mahon, Barrister-at-Law
	Sean Mahon, Solicitor
	Mary McAveety, Solicitor
	Penelope McGrath, Barrister-at-Law
	Eamonn Murray, Solicitor
	Niamh O'Carroll Kelly, Barrister-at-Law
	Leachlain S. Ó Catháin, Solicitor
	Mark O'Connell, Barrister-at-Law

-	Members
	Jeremiah O'Connor, Solicitor
	Rachel O'Flynn, Barrister-at-Law
	Peter J. O'Leary, Barrister-at-Law
	Seán O'Riordáin, Barrister-at-Law
	Marian Petty, Solicitor
	Moya Quinlan, Solicitor
	Pat Quinn, Barrister-at-Law **
	Tom Ryan, Solicitor
	Jeremiah Sheedy, Solicitor

* Resigned upon his appointment as a District Court Judge.

** Appointed w.e.f. 13th June 2007

Employers Panel:

Joe Browne, Pat Casey, Frank Cunneen, Anne Delahunt*, T. P. Flood, Michael Forde, Angela Gaule, Tom Gill, James Goulding, Eamonn Handley, Don Hegarty, James Hennessy, John Horan, Ben Kealy, Mel Kennedy, JJ Killian, Gerry McAuliffe, Cyril McHugh, Finbar Miloney, Don Moore, Desmond Morrison, Michael J. Murphy, Roger Murphy, Michael Noone, William O'Carroll, Aidan O'Mara**, James O'Neill, C. A. Ormond, Tadg O'Sullivan, Gerry Phelan, Pat Pierce, Peter Pierson, William Power, Robert Prole, Jim Redmond, John Reid, Eamonn Ryan, Máire Sweeney, John Walsh, Declan Winston, Jean Winters.

* Resigned

** Appointed w.e.f. 20th August 2007

Employees Panel:

Frank Barry, Eveta Brezina, Nick Broughall, Al Butler, Brendan Byrne, Catherine Byrne, Anne Clune, Jim Dorney, Patsey Doyle, Mary Finnerty, Kay Garvey, Noirin Greene, Helen Henry, George Hunter, Hilary Kelleher, Tony Kennelly, Rosabel Kerrigan, George Lamon, Joe LeCumbre, Sean Mackell, Joe Maher, Mary Maher, Peter McAleer, John McDonnell, Dominic McEvoy, Michael McGarry, Bernard McKenna, Alice Moore, Jim Moore, Maire Mulcahy, Owen Nulty, Phil Ni Sheaghdha, Kevin O'Connor, Seamus O'Donnell, Emer O'Shea, Ciaran Ryan, Paddy Trehy, Catherine Warnock, Gerry Whyte, Patrick Woods.

2006 Members of the Tribunal

-	Members
Chairman:	Kate T. O'Mahony, Barrister-at-Law.
Vice-Chairmen:	Kieran Buckley, Solicitor
	Dympna Cusack, Barrister-at-Law
	Emile Daly, Barrister-at-Law
	Catherine Egan, Barrister-at-Law
	John Fahy, Barrister-at-Law
	Fergal T. Fitzgerald-Doyle, Barrister-at-Law
	James Flanagan, Barrister-at-Law
	Myles Gilvarry, Solicitor
	Clodagh Gleeson, Barrister-at-Law

-	Members
	Bernadette Glynn, Solicitor
	Patrick G. Goold, Solicitor
	Con Guiney, Barrister-at-Law
	Tony Halpin, Barrister-at-Law
	Dara Hayes, Barrister-at-Law
	Elva Kearney, Barrister-at-Law
	Kevin P. Kilrane, Solicitor
	Margaret Levey, Barrister-at-Law
	Dermot MacCarthy, Senior Counsel
	Sean Mahon, Solicitor
	Eoin Martin, Barrister-at-Law
	Penelope McGrath, Barrister-at-Law
	Leachlain S. Ó Catháin, Solicitor
	Mark O'Connell, Barrister-at-Law
	Thomas O'Donoghue, Solicitor
	Peter J. O'Leary, Barrister-at-Law
	Marian Petty, Solicitor
	Moya Quinlan, Solicitor
	Joe Revington, Senior Counsel
	Tom Ryan, Solicitor
	Jeremiah Sheedy, Solicitor
	Geraldine Small, Barrister-at-Law

Employers Panel:

Patrick Bracken, Joe Browne, William Brown, Pat Casey, Frank Cunneen, Anne Delahunt, T. P. Flood, Michael Forde, Tom Gill, James Goulding, John Guinan, Richard Keating, Ben Kealy, Mel Kennedy, Gerry McAuliffe, Cyril McHugh, Don Moore, Desmond Morrison, Michael J. Murphy, Roger Murphy, Terence O'Donnell, Paul O'Leary, James O'Neill, C. A. Ormond, Gerry Phelan, Pat Pierce, Peter Pierson, Jas. A. Power, William Power, Robert Prole, Jim Redmond, John Reid, Eamonn Ryan, Máire Sweeney, John Walsh, Declan Winston.

Employees Panel:

Frank Barry, Rita Bergin, Eveta Brezina, Nick Broughall, Brendan Byrne, Paul Clarke, Anne Clune, Jim Dorney, Breda Fell, Kay Garvey, Noirin Greene, George Hunter, Ben Kearney, Hilary Kelleher, Tony Kennelly,George Lamon, Sean Mackell, Mary Maher, Des Mahon, Rita McArdle, John McDonnell, Dominic McEvoy, Michael McGarry, Bernard McKenna, Alice Moore, Jim Moore, Sam Nolan, Owen Nulty, Clare O'Connor, Kevin O'Connor, Seamus O'Donnell, Emer O'Shea, Ciaran Ryan, Catherine Warnock, Patrick Woods, Tom Wall.

2005 Members of the Tribunal

-	Members
Chairman:	Kate T. O'Mahony, Barrister-at-Law.
Vice-Chairmen:	Kieran Buckley, Solicitor
	Dympna Cusack, Barrister-at-Law
	Emile Daly, Barrister-at-Law

-	Members
	Catherine Egan, Barrister-at-Law
	John Fahy, Barrister-at-Law
	Fergal T. Fitzgerald-Doyle, Barrister-at-Law
	James Flanagan, Barrister-at-Law
	Myles Gilvarry, Solicitor
	Clodagh Gleeson, Barrister-at-Law
	Bernadette Glynn, Solicitor
	Patrick G. Goold, Solicitor
	Con Guiney, Barrister-at-Law
	Tony Halpin, Barrister-at-Law
	Dara Hayes, Barrister-at-Law
	Elva Kearney, Barrister-at-Law
	Kevin P. Kilrane, Solicitor
	Margaret Levey, Barrister-at-Law
	Dermot MacCarthy, Senior Counsel
	Sean Mahon, Solicitor
	Eoin Martin, Barrister-at-Law
	Penelope McGrath, Barrister-at-Law
	Leachlain S. Ó Catháin, Solicitor
	Mark O'Connell, Barrister-at-Law
	Thomas O'Donoghue, Solicitor
	Peter J. O'Leary, Barrister-at-Law
	Marian Petty, Solicitor
	Moya Quinlan, Solicitor
	Joe Revington, Senior Counsel
	Tom Ryan, Solicitor
	Jeremiah Sheedy, Solicitor
	Geraldine Small, Barrister-at-Law

Employers Panel:

Patrick Bracken, Joe Browne, William Brown, Pat Casey, Frank Cunneen, Anne Delahunt, T. P. Flood, Michael Forde, Tom Gill, James Goulding, John Guinan, Richard Keating, Ben Kealy, Mel Kennedy, Gerry McAuliffe, Cyril McHugh, Don Moore, Desmond Morrison, Michael J. Murphy, Roger Murphy, Terence O'Donnell, Paul O'Leary, James O'Neill, C. A. Ormond, Gerry Phelan, Pat Pierce, Peter Pierson, Jas. A. Power, William Power, Robert Prole, Jim Redmond, John Reid, Eamonn Ryan, Máire Sweeney, John Walsh, Declan Winston.

Employees Panel:

Frank Barry, Rita Bergin, Eveta Brezina, Nick Broughall, Brendan Byrne, Paul Clarke, Anne Clune, Jim Dorney, Breda Fell, Kay Garvey, Noirin Greene, George Hunter, Ben Kearney, Hilary Kelleher, Tony Kennelly, George Lamon, Sean Mackell, Mary Maher Des Mahon, Rita McArdle, John McDonnell, Dominic McEvoy, Michael McGarry, Bernard McKenna, Alice Moore, Jim Moore, Sam Nolan, Owen Nulty, Clare O'Connor, Kevin O'Connor, Seamus O'Donnell, Emer O'Shea, Ciaran Ryan, Catherine Warnock, Patrick Woods, Tom Wall.

Consumer Protection

82. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the consumer rights that apply to gift vouchers; his plans to introduce new rules concerning the period of time for which such vouchers must remain valid; his plans to strengthen consumer rights in this area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21208/15]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): Gift cards are subject to general consumer protection legislation, in particular the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 2007 on unfair, misleading and aggressive commercial practices and of the European Communities (Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts) Regulations 1995. Some gift cards, such as the One4all card issued by the Gift Voucher Shop or the gift cards issued by some shopping centres, are subject also to the European Communities (Electronic Money Regulations) 2011 enacted by the Minister for Finance and enforced by the Central Bank.

My Department's Scheme of a proposed Consumer Rights Bill which I launched on Monday includes a number of proposals aimed at strengthening the rights of consumers who purchase gift cards. The Scheme provides that contracts for the supply of a gift card or voucher must not include a term that makes the card or voucher subject to an expiry date. Traders would also be required to inform consumers of any charges applying to a gift card, or any restrictions on the use of the card, before the consumer was bound by the contract. The charges applying to gift cards would also be assessable for fairness under the provisions of the Scheme on unfair contract terms. I am prepared to consider additional protections for consumers in this area if the consultation on the Scheme of the Bill shows a need for them.

Pension Provisions

83. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation his plans to ensure that representatives of retired pensioners can have access to the industrial relations and arbitration machinery of the State, or otherwise gain negotiation rights, in view of the fact that such pensioners are very disadvantaged at present in terms of negotiations on future pension entitlements. [21213/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Gerald Nash): I fully appreciate the concerns of retired and deferred members of pension schemes whose schemes are being restructured, particularly where such restructuring may impact on existing or potential pension benefits.

In this regard, the question of pensioner groups having access to the State's industrial relations machinery in pursuing pension scheme grievances is an issue to which careful consideration has been given.

In doing so, it was important to bear in mind that the industrial relations system in Ireland is voluntary in nature both as regards access to the Labour Relations Commission and the Labour Court. Any change to that principle which would put in place a mandated right to be part of the process would alter fundamentally the conduct of industrial relations.

As it stands, where changes to pension schemes are negotiated at company level whether as a result of a crisis in the scheme or otherwise, the outcome of that engagement cannot, of itself, change the pension scheme. Rather, any proposed changes to the scheme are effected through the trust deeds and rules of the scheme and are at the discretion of the parties so designated in the rules/deeds of the scheme. In my view, it is within this framework, rather than through the

State's industrial relations machinery, that a collective approach would be most effective.

In terms of changes to pension schemes generally, the Trustees of a particular pension scheme are required by law to act in the best interests of all the members, be they active deferred or pensioner members. Until recently, this has been done on an individual basis.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection has now provided for the recognition by trustees and the Pensions Authority of groups representing the interests of retired and deferred scheme members of a particular pension scheme. The required revised section 50 guidance has been published by the Pensions Authority.

From now on, the trustees of a pension scheme are required to notify the groups representing the interests of retired and deferred scheme members where the trustees of a scheme propose to apply to the Pensions Authority to restructure scheme benefits under section 50 of the Pensions Act. This notification affords the representative group an opportunity to make a submission to the trustees of the scheme in relation to such proposals.

In addition, the Pensions Authority is now required to notify groups representing the interest of scheme members where the Pensions Authority proposes to either issue a unilateral direction under section 50 of the Pensions Act to the trustees of a scheme to restructure scheme benefits or to wind up a pension scheme under section 50B of the Pensions Act. This notification affords the representative group an opportunity to make representations to the Pensions Authority in relation to such proposals.

Installation Aid Scheme Applications

84. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine of the 4,000 farmers identified who are under 40 years of age and who commenced farming between 2002 to 2008 with entitlements below national average, the number of these who did avail of installation aid available at that time; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21060/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): On 1 April 2015 officials from my Department met with a group representing farmers under the age of 40, who established their holdings prior to 2008 and who hold low value entitlements. Following the meeting my Department carried out analysis to establish the total number of farmers in this group. It was established that this group comprises some 3,900 farmers. My Department's records show that 898 of these 3,900 farmers availed of Installation Aid available at the time.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme Payments

85. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the penalty in monetary terms being applied to an application for payment under the 2014 rural environment protection scheme in respect of a person (details supplied). [21065/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named commenced REPS 4 in June 2009 and received payments for the full 5 years and 7 months of the REPS4 contract. His participation in the Scheme ended on 31 December 2014.

REPS4 is a measure under the 2007-13 Rural Development Programme and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all applications to be completed before any payments can issue. The person named was entitled to a 2013 Scheme Year REPS4

payment in the amount of €6,521.15. This payment was due to be paid in 2 instalments, a 75% initial payment followed by the balance in a 25% payment. The initial 75% in the amount of €4,890.86 was due to be paid to the person named on 22 April 2014 but a penalty amount of €4,307.19 was deducted from that payment, meaning he received a net payment of €583.67. The 25% balance of the payment in the amount of €1,630.29 was paid in full to the person named on 2 May 2015.

The penalty amount deducted of €4,307.19 was imposed and deducted as a result of a Department inspection, which found a number of non-compliance issues with the terms and conditions of the Scheme. These non-compliance issues were notified to the person named on 15 April 2014 by letter from the Department's local office.

As a result of an appeal and a review within the Department, the penalty amount was reduced by €948.83. This reduction in the penalty was notified to the person named on 22 May 2015 by letter from the Department's local office. It is anticipated that the required repayment will be made to the person named within the next few days.

Departmental Schemes

86. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his plans to bring in a new grant aid scheme for the construction of farm buildings, hay sheds, machine sheds, storage sheds and so on; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21076/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Under the Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 the following investments have been identified as priority areas which will be targeted in the TAMS scheme:-

(i) dairy equipment,

(ii) a young farmer capital investment scheme.

(iii) low emission spreading equipment,

(iv) organic capital investment,

(v) animal welfare and farm safety (specifically beef and sheep handling facilities) farm nutrient storage and animal housing, and

(vi) pig and poultry investments in energy, water meters and medicine dispensers.

I have already launched the new Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme, the Terms and Conditions of which are available on my Department's website. The Scheme is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The specific areas of investment will include animal housing, slurry storage, dairy equipment, specialised slurry spreading equipment, animal welfare & farm safety, and specialised pig & poultry investments. In addition, young farmers will be able to avail of grant-aid for construction of new dairy buildings. All applications must be made on-line, either by the farmer or by an adviser authorised to act on his or her behalf. The facility for farmers and advisers to rapidly link via SMS texting is now available, and the online system will open for applications shortly. The closing date for applications under the first tranche of the new scheme will be Friday 4 September 2015. The next tranches will then follow on with the funding spread evenly for the duration of the programme.

The other TAMS II schemes, including animal housing, will be rolled out as soon as possible.

Agriculture Scheme Administration

87. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the avenues of determination for proof of postage when there is disagreement between his Department and an applicant under the 2014 area-based schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21088/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): As per the terms & conditions for the 2014 EU Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and other 2014 area-based schemes all SPS application forms had to be lodged on-line or in paper form. If applying using a paper form, the applicants must have submitted that form directly by post, or delivered by hand, to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, SPS Co-Ordination Unit, Government Buildings, Old Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. It was not permitted to submit the form through any other office of the Department. If the application form was being posted to the Department, farmers were advised to obtain acceptable proof of postage (see below), which could be used in the event of the application(s) not being received by the Department. In 2014 the only acceptable proof of postage for a 2014 SPS Application Form, Amendment Form and/or the Entitlements Forms was:

- Express post receipt i.e. a receipt is attached to each return envelope sent out with the pre printed application form, or

- Registered post receipt.

No other proof of post was acceptable in 2014. In cases where a dispute arises the Department has an internal appeals procedure in place. Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Department's appeal procedure, it is open to the person concerned to make an appeal to the Agriculture Appeals Office. If not satisfied with the outcome of that appeal each applicant is advised of his/her right of further appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Herd Data

88. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding entitlements on a herd number (details supplied); if a payment may be expected under the basic payment scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21094/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named established 32.33 entitlements with a total value of €363.07 under the Single Payment Scheme in 2005. The EU Regulations governing the Single Payment Scheme provide that payment entitlements must be used at least once in a two year period. 'Used' in this context means that one hectare of eligible land must have been declared in respect of each entitlement held. The Regulations further provide that any entitlements that remain unused over a two year period must revert to the National Reserve and are thereby lost to the farmer.

While applications under the Single Payment Scheme were submitted each year, the person named did not declare any eligible land from 2008 onwards and consequently these Single Payment entitlements reverted to the National Reserve for non-usage by 2012. While a Single Payment application was submitted in 2013 and eligible land declared, no payment issued as

there were no entitlements. Similarly while there was stock on the land, no sheep census was completed and consequently no payment issued under the Grassland Sheep Scheme.

As the person named did not receive a direct payment in 2013, his estate does not hold an automatic right to establish entitlements in 2015 under the new Basic Payment Scheme. In this context the estate of the person named may wish to makes a case under force majeure for an allocation of new entitlements. This application is available on the Department's online facility at www.agfood.ie or alternatively, on the Department's website at www.agriculture.gov.ie and must be submitted by the 29 May, 2015.

Further information regarding such an application may be obtained from the CAP Advisory Centre at 0761 064439 or by email at CAPdirectpayments@agriculture.gov.ie.

Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments

89. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when his officials will write to a person (details supplied) in County Mayo to progress a payment under the agri-environment options scheme. [21099/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): A Department review of the non-productive capital investment claims submitted by applicants under AEOS, was undertaken in 2014. This review identified irregularities with documentation submitted for reimbursement in some of these claims. A full Department investigation was then initiated, which in turn led to the matter being referred to the Gardaí. Payments to applicants under review have been deferred pending the outcome of the investigation.

The application of the person named is one of those being reviewed in the context of this wider investigation. My Department wrote to the person named on 28 January 2015 to explain the situation.

The initial stage of this investigation is now concluded and my Department plans to write very shortly to all participants with payments held seeking further evidence to support their claim for payment, in the amounts declared. Where satisfactory proofs are provided payments will then be processed.

Bord na gCon Inspections

90. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of samples that the National Greyhound Laboratory has returned with a positive finding for stanozolol since the laboratory opened in County Limerick in 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21136/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Bord na gCon is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of greyhound racing under the Greyhound Industry Act 1958. It has specific powers conferred on it by the Greyhound Industry (Racing) Regulations 2007, S.I. 302 2007, which set out the detailed rules under which greyhound racing is conducted. Bord na gCon has confirmed to officials in my Department that its drug surveillance services test for the presence of stanozolol and that there have been no confirmed cases of stanozolol reported for Bord na gCon samples to date.

GLAS Eligibility

91. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason watercourses are included in the mapping for protection under the rural environment protection scheme, but are excluded from similar protection under the green low-carbon agri-environmental scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21155/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Watercourses are not excluded from GLAS. However, not every watercourse which may have been included in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) necessarily qualifies under GLAS. REPS was a whole farm scheme whereas the GLAS is targeted at pre-determined environmental assets at individual farm level. The introduction of new regulations since the inception of REPS and in particular the implementation of the Nitrates Directive now provides general protection of watercourses under Pillar 1 allowing for a more focused approach under Pillar 2 agri-environment schemes.

My Department, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency, has identified specific reaches of rivers for inclusion in the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines and Riparian Margin Actions in GLAS. These rivers have been categorised within GLAS in accordance with their water quality status, with those in the most pristine condition receiving the highest priority (Tier 1) followed by lower status rivers on holdings identified as having predominantly wet soils, which qualify a farmer access to GLAS under Tier 2. Protection of other watercourses shown on the GLAS system may be taken as a Tier 3 action.

Agriculture Scheme Administration

92. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Question No. 100 of 2 April 2015, the specific regulations and-or statutory instrument that refers to the proof of postage necessary to comply with the scheme's terms and conditions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21156/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Applicants under the Basic Payment Scheme in 2015 may lodge applications on-line or by post. The on-line option is becoming increasingly popular as a secure means of lodging applications and was availed of by over 80,000 applicants in 2014. There are no specific regulations and/or Statutory Instrument that refer to the proof of postage necessary to comply with the scheme's terms and conditions. The required proof is specified annually in the Terms and Conditions of the Single Payment Scheme/Basic payment Scheme.

Commencing in 2011, it became a requirement of the Single Payment Scheme for an applicant to furnish an Express Post or Registered Post receipt as proof of postage where such was required. Internal procedures were put in place to keep a record of all post received via registered/express post. Each applicant is supplied annually with a pre-addressed return envelope and express post label with their Single Payment Scheme/Basic Payment Scheme application pack. Part of that label is proof of postage.

Prior to 2011, my Department had reason to conclude that some of the proof of post certificates provided, were unreliable. It was for this reason that procedures were updated while still providing for two very accessible and reliable proof of postage options readily available to all applicants.

While my Department has over the years made strenuous efforts to facilitate its customers

and simplify the application procedure, its primary function is to act as a Competent Authority in processing payment applications. Under the Regulations governing the Schemes the primary onus rests firmly, at all times with the applicant to ensure a completed application form is lodged by the closing date.

Single Payment Scheme Appeals

93. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in relation to an appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary under the single payment scheme, if he will establish the person from his Department who allegedly spoke to the garda referred to in the document issued to the appellant; the reason the findings in the document in relation to the garda are acceptable, considering the contents of the letter dated 26 April 2014 from said garda; in view of the garda's letter, if he is satisfied that all due processes and procedures were effectively carried out by the appeals office in this case; if the decision on this case can stand; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21158/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): EU Regulations governing the administration of these schemes require that full and comprehensive administrative checks, including in some cases on farm inspections be completed to confirm eligibility under the schemes. The 2012 application of the person named was selected for a cross-compliance and nominated for a ground eligibility inspection. The eligibility inspection identified discrepancies between the areas declared and the area found resulting in an over-declaration in area of greater than 20%; based on the terms and conditions of the scheme this resulted in no payment being due in respect of the 2012 Single Payment Scheme. The person named was notified of this decision on 19 November 2012.

As part of the appeals process in relation to a land parcel declared in Tipperary the person named stated that he had visited the land in mid May 2012 and discovered members of the travelling community and loose horses present. The person named also stated that he had reported the matter to the Gardaí in Thurles. This land parcel was submitted by the person named as part of their Single Farm Payment application by way of an amendment form on 31 May 2012. The inspections were carried out during May and June 2012. A Department Official contacted the Gardaí regarding this report and was informed that no report had been submitted up to May 2012. It has since emerged that a report was filed by the person named in mid June 2012. The outcome of the District Inspector's review was to uphold the inspection findings and the person named was notified on 12 February 2013.

Information regarding the names of Department Officials involved with his case has previously been released to the person named on 13 September 2013 as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act 1997.

The Agriculture Appeals Office has advised that a decision, to partially allow the appeal in this case, issued on 7 February 2014. This appeal was processed in accordance with appeal procedures. A request for a review of the decision made was received by the Appeals Office on 25 May 2015. Once it is confirmed that all relevant information and documentation have been submitted by the appellant this review will be carried out. A decision letter in relation to this review will subsequently issue, in due course. In the event that the person named feels that they have been unfairly treated it is open to him to raise the matter with the office of the Ombudsman.

Departmental Staff Remuneration

94. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding industrial action in his Department in 2003; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21165/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): My Department is in the process of implementing the terms of the Supreme Court Order in the case mentioned by the Deputy.

Payment of appropriate salary arrears have been made to the relevant staff currently serving in my Department. Instructions re payment of arrears in respect of staff that re-deployed from my Department have issued to the Government Departments they currently serve in and I understand that payments have already issued in some cases and will issue shortly in the remaining cases. In regard to pension implications of the Supreme Court findings, arrangements are being made to update service and retirement benefit entitlements.

Single Payment Scheme Applications

95. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding an application under the single payment scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21170/15]

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 10 May 2013. Processing of this application has only recently been finalised with payment due to issue under both schemes shortly.

An official from my Department has been in direct contact with the person named to clarify the position.

GLAS Applications

96. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the context of an application under the green low-carbon agri-environmental scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath, the reason the person has been informed that this total landholding is virtually restricted; if same will be reviewed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21206/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Habitats for geese and swans are recognised as priority environmental assets within GLAS and farmers who commit to managing and producing a suitable habitat for these farmland birds receive priority access to the scheme under Tier 1.

The maps used in defining these areas on the GLAS system have been supplied by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, who have provided the most up-to-date datasets available. In this instance, the person named has a number of land parcels which have been identified for geese and swans, and if the person named opts to join GLAS, the required action must be taken across the entire area. It is important to note that GLAS is a completely voluntary scheme and the payment rate for this action, at €202 per hectare, is designed to take full account of the income foregone by the farmer in complying with the prescription outlined in the GLAS Specification.

Beef Data Programme

97. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if urgent consideration will be given to the requests of a number of representative organisations in relation to the need to amend the conditions applicable to the beef data and genomics programme (details supplied), with particular reference to the import of new bloodlines, which are an important part of new breed improvement schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21210/15]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) forms part of Ireland's Rural Development Programme and will provide suckler farmers in Ireland with funding of some €300 million over the next 6 years. The BDGP builds on the investment in data recording and genomics in recent years, and will ultimately bring about long-term improvements to the sector by fundamentally improving the genetic quality of the beef herd. One of the requirements of the programme stipulates that from 30 June 2016, at least 80% of the AI used on participating holdings must be from 4 or 5 star bulls on either the terminal or replacement index. This complements the requirement that where a stock bull is used, at least one stock bull on the holding on the 30 June 2019 must be a genotyped 4 or 5 star bull on either the terminal or replacement index.

There is a very wide range of AI bulls available for pedigree beef breeding that are 4 or 5 stars on either the replacement or terminal index. For example, ICBF recently completed its listing of recommended sires for bull breeders involved in the Gene Ireland maternal beef breeding program. In total there are some 164 bulls in that catalogue of which 151 (92%) are 4 or 5 stars on either the replacement or terminal index within or across breeds.

The fact that 20% of the AI used can come from other types of bulls gives scope for pedigree breeders that wish to use some outcross sires as part of the scheme. ICBF calculates a euro star evaluation for imported sires based on their foreign data so that they can be utilised under the programme. For example, there were 166 new beef AI sires coded last year, both Irish and internationally bred, and of these 69% are already compliant with the scheme. Indeed, ICBF can provide an indication of the likely euro star rating to be given to such bulls when imported into Ireland and it is likely that AI companies and breeders will be much more vigilant regarding the type of "outcross" bulls that they purchase/import in the future.

Finally the Deputy will wish to note that I have extended the deadline for scheme applications to next Friday 5 June in order that as many suckler farmers as possible can join. As of this morning we have received over 17,000 applications and I am encouraging other farmers to submit their application before this revised deadline.

Military Honours

98. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Defence the steps he will take to ensure that military memorabilia are returned to Columb Barracks, Mullingar, County Westmeath, in the context where there is an offer available, as per correspondence (details supplied), to ensure that same will be carefully looked after and made available to the public at all times; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21209/15]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Simon Coveney): The military memorabilia associated with the 4th Field Artillery Regiment was removed from Mullingar Barracks in the first instance to protect it from deterioration, vandalism and theft. Relocating it back to Mullingar Barracks into an environment which does not have the physical and environmental security needed to pre-

serve the collection would put many of the items at risk. Custume Barracks in Athlone where the collection now resides would seem to be the appropriate location for the collection as it is the Barracks where many of the members of the 4th Field Artillery Regiment are now serving.

Garda Deployment

99. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if she will confirm that a percentage of the new Garda recruits, who will qualify on 23 July 2015, will be assigned to Crumlin Garda station in Dublin 12. [21058/15]

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 been informed by the Garda Commissioner that the personnel strength of Dublin Metropolitan Region (D.M.R.) South on 31 March 2015, the latest date for which figures are readily available is 535 of which 91 Gardaí are assigned to Crumlin Garda Station. There are also 41 Garda Reserves and 27 Civilians attached to D.M.R. South Garda Division.

The Deputy will be aware that the first intake since 2009 of 100 new recruits entered training at the Garda College, Templemore, on 15 September 2014. As part of Budget 2015, a further intake of 200 recruits in two batches was announced. The remaining 100 entered the college in early February. This will bring to 300 the number of recruits in the Garda College and is a measure of the Government's commitment to ensure that recruitment to An Garda Síochána continues seamlessly. The September intake attested as members of the Garda Síochána on 23 April 2015 and the December intake will attest in Summer 2015. In addition, I have received sanction from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform for two further intakes of 125 Garda recruits later this year. Of the first batch to be attested, five members have been assigned to the D.M.R. South and are stationed in Tallaght Garda station.

Cash for Gold Trade Regulation

100. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding legislation in relation to cash-for-gold outlets (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21082/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am aware, of course, of the type of concerns outlined in the details supplied by the Deputy and I am examining the best approach to regulation in the area of cash for gold business providers, having regard to the potentially significant impact on legitimate businesses. It is important to recognise that any legislation in this area would have a potentially significant impact on a broad range of businesses. There are a large number of legitimate businesses such as jewellers, antique dealers etc., as well as 'cash for gold' outlets that would be impacted upon.

As the regulatory and resource burden of any proposed measure requires careful examination to ensure that it is proportionate to the matter being addressed, officials in my Department have drafted a proposed consultation documentation setting out potential options for addressing this issue. This document outlines the potential impacts, likelihood of achieving desired objectives and the potential regulatory burden and costs associated with each option.

This document will be submitted to me for consideration in the near future and it is my intention that it will, thereafter, be issued for consultation with relevant stake-holders.

Garda Reserve

101. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding An Garda Síochána Reserve (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21083/15]

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 been informed by the Garda Commissioner that the current strength of the Garda Reserve on the 31 March 2015, the latest date for which figures are readily available, is 1,079.

I fully support the important role of the Garda Reserve in the delivery of the policing service. I am informed by the Garda Commissioner that she is currently finalising arrangements to extend the powers and functions of Reserve members with a view to implementation at an early date.

Garda Reserve

102. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding promoting members of An Garda Síochána Reserve to be full-time members of An Garda Síochána (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21084/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): Recruitment competitions to An Garda Síochána are open to all who meet the eligibility criteria which are set out in the Garda Síochána (Admissions and Appointments) Regulations 2013.

For those who do meet these requirements, the Admission and Appointment Regulations 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.

Road Traffic Offences

103. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the amount of revenue that as been raised from speeding fines within a GoSafe safety camera location (details supplied) in County Donegal since January 2015; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21163/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I understand that it is not possible to extract from overall data with respect to Fixed Charge Notice income and Court fines the amount of revenue collected as a consequence of speeding detections at any individual Safety Camera location.

Immigration Status

104. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Waterford; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21171/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the person concerned is the subject of a Deportation Order and therefore has no entitlement to residency in the State.

Representations were received from the persons' legal representative, pursuant to Section 3 (11) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), to revoke the Deportation Order. The Deputy might wish to note that any such decision will be to 'affirm' or to 'revoke' the existing Deportation Order. In the mean-time, the Deportation Order remains valid and in place.

The enforcement of the Deportation Order is an operational matter for the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

The cases of the children of the person concerned are at various stages of the immigration process and will be determined in due course. As none of them have a current permission to remain in the State, other than in the context of making applications for asylum or subsidiary protection, they are not eligible to apply for naturalisation.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to the INIS by email 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.

Immigration Status

105. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21172/15]

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. These representations, together with all other information and documentation on file, will be fully considered, under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, in advance of a final decision being made.

I am advised that the passport of the person concerned is not held on their immigration case file.

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.

Immigration Status

106. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress in determining residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Waterford; if all of the information required has been submitted to facilitate this person's case; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21173/15]

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.

These representations, together with all other information and documentation on file, will be fully considered, under Section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, 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.

Citizenship Applications

107. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in determining an application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; if all the information requested from this person has been supplied; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21174/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to by the Deputy, who currently has permission to reside in the State until 31 December, 2015, is at an advanced stage. A request for additional information was responded to. The application will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible.

As the Deputy will appreciate, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour which confers certain rights and entitlements not only within the State but also at European Union level and it is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process.

The Deputy may wish to note that queries in relation to the status of individual immigration

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

Immigration Status

108. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected position in regard to regularising the residency/determining the status of of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21175/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department, that the person mentioned by the Deputy arrived in the State on 10/05/2011 and was registered as a student until 16/05/2012. If it is the case that the individual in question has remained in the State since that time it would therefore seem that this person has remained here without permission. This is in breach of Section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 2004 which provides that no non-Irish national may be in the State other than in accordance with the terms of any permission given to them by or on behalf of the Minister. Furthermore, Section 5(2) of the Act provides that a non Irish national who is in the State in contravention of subsection (1) is for all purposes unlawfully present in the State.

It would seem that this person failed to meet the requirements of Section 9 of the Act of 2004 which sets out the obligations of non nationals in respect of registration and in particular to the requirements of Section 9(2)(b) of the Act of 2004.

A person who is found to be in breach of the requirements of the Immigration Act 2004 may have committed an offence. A person found guilty of such an offence is liable under section 13 of the Act of 2004 to a fine not exceeding €3,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

The person in question should now present himself to his local Garda Station.

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.

Immigration Status

109. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 6, with particular reference to the updating of the person's residency status; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21178/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service that the person mentioned by the Deputy arrived in the State on 03/10/2008 as a dependent and had permission, as such, until 30/07/2010. As this permission was not renewed, it would therefore seem that this person has remained in the State

without the permission of the Minister for Justice and Equality. This is in breach of Section 5 (1) of the Immigration Act 2004 which provides that no non-EEA national may be in the State other than in accordance with the terms of any permission given to them by or on behalf of the Minister. Furthermore, Section 5(2) of the Act provides that a non EEA national who is in the State in contravention of subsection (1) is for all purposes unlawfully present in the State. It would seem that this person has failed to meet the requirements of Section 9 of the Act of 2004 which sets out the obligations of non nationals in respect of registration and in particular to the requirements of Section 9(2)(b) of the Act of 2004.

A person who is found to be in breach of the requirements of the Immigration Act 2004 may have committed an offence. A person found guilty of such an offence is liable under Section 13 of the Act of 2004 to a fine not exceeding €3000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

As this person is in the State as a dependant they should be advised to make an application to INIS.

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.

Deportation Orders Re-examination

110. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if it will be possible to review on humanitarian grounds the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 6; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21179/15]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the person concerned is a subject of a Deportation Order that was effected on 16 June 2013. The person concerned recently returned to the State in breach of the conditions of that order.

The person concerned has ongoing Judicial Review proceedings seeking to quash a decision refusing readmittance to the asylum process under Section 17(7) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended). As the foregoing matters are sub judice, I am precluded from commenting further.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS of my Department by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. The 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 in cases where the response from the INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

Employment Rights

111. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the legal position regarding entitlement to maternity leave and parental leave in respect of a person who becomes a parent through surrogacy abroad; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

[21227/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin): Under existing Irish law and EU Directives, maternity leave is only available to a mother who gives birth to a child. This position has been supported by Judgment C-363/12 of the European Court of Justice delivered in March 2014.

Eligibility for parental leave is wider. Parental leave may be available to persons who are the natural parents, adoptive parents, adopting parents or acting in *loco parentis* to a child.

Family Support Services

112. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the position regarding a crisis at a resource centre (details supplied) in Dublin 5; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21153/15]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy James Reilly): As advised previously, the Resource Centre referred to by the Deputy had closed temporarily due to ongoing difficulties.

Tusla met with the Voluntary Board of Management of the Centre on Wednesday, May 20th and were informed by the Board that the Centre is now open to the community.

Tusla has agreed a strategy with the Board regarding the continued funding of the Centre under the Family Resource Centre Programme, in the context of Tusla's mandate for community-based early intervention and family support.

Palliative Care Services

113. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health the percentage of patients in University Hospital Waterford provided with a specialist palliative care service in their place of residence within seven days of referral in each of the years 2010 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; the staff resources allocated to the provision of specialist palliative care service in the home in County Waterford; if additional resources have been allocated through the 2015 operational plan; when these will come on stream; the percentage of patients admitted to a specialist palliative care inpatient bed within seven days of referral in the hospital in each of the years 2010 to 2014 and in 2015 to date; the percentage of patients who received a specialist palliative care service in the community in County Waterford in the same years; if he will provide an update on the status of the new 20-bed palliative care unit to be situated on the grounds of the hospital; the way the construction of this new unit is to be funded; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20885/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): An average of 87% of patients in University Hospital Waterford referred were provided with a specialist palliative care service in their place of residence within seven days of referral in each of the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and to date in 2015. The average percentage of patients referred who were admitted to a specialist palliative care in-patient bed in University Hospital Waterford within seven days of referral for each year identified is 100%. The average number of patients in receipt of specialist palliative care in the community per month for the same years in County Waterford is 87.

With regard to the staff resources allocated to the provision of specialist palliative care ser-

vice in the home in County Waterford, the Health Service Executive provides funding to the Waterford Hospice Movement through the Section 39 grant aid process to support the delivery of Community Specialist Palliative Care Services. The current staffing resources allocated to this service include 6 WTE Nursing Staff and 0.5 WTE Occupational Therapists, with Complementary Therapist Sessions as demand requires. There was one additional Clinical Nurse Specialist allocated to this service in 2015 by the Health Service Executive and this post is currently being recruited.

A new 20-bed Specialist Palliative Care In-Patient Unit is to be built as part of the €20m redevelopment of University Hospital Waterford. Enabling works have been completed and a planning permission application has been submitted to Waterford County Council. Construction is planned to commence in Q1 2016 and is expected to be completed in Q4 2017. Following fit-out and commissioning the unit is planned to open in early 2018 and will comprise of 20 in-patient palliative care beds, palliative care day care, and a further three floors of 24 single rooms on each floor. The Waterford Hospice Movement has committed to providing substantial capital funding towards the palliative care element of this development.

The Palliative Care Unit at University Hospital Waterford was approved on the basis that it is revenue neutral. This will be staffed by existing resources currently working in Palliative Care, both in acute and sub-acute services and across the South East. Resources will be in place to operate the unit as planned in 2018 in line with the Project Plan.

Nursing Home Services

114. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health if funding will be provided to New Ross Community Hospital in County Wexford towards running costs and refurbishments to meet Health Information and Quality Authority standards; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21056/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): New Ross Community Hospital Ltd. is a voluntary organisation providing long term residential and short term care. As an approved centre for the purposes of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme residents can receive financial support towards their cost of care at New Ross. The hospital also receives funding from the HSE under Section 39 of the Health Act 2004.

Since 2009 all nursing homes - public, voluntary (including New Ross Community Hospital) and private - have been registered and inspected by HIQA. I understand that significant refurbishment works are required at the hospital to comply with HIQA standards. If a centre is not in compliance by July 2015 it must agree a realistic time bound costed plan with the Authority. This is a matter for the management of the Hospital and HIQA.

Demand for capital investment for the Community Nursing Unit programme far exceeds the funding available, and investment must therefore be allocated as effectively as possible based on the HSE's assessment of priorities. At present this funding programme focuses on the upgrade and refurbishment of existing public facilities to achieve compliance with HIQA.

I understand that the HSE has worked closely with New Ross Community Hospital in relation to the challenges faced and will continue to support them in every way possible.

Pension Provisions

115. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health the reason a full pension is not being paid in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary; and if the special circumstance of the case will be reviewed and a positive result expedited. [21057/15]

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.

HIQA Remit

116. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if the Health Information and Quality Authority has authority to carry out inspections of the premises used by general practitioners to provide services to patients covered by the medical card scheme or private patients; if such inspections have been carried out to date; if the reports of any such inspections are available; if it is planned to carry out such inspections in the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21067/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The Health Information and Quality Authority was established by the Health Act 2007. As general practitioners are self employed contractors they do not come within the existing scope of the Health Act 2007 and, therefore, are not subject to HIQA inspections.

I intend bringing a Memo to Government shortly seeking Government approval to draft amendments to the Health Act 2007 as an interim step towards the licensing of healthcare providers. This amendment would seek to extend HIQA's remit for standard setting and monitoring to the private healthcare sector in the shorter term. This would mean that HIQA's powers to set and monitor standards and, where necessary, to undertake investigations would apply to both public providers and certain private healthcare providers. It is not intended to extend HIQA's remit to cover general practice at this time.

Medical Aids and Appliances Provision

117. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if Medtronic's i-port Advance injection device will be added on the long-term illness card; the advancement of the assessment process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21070/15]

142. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health his plans to make Medtronic's i-port Advance injection device available on the long-term illness scheme for children with diabetes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21228/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 117 and 142 together.

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.

The decisions on which medicines are reimbursed by the taxpayer are made on objective, scientific and economic grounds by the HSE on the advice of the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics. They are not political or ministerial decisions.

The HSE received an application for the inclusion of the product, i-port Advance™, to be

added to the List of Reimbursable Items in the GMS and community drugs schemes. The application was considered in line with the procedures and timescales agreed by the Department of Health and the HSE with the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association for the assessment of new medicines.

An Expert Group, chaired by the Clinical Lead of the HSE Diabetes Programme, was convened by the HSE to (i) assess the clinical evidence to support the use of the product, (ii) consider whether the product is appropriate for reimbursement status under Schemes and (iii) assist in the determination of the 'value' that the innovation presents. The Expert Group did not find that the product was either clinically effective or cost effective, and therefore did not recommend that the product should be reimbursed. The Director of Primary Care accepted the recommendation of the Expert Group and the company was informed of the HSE's decision on the 20th April 2015.

Orthodontic Services Provision

118. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Meath will receive an appointment for orthodontic surgery; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21072/15]

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

119. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding an entitlement to a medical card in respect of persons (details supplied) with motor neuron disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21077/15]

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.

The Deputy will also be aware that a Clinical Advisory Group has been appointed and it will provide an interim update on its work in June on the development of guidance on assessing medical card applications involving significant medical conditions, so as to take account of the burden involved and the needs arising from the condition and to ensure that appropriate services are provided to people who need them.

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.

Community Care

120. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health his views on a matter regarding a day care centre (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21135/15]

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 a reply has not been issued within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

121. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a cataract operation in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21152/15]

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.

Community Care Provision

122. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Health the current staffing levels in all the community hospitals in west Cork; his plans to recruit additional nursing staff and attendants in each of these hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21154/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on the specific information sought. 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.

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform announced in Budget 2015 that he intends to delegate greater autonomy to Departments and Agencies to manage their own staffing levels. The change from the application of a rigid employment control framework, with its particular focus on a moratorium on recruitment and compliance with employment ceilings and targets, to one operating strictly within allocated pay frameworks will allow for recruitment where it is determined that this can achieve more economical service delivery. This delegation is currently subject to the finalisation of a Pay and Numbers Strategy by the HSE and approval of the Strategy by this Department and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Although there had been a significant reduction in the number of nurses and midwives employees in the period between 2009 and 2013, numbers are now increasing. Between the end of 2013 and the end of 2014 nursing and midwifery numbers increased by 365. More importantly, the recruitment rate has accelerated, and an extra 493 nurses and midwives have been employed between December 2014 and March 2015. The HSE are actively recruiting nurses. A total of 1,986 nurses were interviewed in the past 10 weeks and 906 of these have started or are currently being appointed.

Hospital Waiting Lists

123. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Meath will receive an appointment for orthopaedic surgery at Cappagh Hospital, Dublin 11; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21160/15]

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 Staff

124. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health his plans to enhance the regulation of counselling and psychotherapy services; his further plans to make it a requirement for practitioners to hold a minimum educational qualification in order to maintain industry standards; if consideration has been given to the benefit to the sector of introducing such regulation,

particularly with regard to safeguarding the public; the consultation with industry professionals that is planned as part of introducing new regulations; the expected time frame as to when such regulation will be introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21162/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): Psychotherapists and counsellors are not currently regulated under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005. However, the Act provides that the Minister for Health may, under section 4(2), designate a health and social care profession not already designated if he or she considers that it is in the public interest to do so and if specified criteria have been met.

My predecessor, Minister James Reilly T.D, wrote to the The Health and Social Care Professionals Council last year seeking advice on the question of specifically designating counsellors and psychotherapists under the 2005 Act.

A number of issues require clarification and there are varying views among the professional bodies representing counsellors and psychotherapists in Ireland. The main questions to be resolved include whether counselling and psychotherapy should be treated as one or two professions for the purposes of regulation, the title or titles of the profession(s) to be protected, and the minimum qualifications that would be required of applicants for registration. The readiness and compatibility of the professions for designation under the 2005 Act also need to be determined.

The Council's detailed report on the matter has now been received and is being carefully examined in the Department. The matter remains at an early stage of consideration and consultation with industry professionals and other stakeholders will be considered in due course.

Hospitals Building Programme

125. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the current position in regard to the next stage of development at Naas General Hospital, County Kildare; when the relevant works will be undertaken and completed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21182/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The HSE is developing a substantial infrastructure project at Naas General Hospital which will deliver an endoscopy unit, an oncology unit and a physical medicine department. Therefore your question has been referred to the Executive to provide a progress update by direct reply.

If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office who will follow up.

Hospital Staff Recruitment

126. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which extra nursing staff have been recruited at Naas General Hospital, County Kildare, as per previous indications; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21183/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on the specific information sought. 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.

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform announced in Budget 2015 that he intends

to delegate greater autonomy to Departments and Agencies to manage their own staffing levels. The change from the application of a rigid employment control framework, with its particular focus on a moratorium on recruitment and compliance with employment ceilings and targets, to one operating strictly within allocated pay frameworks will allow for recruitment where it is determined that this can achieve more economical service delivery. This delegation is currently subject to the finalisation of a Pay and Numbers Strategy by the HSE and approval of the Strategy by this Department and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Although there had been a significant reduction in the number of nurses and midwives employees in the period between 2009 and 2013, numbers are now increasing. Between the end of 2013 and the end of 2014 nursing and midwifery numbers increased by 365. More recently, the recruitment rate has accelerated, and an extra 493 nurses and midwives have been employed between December 2014 and March 2015. The HSE are actively recruiting nurses. A total of 1,986 nurses were interviewed in the past 10 weeks and 906 of these have started or are currently being appointed.

Accident and Emergency Departments

127. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which overcrowding at the accident and emergency unit in Naas General Hospital in County Kildare has been alleviated; if consideration continues to be provided to the re-activation of decommissioned existing space within the hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21184/15]

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 Staff Data

128. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the degree to which hospital staffing levels in the public sector compare with staffing levels in other jurisdictions throughout Europe, with particular reference to nursing and/or medical staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21185/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The OECD reports that on average across EU countries there were about eight nurses per 1,000 population in 2012. The number of registered nurses per capita was highest in Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. While registrations do not convert directly to numbers in employment, it has been estimated that Ireland has 9.22 working nurses per 1,000. Though numbers in employment fell between 2008 and 2013, given the recruitment embargo, numbers employed have increased in the last year and a half and continue to do so.

It is Government policy to move to a consultant delivered service. While the ratio of consultants to patients is lower in Ireland than in other countries, reflecting a historical low base, significant progress has been achieved. There has been a large increase in the number of consultants since the establishment of the HSE, the number having increased by 737 from the end of 2004 to the end of March 2015 (1,905 to 2,642 - Whole Time Equivalents). There are some specialties in which there are international shortages and which have been traditionally difficult to fill. This means that progress in improving the ratios is more difficult. Shortages in specialties such as emergency medicine, anaesthesia and psychiatry are a worldwide phenomenon and not specific to the Irish health services.

The number of NCHDs has also increased significantly in the past decade, reflecting service demands and ongoing efforts to achieve full compliance with the requirements of the European Working Time Directive. From 1 January 2005 to 30 April 2015 the number increased from 4208 to 5,280, and increase of 1,072.

The HSE is actively pursuing the recruitment of additional nurses, consultants and NCHDs at present to fill vacant posts.

Hospital Waiting Lists

129. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which the total number of patients on waiting lists for various procedures throughout the public hospital sector has been identified; the degree to which cases are being dealt with on a weekly basis; the number of new or extra patients seeking procedures each week; when the numbers may decline arising from provisions being made to deal with the issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21186/15]

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.

Health and Safety Regulations

130. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the steps being taken to ensure strict adherence to health and safety standards throughout the public hospital sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21187/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): In June 2012 the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare were approved by the previous Minister for Health. The National Standards are aimed at protecting patients and they provide a strategic approach to improving safety, quality and reliability in our health services. They describe high quality safe healthcare services. Such services deliver care which is safe, effective, person centred and which promotes better health for service users. The National Standards also describe what capacity and capability factors service providers require to implement these standards. Service providers, including the private (independent) service providers, can use the National Standards as a framework to organise, manage and deliver their services safely. It is envisaged that the proposals being developed for the licensing of healthcare providers will be based on key concepts within the National Standards.

HIQA continues to monitor the quality and safety of healthcare service with the National Standards through the delivery of a programme of thematic monitoring reviews based on identified priorities and consultation with stakeholders. HIQA also carries out a programme of announced and unannounced infection prevention and hygiene inspections in hospitals in line with the *National Standards for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections.*

The National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) was established in 2010. Clinical effectiveness is a key component of patient safety and quality. The integration of national and international best available evidence in service provision through utilisation of clinical effectiveness processes promotes healthcare that is up to date, effective and consistent.

Clinical effectiveness incorporates the utilisation of quality assured National Clinical Guidelines, National Clinical Audit and general clinical practice guidance. This is a quality improvement approach which promotes cost-effective healthcare that is evidence-based, with subsequent improved clinical decision-making and clinical outcomes. Clinical effectiveness will underpin the models of care for the HSE's national clinical programmes.

To date, the NCEC has quality assured 6 National Clinical Guidelines which have been endorsed by respective Ministers and mandated for implementation in the Irish health system. These include:

1. National Early Warning Score (NEWS);
2. Prevention and Control of MRSA;
3. Clostridium difficile;
4. Irish Maternity Early Warning System (IMEWS);
5. Clinical Handover in Maternity Service; and
6. Sepsis Management.

Their implementation will be monitored through the HSE Assurance Reports, compliance with HIQA's National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare and increased alignment with the Clinical Indemnity Scheme.

Hospital Staff

131. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the reason nursing numbers have decreased more significantly than other categories of staff in the public hospital sector over the past six years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21188/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): There was a requirement to reduce public service numbers and maximise savings in the public service from the time of the downturn in the economy. The HSE introduced an embargo on recruitment in 2007, and this was followed by the moratorium on recruitment and promotion in the public sector in 2008. Overall, numbers employed fell by 11,000 between April 2009 and April 2015, while nursing numbers fell by over 3,500 in the same period. Nursing staff account for approximately one third of the work-force, it is the biggest staff category, and consequently has experienced a greater reduction in number terms than other categories.

Although there was a significant reduction in the number of nurses and midwives up to the end of 2013, the position is now improving. Between the end of 2013 and the end of 2014 nursing and midwifery numbers increased by 365. The recruitment rate has accelerated, and an extra 493 nurses and midwives have been taken on between December 2014 and March 2015.

Nursing Home Accommodation Provision

132. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which he may provide for extra step-down beds in the public sector, thereby alleviating overcrowding in pub-lic hospitals; the extent to which such provision has been matched to the level of overcrowding in the past year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21189/15]

134. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which the private nursing home sector has been utilised in efforts to alleviate overcrowding in the public sector hospitals; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21191/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): I propose to take Questions Nos. 132 and 134 together.

Delayed Discharges arise when a patient has been judged clinically to no longer have a requirement for acute hospital care but remains in an acute hospital bed, thus rendering that bed unavailable for patients who need admission. As of 19 May, there are 668 delayed discharges nationally, of whom 381 are in the Dublin Academic Teaching Hospitals. This compares to a high of 830 in December 2014.

In Budget 2015, **€25m** was provided to support services that provide alternative to, and relieve pressures on acute hospitals.

Of this €25m:

- €10m was used to provide an additional 300 places under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme reducing the waiting time from a peak of 17 weeks to 11 weeks;

- €8m was allocated to provide access to an additional 115 short-stay beds across the Dublin area;

- €5m was used to provide 400 additional Home Care Packages which will benefit 600 people in the course of the year; and

- €2m was used to expand the community intervention team services in primary care across Dublin and the surrounding region.

At the beginning of April 2015, it was announced that an additional **€74m** has been allocated to further tackle the on-going issue of delayed discharges, to reduce length of stay in hospitals and have faster assessment of patients in emergency departments.

Of this €74m:

- €44m has been allocated to the Nursing Homes Support Scheme which will provide 1,600 places and has already reduced the waiting time for approved applicants down to 4 weeks from 11 weeks in March; the numbers on the national placement list have reduced down to 565 as of the 19 May 2015.

- The remaining **€30m** will meet the cost of measures additional to those covered by the above €25m allocation which were needed because of the severity of the on-going pressures. This included the provision of **1,819** (at 1st April 2015) additional transitional care beds on a temporary basis. As a measure to address delayed discharges, **250** community care beds are to be opened up outside of acute hospitals on a permanent basis.

- 173 beds have been identified which can be opened on a short or long term basis and as a mix of short stay, rehab and long-term care.

As of 8 May, 110 of these beds are opened.

- 24 beds have been opened at Moorehall in Co. Louth.

- 65 beds are to be opened on a phased basis in Mount Carmel - as of 8 May 10 of these beds are opened.

The HSE is continuing to look at every possible options for alternative accommodation to address the issue of delayed discharges. Among the priority areas identified for the health sector is the commitment to "modernise health facilities". This includes pursuing alternative public/private options to provide new community nursing units.

The Department has commissioned a research project to identify and assess the various policy options available to Government to encourage the provision, including the upgrading and refurbishment of nursing home and community nursing unit facilities in areas where they are needed. This project is currently underway and is due for completion in July 2015.

Nursing Home Accommodation Provision

133. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if an audit has been done of the various public hospitals or nursing homes to ascertain the extent to which overcrowding in public hospitals may be alleviated; if St. Brigid's Hospital, Crooksling, County Dublin, continues to play its part in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21190/15]

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. 134 answered with Question No. 132.

Hospital Beds Data

135. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the total number of medical and surgical hospital beds currently available throughout the public sector; the extent to which this number has fluctuated in the past seven years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21192/15]

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.

National Children's Hospital Status

136. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the current position in regard to the provision of the new children's hospital; the extent to which the necessary provision has been made to date in terms of forward planning, site preparation and utilisation of data available from previous proposals in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21193/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The National Paediatric Hospital Development Board is the statutory body responsible for planning, designing, building and equipping the new children's hospital. The new hospital will be co-located with St James's Hospital, and ultimately tri-located with a maternity hospital to be developed on campus. In addition to the main hospital, the project includes two satellite centres at the campuses of Tallaght and Connolly Hospitals.

Much of the work undertaken for the project on the Mater site was transferable to the project in its new location. This includes in particular development of activity projections and capacity requirements, development of functional requirements, and decisions on workflow, adjacency planning and logistics. This work has been built on in developing the preliminary Project Brief for the hospital on the St James's campus, which was approved in 2014 and which sets out details of the specialties to be provided and the planned accommodation.

Site surveys and investigations have been completed, decant plans are being progressed, and a design team is working on detailed design development with planning submission to be made in mid-2015. Subject to planning, work is scheduled to commence at the main site at St. James's, and at satellite centre sites at Connolly and Tallaght, in early 2016.

I hope this provides some clarification on the matter.

Orthodontic Services Waiting Lists

137. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the total number of children currently awaiting assessment for orthodontic treatment; the number currently awaiting treatment in respect of categories 1 and 2; the extent to which new patients are referred for treatment on a monthly basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21194/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE provides orthodontic treatment to those who have been assessed and referred for treatment before their 16th birthday. It should be noted that the nature of orthodontic care means that immediate treatment is not always desirable. It is estimated that in up to 5% of cases it is necessary to wait for further growth to take place before treatment commences. Patients are assessed by the HSE Orthodontic Service under the modified Index of Treatment Need. Patients with the greatest level of need i.e. Grade 5 or Grade 4 are provided with treatment by the HSE.

Waiting lists are compiled quarterly and for the intervals as shown. The most recent figures available relate to Quarter 1 of 2015. 5,653 patients were awaiting assessment. This compares with 6,003 for the same period last year. The number of patients awaiting treatment has risen from 15,697 in Quarter 1 2014 to 18,025 in Quarter 1 2015. Information on waiting times for treatment is as follows:

Waiting time from assessment to commencement of treatment	1 - 6 months	7 - 12 months	13 - 24 months	25-36 months	37-48 months	Over 48 months	TOTAL
Grade 4	1,326	1,523	2,715	2,024	1,371	873	9,832
Grade 5	1,694	1,727	2,588	1,505	551	128	8,193
TOTAL	3,020	3,250	5,303	3,529	1,922	1,001	18,025

The HSE has established a pilot scheme in Dublin North East which will involve the use of orthodontic therapists in the treatment of a number of eligible children. Consideration will be given to expanding this Scheme to other HSE areas in the future. In addition to the services provided by HSE staff, orthodontic treatment for certain categories of misalignment will be provided by a panel of independent practitioners under contract to the HSE over the next three years. A national procurement process is being finalised. This initiative will especially focus on those waiting for 4 years or longer. It is expected that this initiative will commence later this

year and will have a positive impact on waiting times.

Medical Card Administration

138. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the degree to which the medical card application process may be streamlined or simplified, with a view to speeding up the process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21195/15]

Minister for Health (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The HSE is obliged to operate within the legal parameters as set out in the Health Act 1970 (as amended), which includes the overall financial situation of a person, while also having regard to the variety of circumstances and complexities faced by individuals who apply for a medical card. It aims to ensure that every person who is entitled to a medical card or a GP visit card is given the opportunity to avail of his or her entitlement which necessitates, in some cases, the provision of detailed personal and financial data and supporting documentation. In addition, the HSE routinely examines for indications of medical or social circumstances, which might result in undue financial hardship in arranging medical services, and may seek additional information. In exercising discretion, the HSE may grant eligibility for a medical card. If a more streamlined application process, which required less information from people, were to apply, it could result in a more simplified but less sensitive assessment process relative to an individual's circumstances.

Following on from 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, a range of actions were identified to improve the operation of the medical card system, particularly for people with significant medical needs.

A detailed programme of reform was drawn up by the HSE with short, medium and long-term actions to be addressed over the period 2015-2016. The HSE appointed a senior manager, at Assistant National Director level, with specific responsibility for Primary Care Schemes and Eligibility, to lead the reform. A Clinical Advisory Group was appointed to provide oversight and guidance to the operation of a more compassionate medical card system and will focus initially on the development of a framework for assessment and measurement of the burden of disease in this context. The Group will provide an interim update on its work in June.

The HSE has already implemented a number of short term and medium term processes identified in the programme of reform and work is underway on the longer term actions, some of which will be informed by the findings of the Clinical Advisory Group. I can advise the Deputy that the HSE has put arrangements in place for a more integrated and sensitive processing of medical card applications involving significant medical conditions with greater interaction between the central office regarding the assessment of a person's eligibility and the local health office regarding the person's medical condition and the services that they may require. The HSE has also appointed a senior manager to lead the reform of the systems for handling medical card application and reviews.

Mental Health Services Provision

139. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which he remains satisfied that the child and adolescent psychiatric services remain adequate to meet demand; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21196/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The HSE

Mental Health Division (MHD) supports timely access to appropriate services to address the mental health needs of all children, from a preventative care model and early intervention perspective. It should be noted, however, that the response to mental health issues is not the sole remit of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and may for example, be more appropriately addressed in other care areas, such as Primary Care, or Disability.

While a broad range of services support the mental health of children and adolescents, the term 'CAMHS' is usually applied very specifically to services that provide specialist mental health treatment and care to young people up to 18 years of age, through a multidisciplinary team. In 2015, the HSE National Service Plan objective for improved performance for the year is for 72% or greater of accepted referrals to Child and Adolescent Community Mental Health Teams to be seen within three months, together with an overall 5% reduction in the waiting list, combined with a position where no-one is waiting over 12 months at end December 2015.

In relation to waiting times for an appointment, the following should be noted:

- All cases are triaged and urgent cases seen as a priority. Many of these urgent cases are seen within days. 55% of children seen in 2014 were seen in under 4 weeks.

- There has been an increased number of referrals to the service, including 16 and 17 yr. olds (over 50% of teams are seeing new referrals up to the age of 18 years, and the remainder new referrals up to the age of 17 years).

- In March last, there were around 1,800 children and adolescents waiting for a first appointment for longer than three months, of which some 480 were waiting more than 12 months for a first appointment with CAMHS.

- In March 2015, 75% of referrals nationally were offered a first appointment and seen within 12 weeks, with the year-to-date performance consistently ahead of the target of 72%.

A targeted approach to addressing the needs of those waiting over 12 months, combined with maintaining targets for first appointments and seeing individuals within three months, is a priority for 2015. A number of factors can contribute to an individual waiting longer than 12 months. The HSE has an on-going CAMHS Service Improvement Project and is currently carrying out a specific Validation Exercise on the waiting lists, to improve various aspects of CAMHS service provision.

I, and the HSE, will continue to progress and monitor the development of the CAMHS service, in line with agreed HSE Service Plan commitments, to ensure the adequacy of the service to meet current and future demands.

Medicinal Products Prices

140. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which the cost of medicine has been reduced as a result of strategic sourcing of products, generic prescribing or other methods to reduce costs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21197/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Government has introduced a series of reforms in recent years to reduce the prices of drugs and medicines which are paid for by the HSE. This has resulted in reductions in the price of thousands of medicines. Price reductions of the order of 30% per item reimbursed have been achieved between 2009 and 2013; the average cost per items reimbursed is now running at 2001/2002 levels.

In recent times, the Government has entered into a number of price reduction Agreements with both the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA) and the Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Ireland (APMI) delivering a number of important benefits, including, significant reductions for patients in the cost of drugs, a lowering of the drugs bill to the State, timely access for patients to new cutting-edge drugs for certain conditions, and reducing the cost base of the health system into the future. Cumulative savings and cost avoidance generated from these Agreements between 2006 and 2014 amount to approximately €1.5 billion.

Another important reform measure introduced to reduce the cost of drugs was the implementation of generic substitution and reference pricing, as provided for under the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. Reference pricing has generated approximately €50 million in savings in 2014 and is expected to deliver a further €25 million in 2015. Reference prices will ensure that generic prices in Ireland will fall towards European norms.

Further reductions in the price of medicines in Ireland remains a priority for the Government.

Dental Services Provision

141. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide funding for dental treatment in respect of a child (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21201/15]

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

Question No. 142 answered with Question No. 117.

Overseas Development Aid Provision

143. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will address the concerns outlined in correspondence (details supplied) regarding Irish Aid funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21075/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I can confirm that the organisation, Global Schoolroom, applied for funding under the Irish Aid Civil Society Fund in 2014 and was awarded a grant of €40,000 for one year for its project in India in 2014. Global Schoolroom applied again in 2015 for further funding but, on this occasion, was unsuccessful.

The Civil Society Fund application and appraisal process is completed in an open and transparent manner by a committee comprising external consultants in addition to officials from The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The detailed assessment of the external consultant is subsequently communicated to all organizations that have applied for funding. The funding process is always very competitive and it is not possible to allocate funding to all applicants.

Ministerial Meetings

144. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the issues discussed at his recent meeting with the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21215/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): On 19 May, I met with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Theresa Villiers MP, in Dublin. We discussed a range of legacy and political issues. It was an opportunity also for the Secretary of State and me to discuss the current political impasse within the Northern Ireland Executive.

I have remained in close contact with her since then on this matter, as I have also with the Northern Ireland Executive Parties and with US Senator Gary Hart. It is disappointing that a resolution has not yet been found and I urge the Parties to consider the serious consequences of a continued failure to find a way forward. The shared aim of the British and Irish Governments is to support the parties with a view to seeing the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement back on track. Political stasis in Northern Ireland benefits no-one.

On 19 May, I again raised with Secretary of State Villiers the issue of access by an independent international judicial figure to original documents in the possession of the British Government relating to the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. She assured me that she is reflecting on how her Government can respond. I also briefed her on my recent meeting with Justice for the Forgotten on 15 May, on the eve of ceremonies in Dublin to mark the 41st anniversary of the bombings.

We discussed the Pat Finucane case. I made clear that the Irish Government considers there was a political commitment made at the highest level by both Governments at Weston Park in 2001 in relation to the holding of public inquiries in a number of controversial cases and that this commitment remains unfulfilled in the case of Pat Finucane.

I also outlined, as I had in the Seanad on 14 May, the Irish Government's serious concerns in relation to any proposal to replace the 1998 UK Human Rights Act without taking account of the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement. The UK Human Rights Act of 1998 was the means of satisfying the obligation of the British Government arising from the Good Friday Agreement that the European Convention on Human Rights would be incorporated into Northern Ireland law.

The Secretary of State and I discussed and welcomed the then approaching visit of TRH the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall to Ireland and Northern Ireland. I believe the visit served as a further contribution to building peace and reconciliation on this island.

European Council Meetings

145. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the issues discussed at the recent European Union Foreign Affairs Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21216/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I attended the most recent Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meeting in Brussels on 18 May.

At the Council, Foreign Ministers addressed the Middle East Peace Process. This was the first meeting of EU Foreign Ministers since the formation of the Israeli government, and in the run up to the meeting I had urged High Representative (HR) Mogherini to include the Peace Process on the Council agenda. The exchange of views was frank, and Ministers will return to the issue next month for more substantive discussions. For my part, in the exchange of views

that took place, I emphasised that the EU has the capacity to make a positive difference and, further, that we have a responsibility to act. The Peace Process itself is at a standstill. We know that events on the ground are rapidly closing the window on a possible two-state solution. We must act to defend that solution which is the core of our policy on the Middle East Peace Process and the only path that will provide peace, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. I look forward to continuing discussions on the Peace Process next month - at which time HR Mogherini and newly-appointed EU Special Representative for the Peace Process, Fernando Gentilini, will report back to Ministers on their visit to the region, which took place last week.

Foreign Ministers briefly addressed the crisis on the ground in Burundi, where Conclusions were adopted condemning the violence, and re-iterating support for the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Saïd Djinnit. Concern was also expressed about the crisis in Macedonia. It was agreed to monitor the situation closely, and to discuss the matter again at the Council in the near future.

The Council also met in joint session with Foreign and Defence Ministers, where initally, in the presence of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, we had an exchange of views on the security situation in the EU's broader neighbourhood.

The Council – EU Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers only – then proceeded to discuss preparations for the European Council in June, where Heads of State and Government will discuss the Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Ministers adopted a comprehensive set of conclusions on CSDP which will feed into that discussion. Key areas covered by the conclusions include enhancing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP in contributing to international peace and security; enhancing the development of capabilities required for that purpose and improving the capacity of European industry to provide those capabilities. The conclusions highlight the fact that the EU and its Member States, through CSDP and other policy instruments, have a strong role to play in preventing and managing conflicts and addressing their causes.

HR Mogherini then outlined to us her thinking on a new European Foreign Policy and Security Strategy. An assessment of the changed global environment will be prepared by HR Mogherini for consideration by Heads of State and Government when they meet next month. It is expected that work will then commence on drafting a new European Foreign Policy and Security Strategy in consultation with the Member States - Ireland will participate fully in this process. Indeed, having recently concluded a review of our own national foreign policy strategy, I believe it is timely that a similar exercise is conducted at EU level.

Discussions then turned to follow up on the Special Meeting of the European Council on 23 April, attended by the Taoiseach, which addressed the migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The FAC adopted a Decision to establish a European Union operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean to disrupt the smuggler networks that drive this criminal trade in human misery and exploit vulnerable people for profit. 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. The establishment of this operation is one strand of the comprehensive approach being pursued by the EU to tackle the root causes of the human emergency and to prevent the loss of more lives at sea which also includes continued provision of development assistance to build capacity in source countries and performance of search and rescue tasks as necessary. This follows on from the commitment made by Heads of State and Government to use all of the tools at the EU's disposal for this purpose.

North-South Ministerial Council

146. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the issues to be discussed at the next North South Ministerial Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21217/15]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The next Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council is scheduled to take place in early June, and is to be chaired by the Taoiseach.

It is likely that discussions will touch on financial and economic issues affecting both jurisdictions and that Ministers from North and South will together take the opportunity to review the work undertaken in the areas of North South cooperation, including by the North South Bodies, since the preceding Plenary meeting on 5 December 2014 in Armagh.

Following on from the Stormont House Agreement, I would expect that the meeting will also review the progress made on developing new priorities for North/South cooperation which have been identified during Ministerial discussions, with the focus on those areas that promote economic recovery, job creation, the best use of tax-payers' funds and the most effective delivery of public services. The North West Gateway Initiative, the current position on the North South Consultative Forum and other matters of topical concern, in particular cross-border smuggling and fuel laundering, are other matters which are expected to be discussed at the meeting.

The forthcoming Plenary meeting of the Council also offers an opportunity for substantive discussions with our Northern Ireland colleagues on shared interests such as increasing trade and business activity and EU matters, including the new PEACE and INTERREG Cross-Border Programmes.

I am looking forward to the Plenary meeting and to continuing, with my colleagues in Government, to actively pursue our priorities for advancing cooperation with the Northern Ireland Executive, primarily through the structures of the Council.

School Equipment

147. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if her Department will fund information technology equipment in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and the funding available in this regard. [21055/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The Digital Strategy for Schools will be finalised in the coming weeks and sets out an ambitious five year plan to further embed ICT in teaching, learning and assessment. Under this Strategy my Department will identify a set of funding priorities annually over the lifetime of the Digital Strategy and the provision of IT equipment to schools will be considered in this context.

School Patronage

148. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills her views on a matter (details supplied) regarding national schools; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21061/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The majority of school

buildings in the state are in private ownership and under denominational patronage. When state monies were provided to facilitate building works to school property owned by a third party, a legal mechanism had to be put in place in order to protect the State's interest. This was known as a Charging Lease or Declaration of Trust. These leases protect the Minister's capital investment in the school property and require that the property be used as a school for a set period.

As a result of negotiations in the late 1990s on the reconstitution of Boards of Management, an agreement was reached whereby patrons agreed to cede representatives on the Boards of Management in lieu of the Department agreeing to insert a Deed of Variation into the existing property lease. The objective of this Deed of Variation is to provide security for the denominational ethos of a school in cases where a patron or trustee owns the property. Discussions have taken place with the relevant patron bodies over the years to obtain a mutually acceptable solution which meets this objective and these discussions are ongoing.

The Deed of Variation refers to a change in the terms of a charging lease or Declaration of Trust. With regard to admission policies, irrespective of property or Charging Lease arrangements, it is the responsibility of the managerial authorities of all schools to implement an enrolment policy in accordance with the Education Act, 1998. The enrolment policy must be non-discriminatory and must be applied fairly in respect of all applicants.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 provides that an educational establishment does not discriminate where the establishment is a school providing primary or post-primary education to students and the objective of the school is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values, it admits persons of a particular religious denomination in preference to others or it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of that denomination and, in the case of a refusal, it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Article 44.2.4 of the Constitution states that legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school. In this regard, Section 30 of the Education Act (1998), provides that no student can be required to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student. Therefore, parents have the right, if so desired, to ensure that their children do not receive religious instruction.

The objective of the recently published Education (Admission to Schools) Bill is to provide an over-arching framework to ensure that how schools decide on who is enrolled and who is refused a place in schools is more structured, fair and transparent.

The Bill does not propose changes to the existing equality legislation. The Bill, while including provision for single sex schools and denominational schools to reflect in their admission policy the exemptions applicable to such schools under equality legislation, requires schools to explicitly state in the school's admission policy that it will not discriminate against an applicant for admission on the grounds of disability, special educational needs, sexual orientation, family status, membership of the traveller community, race, civil status, gender or religion. The Bill also requires schools to publish an enrolment policy which will include details of the school's arrangements for students who do not want to attend religious instruction.

School Accommodation Provision

149. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she has discussed with officials in her Department a request in respect of a school (details supplied) in

County Wicklow for the purposes of providing extra space to accommodate the growing enrolment numbers; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21080/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department has received correspondence from the school in question relating to the matter referenced in the details supplied. My Department expects to be in a position to respond to the correspondence shortly.

Teacher Data

150. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of career guidance teachers working in each of the post-leaving certificate colleges, institutes of technology and universities; the number of students in each college; and the number five years ago. [21093/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Since September 2012 guidance provision in schools, including PLCs, must be managed by schools from within their standard staffing allocation. Schools have autonomy on how best to prioritise their available resources to meet their requirements in relation to guidance and the provision of an appropriate range of subjects to students. Decisions on how this is done is taken at school level. For the 2009/10 academic year, 186 schools enrolled 38,534 PLC participants. In 2014/15, 33,089 PLC participants were enrolled in 159 schools. A breakdown of these figures is provided in the following tables.

There are no career guidance teachers employed in the University or Institute of Technology sector. However, higher education institutions run their own careers advisory services for their students.

I have, therefore, provided in the following tables the number of career guidance teachers currently employed and the number of those employed five years ago. The enrolment figures for third level institutions are contained in the following table.

Third level full and part-time enrolments for 2014/15 and 2009/10.

Institute	2014/15	2009/10
DCU	11,023	9,995
NUIG	17,216	16,087
MU	10,499	7,876
TCD	15,993	16,173
UCC	19,048	17,006
UCD	24,811	23,655
UL	12,185	10,767
MI	3,179	2,670
MATER DEI	557	717
ST PATS	2,383	2,670
NCAD	1,311	1,174
RCSI	3,686	2,896
ST ANGELAS	1,315	854
AIT	4,956	4,571
ITB	3,235	2,102

Institute	2014/15	2009/10
CIT	10,323	9,149
IT CARLOW	6,221	4,282
DIT	18,539	15,321
IADT	2,217	2,182
DKIT	4,786	4,528
GMIT	6,202	6,364
ITSLIGO	3,973	4,058
ITRALEE	3,002	2,572
ITTALLAGHT	5,085	3,905
LIT	6,075	5,519
LYIT	3,587	2,986
WIT	7,980	7,743

PLC Enrolment 2009 - 2010

School No.	School Name	Address	PLC
61220I	St. Joseph's Secondary School	Doon Road	29
61520U	St. Brigid's College	Callan	21
62000W	Mary Immaculate Secondary School	Lisdoonvarna	83
62010C	St. Joseph's Secondary School	Spanish Point	20
62540I	Deerpark C.B.S.	St Patrick's Road	25
62900M	Coláiste Mhuire	Ballygar	44
62930V	St. Cuan's College	Castleblakney	52
63000E	Presentation Secondary School	Presentation Rd	20
63010H	Meán Scoil Mhuire	Newtownsmith	41
63211R	St Joseph's College	Summerhill	57
64250J	Presentation Secondary School	Sexton Street	318
64570E	Our Lady's Secondary School	Belmullet	37
64660F	Sancta Maria College	Louisburgh	27
64690O	Scoil Muire Agus Padraig	Swinford	20
64710R	Sacred Heart School	Westport	40
64880T	Scoil na mBraithre	Dungarvan	30
65140H	Colaiste Mhuire	Ballymote	23
65150K	Jesus & Mary Secondary School	Enniscrone	100
65181V	Mercy College	Sligo	71
65241N	St Josephs College	Borrisoleigh	24
70020B	Grange Community College	Grange Road	67
70030E	Senior College Dunlaoghaire	Eblana Avenue	1,129
70040H	Deansrath Community College	New Nangor Road	140
70041J	Collinstown Park Community College	Neilstown Rd.	55
70050K	Dun Laoghaire College of	Further Education	771
70070Q	College Of Further Education Dundrum	Main Street	352
70090W	Sallynoggin College of Further Education	Pearse Street	680
70110C	Stillorgan College of Further Education	Further Education	240
70130I	Greenhills College	Limekiln Avenue	341

School No.	School Name	Address	PLC
70160R	St. Kevins College	Clogher Road	237
70170U	Crumlin College Of Further Education	Crumlin Road	681
70190D	Colaiste Ide College of Further Education	Cardiffsbridge Road	688
70200D	Technical Institute	Cambridge Road	20
70220J	Inchicore College of Further Education	Emmet Road	915
70230M	Killester College of Further Education	Collins Avenue	384
70240P	Kylemore College	Kylemore Road	92
70250S	Marino College	14-20 Marino Mart	431
70280E	Rathmines College	Town Hall	584
70290H	Ballsbridge College of Further Education	Shelbourne Road	422
70300H	Pearse College - Colaiste an Phiarsaigh	Clogher Road	328
70310K	Plunket College	Swords Road	124
70320N	Whitehall House Senior College	Swords Road	403
70340T	Liberties College	Bull Alley Street	842
70342A	Ballyfermot College of Further Education	Ballyfermot Road	1,625
70410O	Coláiste Eoin	Hacketstown	64
70420R	Carlow Vocational School	Kilkenny Road	756
70430U	Vocational School Muine Bheag	Muine Bheag	172
70450D	Killarney Community College	New Road	37
70500P	Listowel Community College	Listowel	196
70550H	Tralee Community College	Clash	468
70570N	Scoil Aireagail	Ballyhale	52
70590T	Duiske College	Graignamanagh	46
70600T	Coláiste Mhuire	Johnstown	78
70610W	City Vocational School	New Street,	349
70620C	Coláiste Cois Siúire	Mooncoin	23
70640I	Grennan College	Ladywell St	121
70650L	Athy Community College	Athy	55
70660O	Curragh Post-Primary School	McSwiney Road	22
70680U	St Conleth's Vocational School	Station Road	113
70690A	Vocational School / Kildare College of Further Studies	Kildare Town	23
70691C	Confey Community College	Confey	45
70710D	Piper's Hill College	Killashee	110
70720G	St Farnan's Post Primary School	Prosperous	27
70740M	Arklow Community College	Coolgreaney Rd	59
70750P	Scoil Chonglais	Baltinglass	15
70770V	St Thomas' Community College	Novara Avenue	1,165
70790E	Coláiste Bhríde Carnew	Carnew	22
70800E	St Kevin's Community College	Dunlavin	24
70830N	Ennis Community College	Ennis	126
70840Q	Ennistymon Vocational School	Ennistymon	30
70910L	St. Brogan's College, Bandon	Kilbrogan	245
70930R	St Goban's College	Sheskin	18

School No.	School Name	Address	PLC
70950A	Clonakilty Community College	Clonakilty	57
70970G	Cobh Community College	Carrignafoy	83
70990M	Coláiste an Chraoibhin	Duntaheen Road	150
71020G	Davis College	Summerhill	443
71030J	McEgan College	Macroom	114
71040M	St Fanahan's College	Mitchelstown	111
71050P	St Colman's Community College	Youghal Road	94
71080B	Mannix College	Charleville	25
71090E	Rossa College	Skibbereen	92
71102I	Schull Community College	Colla Road	17
71110H	Nagle Community College	Mahon	61
71120K	Cork College Of Commerce	Morrison's Island	2,043
71121M	St John's Central College	Sawmill Street	1,252
71122O	Colaiste Stiofán Naofa	Tramore Road	926
71123Q	Terence Mac Swiney Community College	Hollyhill	173
71180F	Abbey Vocational School	Donegal Town	17
71200I	Errigal College	Windyhall	152
71240U	Finn Valley College	Main Street	15
71241W	St. Catherine's Vocational School	Donegal Road	19
71270G	Gairmscoil Mhuire	Athenry	91
71280J	St Brigids Vocational School	Loughrea	20
71290M	St. Jarlath's Vocational School	Mountbellew	32
71310P	Gairm Scoil Chilleáin Naofa	Cnoc Breac	17
71340B	Galway Technical Institute	Father Griffin Road	1,254
71390Q	Archbishop McHale College	Dublin Road	61
71400Q	Galway Community College	Wellpark	324
71410T	Athlone Community College	Retreat Road	30
71420W	Castlepollard Community College	Castlepollard	61
71430C	Columba College	Killucan	23
71450I	Mullingar Community College	Millmount Road	94
71510A	Portlaoise College	Mountrath Road	306
71560P	Lough Allen College	Drumkeerin	42
71570S	Vocational School	Drumshanbo	52
71600B	Coláiste Abbain	Adamstown	40
71610E	Bridgetown Vocational College	Bridgetown	24
71620H	Vocational College Bunclody	Bunclody	104
71630K	Vocational College	Enniscorthy	436
71660T	New Ross Vocational College	New Ross	178
71680C	Wexford Vocational College	Westgate	159
71690F	Ballymahon Vocational School	Ballymahon	53
71700F	Colaiste Mhuire	Askeaton	20
71710I	Ardscoil Phadraig	Granard	70
71720L	Lanesboro Community College	Lanesboro	76
71730O	Templemichael College	Templemichael	225
71760A	Drogheda Inst. of Further Education	The Twenties	923
71770D	Ó Fiaich College	Dublin Road	551
71790J	Desmond College	Station Road	34

School No.	School Name	Address	PLC
71810M	Coláiste Pobail Mhichíl	Cappamore	45
71840V	Colaiste Chiarain	Croom	143
71850B	Hazelwood College	Dromcollogher	39
71930W	Limerick Senior College	Mulgrave Street	1,199
71950F	St Peter's College	Dunboyne	346
71990R	St Oliver Post Primary	Oldcastle	17
72010I	Beaufort College	Trim Rd	88
72020L	Moyne College	Ballina	79
72050U	St. Brendan's College	Belmullet	15
72070D	McHale College	Achill Sound	14
72100J	St. Tiernan's College	Crossmolina	24
72160E	Carrowbeg College	Westport	87
72210Q	Beech Hill College	Monaghan	363
72220T	Coláiste Chathail Naofa	Youghal Rd	240
72240C	Waterford College of Further Education	Parnell Street	855
72241E	St Paul's Community College	Browne's Road	49
72290R	Roscommon Community School	Lisnamult	22
72300R	Corran College	Ballymote	41
72350J	North Connaught College	Tubbercurry	198
72360M	Ballinode College	Ballinode	604
72420E	Central Technical Institute	Clonmel	201
72430H	Scoil Ruain	Killenaule	38
72440K	Nenagh Vocational School	Dromin Road	128
72450N	St Joseph's College	Newport	63
72470T	St. Sheelan's College	Templemore	273
72480W	St. Alibe's School	Rosanna Road	65
72490C	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed	Castlemeadows	211
72540O	Oaklands Community College	Sr. Senan Avenue	22
72560U	Tullamore College	Riverside	13
76060U	Davitt College	Springfield	282
76063D	Colaiste Dun Iascaigh	Cashel Road	26
76068N	Coláiste na Sceilge	Caherciveen	50
76069P	Colaiste Phobáil Ros Cré	Corville Rd	72
76070A	Coláiste Ióasef	Kilmallock	73
76072E	Abbey Community College	Boyle	33
76075K	St John Bosco Community College	Cahercon	12
76083J	Magh Ene College	Church Road	26
76086P	MARIA IMMACULATA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Dunmanway	18
76087R	CAVAN INSTITUTE	CATHEDRAL ROAD	1,581
76094O	COLÁISTE DHÚLAIGH COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	BARRYCOURT ROAD	1,219
76105Q	Colaiste Na Sionna	Banagher	14
81007U	Shannon Comprehensive School	Shannon	42
91310E	Cabinteely Community School	Cabinteely	40
91318U	The Donahies Community School	Streamville Road	36
91332O	St Marks Community School	Cookstown Rd	21
91338D	St Aidan's Community School	Brookfield	15

School No.	School Name	Address	PLC
91343T	St. Tiernan's Community School	Parkvale	24
91356F	Tullow Community School	The Mullawn	45
91360T	Community School	Castlecomer	29
91391H	St Peter's Community School	Passage West	11
91406R	Carndonagh Community School	Carndonagh	16
91411K	Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara	Carna	11
91412M	Scoil Phobail	Clifden	18
91413O	Portumna Community School	Portumna	17
91414Q	Dunmore Community School	Dunmore	19
91431Q	Ramsgrange Community School	Ramsgrange	41
91448K	Kilrush Community School	Kilrush	22
91461C	Ballyhaunis Community School	Knock Road	98
91492N	Gorey Community School	Esmonde Street	142
91493P	Castlerea Community School	Castlerea	19
91494R	St Louis Community School	Kiltimagh	151
91496V	Community School	Carrick-On-Shannon	12
91499E	Kinsale Community School	Kinsale	18
91501L	Moate Community School	Church Street	482
91508C	Boyne Community School	Trim	20
91514U	GLENAMADDY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	GLENAMADDY	53
91517D	ATHBOY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	ATHBOY	6
	TOTAL		38534

PLC Enrolment 2014 - 2015

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
61220I	St. Joseph's Secondary School	Doon Road	Ballybunion	Co. Kerry		17
62000W	Mary Immaculate Secondary School	Lisdoonvarna	Co Clare			41
62900M	Coláiste Mhuire	Ballygar	Co. Galway			11
62930V	St. Cuan's College	Castleblakney	Ballinasloe	Co Galway		38
63010H	Meán Scoil Mhuire	Newtownsmith	Galway			8
63211R	St Joseph's College	Summerhill	Athlone	Co Westmeath		35
64250J	Coláiste Nano Nagle	Sexton Street	Limerick			247
64570E	Our Lady's Secondary School	Belmullet	Co Mayo			19
64660F	Sancta Maria College	Louisburgh	Co Mayo			8
65150K	Jesus & Mary Secondary School	Enniscrone	Co Sligo			77
65181V	Mercy College	Chapel Hill	Sligo	Co. Sligo		56
70020B	Grange Community College	Grange Road	Donaghmede	Dublin 13		79
70030E	Blackrock Further Education Institute	Main Street	Blackrock	Co Dublin		871
70040H	Deansrath Community College	New Nangor Road	Clondalkin	Dublin 22		100

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
70041J	Collinstown Park Community College	Neilstown Rd.	Rowlagh	Clondalkin	Dublin 22	46
70050K	Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute	Further Education	Cumberland St	Dun Laoghaire	Co Dublin	693
70070Q	College Of Further Education Dundrum	Main Street	Dundrum	Dublin 14		263
70090W	Sallynoggin College of Further Education	Pearse Street	Sallynoggin	Co Dublin		670
70110C	Stillorgan College of Further Education	Further Education	Old Dublin Rd	Stillorgan	Co Dublin	192
70130I	Greenhills College	Limekiln Avenue	Greenhills	Dublin 12		264
70150O	Cabra Community College	Kilkieran Road	Cabra	Dublin 7		12
70160R	St. Kevins College	Clogher Road	Crumlin	Dublin 12		158
70170U	Crumlin College Of Further Education	Crumlin Road	Crumlin	Dublin 12		641
70190D	Colaiste Ide College of Further Education	Cardiffsbridge Road	Finglas West	Dublin11		556
70200D	Ringsend College	Cambridge Road	Ringsend	Dublin 4		5
70220J	Inchicore College of Further Education	Emmet Road	Inchicore	Dublin 8		790
70230M	Killester College of Further Education	Collins Avenue	Killester	Dublin 5	Dublin	305
70240P	Kylemore College	Kylemore Road	Ballyfermot	Dublin 10		72
70250S	Marino College	14-20 Marino Mart	Fairview	Dublin 3		345
70280E	Rathmines College	Town Hall	Rathmines	Dublin 6		551
70290H	Ballsbridge College of Further Education	Shelbourne Road	Ballsbridge	Dublin 4		444
70300H	Pearse College - Colaiste an Phiarsaigh	Clogher Road	Crumlin	Dublin 12		263
70310K	Plunket College	Swords Road	Whitehall	Dublin 9		142
70320N	Whitehall House Senior College	Swords Road	Dublin 9			382
70340T	Liberties College	Bull Alley Street	Dublin 8			795
70342A	Ballyfermot College of Further Education	Ballyfermot Road	Dublin 10			1,439
70410O	Coláiste Eoin	Hacketstown	Co Carlow			14
70420R	Carlow Vocational School	Kilkenny Road	Carlow	Co. Carlow		769
70430U	Vocational School Muine Bheag	Muine Bheag	Co Carlow			98
70450D	Killarney Community College	New Road	Killarney	Co Kerry		17
70500P	Listowel Community College	Listowel	Co Kerry			170

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
70550H	Coláiste Gleann Lí Post Primary School	Clash	Tralee			514
70570N	Scoil Aireagail	Ballyhale	Kilkenny			16
70590T	Duiske College	Graignamanagh	Co Kilkenny			40
70600T	Coláiste Mhuire	Johnstown	Co Kilkenny			16
70610W	City Vocational School	New Street,	Kilkenny			261
70640I	Grennan College	Ladywell St	Thomastown	Co Kilkenny		41
70660O	Curragh Post-Primary School	McSwiney Road	Curragh	Co Kildare		25
70680U	St Conleth's Community College	Station Road	Newbridge	Co Kildare		241
70691C	Confey Community College	Confey	Leixlip	Co Kildare		20
70720G	St Farnan's Post Primary School	Prosperous	Co. Kildare			12
70740M	Arklow Community College	Coolgreaney Rd	Arklow	Co Wicklow		51
70750P	Scoil Chonglais	Baltinglass	Co Wicklow			17
70770V	St Thomas' Community College	Novara Avenue	Bray	Co. Wicklow		949
70790E	Coláiste Bhríde Carnew	Carnew	Co.Wicklow			17
70800E	St Kevin's Community College	Dunlavin	Co Wicklow			13
70830N	Ennis Community College	Ennis	Co Clare			126
70840Q	Ennistymon Vocational School	Ennistymon	Ennis	Co Clare		13
70910L	St. Brogan's College, Bandon	Kilbrogan	Bandon	Co Cork		255
70950A	Clonakilty Community College	Clonakilty	Co Cork			27
70970G	Cobh Community College	Carrignafoy	Cobh	Co. Cork		35
71020G	Davis College	Summerhill	Mallow	Co Cork		483
71030J	McEgan College	Macroom	Co Cork			94
71040M	St Fanahan's College	Mitchelstown	Mallow	Co.Cork		53
71050P	St Colman's Community College	Youghal Road	Midleton	Co Cork		99
71090E	Rossa College	Skibbereen	Co Cork			106
71120K	Cork College Of Commerce	Morrison's Island	Cork			1,741
71121M	St John's Central College	Sawmill Street	Cork			1,168
71122O	Colaiste Stiofán Naofa	Tramore Road	Cork			767
71123Q	Terence Mac Swiney Community College	Hollyhill	Knocknaheeny	Cork		135
71200I	Errigal College	Windyhall	Letterkenny			88

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
71240U	Finn Valley College	Main Street	Stranorlar	Lifford		37
71241W	St. Catherine's Vocational School	Donegal Road	Killybegs	Co. Donegal		9
71270G	Gairmscoil Mhuire	Athenry	Co Galway			83
71280J	St Brigids Vocational School	Loughrea	Co Galway			29
71290M	Coláiste an Chreagáin	Mountbellew	Ballinasloe	Co Galway		32
71310P	Gairm Scoil Chilleáin Naofa	St. Killians Vocational School	Cnoc Breac	New Inn, Ballinasloe	Co Galway	6
71340B	Galway Technical Institute	Father Griffin Road	Galway			1,114
71390Q	Archbishop McHale College	Dublin Road	Tuam	Co Galway		26
71400Q	Galway Community College	Wellpark	Galway			367
71410T	Athlone Community College	Retreat Road	Athlone	Co Westmeath		29
71420W	Castlepollard Community College	Castlepollard	Mullingar	Co Westmeath		30
71430C	Columba College	Killucan	Co Westmeath			32
71450I	Mullingar Community College	Millmount Road	Mullingar	Co. Westmeath		86
71510A	Portlaoise College	Mountrath Road	Portlaoise	Co. Laois		357
71560P	Lough Allen College	Drumkeerin	Co Leitrim			36
71570S	Vocational School	Drumshanbo	Co Leitrim			45
71600B	Coláiste Abbain	Adamstown	Enniscorthy	Co Wexford		26
71610E	Bridgetown Vocational College	Bridgetown	Co Wexford			22
71620H	Vocational College Bunclody	Bunclody	Enniscorthy	Co Wexford		59
71630K	Vocational College	Enniscorthy	Co Wexford			287
71650Q	Coláiste an Átha	Kilmuckridge	Co. Wexford			40
71660T	New Ross Vocational College	New Ross	Co Wexford			94
71680C	Wexford Vocational College	Westgate	Wexford	Co Wexford		145
71710I	Ardscoil Phadraig	Granard	Co Longford			23
71720L	Lanesboro Community College	Lanesboro	Co Longford			31
71730O	Templemichael College	Templemichael	Longford			316
71760A	Drogheda Inst. of Further Education	The Twenties	Drogheda	Co. Louth		812
71770D	Ó Fiaich College	Dublin Road	Dundalk	Co. Louth		533
71840V	Colaiste Chiarain	Croom	Co. Limerick			75
71850B	Hazelwood College	Dromcollogher	Co. Limerick			30

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
71930W	Limerick College of Further Education	Limerick Senior College	Mulgrave Street	Limerick		1,149
71950F	St Peter's College	Dunboyne	Co. Meath			439
71990R	St Oliver Post Primary	Oldcastle	Co. Meath			20
72010I	Beaufort College	Trim Rd	Navan	Co Meath		57
72020L	Moyne College	Ballina	Co Mayo			45
72100J	St. Tiernan's College	Crossmolina	Ballina	Co Mayo		12
72140V	Colaiste Chomain	Rossport	Ballina	Co Mayo		20
72160E	Carrowbeg College	Westport	Co Mayo			274
72180K	Inver College	Carrick-macross	Co Monaghan			1
72220T	Coláiste Chathail Naofa	Youghal Rd	Dungarvan			192
72240C	Waterford College of Further Education	Parnell Street	Waterford			746
72241E	St Paul's Community College	Browne's Road	Waterford City			42
72290R	Roscommon Community School	Lisnamult	Roscommon	Co. Roscommon		16
72300R	Corran College	Ballymote	Co Sligo			11
72350J	North Connaught College	Tubbercurry	Co Sligo			137
72360M	Ballinode College	Clarion Rd	Sligo			514
72420E	Central Technical Institute	Clonmel	Co Tipperary			210
72430H	Scoil Ruain	Killenaule	Thurles	Co Tipperary		18
72440K	Nenagh Vocational School	Dromin Road	Nenagh	Co Tipperary		95
72450N	Newport College	Newport	Co Tipperary			41
72470T	Templemore College	Templemore	Co Tipperary			293
72480W	St. Alibe's School	Rosanna Road	Tipperary Town			25
72490C	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed	Castlemeadows	Thurles	Co Tipperary		160
72520I	Coláiste Naomh Cormac	Kilcormac	Co Offaly			8
72540O	Oaklands Community College	Sr. Senan Avenue	Edenderry	Co. Offaly		18
72560U	Tullamore College	Riverside	Tullamore	Co. Offaly		14
76060U	Davitt College	Springfield	Castlebar			290
76063D	Colaiste Dun Iascaigh	Cashel Road	Cahir	Co Tipperary		17
76068N	Coláiste na Sceilge	Caherciveen	Co. Kerry			24
76069P	Colaiste Phobáil Ros Cré	Corville Rd	Roscrea	Co Tipperary		72
76070A	Coláiste Ióasef	Kilmallock	Co. Limerick			80
76072E	Abbey Community College	Boyle	Co Roscommon			31

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
76075K	St John Bosco Community College	Cahercon	Kildysart	Co Clare		13
76086P	MARIA IMMACULATA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Dunmanway	Co Cork			16
76087R	CAVAN INSTITUTE	CATHEDRAL ROAD	CAVAN			1,353
76090G	Coláiste Pobail Bheanntraí	SESKIN	BANTRY	CO CORK		27
76094O	COLÁISTE DHÚLAIGH COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	BARRYCOURT ROAD	COOLOCK	DUBLIN 17		1,159
76095Q	MONAGHAN INSTITUTE	Armagh Road	Monaghan Town	Co. Monaghan		436
76105Q	Colaiste Na Sionna	Banagher	Banagher			11
81007U	Shannon Comprehensive School	Shannon	Co Clare			33
91310E	Cabinteely Community School	Cabinteely	Dublin 18			26
91318U	The Donahies Community School	Streamville Road	Dublin 13			28
91338D	St Aidan's Community School	Brookfield	Tallaght	Dublin 24		23
91343T	St. Tiernan's Community School	Parkvale	Balally	Dublin 16		12
91356F	Tullow Community School	The Mullawn	Tullow	Co. Carlow		47
91360T	Community School	Castlecomer	Co Kilkenny			7
91411K	Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara	Carna	Co na Gaillimhe			8
91412M	Scoil Phobail	Clifden	Co Galway			16
91414Q	Dunmore Community School	Dunmore	Co Galway			20
91431Q	Ramsgrange Community School	Ramsgrange	New Ross	Co Wexford		15
91448K	Kilrush Community School	Kilrush	Co Clare			25
91461C	Ballyhaunis Community School	Knock Road	Ballyhaunis	Co.Mayo		10
91492N	Gorey Community School	Esmonde Street	Gorey	Co. Wexford		96
91493P	Castlerea Community School	Castlerea	Co. Roscommon			19
91494R	St Louis Community School	Kiltimagh	Co Mayo			157
91499E	Kinsale Community School	Kinsale	Co Cork			24
91501L	Moate Community School	Church Street	Moate	Co Westmeath		450
91514U	GLENAMADDY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	GLENAMADDY	CO GALWAY			50

Roll Number	Official School Name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	PLC Enrolment
Total						33,089

Career Guidance Counsellors

Institution	31-Dec-09	01-Dec-14	-	-
UCD	4 (3.5 FTE)*	7 (6.5 FTE)**	*2 of the resources were dedicated to the Smurfit Business School and 1.5 resources to the rest of the UCD student population / **2.5 of the resources are dedicated to the Smurfit Business School and 4 resources to the rest of the UCD student population.	
UCC	19 (Feb 2010)	18	UCC do not have any staff with a specific role title of 'Career Guidance Counsellor' - the university has a Careers Office and the staff breakdown as follows:	"CAREERS ADVISOR (2010:6/2014:8) EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (2010:4/2014:1) HEAD OF CAREERS SERVICE (2010:1/2014:1) SENIOR CAREERS ADVISOR (2010:2/2014:2) SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (2010:3/2014:3) UNDERGRADUATE WORK PLACEMENT OFFICER (2010:1/2014:1) WORK PLACEMENT OFFICER (2010:2/2014:2) Total (2010:19/2014:18)"
NUIG				
NUIM	4	5		
TCD		6.1 (FTE)	"Figures include staff members employed as part of TCD's Careers Services team. Not feasible to provide a figure for staff employed in this capacity from 5 years previously. "	
UL	3	4		
DCU	2	2		
AIT	1	1		
ITB	1	1		
ITC	1	1		

Institution	31-Dec-09	01-Dec-14	-	-
CIT	4	4	" Figure include staff employed in CIT's Career Office (both years) 1 – Careers Officer 1 – Careers Advisor 2 – Careers Advisors employed two days per week on contract basis."	
DIT	11	6		
DKIT	1	2		
IADT				
GMIT	1	1		
LYIT	1	1		
LIT	1	1		
ITS	1 post. 2 staff (job sharing)	1 post. 2 staff (job sharing)		
ITTD	1	1		
ITTra	1	1		
WIT				

School Transport Eligibility

151. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills her plans to change the current eligibility criteria for the post-primary school transport scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21096/15]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Damien English): The purpose of my Department's School Transport Schemes is, having regard to available resources, to support the transport to and from school of children who reside remote from their nearest school.

Under the terms of my Department's Post Primary School Transport Scheme children are eligible for school transport where they reside not less than 4.8 kilometres from and are attending their nearest education centre as determined by my Department/Bus Éireann, having regard to ethos and language.

While it is the prerogative of parents to send their children to the school of their choice, eligibility for school transport is to the nearest school or education centre.

The terms of the Post Primary School Transport Scheme are applied equitably on a national basis and I am satisfied with the current criteria for determining eligibility.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

152. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide clarification regarding a home tuition scheme matter (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21097/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Where parents of children who are eligible for Home Tuition under the terms of the scheme seek access to alternative arrangements such as those which are the subject of this question, and where such services are available to the parents and eligible children, my Department has responded and will continue to respond to such requests with consideration and sympathy and with whatever flexibility can be applied.

In the case of the private provider to which the Deputy has referred, my officials approved arrangements which were sought by parents of eligible children. As this arrangement was approved outside of the general terms of the scheme it was not advertised.

Under the terms of the Home Tuition scheme, home tuition is terminated in respect of a child for whom a school placement has been identified. The private providers which are currently the subject of parent requested arrangements all facilitate the take up of identified placements in state funded schools.

In relation to the Charitable organisation to which the Deputy also refers, it was clear to this Department that this organisation had no plans to facilitate the take up of school placements when such had been identified by the NCSE. This position was confirmed by this organisation in a comprehensive submission in 2011, in which it was made clear under section 9(b) that the placement of the child in this organisation would replace the State funded placement until after the child reached 6 years. The correspondent in this matter has been informed directly that my Department could not agree to this proposal and has not agreed to such a proposal with any other private provider.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

153. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will provide clarification regarding the operation of the home tuition scheme (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21098/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): As I have previously advised the House in January of this year, the context of the correspondence referred to by the Deputy is significant in clarifying this issue.

The letter was in response to a submission from a private service provider outlining their intention to submit claim forms for funding for four children who were approved for home tuition to assist in their timely processing and payment. The letter added that applications for three children not approved for home tuition were to be submitted subsequently.

Therefore the approach in my official's response was to advise that new applications for home tuition were to be processed in line with the relevant circular and outlined the general conditions for payment which were at that time compatible with arrangements in place for the aforementioned four children for whom tuition had been provided.

School Accommodation Provision

154. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding the relocation of a school (details supplied) in County Laois. [21100/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I wish to advise the Deputy that discussions are ongoing between my Department and the Patron of the school, in question,

regarding options including that referred to by the Deputy to meet the long term accommodation needs of the school concerned.

State Examinations Commission

155. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason teachers in receipt of substitute pay rates are categorised as part-time employees when applying for temporary positions in the State Examination Commission; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21128/15]

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 Management

156. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the regulatory body responsible for ensuring proper audited accounts are compiled and spending of public funds is in accordance with proper practice by school boards of management. [21159/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): In accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998, schools (other than those established or maintained by an Education and Training Board) are required to keep all proper and usual accounts and records of all monies received by it or expenditure of such monies incurred by it and must ensure that in each year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best accounting practice. The Act further requires that such accounts shall be made available by the school for inspection by the Minister and by parents of students in the school, in so far as those accounts relate to monies provided by the Oireachtas. Furthermore, the Board must satisfy itself that proper internal controls are in place for all financial transactions.

In respect of primary schools, a total account of the Board's income and expenditure shall be prepared at the end of each school year and shall be properly audited or certified in accord with best accounting practice. This account shall be made available for inspection to the school community including parents, the Patron, Trustees and the Minister. In addition, copies of this account shall be presented to the Board and a copy retained as part of the minutes of the Board of Management. The school accounts shall also be available for audit by officers of the Department and officials of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office if requested.

In the case of Voluntary Secondary Schools the school must submit annual accounts in respect of each financial year ending 31 August. The annual accounts must be formally approved by the Management Authority of the school and must be forwarded to the Financial Services Support Unit (FSSU) of the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) by 1 December following the end of the financial year. The accounts must be accompanied by such other information as the FSSU may require from time to time. This requirement applies to all voluntary secondary schools, including fee charging schools.

In the case of Community and Comprehensive schools the Board of Management must prepare a financial report in respect of each financial year ending on 31 December. This report,

formally approved by the Board must be forwarded to the Department by mid-February following the end of the financial year. The completed accounts must be accompanied by such other information as the Minister may require from time to time.

The accounts of schools established and maintained by an Education and Training Board (formerly known as Vocational Education Committees) form part of the accounts of the relevant ETB. In respect of ETBs, annual accounts must be submitted no later than the 1st April in the year following the end of the accounting period to which they relate, to the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

Teaching Contracts

157. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will address a matter (details supplied) regarding contracts of indefinite duration for temporary teachers; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21166/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Circular Letter 0023/2015 which was issued by my Department in March 2015 sets out the detailed arrangements and procedures for the implementation and procedures for the implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Group on Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employment in Primary and Second Level Education in Ireland. One of the key features of the new procedures is that the qualification period for the granting of an initial Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID) is reduced from a period of continuous employment in excess of three years with the same employer to a period of continuous employment in excess of two years. It remains the case that the post must continue to be viable for a reasonable period considered to be at least a full school year.

Previously a post which concerned providing cover for a teacher absent on an approved scheme of leave of absence did not provide eligibility for a CID. In line with the recommendations of the Expert Group eligibility for a CID is extended to include providing cover for a teacher absent on two specific schemes of absence but this is confined to covering the absence of a teacher on career break or secondment.

Also in line with the recommendations of the Expert Group once a teacher has completed his or her first year of fixed-term employment in a school and the hours are available for that post for the following year, that position should be automatically re-advertised by the school and a new recruitment process undertaken for the filling of the post for the second year. From the commencement of the 2015/16 school year, there is now a requirement that schools must certify to the Department that when a teacher is being placed on the payroll for a second year of continuous employment the post was advertised, interviews were conducted and that the teacher was successful following interview. As an interim measure for the 2015/16 school year any teacher who has entered their third or more year of continuous employment may be considered for the award of a CID providing they satisfy the terms and conditions of circular 0023/2015 without the requirement of an interview at the end of their first fixed-term contract.

Teacher Secondment

158. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Question No. 180 of 7 May 2015, if she will provide details of the process to grant exemptions to the five-year secondment limit to the directors of education centres; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21167/15]

159. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if there has been a cost-benefit analysis regarding the Professional Development Service for Teachers secondees who have been informed by the teacher education section that their secondment is to end; the criteria that were used for the application of derogations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21168/15]

160. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will meet with a person (details supplied) with a view to addressing concerns regarding the Professional Development Service for Teachers secondees, who have been informed by the teacher education section that their secondment is to end; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21169/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 158 to 160, inclusive, together.

My Department, through the teacher support services and education centres, engages teachers on a full time basis annually for the provision of CPD through secondment from their schools. These secondments are subject to annual review. The arrangements provide flexibility and ensure that the in-service needs of teachers and other support priorities of the school system can be met within the resources available.

Having teachers with relevant and recent teaching experience and expertise is a key requirement for the role. It is a condition therefore that the maximum length of time that a teacher may be on secondment is five years, following which they return to their teaching roles within their schools. In this way, their expertise and knowledge is not lost to the system.

These teacher secondment arrangements were disseminated extensively so the necessary planning could take place at all levels including education centres, support services, school boards of management and individual teacher.

Overall, secondment numbers available to my Department are limited and HR planning to meet business needs in terms of supporting national priorities is essential.

The support services, including PDST, have engaged in succession planning as a key strategy in ensuring continued support for teachers and school leaders in implementing national education policy priorities and CPD and which allows for continuity, quality planning and management.

A limited alleviation of the application of the five year limit, where required, has been agreed to allow secondees to serve for a further limited period. It is Department policy to apply alleviations to meet the business needs of each of the services, for example, to provide for continuity in management, planning and leadership and retention of expertise. Decisions are taken following consultation with service management and other groups where appropriate. Circumstances will vary across services and my Department's overall priority is to ensure continuity of professional development support for teachers and schools within the available resources.

Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board

161. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of persons who have been excluded from the Caranua scheme on the grounds that their applications were too late, or on any other grounds. [21199/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Caranua, the Residential In-

stitutions Statutory Fund Board, commenced accepting applications in January 2014 and there is no closing date for receipt of applications. While it is envisaged that Caranua will be dissolved when the moneys at its disposal are expended, the precise timing cannot be predicted and accordingly it was deemed preferable to introduce amending primary legislation to dissolve the body in due course and not anticipate in advance how long it will have to do its work.

Eligibility for assistance from Caranua is confined to those who received awards from the Redress Board or equivalent Court awards or settlements. This approach was taken having regard to the maximum funds available of €110 million and a potential pool of some 15,000 applicants. I intend to consider the question of a review of the arrangements relating to eligibility later this year by which time a clearer picture should have emerged regarding the uptake of the funding available. I understand that as of 31 March 2015 Caranua had received 4,232 applications of which 4,041 were deemed eligible and 75 were deemed not to be eligible, leaving 116 applications to be considered.

Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board

162. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if progress has been made in relation to Caranua assisting survivors of residential abuse to access enhanced medical cards; or dentistry; or other assistance. [21200/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): There are no plans currently for the provision of Health (Amendment) Act cards to survivors who have accessed Caranua, the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board. In this regard I would point out that those applying to Caranua can continue to be assessed under the medical card scheme and any awards made by Caranua are disregarded in the income assessment.

Eligible survivors can apply to Caranua for approved services which include health and personal social services, mental health and counselling services, housing support services and education services.

School Staff

163. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will examine the case being made by a school (details supplied) in County Carlow to retain its current number of teachers, in view of the increased number of students expected over the next three years; if she will make an early and positive decision regarding the matter, as the local community is deeply concerned; the Government policy on such matters relative to the case being made to support rural communities; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21207/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The criteria used for the allocation of teachers to schools is published annually on the Department's 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 coming school year 2015/16 are set out in Circular 0005/2015 which is available on the website. An appeals process is also available to schools. Details of the appeals criteria are set out in the published staffing arrangements.

The school referred to by the Deputy submitted an appeal to the March, 2015 meeting of the Primary Staffing Appeals Board. Having considered the application in the context of the published grounds, the Board deemed the application ineligible. The school was notified ac-

cordingly. The Primary Staffing Appeals Board operates independently of the Department and its decision is final.

I recognise that small schools are an important part of the social fabric of rural communities and will continue to be so. It is for that reason that I recently announced that a voluntary protocol for amalgamation is being developed for the very smallest schools. The protocol is still under development. Under the protocol, it is envisaged that the Department will write to the patrons of all such schools that are located within an 8km distance of another school of similar patronage and language of instruction. The letter will invite them to reflect on the benefits that amalgamation opportunities might provide in order to create more sustainable school communities into the future. Engagement with the protocol will be entirely voluntary.

The Deputy will also be aware of the improvement in the staffing levels for small schools contained in my Department's Circular 0005/2015, which is available on my Department's website at www.education.gov.ie. These improvements particularly recognise the challenges faced by very small schools that are more than 8km from the next nearest school of the same type.

Student Grant Scheme Administration

164. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if there are circumstances by which a student who is in receipt of a grant and who on completing the current course will move onto a follow-on course, where the first year is the equivalent level as the course just finished, can qualify for a grant for that first year on the new course; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21219/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Under the terms of the student grant scheme, grant assistance is awarded to students who meet the prescribed conditions of funding, including those relating to nationality, residency, previous academic attainment and means.

To satisfy the terms and conditions in relation to progression, a student must be moving from year to year within a course, having successfully completed the previous year or be transferring from one course to another, where the award for the subsequent course is of a higher level than the previous course.

The Deputy will appreciate that, in the absence of all of the relevant details that would be contained in an individual's application form and supporting documentation, it is not possible to say whether or not a particular student would qualify for a grant.

The eligibility of an individual is a matter for SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) to determine upon receipt of the relevant application form and supporting documentation.

The online application process for 2015/16 is now open.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

165. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding home tuition in respect of a child (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21224/15]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): As the Deputy may be

aware home tuition is intended as interim provision only for children with a special educational need for whom a school placement is not available. Eligibility in this regard is determined in consultation with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

The NCSE has advised that a placement in an existing autism class is available for the child to whom he refers and therefore she is not eligible for home tuition. Her parents have been advised accordingly.

Fire Service Staff

166. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the reason retained firefighters are not eligible for a pension when they retire, despite paying tax on the payments they receive for their work. [21085/15]

167. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the reason retained firefighters have been forced to pay the pension levy, despite not having any work-related pension; and if the pension levy will be abolished for this category of workers forthwith. [21086/15]

168. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will cease the pension levy being applied to the salaries of retained fire fighters who are not eligible for a public service pension; if he will refund the deductions from their income since the pension levy was introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21125/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 166 to 168, inclusive, together.

In 2008, retained fire-fighters were given the option of joining the Local Government Superannuation Scheme (LGSS) and receive a pension and retirement lump sum based on their pensionable remuneration and length of service. Retained fire-fighters who opted not to join the scheme receive, on retirement, a gratuity of 1/8th of the annual retainer multiplied by the number of years of actual service (up to a maximum of four times the annual retainer). All retained fire-fighters appointed after 1 January 2013 must join the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009 states that any public servant who is a member of a public service pension scheme, is entitled to a benefit under such a scheme, or receives a payment in lieu of membership of such a scheme, is subject to a deduction from their remuneration. Additional pension benefits do not arise as a result of this deduction.

The payment of the retirement gratuity to retained firefighters who are not members of the LGSS is a payment in lieu of membership of a pension scheme and, as such, all retained fire-fighters, whether members of a public service pension scheme or not, are subject to the deduction outlined in the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009. Responsibility for this legislation rests with my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Services for People with Disabilities

169. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will support measures (details supplied) regarding planning and the

Disability Act 2005; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21064/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability reflects the need for an integrated, flexible and responsive approach and this is being pursued across a number of measures, including building regulations which deal with physical disability. From a planning perspective, Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, specifically requires planning authorities as part of the preparation of development plans to prepare a housing strategy which takes account of the existing need and likely future need for housing, with an appropriate mix of types and sizes to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households. The special requirements of elderly persons and people with a disability are specifically highlighted in this regard.

Individual planning decisions are taken in this context, balancing the various perspectives and factors involved, including the amenity of adjoining properties. Whether or not a proposed development is acceptable is an assessment which needs to be independent of individual circumstances, and which takes account of the level of residential amenity that it would be reasonable to protect in respect of adjacent properties, inclusive of the range of usual circumstances that those amenities support.

I am satisfied that existing policy and practice in relation to consideration of residential amenities is sufficient and that to consider medical circumstances could have unforeseen and disproportionate impacts in relation to balanced decision making on planning applications.

Planning Issues

170. **Deputy Derek Nolan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide an update on the review of the wind farm guidelines that his Department is undertaking; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21066/15]

176. **Deputy Helen McEntee** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the proposed revisions to the 2006 wind energy development guidelines will have to be taken into account by An Bord Pleanála in its decision making on wind farm projects that are already within the planning system when the revisions to the guidelines are published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21229/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 170 and 176 together.

In December 2013, my Department published proposed "draft" revisions to the noise, setbacks and shadow flicker aspects of the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines. These draft revisions proposed:

- The setting of a more stringent day and night noise limit of 40 decibels for future wind energy developments,

- A mandatory minimum setback of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the nearest dwelling for amenity considerations, and

- The complete elimination of shadow flicker between wind turbines and neighbouring dwellings.

A public consultation process was initiated on these proposed draft revisions to the Guide-

lines, which ran until February 21 2014. My Department received submissions from 7,500 organisations and members of the public during this public consultation process. It is intended that the revisions to the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines will be finalised as soon as possible. In this regard, account has to be taken of the extensive response to the public consultation in framing the final guidelines. Further work is also advancing to develop technical appendices to assist planning authorities with the practical application of the noise measurement aspects of the Wind Guidelines.

The revisions to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, when finalised, will be issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Planning authorities, and, where applicable, An Bord Pleanála must have regard to guidelines issued under Section 28 in the performance of their functions under the Planning Acts.

In the interim, the 2006 Guidelines will continue to apply to existing planning applications, including those currently with An Bord Pleanala.

Election Management System

171. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding voting in referendums; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21078/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): Only voters included in the register of electors as presidential electors may vote in referendums. A person is entitled to be registered as a presidential elector in a constituency if they have reached the age of 18 years and were a citizen of Ireland and ordinarily resident in that constituency on the qualifying date for the register.

Housing Assistance Payments Implementation

172. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will confirm that the housing assistance payment scheme is now being operated by Dublin City Council; if the scheme is open to all housing applicants in Dublin city; and if he will provide a copy of the statutory regulation provided to Dublin City Council regarding the implementation of scheme. [21134/15]

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. 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.

Following 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.

While HAP is not currently available for all classes of qualified household in the Dublin

City Council area, on 18 December 2014, 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. South Dublin County Council is the only Dublin Local Authority that currently operates HAP in respect of all other classes of qualified household in its area.

The Dublin Homeless HAP Pilot is provided for through the following two statutory instruments which are available on www.irishstatutebook.ie at the links provided:

- Housing Assistance Payment (Section 50) (No. 3) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 575 of 2014) http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0575.html and

- Housing Assistance Payment (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 576 of 2014) http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0576.html.

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. Based on the findings of that review, HAP commenced in Donegal County Council on 25 May 2015 and consideration is currently being given to the sequencing of a further cohort of local authorities to commence HAP on an incremental basis this year. There are now over 2,000 households in receipt of HAP across the local authority areas taking part in the statutory pilot scheme and these additional local authorities will assist in achieving the 2015 HAP delivery target as set out in the Strategy.

Local Authority Housing Eligibility

173. **Deputy Shane Ross** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if there is a national policy instructing council housing authorities to take redress compensation payments into account as income in assessing means for social housing applicants; if it is at the discretion of local council authorities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21161/15]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly): The Household Means Policy issued in March 2011 under Regulation 17 of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 defines income for the purposes of determining an applicant's compliance with the income eligibility criterion for social housing support and applies in all housing authorities. Under this criterion, the net income of an applicant household, as assessed in accordance with the Policy, cannot exceed the limits prescribed under the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. Net income for social housing assessment is defined as gross household income less income tax, PRSI, pension-related deductions within the meaning of Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009 and the universal social charge.

The Policy lists the sources of income that are assessable and non-assessable for determining a household's compliance with the income eligibility criterion. While compensation payments are not specifically provided for under the Policy, housing authorities have discretion to decide to disregard income that is once-off, temporary or short-term in nature and which is outside the regular pattern of a person's annual income.

My Department is currently reviewing the prescribed income limits and the Household Means Policy in the context of the review of social housing assessment procedures currently being undertaken as part of the broader social housing reform agenda outlined in the Social

Housing Strategy 2020. This review will include an examination of the sources of income to be taken into consideration for assessment purposes, including payments received as compensation awards.

Housing Estates

174. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government arising from replies to previous parliamentary questions and indications provided therein, the extent to which progress has taken place in negotiations between the various stakeholders at Waterways, Sallins, County Kildare, including the National Asset Management Agency, KPMG and Kildare County Council, with the objective of completing the development in accordance with planning permission; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21198/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The finalisation of any outstanding planning related matters affecting the development concerned are a matter for Kildare County Council and I have no function in such matters.

Private Residential Tenancies Board

175. **Deputy Seán Kyne** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on the length of time it is taking for the Private Residential Tenancies Board to issue determination orders; if he is aware that in some cases it takes nine months to issue such orders, which is a factor in the reduced numbers of properties available to rent in the private rental sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21202/15]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Paudie Coffey): The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 regulates the tenant-landlord relationship in the private rented residential sector. The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) was established under the Act to operate a national tenancy registration system and to facilitate the resolution of disputes between landlords and tenants in this sector.

As the PRTB replaces the Courts for the vast majority of landlord and tenant disputes, there are statutory time periods laid down in the Residential Tenancies Act to provide for due process.

The PRTB received 3,374 applications for Dispute Resolution in 2014; this is a 104% increase since 2008 when 1,650 cases were received. Some 80% of cases are processed or closed within 5 to 6 months. Only 7% of what are the most difficult cases are taking 9 to 10 months to process. There are a number of factors that may delay the processing of a case including where adjournment requests are made or where there are difficulties locating a party to the dispute.

Late 2013 also saw the introduction of a pilot telephone mediation service as an alternative means to address disputes. Processing times for mediation cases are typically 10 to 12 weeks.

Question No. 176 answered with Question No. 170.

Better Energy Homes Scheme

177. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural

Resources if he will introduce a boiler upgrade scheme for pensioners, without the additional heating upgrading requirements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21157/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) administers the Better Energy Programme on behalf of my Department.

I am advised by SEAI that the provision of appropriate heating controls is an integral part of any heating system upgrade and that such controls are essential to realising the energy efficiency features of efficient boilers. Accordingly, the supports available under the Better Energy Programme for boiler upgrades require that the fitting of heating controls be undertaken as part of the work to install more efficient boilers. SEAI also advocates that contractors only use heating controls which are appropriate to the end user and that users are provided with good instruction on their proper usage. I have no plans to suggest changes to these arrangements which I consider to be appropriate and best practice.

Alternative Energy Projects

178. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the extent to which adequate alternative energy sources continue to be provided to facilitate compliance with international and national renewable energy targets in respect of the coal, gas, oil, hydro and biomass that currently contribute to the generation of energy for the national grid; if this has fluctuated in the past five years; if targets are deemed to be realistic; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21180/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The 2009 EU Renewable Energy Directive set Ireland a legally binding target of meeting 16% of our energy requirements from renewable sources by 2020, to be achieved through 40% renewables in electricity, 12% in heat and 10% in transport. Provisional figures provided by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) indicate that at the end of 2014 some 6.6% of heat demand was met by renewable sources, while at the end of 2013 some 2.8% of transport demand was met by renewable sources. The SEAI figures also indicate that the total contribution from renewable generation to gross electricity consumption last year was 22.6% with some 69.6% (both provisional figures) of electricity generated from fossil fuels.

The table, provided by the SEAI, provides data for the past 5 years (including provisional figures for 2014) on the contributions of coal, gas, oil, hydro and biomass to gross electricity consumption.

Share of Electricity Generated by Fuel	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014P
Coal	14.3%	16.8%	19.8%	17.2%	14.3%
Oil	2.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
of which - Gas Oil	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
of which -Fuel Oil	1.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
of which -Refinery Gas	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
of which -LPG	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Natural Gas	61.3%	53.2%	49.4%	45.4%	45.8%
Renewables	12.9%	19.4%	18.9%	20.1%	22.6%
of which - Hydro	2.1%	2.5%	2.9%	2.1%	2.5%

Share of Electricity Generated by Fuel	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014P
of which - Wind	9.7%	15.7%	14.4%	16.3%	18.3%
of which - Biomass, Renewable Waste & Biogas	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%

Source: SEAI.

Energy Resources

179. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if hydro-electricity generation has been displaced by wind or other forms of renewable energy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21181/15]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Alex White): The generation of electricity from renewable sources is an important element of Ireland's transition to a lower carbon energy system. Hydro electricity makes a significant contribution to our renewable electricity. In April 2015 there was 2,576MW of renewable electricity connected to the Irish Grid, 238MW of which was from hydro. Onshore wind contributed 2256MW, and biomass contributed 82 MW.

Additionally, there is approximately 3760MW of renewable electricity generation with signed grid connection offers. This is predominantly wind generation.

It is also important to note that rules are in place to deal with "priority dispatch", i.e., when electricity generators produce more electricity than the grid can handle at a particular time. Those rules are implemented in the All Island Electricity Market by the Single Electricity Market Committee. While this is a matter in which I have no function, I would highlight that EU Regulation 2009/28/EU requires Member States to give priority dispatch to renewable generation on the electricity grid, including to hydro-electric generators, unless the generator concerned has elected to forego priority dispatch and to trade in the market. It is the case that hydro-electric generators who have elected to avail of priority dispatch may have their output reduced under certain circumstances. In such instances, these hydro generators are compensated in the Single Electricity Market.

Departmental Agencies Staff Recruitment

180. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding the use of employment agencies by Government funded organisations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21062/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): In relation to the vacancies concerned, sanction was received from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to fill these posts and the jobs are being advertised on the publicjobs.ie website.

In relation to the recruitment process, this is an operational matter for Fáilte Ireland and I have referred the question to Failte Ireland for reply and further information.

However, I am informed that the recruitment agency concerned is not engaged in active recruitment nor is it being paid a recruitment fee to carry out such a service. It is providing support to Fáilte Ireland in relation to the collation of applications and supporting documentation

as well as other logistical support.

Irish Airlines Superannuation Scheme

181. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding Irish Airlines (General Employees) Superannuation Scheme pensions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21063/15]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Pension schemes are closely regulated under Irish and European law and the Pensions Authority is the national statutory regulatory authority in Ireland. Responsibility for the management of the IASS pension fund rests with the Trustees of the Scheme and I have no function in this regard.

Departmental Schemes

182. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding or grant schemes that are available through her Department for renovations required to a cottage, which was originally constructed circa 1912; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [21222/15]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys): As the Deputy can appreciate, the scope for funding the conservation of heritage buildings is currently constrained by the significant reduction in the public finances. Funding for the protection of built heritage will continue to be provided by my Department in 2015 via a number of schemes, which will be either directly administered or delivered through local authorities and agencies.

Recently I announced the awarding of €624,000 in funding under the Structures at Risk Fund 2015, to enable conservation works to twenty-eight heritage structures throughout the country, in both private and public ownership, deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration and which are protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This Fund, which is being administered through the local authorities, encourages the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and helps to secure the preservation of protected structures, which might otherwise be lost. The Fund was open to two applications per local authority, of which one application may be in respect of a privately-owned building. The amount of funding available per project was subject to a minimum level of €15,000 and a maximum level of €60,000. Since 2011, approximately 130 structures have been safeguarded for the future as a result of the Structures at Risk Fund.

The remainder of my Department's built heritage capital budget for 2015 will be focused on the conservation and presentation of the State's heritage portfolio, which is managed by the Office of Public Works.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of the built heritage. The Council recently announced funding for 197 heritage projects in its 2015 Community-based Heritage Grants Scheme totalling €547,000. The scheme, which supports the continuing conservation and development of Irish heritage through local community based groups, is expected to generate total investment of more than €1 million. The Heritage Council can be contacted at www.heritagecouncil.ie.