

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 23, inclusive, answered orally.

Questions Nos. 24 to 33, inclusive, resubmitted.

Questions Nos. 34 to 40, inclusive, answered orally.

Hare Coursing Regulation

41. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will consider the introduction of microchipping to ensure that hares are not subjected to trafficking and continuous recoursing and to eliminate the illegal trapping of hares for sale to coursing clubs. [1678/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): My Department issued the Irish Coursing Club with licences in August 2018 on behalf of its affiliated clubs to capture and tag hares for the 2018/19 coursing season which included conditions relating to the reporting of coursing trials.

There are 29 conditions associated with the licences issued to the Irish Coursing Club which have been developed and refined over the years. One of the conditions requires that hares may not be coursed more than once on the same day. In addition, the licence specifically requires that hares that have been coursed can be readily identified to ensure that this condition is rigidly observed.

Any allegations made to my Department about illegal trading of hares will be investigated where possible. It would of course be useful if any such allegations were backed up by some evidence. If a coursing club were involved in illegal trading of hares – for example, by selling on hares that had already been coursed – this would represent a breach of the licensing conditions, with inevitable consequences in the context of renewal applications for any clubs found to be involved in any way in such activities. If there is tangible evidence of illegal trafficking or trapping of hares I would urge that it be made available to my Department. Indeed, I would abhor and condemn this activity unequivocally.

There may be some merit in considering the issue of microchipping of hares at coursing meetings and I have requesting officials of my Department to examine the possibility of, perhaps, introducing a pilot project at some coursing meetings during the next 2019/20 coursing season in consultation with the Irish Coursing Club. It is certainly a method using in the tracking, quantification and assessment of certain species in the wild and if it aids the welfare of the wild animal and can be feasibly, safely and cleanly done, then it merits that consideration, and

I want to thank the Deputy in that regard.

Officials of the NPWS of my Department have monitored 32 coursing events during the current 2018/19 season to date. During the previous 2017/18 season, 35 coursing events were monitored while during the 2016/17 season a total of 17 coursing events were monitored by my Department.

I am advised that Department officials have not encountered trafficking of hares in the current season so far. If such activity is detected, I have asked my officials to bring it to my immediate attention and I will consider the possibility of in-season sanction as well as looking to actions next season. In the meantime, I will also seek advice as to whether a possible offence arises under the Wildlife Acts in this regard.

Questions Nos. 42 to 45, inclusive, answered orally.

Commemorative Events

46. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for the upcoming centenary commemorations of the War of Independence, the Civil War, the 1st Dáil and partition; the estimated cost of these commemorations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1586/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): My priority is to ensure that the Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and related themes of the period 1919-1923 is appropriate, measured, respectful, inclusive and sensitive to the different perspectives that persist on the events of this period.

This approach will continue to be informed by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations including its most recent guidance, which I published on 8th January (<https://www.chg.gov.ie/minister-madigan-announces-publication-of-guidance-of-the-expert-advisory-group-on-decade-of-centenaries-1919-1923/>). The All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations also has a significant contribution to make and will be instrumental in promoting an authentic, consensus-based and inclusive approach.

I have allocated €1.1m to support the Decade of Centenaries Programme in 2019, an increase of €250k on 2018 and I will seek to continue to adequately and appropriately resource the programme in future years.

The centenary of many of the relevant events are concentrated in the period 2020-2022 but the events of 21st January 1919 were defining moments on our journey towards nationhood.

On Sunday, 20th January I will represent the Government at a community-led centenary commemoration of the Soloheadbeg Ambush, generally recognised as the first action in the War of Independence.

Significantly, on the day of the ambush Dáil Éireann was also convened for the first time. The Houses of the Oireachtas are leading plans to mark this centenary and have developed a diverse and inclusive public engagement programme – accessible at www.dail100.ie.

The Decade of Centenaries Programme 2019-2023 will be based on a four strand approach comprising:

- a State Ceremonial Strand which will comprise a limited number of symbolic acts of national commemoration focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation and on the com-

memoration of all of those who lost their lives during this period;

- an Historical Strand which will comprise a diverse range of activities designed to encourage authentic historical enquiry about this period and promote the use of primary archival sources;

- a Community Strand, which will involve a collaborative approach – similar to that adopted for the 1916 centenary commemorations – between the State, local authority network and community organisations, including in Northern Ireland where appropriate; and

- the Creative Imagination Strand, which will continue to encourage artistic and creative expression in remembrance of the significant historical events of the period from 1919 to 1923 and all of those who lost their lives.

I look forward to working with colleagues in the Oireachtas and communities across Ireland, in appropriately commemorating these important events.

Gaeltacht Policy

47. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the actions she will take following the publication of a report (details supplied). [1768/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne): At the outset I wish to welcome the publication of the report referred to by the Deputy. The report, which highlights some of the challenges and opportunities facing the Gaeltacht areas, adds to the significant regional and rural knowledge base Údarás na Gaeltachta possesses and is a welcome addition to our collective knowledge of the ongoing challenges facing peripheral regions.

The challenges of rural depopulation, disadvantaged areas, ageing population and broadband infrastructure are not unique to Gaeltacht areas and are being addressed on an ongoing basis by way of inter-departmental strategies such as the Action Plans for Jobs, the Action Plan for Rural Development, Harnessing our Ocean Wealth and the Rural Regeneration & Development Scheme.

Gaeltacht areas are unique, however, in being the natural domain of spoken Irish and it is a stated cross-party objective to maintain and support the development of these areas as embodied in the Government's 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

Údarás na Gaeltachta is responsible for supporting the economic, cultural and social development of the Gaeltacht and the organisation believes that it has the appropriate business model and strategy in place to address the various challenges outlined in the report.

In support of the Údarás, the Deputy may be aware that I recently announced that additional capital funding has been allocated to Údarás na Gaeltachta in 2019. In addition to this, a sum of €0.7m unspent by my Department in 2018 has been allocated to An tÚdarás' capital budget, thus providing An tÚdarás with a total capital budget of €9.7m to be spent in support of employment and enterprise in 2019. This represents a significant increase from a Revised Estimates total of €7m in 2018.

Taking into account the €2.8m in funding allocated recently to An tÚdarás under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, as well as the €2m in funding for Páirc na Mara in Cill Chiaráin allocated to An tÚdarás under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, Exchequer

funding of €14.5m is being made available to the organisation in 2019. This figure represents more than double the amount allocated to the organisation in the 2018 Revised Estimates.

I am confident, in light of all of this, that both my Department and Údarás na Gaeltachta are in a strengthened position and can now accelerate the implementation of both existing programmes, schemes and initiatives in addition to developing new measures as emerging opportunities arise.

Question No. 48 answered with Question No. 44.

Island Communities

49. Deputy Catherine Connolly asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of the consultation process in relation to the airstrips at Cleggan and Inishbofin; when the consultation process began; when it concluded; the number of submissions received; the decisions arising from the consultation process; the further steps in this regard; the publication date for the report in respect of the consultation process; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1759/19]

55. Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for the use of the airstrips built in Inishbofin and in Cluain Leacht an Abba, Cleggan, County Galway; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1544/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne): I propose to take Questions Nos. 49 and 55 together.

As the Deputies will be aware, in April 2017 my Department undertook a public consultation process whereby it sought submissions from interested parties in relation to the future use of airstrips and surrounding sites in the ownership of the Department on Inishbofin and in Cleggan, County Galway.

Adverts were placed in the media with a deadline set for receipt of submissions of 19 May 2017. I understand that 113 submissions were received from members of the public, community organisations and other public bodies, all of which were then reviewed by my Department.

The various submissions received have been uploaded to my Department's website and are available for public view. My Department is currently exploring two of the proposals, one for the site at Cleggan and one for the site on Inishbofin.

With regard to the site at Cleggan, my Department is in discussions with the Irish Coast Guard with a view to utilising part of the site for the provision of a Coast Guard Station.

In the case of the site on Inishbofin, my Department is in discussions with the HSE with a view to the use of part of the site to locate a Health Care Centre for the island, a facility for which the island development company has been campaigning for some time.

Any such developments will need to be agreed with the relevant regulatory bodies and planning bodies having regard to the original purpose for which the sites were developed.

It is also important to point out that any development undertaken at this time will not prejudice the potential future use of the airstrips for the provision of air services to Inishbofin.

It is not my intention to publish a formal report with regard to the consultation process.

Arts Funding

50. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the €2.13 million in funding through Culture Ireland for Irish arts globally in 2019; and the projects with involvement from County Clare. [1775/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): On Monday on 31 December, 2018 I announced approval of over €2.13m in funding by Culture Ireland for the promotion of Irish arts globally in 2019.

Of this amount a total of €1.16m is accounted for by over 160 projects enabling Irish artists and arts organisations to present their work covering architecture, circus, dance, film, literature, music, opera, theatre and the visual arts in more than 40 different countries and build on Ireland's strong global reputation for creativity.

Also included in the awards is a total of €975,000 to annual funding for the promotion of Irish literature, music and film through resource organisations and Ireland's cultural centres in Paris and New York who partner Culture Ireland to present ongoing programmes of Irish artists abroad.

The breakdown of the annual funding is as follows:

Body	Amount allocated
Centre Culturel Irlandais	€180,000
First Music Contact	€160,000
Irish Arts Center	€245,000
Irish Film Institute Intl.	€100,000
Literature Ireland	€290,000
Total	€975,000

Through Culture Ireland's most recent funding round we have supported the following three applications by artists and arts organisations based in county Clare for this year:

Salmon Poetry is being funded €2,500 to present Irish writers at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference & Bookfair, at the Portland Convention Center , USA in late March. Salmon Poetry has been taking part in AWP for 14 years and has been described as central to the promotion of Irish writers in the US by the AWP development.

Culture Ireland will also support new film installation work by County Clare visual artist Shelagh Honan at seven international exhibitions during 2019 in Slovenia, Lithuania, Spain, France and Croatia. Shelagh has been selected by Limerick School of Art and Design and Wom@rts for this project and is being supported by Culture Ireland with €3,500 in funding. The exhibition will be presented at each of location for a period of 2 months.

Culture Ireland will fund €4,000 for participation by Music of Oriel as a program headliner at the National Festival, Canberra, Australia, in April. The National Festival is a huge supporter of traditional Irish Music, having showcased many traditional artists in previous years including Sharon Shannon, Andy Irvine and many more.

National Parks and Wildlife Service

51. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she has contact with the owners of an estate (details supplied) in relation to a public access proposal for the estate with regard to walkers and mountaineers; her plans to acquire the estate in the national interest; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1583/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As outlined in my responses of 18th September 2018, (Parliamentary Question No. 823), 02 October 2018 (Parliamentary Question No. 69), 29th November 2018 (Dail Question No. 248) and 7th December 2018 (Parliamentary Question number 47411/18) there is no change to my Department's position. The sale of the property is a commercial matter for the vendor.

While the lands in question would represent a significant addition to the stock of publicly owned heritage properties and lands, my Department could, as stressed previously, only consider acquiring this property if the price fell to within a certain range, or in the context of a donation or bequest. This is known to the Vendors. Through the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), my Department manages a property portfolio in respect of national parks and reserves of approximately 87,000 hectares. These important biodiversity areas are located all around the country including a large area of County Wicklow, and the 5,000 hectares of lands in Glenasmole purchased in recent years. Given the limited resources available for capital investment within the National Parks and Nature Reserves, I recognise the need to focus on the core responsibilities relating to the management of the existing Parks and Reserves' lands.

Clearly, the Glenasmole purchase of 5,000 hectares sets a precedent, and although the circumstance pertaining are very dissimilar, it is certainly a market factor. As the Deputy will no doubt appreciate, it would not be appropriate of me to seek to negotiate indirectly or publicly. Suffice it to say that I am aware of the public-good value of this property, balanced across a range of demands across my Department.

With regard to the use of the area by hillwalkers, climbers and the public in general, as I have stated previously, I have no statutory function regarding the provision of access to private lands. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Estate has allowed a permissive access to its hugely popular walking route for many decades and I would hope that this would continue under any new ownership arrangements and my Department has conveyed this desire directly to the vendors and their agent.

As outlined in my earlier replies, my Department's relationship with the Guinness Estate here, and more generally, has been positive. It is one of mutual respect and good neighbours, and indeed often working together on shared issue of interest. These include herd management and husbandry, habitat oversight, film-making, signage, visitor accommodation, trail maintenance and designation management. Indeed, for the most part, the boundary between the private estate and the National Park is invisible to the visitor and tourist, with pre-imminence being given to the idyllic shared land, lake and mountainscape.

Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge

52. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén líon cruinnithe le 12 mhí anuas a bhí ag an gCoiste atá le maoirsiú a dhéanamh ar Phlean Gníomhaíochta 2018-2022 faoin Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge agus an bhfuil an Coiste tar éis aon ghníomh nó tionscnamh a aithint a chuideodh chun an plean a chur chun cinn. [1673/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy

Seán Kyne): Faoi mar a tugadh le fios agus Ceist Dála Uimh 689 á freagairt ar 16 Deireadh Fómhair 2018, is mian liom a chur in iúl don Teachta gur tionóladh an chéad chruinniú den Choiste Stiúrtha ar 1 Samhain 2018 i ndiaidh don Rialtas a bheannacht a thabhairt i mí Meithimh don Phlean Gníomhaíochta 2018 - 2022 don Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge.

Is é cúram an Choiste Stiúrtha, atá ag feidhmiú faoi chathaoirleacht mo Roinne, ná:

1. monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm an 180 beart atá leagtha amach sa phlean. a chuirfear i bhfeidhm i gcomhar le 60 páirtí leasamhar;

2. tacú le bearta agus tionscnaimh eile nach bhfuil san áireamh cheana féin sa phlean a aithint; agus,

3. treochtaí, constaicí nó údair inní a thagann chun cinn maidir leis an nGaeilge trí chéile a shaináithint ar leas foriomlán na Straitéise 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030.

Ós rud é go bhfuil freagracht thras-Rannach i gceist maidir le forfheidhmiú an Phlean, tá an Coiste Stiúrtha comhdhéanta d'ionadaithe ón Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, An Roinn Leanaí & Gnóthaí Óige, An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí & Athchóirithe, Údarás na Gaeltachta agus Foras na Gaeilge, chomh maith, ár ndóigh, le hionadaíocht ó mo Roinn féin.

Tá sé i gceist go dtiocfaidh an coiste le chéile ar bhonn rialta agus mar atá leagtha amach sa phlean, go bhfoilseofar tuairisc bhliantúil maidir le dul chun cinn, tar éis don tuairisc a bheith faoifa ag an Rialtas. Tá beartaithe, dá réir, go bhfoilseofar an chéad tuairisc bhliantúil i bhfómhar 2019. Tá i gceist go dtionólfar an chéad chruinniú eile den choiste an mhí seo chugainn agus tá na socruithe ina leith idir lámha cheana féin.

Ní miste a lua chomh maith go bhfuil sé i gceist go leanfar leis an gCoiste Comhairleach a ceapadh in 2014 mar thaca eile d'fhorfheidhmiú rathúil na Straitéise. Ina theannta sin, leanfaidh mo Roinn ag obair go dlúth, ar bhonn déthaobhach agus leanúnach, leis na Ranna agus na forais ábhartha Stáit ar mhaithe le dul chun cinn a chinntiú.

De thoradh seo ar fad, táim sásta go ndéanfar monatóireacht agus tuairisciú chuí ar chur i bhfeidhm an Phlean 5-Bliana.

Commemorative Events

53. **Deputy Colm Brophy** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will provide a summary of the guidance of the expert advisory group on the decade of centenaries 1919 to 1923 and the plans for commemorative events for the period. [1754/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As the Minister with responsibility for leading the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme, my priority is to ensure that the Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and related themes of the period from 1919 to 1923 is appropriate, measured, respectful, inclusive and sensitive to the different perspectives that persist on the events of this period.

At the Government's first cabinet meeting this year, I outlined my proposed overall approach to commemorations in 2019 and over the remainder of the Decade. This approach will continue to be informed by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations - specifically, the principles laid down in the Advisory Group's Second Statement, which was published in October 2017, and also the most recent specific guidance from this Group, which I published on 8th January. This guidance is available on my Department's

website (<https://www.chg.gov.ie/minister-madigan-announces-publication-of-guidance-of-the-expert-advisory-group-on-decade-of-centenaries-1919-1923/>). The advice will inform the Government's approach to the remembrance of specific historical events over the coming years, including the Struggle for Independence, the Civil War, the Foundation of the State and Partition. This latest guidance follows from last year's publication of the Group's Second Statement of Principles. These guiding principles have been widely commended for providing clarity and a broad template to support all involved in delivering authentic, citizen-focused and meaningful commemorations at national and local level over the remainder of the Decade.

The All Party Consultation Group also has a significant contribution to make and will be instrumental in promoting an authentic, consensus-based and inclusive approach. I look forward to continued positive engagement and consultation with both groups over the coming period.

My objective in developing the State Commemorative Programme for the years from 2019 – 2023 is to ensure that, in remembering this complex period in our history, which includes the Struggle for Independence, the Civil War, the Foundation of the State and Partition, we promote a deeper understanding of the significance of these events, which accepts that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to very different narratives and memories. It will also take account of sensitivities across communities in Northern Ireland and continue to recognise that very different perspectives persist on many of these events.

This Programme will be based on a four strand approach comprising:

A State Ceremonial Strand which will comprise a limited number of symbolic acts of national commemoration focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation and on the commemoration of all of those who lost their lives during this period.

A Historical Strand which will comprise a diverse range of activities designed to encourage authentic historical enquiry about this period and promote the use of primary archival sources. Initiatives will be developed in collaboration with State partners, National Cultural Institutions, institutions of learning and other stakeholders.

A Community Strand, which will involve a collaborative approach – similar to that adopted for the 1916 centenary commemorations – between the State, local authority network and community organisations, including in Northern Ireland where appropriate.

The Creative Imagination Strand, which will continue to encourage artistic and creative expression in remembrance of the significant historical events of the period from 1919 to 1923 and all of those who lost their lives.

Commemorative Events

54. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will be attending the commemoration of the Soloheadbeg ambush in January 2019. [54138/18]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Plans to mark the centenary of the Soloheadbeg Ambush on 21st January 2019 are well advanced. Tipperary County Council is supporting a community-led commemoration on Sunday, 20th January, as part of a broader commemorative programme across the county to mark the centenary of the Independence Struggle. My Department is collaborating with Tipperary County Council to support these plans, in accordance with the most recent guidance of the Expert Advisory Group, which states that:

‘Many of the events of this period have great local significance; it is therefore appropriate for local authorities and local community organisations to be encouraged to lead the commemorative process. Some events have been commemorated annually for decades and it would be inappropriate for the State to compete with these established ceremonies.

I can advise the Deputy that I will be representing the Government at this commemoration. I might add that I have approved a grant allocation of €10,000 to assist Tipperary County Council in supporting the local commemorative committee and wider community in developing their plans, in recognition of the significance of the Soloheadbeg Ambush as the generally accepted first action in the War of Independence. It is, I believe, very fitting that local authorities have a leading role in supporting inclusive, respectful and meaningful community-led commemorations such as this one which remember all of the lives lost, augmented as appropriate with support from the State, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Question No. 55 answered with Question No. 49.

Commemorative Events

56. **Deputy Aindrias Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding streams being made available for the decade of centenaries through the all-party committee on commemorations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1766/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As Chair of the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations (APCGC) I reconvened the group last October and our initial meeting was well attended with good engagement and a wide range of perspectives were offered on the themes anticipated over the second phase of the Decade of Centenaries. The group is composed of members of the Oireachtas and the SDLP and Alliance political parties in Northern Ireland.

The Group is consultative in nature - funding to underpin and support elements of the Decade of Centenaries Programme will be administered directly by my Department. The process by which funding is administered will be informed by my consultation with partners and relevant stakeholder bodies. I have allocated €1.1m to support the Decade of Centenaries Programme in 2019. This is €250k above the funding level in 2018 and I will seek to continue to adequately and appropriately resource the programme in future years.

I have recently published the Guidance Report of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Commemorations and this important and very valuable advice will help inform our next meeting of the All-Party Group.

I look forward to future meetings of both groups to explore and address appropriate commemoration of the events and milestones in the period covered by the next phase of the Decade of Centenaries. Both groups are due to meet shortly.

My Department will also continue to consult and collaborate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including the local authority network, in developing the State commemorative programme out to 2023.

Commemorative Events

57. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will report on the commemorations planned by her Department for 2019. [50452/18]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As the Minister with responsibility for leading the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme, my priority is to ensure that the Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and related themes of the period from 1919 to 1923 is appropriate, measured, respectful, inclusive and sensitive to the different perspectives that persist on the events of this period.

The programme will be based on a four strand approach comprising:

- A State Ceremonial Strand which will comprise a limited number of symbolic acts of national commemoration focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation and on the commemoration of all of those who lost their lives during this period.

- An Historical Strand which will comprise a diverse range of activities designed to encourage authentic historical enquiry about this period and promote the use of primary archival sources. Initiatives will be developed in collaboration with State partners, National Cultural Institutions, institutions of learning and other stakeholders.

- A Community Strand, which will involve a collaborative approach – similar to that adopted for the 1916 centenary commemorations – between the State, local authority network and community organisations, including in Northern Ireland where appropriate.

- The Creative Imagination Strand, which will continue to encourage artistic and creative expression in remembrance of the significant historical events of the period from 1919 to 1923 and all of those who lost their lives.

With regard to the State commemoration programme for 2019, I can advise that it commences with engagement by my Department on the marking of the centenary of the Soloheadbeg Ambush on 21st January 2019. Tipperary County Council is supporting a community-led commemoration on Sunday, 20th January, as part of a broader commemorative programme across the county to mark the centenary of the Independence Struggle. My Department is collaborating with Tipperary County Council to support these plans, in accordance with the most recent guidance of the Expert Advisory Group.

I have approved a grant allocation of €10,000 to assist Tipperary County Council in supporting the local commemorative committee and wider community in developing their plans, in recognition of the significance of the Soloheadbeg Ambush as the generally accepted first action in the War of Independence.

Significantly, on the day of the ambush, Dáil Éireann was also convened for the first time. The Houses of the Oireachtas are leading plans to mark this centenary and have developed a diverse and inclusive public engagement programme – accessible at www.dail100.ie.

Soláthar Aersheirbhísí

58. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Catherine Connolly** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta céard iad sonraí an chonartha maidir le hAersheirbhís Árann; cén dul chun cinn atá déanta ag an Roinn maidir le hAerfort na Mine a cheannach; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [1760/19]

76. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta maidir le hAerfort Chonamara a cheannach; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [1543/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Tógfaidh mé Ceisteanna Uimh. 58 and 76 le chéile.

Ag deireadh mí na Nollag 2018, aontaíodh conradh eatramhach idir mo Roinn agus Galway Aviation Services Ltd chun seirbhís aeir a chur ar fáil chuig na hOileáin Árann, don tréimhse ó 21 Nollaig 2018 go dtí 30 Meán Fómhair 2019. Faoin gconradh seo, leanfar leis an tseirbhís aeir go hÁrainn ar na coinníollacha a bhí leagtha amach san Iarratas ar Thairiscintí a foilsíodh. Is ionainn iad seo agus na coinníollacha a bhí san áireamh sa chonradh a bhí i bhfeidhm go dtí 20 Nollaig 2018.

Níl an dáta ar a bhfógrófar an comórtas tairisceana don chonradh fadtéarmach socraithe go fóill. Tá obair ar bun ag oifigigh mo Roinne chun na cáipéisí tairisceana cuí a ullmhú don chonradh seo a bheidh le tosú ar 1 Deireadh Fómhair 2019 agus déanfar iad seo a fhoilsiú in am trátha. Tá comhairleoirí fostaithe ag mo Roinn ag a bhfuil taithí ar sholáthair san earnáil aerthaistil. Cuirfear comhairle ar fail do mo Roinn agus an conradh á dhréachtú le cinntiú go ndéanfar seo de réir na rialacháin chuí agus go ndéanfar seirbhís a chur ar fáil a fhreastalaíonn ar riachtanais na n-oileánach.

Tá plé leanúnach ar bun idir mé féin, oifigigh mo Roinne agus ionadaithe ó na hoileáin le cinntiú go bhfuil siad ar an eolas faoi gach atá ag tarlú, agus ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghlacadh leo siúd agus leis na hionadaithe poiblí as ucht a n-ionchur sa phróiseas seo.

Tá mo Roinn agus Galway Aviation Services Ltd ag brú ar aghaidh leis an obair maidir leis an bpoitéinseal go gceannófaí Aerfort na Mine a scrúdú. Níl an obair seo ach ina tús ag an bpointe ama seo, áfach. Mar a rinne mé go dtí seo, tá i gceist agam cruinnithe rialta a thionól le hionadaithe na n-oileán agus leis na hionadaithe poiblí ar mhaithe len' iad a choinneáil ar an eolas faoin dul chun cinn.

Scéimeanna Teanga

59. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén tuairim atá aici faoin gcaoi a bhfuil ag éirí leis an gceist náisiúnta RTÉ a phlean teanga a chur i bhfeidhm agus a dhualgais i leith na teanga náisiúnta a chomhlíonadh. [1675/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne): Tháinig an chéad scéim teanga de chuid RTÉ faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 i bhfeidhm ar 01 Meán Fómhair 2015. Tá an dara scéim dá gcuid curtha faoi bhráid na Roinne agus táthar ag súil léi a bheith ceadaithe go luath. Tá an cúram maidir le monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na scéimeanna teanga ar Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.

Ina theannta sin, ceadaíodh deontas i leith réimse Gnímh Dhigiteacha RTÉ mar chuid de Phlean Gníomhaíochta Gaeilge RTÉ thar tréimhse 3 bliana, 2016-2018. Tá deontas de €210,000 íoctha ag mo Roinn i leith an togra seo agus tá mo Roinn sásta go bhfuil an méid a bhí beartaithe curtha i gcrích anois.

Waterways Ireland Funding

60. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if additional capital funding will be provided to Waterways Ireland in 2019 apart from the provision in the 2019 Estimates at present; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1764/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Waterways Ireland is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of 1,000 km of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes, including the Lower Bann Navigation, the Erne System, the Shannon-Erne Waterway, the Shannon Navigation, the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal and the Barrow Navigation.

Waterways Ireland's work programmes are critical to providing a safe and high quality recreational environment for the public, whilst also preserving the industrial and environmental heritage of the waterways for future generations. These challenges must be balanced with its objective of increasing recreational activity across all our waterways.

Despite the many challenges of reduced resources which have been felt right across all publicly funded bodies, Waterways Ireland has continued to ensure the inland waterways have been developed and maintained.

The Estimates for 2019 provide for an allocation of **€25,117,000** for Waterways Ireland, made up of **€20,737,000** in Current funding and **€4,380,000** in Capital funding. This is an overall increase of €1,000,000 on the original 2018 allocation.

Capital funding has been increased by **€800,000** from **€3,580,000** in 2018 to **€4,380,000** in 2019.

The funding of Waterways Ireland for 2019 is for investment in the management, maintenance and development of the inland waterways under its control.

Any requests for additional funding from Waterways Ireland in 2019 can only be considered on their merits, taking into account the Organisation's strategic business objectives for the waterways network and the Estimates and annual budgetary processes.

Commemorative Events

61. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding and support she has provided to date for the commemoration of the Soloheadbeg ambush in County Tipperary. [1542/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Plans to mark the centenary of the Soloheadbeg Ambush on 21st January 2019 are well advanced. Tipperary County Council is supporting a community-led commemoration on Sunday, 20th January, as part of a broader commemorative programme across the county to mark the centenary of the Independence Struggle. My Department is collaborating with Tipperary County Council to support these plans, in accordance with the most recent guidance of the Expert Advisory Group, which states that:

'Many of the events of this period have great local significance; it is therefore appropriate for local authorities and local community organisations to be encouraged to lead the commemorative process. Some events have been commemorated annually for decades and it would be inappropriate for the State to compete with these established ceremonies.'

I have approved a grant allocation of €10,000 to assist Tipperary County Council in supporting the local commemorative committee and wider community in developing their plans, in recognition of the significance of the Soloheadbeg Ambush as the generally accepted first action in the War of Independence.

My Department is also assisting the local authority with its request for appropriate Defence Forces ceremonial participation at the commemoration. It may be noted that all such requests for Defence Forces participation over the coming years will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Department of Defence and relevant parties.

It is, I believe, very fitting that local authorities have a leading role in supporting inclusive, respectful and meaningful community-led commemorations such as this one which remember all of the lives lost, augmented as appropriate with support from the State, considered and agreed on a case-by-case basis.

City of Culture Initiative

62. **Deputy Catherine Connolly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the breakdown of sponsorship raised by Galway 2020 to date; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1762/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): It is my understanding that Galway 2020 commenced with the full rollout of the partnership programme from the beginning of this month. Sponsorship has commenced with the receipt of approximately €29,000.

The funding raised through the partnership programme will be in addition to other streams of funding to Galway 2020. This includes €15m from my Department which, together with existing commitments from Galway City and County Councils, amounts to €23m.

Film Industry

63. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will provide a progress report on film industry stakeholder forum; the stakeholders the appointed chairperson of the forum has engaged with in advance of convening the forum since their appointment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1772/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): A Report by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on the *Development and Working Conditions in the Irish Film Industry* was published in July 2018.

One of the Report's recommendations is for Screen Ireland to constitute a Film Forum, with an independent Chair, in order to allow all stakeholders within the sector to meet and work together to develop mutually beneficial solutions for the industry. I have met with Screen Ireland on arrangements to hold an Industry Forum that can focus on issues around employment and dignity at work.

Stakeholder disputes have emerged which have impeded progress. Screen Ireland has been endeavouring to organise the Forum and had drawn up a list of all stakeholders to invite to the Forum. These include representatives of workers in the industry which include

- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- SIPTU
- Irish Film Workers Association (IFWA)

- GMBh Trade Union
- Screen Guilds of Ireland

The emergence of disputes between stakeholders have, however, impeded progress on the Forum. I understand that following the transmission of an RTÉ Prime Time programme on the film industry, ICTU and SIPTU stated that they would not attend a Forum to which the IFWA is invited, and that the Screen Guilds of Ireland gave a similar response. Based on the ICTU position, Screen Producers Ireland also indicated that it would not attend.

My Department continues to work with the Audiovisual High Level Steering Group to address issues in the audiovisual industry, and to support the industry and to the people who work in it.

Meanwhile, the Deputy will be aware that the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 was enacted in December and will introduce important new protections - particularly for those workers in sectors where employment terms are perceived to be becoming more precarious.

Departmental Projects

64. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to extend the creative schools pilot project; and the number of DEIS schools that are part of the project. [1677/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The Creative Schools pilot project is one of the flagship projects of Creative Youth - a plan to enable the creative potential for every child and young person, which was launched last December 2017. This Plan seeks to ensure that every child in Ireland has practical access to tuition, experience and participation in music, drama, art and coding by 2022. This Plan is being led by my Department, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Arts Council, all working in partnership.

The Creative Schools pilot project for 150 schools was launched in 2017 and is now up and running reaching over 38,000 children and young people. Approximately 10% of all schools in the country applied for the pilot; 150 schools were chosen from 400 applications. Of the 150 schools participating, 110 are primary, 30 post primary, 7 special schools and 3 Youthreach centres. 38 DEIS schools were chosen for inclusion in the pilot (30 primary and 8 post-primary).

Each participating school will have access to Creative Associates who are essential in embedding inspirational and sustainable creative practices in teaching and learning. Creative Associates are a mixture of practising artists and teachers with an understanding of creativity and its potential to transform the lives of children and young people.

Participating schools, working with their Creative Associate, are completing the development of a school development plan for arts and creativity and implementing these plans. The Creative Associates will explore new links for schools with artists and with arts and cultural organisations, both locally and nationally, to help develop their plan. To assist this, each participating school will be awarded €2,000 for implementation of their plan.

The Creative Youth Plan is ambitious and ever developing. I hope that by 2022, it will have touched the lives of every child and young person in Ireland. Plans for Creative Schools in 2019 will be announced shortly.

Heritage Sites

65. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps she will take to promote the importance of heritage and burial grounds nationally, with particular reference to the encouragement of interest in local historical sites; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1757/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As Minister, I am the owner or guardian under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014 of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites, including historic graveyards. Presentation and maintenance of national monuments in State care is undertaken by the Office of Public Works (OPW). Local authorities are responsible for national monuments of which they are owners or guardians.

Under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, my Department has established and maintains the Record of Monuments and Places, which affords legal protection to all recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the State. Anyone proposing works to, at, or in the vicinity of a monument that is included in the Record of Monument and Places must give my Department two months prior notice before works can start.

The majority of historic graveyards are in the ownership of the local authorities. My Department's National Monuments Service has issued a guidance document "The Care and Conservation of Graveyards" to help guide the appropriate preservation of these important elements of our culture for the benefit of local communities and as places for visitors to come to.

My Department fully supports the appropriate conservation of Ireland's rich portfolio of heritage sites, both as important assets in their own right and to optimise their contribution to economic development and tourism promotion. It is in regular and ongoing contact with the Office of Public Works and Fáilte Ireland to agree and devise shared priorities and policy approaches with respect to the management of national monuments and their presentation to visitors.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides for the protection of architectural heritage. The Act gives primary responsibility to planning authorities to identify and protect the architectural heritage by including relevant structures on the Record of Protected Structures. Inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures places a duty of care on the owners and occupiers of protected structures and also gives planning authorities powers to deal with development proposals affecting them and to seek to safeguard their future.

I also have a role, as Minister, in terms of being a prescribed body under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015, whereby development proposals that may impact on our built heritage are referred by planning authorities to my Department so that recommendations can be made as appropriate to avoid or mitigate any such impacts.

Arts Council Funding

66. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to address employment, income and career precarity and insecurity in theatre, film and across the arts sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1774/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I am aware of the issues referred to in the question and I am determined to deliver additional sup-

ports to the arts and culture sector in line with Government commitments.

Primary support for the Arts is delivered through the Arts Council. Funding for the Arts Council has increased in recent years and now stands at €75 million in 2019, and increase of some €6.8m or 10% over 2018. The Creative Ireland Programme is also delivering additional resources to the sector, for example, through the Creative Youth Programme and the Culture and Creativity Strategies delivered by local authorities.

The Arts Council, which is independent in its funding decisions under the Arts Act 2003, operates within a published 10 year strategic framework entitled *Making Great Art Work*. This strategy prioritises support for artists throughout their careers, by the involvement of many agencies in cultural provision, by the impact of the arts on the creative economy, and by the depth and breadth of people's engagement with the arts.

For example the Arts Council now include as an assessment criterion, an organisation's policy on the remuneration of artists in an effort to ensure that organisations in receipt of Arts Council funding should offer fair and equitable remuneration to artists.

With regard to legal protections for workers across the arts sector, it is important to note that employees in every industry and sector are entitled to all existing legal protections.

As members will be aware legislation was introduced by my colleague, the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 should improve the insecurity and unpredictability of working hours for employees on insecure contracts and those working variable hours. Employment law in general should also have a role to play in terms of existing legal protections. There are also institutions for reporting abuse of employment legislation. I am satisfied that the industry works in general to a high standard.

Abbey Theatre

67. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on reduced employment and fees for actors and theatre staff due to the artistic model of a theatre (details supplied) of fewer in-house productions and increased co-productions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1758/19]

71. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the oversight undertaken to ensure that national theatre provides quality employment opportunities for Irish based artists; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1710/19]

81. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to address perceived widespread income, employment and career insecurity for arts workers in theatre and film and elsewhere in the arts and cultural sector particularly in view of the recent letter by theatre practitioners regarding a theatre (details supplied) and ongoing disputes in relation to similar issues in the film industry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1770/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 67, 71 and 81 together.

The Abbey Theatre and all theatre practitioners are a central part of our national culture and I take their concerns very seriously. While the correspondence I received last week from theatre practitioners raises concerns about the changing artistic model at the Abbey Theatre, I understand that more positive outcomes arising from these changes have also been recognised.

I acknowledge the necessity for the Abbey Theatre, as with all theatres, to have a level of artistic freedom in terms of its programming, while also recognising the necessity for a strong working relationship with theatre practitioners. This is vital for the continued success of theatre in this country. I have written to both the theatre practitioners and the Abbey theatre on the issues raised last week.

The Arts Council had been engaging with the Abbey Theatre in recent months in relation to the quality of employment opportunities and remuneration rates that it provides for Irish based artists. This is the role of the Arts Council as the main funder of the Abbey Theatre and indeed other State supported theatres and arts organisations. I am reassured by the fact the Arts Council were already aware of and in discussions about this issue with the Abbey Theatre.

I note also that in a recent statement, the Abbey Theatre made clear that it pays the actors it employs on terms and conditions agreed with Irish Equity, the actors' union. In presentation or in-association arrangements, the Abbey Theatre does not set the rate of pay which has been the prerogative of the producing companies. The Abbey Theatre has stated that this is to be reviewed as part of the dialogue with the theatre practitioners and I welcome that this review is to take place.

The Abbey has also confirmed that it will self-produce seven shows (one in partnership, led by the Abbey Theatre) on the Abbey stages in 2019. These productions will include five world premieres.

It is important to note that employees in every industry including those working in the Arts & Film sectors are entitled to all existing legal protections. In addition to existing legislation, the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection brought forward legislation under the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 to improve the security and predictability of working hours for employees on insecure contracts and those working variable hours. This legislation responds specifically to the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to address the problems caused by the increased casualisation of work and to strengthen the regulation of precarious work. The Bill was signed into law by the President of Ireland on the 12th December last.

I am pleased to have been able to deliver additional supports to this sector in line with Government commitments. In Budget 2019, funding for the arts and culture sector increased by €22.6m to almost €190m which represents an increase of 14% on 2018. This funding comprises of €148.2m in current expenditure and €41.7m in capital investment. This includes an increase to the Arts Council funding by almost €6.8m or 10% to a total of €75m made up of €6m in current expenditure, which is more than double the increase in 2018. The increased funding for the arts and cultural sector secured in Budget 2019 - in addition to the almost €1.2 billion in capital funding for culture, heritage and the Irish language in the ten-year National Development Plan published in 2018 - clearly shows that the Government is acting on the commitment to double funding for arts, culture and sport by 2025.

Waterways Ireland Funding

68. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the level of funding provided for Waterways Ireland in each of the years 2016 to 2018; the level of funding proposed for 2019, in particular for the maintenance and upgrade of waterways, canals and rivers in County Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1581/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Water-

ways Ireland is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of 1,000 km of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes, including the Lower Bann Navigation, the Erne System, the Shannon-erne Waterway, the Shannon Navigation, the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal and the Barrow Navigation. Other than the Royal and Grand Canals in the county it is not responsible for other waterways and rivers in Dublin.

Waterways Ireland's work programmes, including those canals within County Dublin, are critical to providing a safe and high quality recreational environment for the public, whilst also preserving the industrial and environmental heritage of the waterways for future generations

The level of Exchequer funding to Waterways Ireland from my Department for each of the years 2016 to 2018 is as follows:

Funding to Waterways Ireland - 2016 to 2018

	Current	Capital	Total
2016	€20,699,000	€5,868,000	€26,567,000
2017	€20,359,000	€5,446,000	€25,805,000
2018	€20,526,000	€5,180,000	€25,706,000

The Estimates for 2019 provide for an allocation of €25,117,000 for Waterways Ireland, made up of €20,737,000 in Current funding and €4,380,000 in Capital funding. This is an overall increase of €1,000,000 on the 2018 allocation.

Capital funding has been increased by €800,000 from €3,580,000 in 2018 to €4,380,000 in 2019

The level of funding allocated for the maintenance and upgrade of waterways, canals and rivers in County Dublin in each of the years 2016 to 2018 and proposed for 2019 is shown in the following table:

	2016	2017	2018	2019 Forecast*
	€	€	€	€
Waterways Ireland	904,696	1,231,490	1,158,136	3,153,665

Commemorative Events

69. **Deputy Aindrias Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will report on the most recent meeting of the all-party committee on commemorations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1767/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As Chair of the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations I reconvened the group last October and our initial meeting was well attended with good engagement and a wide range of perspectives on the themes anticipated over the second phase of the Decade of Centenaries. The group is composed of members of the Oireachtas and political parties in Northern Ireland.

I have recently published the Guidance Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations and this important and very valuable advice will help inform discussions at the next meeting of the All-Party Group which I intend to schedule shortly.

I look forward to future meetings of the group to explore and address appropriate com-

memoration of the events and milestones in the period covered by the next phase of the Decade of Centenaries.

Commemorative Events

70. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for War of Independence and Civil War commemorations in County Wexford; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1546/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As we approach the most challenging and sensitive phase of the Decade of Centenaries, the Government will continue to be advised and supported in its commemoration plans by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, and consultation with the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations.

One of the cornerstones of the State's approach to commemorations over the coming years will be to continue to further reconciliation on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain.

I am committed to ensuring that the State's approach to remembering this very complex period in our history, and all of those who lost their lives during those years, will be based on the respectful, sensitive, appropriate and authentic approach that has become the hallmark of the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme.

I expect that local authorities will continue to have a key role in supporting engagement and facilitation in local communities and in developing appropriate commemorative initiatives as part of the Decade of Centenaries. This is particularly important, given the significance of and the need to be sensitive to the local historical context. It is also in line with the principles expressed by the Expert Advisory Group in their Second Statement.

I approved a funding allocation of €5,000 for each local authority in 2018 under the Decade of Centenaries programme. This funding was provided to support local authorities in responding to the themes of the State commemorative programme for 2018; and in developing inclusive, appropriate and citizen focused initiatives, to encourage people of all ages to explore significant aspects of the political, historical, social and cultural context of that period. Funding allocations for local authorities including Wexford County Council in 2019 are currently under consideration and I expect to make an announcement in this regard shortly.

Question No. 71 answered with Question No. 67.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme Funding

72. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the support funding which will be provided for built and heritage programmes in County Dublin and nationally in 2019. [1585/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): My Department provides financial support for the protection of heritage buildings and historic structures through a number of schemes which are generally administered by local authorities.

In November 2018, I announced €4.3 million in funding for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) 2019. The BHIS is a scheme for the

repair and conservation of structures on the local authority Record of Protected Structures. It is designed to leverage private capital for investment in small scale conservation projects across the country and to support the employment of skilled conservation professionals.

The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) (formerly the Structures at Risk Fund) is for conservation and enhancement to heritage structures, in both private and public ownership, for the benefit of communities and the public.

Both schemes are open for applications until 31 January 2019. Full details are available on my Department's website and on each local authority's website.

I approved a further €1m in funding nationally for the Historic Towns Initiative 2019, which is a joint initiative of my Department and the Heritage Council.

My Department is also providing funding to the OPW in 2019 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. As in previous years, in cooperation with its Office of Public Works and local authority partners, my Department's National Monuments Service will also make available such funding as may be required over the course of 2019 in relation to the discharge of my functions as Minister under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2014 to support rescue excavations and post excavation research at archaeological sites where there is an urgent risk to such being irreparably lost or damaged.

My Department also provides for the maintenance, development, management and operation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). This funding includes running costs of the six National Parks and 80 statutory Nature Reserves, development and improvement works for visitor facilities and other minor capital projects. It also includes funding for conservation-related research and surveys and compensatory measures for landowners' costs and losses resulting from restrictions in managing their land in areas designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

In addition to these funding streams there are provisions for supporting small scale conservation and community education and awareness projects in areas affected by the cessation of domestic turf cutting on designated raised bogs, the operational costs of the Peatlands Council and also for the scanning costs of applications referred to the Minister in her role as a statutory consultee under the Planning Acts and from other consent authorities.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of our heritage. It is primarily a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports. Grant schemes for 2019 will be advertised by the Heritage Council on its website www.heritagecouncil.ie.

Cultural Policy

73. **Deputy Tom Neville** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the cultural ambassadors initiative; and the ambassador with connections to County Limerick. [1776/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): On Monday 7 January, 2019 I announced the appointment of five Cultural Ambassadors to assist in and enhance the promotion of Ireland in the global arena under the Government's Global Ireland 2025 initiative.

Master musician and founding member of The Gloaming, Martin Hayes, leading architects, Shelly McNamara and Yvonne Farrell of Grafton Architects, award winning actress Ruth Negga and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Paul Muldoon have all accepted the role of Cultural Ambassador for a period of three years.

The Cultural Ambassadors will serve for a period of three years. In their role they will endeavour to raise the public focus on arts and culture as a means of promoting Ireland globally, provide advice and input on strategic cultural initiatives and participate in key events and projects.

The first such event is a conference of cultural stakeholders being held on 24 January which will discuss and debate how best to advance Ireland's global visibility and strengthen global relationships. Further appointments of Cultural Ambassadors may be made over time in line with the Government's geographic and other priorities.

Among the five newly appointed Cultural Ambassadors is an award-winning actress, Ruth Negga, who is based in London at present but comes originally from County Limerick.

Ruth Negga is an exceptionally talented and versatile actress with a body of work that spans award-winning theatre productions, big screen historical dramas, independent films and innovative television series.

For her performances, Ruth's accolades include Academy Award, Golden Globe and Critics Choice Award nominations, Irish Film & Television Award and Irish Times Award for Best Actress.

An Foras Teanga

74. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Dara Calleary** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cé mhéad airgid atá curtha ar fáil i meastacháin 2019 don Fhoras Teanga, agus é briste síos idir Foras na Gaeilge agus Gníomhaireacht na hUltaise; an bhfuil sí sásta leis an maoiniú atá á chur ar fáil don dá ghníomhaireacht sin; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [1769/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne): Dírím aird an Teachta ar mo fhreagra ar Cheist Dála 684 den 20 Samhain 2018 agus ar Cheist Dála Uimhir 594 den 19 Nollaig 2018, a leagann amach na fíricí maidir le meastacháin 2019 don bhForas Teanga.

Is í an Chomhairle Aireachta Thuaidh Theas (CATT) a cheadaíonn na buiséid do na Forais Trasteorann uile, An Foras Teanga san áireamh. Mar gheall ar chúinsí polaitiúla i dTuaisceart Éireann, áfach, níorbh fhéidir cruinnithe CATT a eagrú ó lár 2016 agus, dá bhrí sin, níl na buiséid i leith 2017, 2018 agus 2019 ceadaithe go hoifigiúil go fóill. Idir an dá linn, tá sé aontaithe ag na Ranna Airgeadais sa dá dhlínse go bhfeidhmeodh na Forais Trasteorann uile sna blianta 2017, 2018 agus 2019 de réir na buiséid a cheadaigh an CATT ina leith don bhliain 2016.

Ar an mbonn sin, i 2019 íocfaidh mo Roinn €11,087,183 (75% den ollbhuiséad CATT) d'Fhoras na Gaeilge agus £585,733 (c.€650,815 - 25% den ollbhuiséad CATT) do Gníomhaireacht na hUltaise. Anuas air sin, cuirfidh mo Roinn maoiniú breise ar fáil d'Fhoras na Gaeilge i ndáil le nithe imfhálaithe mar a bhaineann le Clár na Leabhar Gaeilge (€1,061,165) agus Colmille (€118,519).

Heritage Promotion

75. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the current public consultation process for Heritage 2030; and the opportunities for residents of County Kildare to contribute to the process, including public events. [1689/19]

85. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the current public consultation process for Heritage 2030; the opportunities for residents of counties Carlow and Kilkenny to contribute to the process, including public events; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1688/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 75 and 85 together.

I refer the Deputies to my response to PQ 1720/19, answered on 16 January 2019, which explains the position.

Question No. 76 answered with Question No. 58.

Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla

77. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Catherine Connolly** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta céard é stádas Bhille na dTeangacha Oifigiúla; cén dáta a fhoilseofar an Bille; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [1761/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne): Mar chúlra, is iarracht í an Bille seo, trí na ceannteidil éagsúla, an timpeallacht a chruthú ina mbeidh ról níos lárnaí ag an teanga in obair an Stáit, go mbeidh an teanga níos feiceálaí agus go mbeidh fáil níos leithne ar sheirbhísí trí Ghaeilge.

Agus an Bille á thabhairt chun cinn, cuireadh tréimhse comhairliúcháin ar bun leis na bpáirtithe leasmhara. Leagadh na Ceannteidil faoi bhráid Chomhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus na hOileáin agus foilsíodh tuarascáil ag eascairt as an bpróiseas seo roimh samhraidh 2018. Tá an tuarascáil sin scrúdaithe anois ag mo Roinn i gcomhthéacs dréachtú an Bhille.

Beidh sé mar ollchuspóir sa Bille go mbeidh 20% de na daoine nua a earcaítear don tseirbhís phoiblí ina gcainteoirí Gaeilge, go mbeidh gach oifig phoiblí atá lonnaithe sa Ghaeltacht ag feidhmiú trí Ghaeilge agus go mbeidh comhlachtaí poiblí in ann freastal ar an éileamh ón bpobal ar sheirbhísí trí Ghaeilge. Is í an earcaíocht croí-lár na ceiste, agus táim dóchasach gur féidir tógáil, ar bhonn chéimíúil, ar líon na bhfostaithe le Gaeilge sa stachóras agus ag eascairt as sin, go mbeifear in ann feabhas a chur ar sholáthar seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge, mar is cóir.

Tá oifigigh mo Roinne ag obair faoi láthair i gcomhar le hOifig an Ard-Aighne chun Bille na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú) a dhréachtú.

National Monuments

78. **Deputy Bríd Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the progress made on ensuring the Moore Street sites of national cultural and historic significance are safeguarded; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1753/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): My Department's project to conserve the national monument buildings at Nos. 14 - 17 Moore Street and to open them to the public to honour the leaders of the 1916 Rising was suspended in early

2016 on foot of court proceedings. The aim of the works was to restore the buildings in a way that would have ensured that they reflected as closely as possible what they would have been like when they were occupied by the insurgents in 1916. Each of the buildings has extensive original features, including plasterwork, partitions, staircases, doors, floors, fittings and fixtures. Most significantly, they also contain physical evidence of the presence of the insurgents themselves in the form of the openings broken through from house to house during the final phase of the Rising. The intention was, and remains, to retain all of this original material. With the agreement of the courts, a programme of works was subsequently carried out to stabilise and weatherproof the buildings until the substantive restoration could be completed. This agreed programme was finished in 2017 and the monument buildings are now in the care of the Office of Public Works.

Working with The Moore Report - Securing History as its guide, the Moore Street Advisory Group is currently engaged in discussions with the new owners of the Dublin Central site about the implementation of these recommendations and the future of the site which surrounds the national monument. I was pleased to hear from the chair of the Advisory Group that the discussions are progressing very positively. I understand that the Advisory Group has been briefed in some detail by the architects for the new owners on how the previous plans for the wider site are being significantly modified in a way that is seen to be more sympathetic to the traditions and history of the area and that also brings the commemoration of the events of Easter 1916 much more to the fore.

The design changes that will follow in relation to aspects such as architectural heritage, urban regeneration, community benefit and social amenity will determine how the wider regeneration work interacts with the national monument buildings themselves and how both elements are appropriately and sensitively integrated. Until that discussion - in which I see the Moore Street Advisory Group having a significant role - is complete and an overall solution to the regeneration of the surrounding site is in place, it would not be possible to put a precise timeframe on the resumption of work on the national monument project. In the meantime, I understand that the Advisory Group itself has formed its own sub-committee that is specifically tasked with coming up with a vision for the buildings. The sub-committee is engaging with my Department, the national Museum of Ireland and other relevant bodies as part of this process. For its part, the government remains entirely committed to having the buildings conserved and open to the public and to having the related works started without delay once the wider discussions now in progress produce an appropriate framework to allow that to happen.

The State owned buildings continue to be monitored and maintained by the Office of Public Works. The buildings are now regularly visited and inspected by OPW and monitored fire and security systems are in place. My Department's National Monuments Service is also regularly briefed by OPW.

Abbey Theatre

79. **Deputy Catherine Connolly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she has met with the directors, management and-or the board of a theatre (details supplied) following her receipt of an open letter signed by more than 300 Irish theatre practitioners; the steps she is taking to address the concerns contained in the letter; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1763/19]

80. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on the recent controversy in a theatre (details supplied) following the recent letter signed by theatre practitioners regarding employment in the national theatre; her further

views on whether the controversy more generally reflects widespread employment and income insecurity among theatre makers and arts workers generally; the measures she plans to address these issues; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1773/19]

89. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she has received communications from actors, directors, designers, agents and playwrights in relation to the Abbey Theatre; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1584/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 79, 80 and 89 together.

On 7 January 2019, I received a letter signed by over 300 theatre practitioners. The letter raised the concerns of the practitioners about the direction taken by Abbey Theatre over the past two years. I would like to put on record the huge respect I have for the theatre practitioners who wrote to me and celebrate the extent and depth of the talent encompassed by the totality of the signatories.

While the correspondence from theatre practitioners raises concerns about the changing artistic model at the Abbey Theatre, I also understand that more positive outcomes arising from these changes have also been recognised.

I acknowledge the concerns raised by the practitioners while at the same time recognising the Abbey Theatre's need for artistic freedom to strike a balance in terms of its programming. I also recognise the necessity for a strong working relationship between theatres and theatre practitioners. This is vital for the continued success of theatre in this country. The Abbey Theatre and all theatre practitioners are a central part of our national culture and I take the concerns of the practitioners very seriously

I have been informed that the Abbey Theatre had already been aware of some of the concerns raised from the practitioners and they are actively working with stakeholder companies to address them. I am pleased to report that the Abbey is already making arrangements to meet with representatives of the signatories to discuss their concerns. In the meantime, I have written to both the theatre practitioners and the Abbey theatre on the issues raised last week.

It should also be noted that the Arts Council has been engaging with the Abbey Theatre in recent months about the employment opportunities and remuneration rates it provides for Irish based artists rates.

I welcome the commitment by all parties to dialogue and engagement and look forward to a mutually satisfactory outcome that will deliver the vision for a National Theatre at the heart of Irish society that is artist-led and audience-focused.

I am also pleased to be able to deliver additional supports to this sector in line with Government commitments. In Budget 2019, funding for the arts and culture sector increased by €22.6m to almost €190m which represents an increase of 14% on 2018. This funding comprises of €148.2m in current expenditure and €41.7m in capital investment. This includes an increase to the Arts Council funding by almost €6.8m or 10% to a total of €75m made up of €6m in current expenditure, which is more than double the increase in 2018.

Question No. 81 answered with Question No. 67.

Commemorative Events

82. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the actions which will be taken to ensure that commemorations in 2019 will be inclusive, sensitive and respectful commemorative events and activities for all communities. [1711/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As the Minister with responsibility for leading the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme, my priority is to ensure that the Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and related themes of the period from 1919 to 1923 is appropriate, measured, respectful, inclusive and sensitive to the different perspectives that persist on the events of this period.

At the Government's first cabinet meeting this year, I outlined my proposed overall approach to commemorations in 2019 and over the remainder of the Decade. This approach will continue to be informed by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations - specifically, the principles laid down in the Advisory Group's Second Statement, which was published in October 2017, and also the most recent specific guidance from this Group, which I published on 8th January. This guidance is available on my Department's website (<https://www.chg.gov.ie/minister-madigan-announces-publication-of-guidance-of-the-expert-advisory-group-on-decade-of-centenaries-1919-1923/>). The advice will inform the Government's approach to the remembrance of specific historical events over the coming years, including the Struggle for Independence, the Civil War, the Foundation of the State and Partition. This latest guidance follows from last year's publication of the Group's Second Statement of Principles. These guiding principles have been widely commended for providing clarity and a broad template to support all involved in delivering authentic, citizen-focused and meaningful commemorations at national and local level over the remainder of the Decade.

The All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations also has a significant contribution to make and will be instrumental in promoting an authentic, consensus-based and inclusive approach. I look forward to continued positive engagement and consultation with both groups over the coming period.

My objective in developing the State Commemorative Programme for the years from 2019 – 2023 is to ensure that, in remembering this complex period in our history, we promote a deeper understanding of the significance of these events, which accepts that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to very different narratives and memories. It will also take account of sensitivities across communities in Northern Ireland and continue to recognise that very different perspectives persist on many of these events.

This Programme will be based on a four strand approach comprising:

- A State Ceremonial Strand which will comprise a limited number of symbolic acts of national commemoration focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation and on the commemoration of all of those who lost their lives during this period.

- An Historical Strand which will comprise a diverse range of activities designed to encourage authentic historical enquiry about this period and promote the use of primary archival sources. Initiatives will be developed in collaboration with State partners, National Cultural Institutions, institutions of learning and other stakeholders.

- A Community Strand, which will involve a collaborative approach – similar to that adopted for the 1916 centenary commemorations – between the State, local authority network and community organisations, including in Northern Ireland where appropriate.

- The Creative Imagination Strand, which will continue to encourage artistic and creative

expression in remembrance of the significant historical events of the period from 1919 to 1923 and all of those who lost their lives.

Hare Coursing Regulation

83. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will report on the findings of officials of the National Parks and Wildlife Service attending coursing meetings in 2018; if there will be an increase in attendances of officials in 2019; and if she has commissioned a report to examine the sustainability of the Irish hare. [1693/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): My Department issued the Irish Coursing Club (ICC) with licences in August 2018 on behalf of its affiliated clubs to capture and tag hares for the 2018/19 coursing season.

I have already informed the Deputy in my response to Priority Question No. 5 today that where resources allow, local NPWS conservation rangers and other staff attend coursing meetings to conduct on-the-spot checks and to monitor compliance with the licences issued to the Irish Coursing Club and its affiliated clubs. For the current coursing season, my Department has concentrated its efforts on monitoring regular coursing meetings and to date has monitored some thirty two coursing events compared to a total of thirty five coursing events during the previous 2017/18 season. My Department’s monitoring reports for the 2017/18 season are all available on the NPWS website at www.npws.ie.

My Department will be appointing additional conservation rangers during 2019 and it would be my intention that more coursing meetings and trials would be monitored during the next coursing season.

My Department recently commissioned a new assessment of the status of hare’s population in Ireland. The survey work to inform this population assessment has already begun with the main survey work occurring over the 2018/19 winter period. The final report is due in mid-2019.

Hedge Cutting Season

84. **Deputy Bríd Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the measures she will take to monitor the impact on wildlife and biodiversity of the extension to the periods for removing and cutting of hedgerows in 2019 contained in the Heritage Act 2018; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1752/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The new provisions in relation to the cutting of hedgerows under Section 7 of the Heritage Act 2018 give the Minister power by Regulations to allow landowners or their agents to cut, in any hedge or ditch on the roadside during August, subject to such Regulations as the Minister may make. This provision will remain active for a pilot period of two years, with provision for continuation by resolution by each House of the Oireachtas for periods not to exceed 3 years

I am fully aware that these are a very important wildlife habitats, providing food, shelter, corridors of movement, nest and hibernation sites. It is my intention that the change set out in Section 7 of the Heritage Act would not interfere with this.

Ireland has some 300,000 kilometres of hedgerow mainly surrounding fields and properties

across the country and only roadside hedges are subject to the provisions of the Heritage Act - a fraction of the entirety of the total hedgerow resource in this country.

In recognition of the importance of hedgerows, the Regulations will require that any cutting in the month of August may only be of the current year's growth and should not involve the use of heavy flails.

My Department will commission a study during this 2-year period focussed primarily on determining if there is any impact arising from the extension of the cutting season on late-nesting species of birds and in particular, the yellowhammer.

My Department will be publishing draft Regulations for public consultation on these issues in due course.

Question No. 85 answered with Question No. 75.

Arts Council Funding

86. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if there is an expectation or obligation on recipients of funding from the Arts Council to promote and develop Irish based productions; and if a proportion of funding is allocated to theatres on this basis. [1676/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The Arts Council, which is independent in its funding decisions under Section 24 of the Arts Act 2003, operates within a published 10 year strategic framework entitled *Making Great Art Work*. This Plan describes the investment strategies, projects and programmes prioritises and sets out the achievements and milestones for this period. This strategy prioritises support for artists throughout their careers, by the involvement of many agencies in cultural provision, by the impact of the arts on the creative economy, and by the depth and breadth of people's engagement with the arts.

I am advised that recipients of Arts Council funding are based in Ireland or making or presenting work for Irish audiences. The majority of the work funded is developed in Ireland. Additionally, the Arts Council recognises the benefit to Irish audiences of experiencing work from overseas, and this is an integral part of the programmes of some festivals and venues. Funding to all organisations is based on the quality and impact of the individual programme or project proposed. No specific quotas or proportions are imposed.

Hare Coursing Regulation

87. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps she will take to prevent illegal trapping of hares in view of recent reports from An Garda Síochána of persons travelling to south County Kerry to illegally trap hares with an intention to selling the hares on for coursing events; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1679/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Any allegations made to my Department about illegal trapping of hares will be investigated where possible. If there is tangible evidence of such activities I would urge that it be made available to my Department.

My Department has no information as to the incidents in Co. Kerry mentioned by the Deputy.

Inland Waterways Development

88. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the specific capital funding that will be allocated towards maintenance and improvement works on the Erne and Shannon Waterway in 2019; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1765/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): In 2019, Waterways Ireland plans to complete 10.4km of Greenway enhancement towpath on the Shannon Erne waterway and to advance plans to secure funding to create a Greenway along this 64km route.

The specific capital funding that will be allocated towards maintenance and improvement works on the Shannon-Erne Waterway in 2019 by Waterways Ireland is €125,000.

Waterways Ireland is also partnered with local authorities in 3rd party projects in the amount of: €311,500.

These projects are as follows:

- Blueway Leitrim Village to Kilclare Trail Development - €162,000 (Waterways Ireland Contribution) - Partner: Leitrim County Council

- Blueway Ballyconnell to Bellaheady Bridge Trail Development - €124,500 (Waterways Ireland Contribution) - Partner Cavan County Council

- Aghalane to Lock 1 Corraquill Trail Extension Forward Planning Development - €25,000 (Waterways Ireland Contribution - Partner Cavan County Council.

Question No. 89 answered with Question No. 79.

Film Industry Development

90. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to ensure that future public funding for the film industry will be strictly conditional on the provision of quality employment and training, full compliance with employment legislation and participation in the film industry stakeholder forum proposed by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report on the film industry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1771/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Under the Creative Ireland Programme, the Government launched the Audiovisual Action Plan in June 2018. The Plan is a long-term, industry-wide strategy to enable *Ireland to become a global hub for the production of Film, TV drama and animation*. The Audiovisual Action Plan is underpinned by significant research and extensive consultation with stakeholders across the industry. Research was undertaken into the economic impact of the Audio-Visual Industry in Ireland and into training and skills development in the industry. The Action Plan places strong emphasis on actions relating to both training and the Section 481 tax relief.

At the same time, the Government established an Audiovisual High Level Steering Group to implement the Audiovisual Action Plan. The Steering Group provides for a whole-of-Government approach to the audiovisual industry with representatives from all Government Departments and State Agencies that have an involvement with the audiovisual industry.

As with every industry, the Irish film industry must observe employment law. In addition, everyone in the industry is entitled to a workplace which is dignified and free from bullying, harassment and intimidation of any kind. Screen Ireland is pro-active in this area and in recent years has provided a series of seminars on topics related to dignity in the workplace.

The Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2018 was enacted in December. This legislation introduces important new protections for workers in sectors where employment terms are perceived to be becoming more precarious.

In July 2018, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a Report on the *Development and Working Conditions in the Irish Film Industry*. One of its recommendations is the organisation, by Screen Ireland, of a Film Forum, with an independent Chair, which would allow all stakeholders within the sector to meet and work together to develop mutually beneficial solutions for the industry. I have met with Screen Ireland on arrangements to hold an Forum that can focus on issues around employment and dignity at work.

Screen Ireland has been endeavouring to organise the Forum and had drawn up a list of all stakeholders to invite to the Forum. These include representatives of workers in the industry including:-

- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- SIPTU
- Irish Film Workers Association (IFWA)
- GMBh Trade Union
- Screen Guilds of Ireland

The emergence of disputes between stakeholders have, however, impeded progress on the Forum. I understand that following the transmission of an RTÉ Prime Time programme on the film industry, ICTU and SIPTU stated that they would not attend a Forum to which the IFWA is invited, and that the Screen Guilds of Ireland have given a similar response. Based on the ICTU position, Screen Producers Ireland also indicated that it would not attend.

Screen Ireland has now written to the Chair of the Joint Oireachtas Committee requesting a meeting and also requesting that the Chair meet with ICTU, SIPTU, Screen Producers Ireland and the Screen Guilds of Ireland.

Meanwhile my Department continues to work with the Audiovisual High Level Steering Group to address issues in the audiovisual industry, and to support the industry and to the people who work in it.

Cultural Policy

91. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the cultural ambassadors initiative and the ambassadors from County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1655/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): On Monday 7 January, 2019 I announced the appointment of five Cultural Ambassadors to assist in and enhance the promotion of Ireland in the global arena under the Government's Global Ireland 2025 initiative.

Master musician and founding member of The Gloaming, Martin Hayes, leading architects, Shelly McNamara and Yvonne Farrell of Grafton Architects, awarding winning actress Ruth Negga and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Paul Muldoon have all accepted the role of Cultural Ambassador for a period of three years.

The Cultural Ambassadors will serve for a period of three years. In their role they will endeavour to raise the public focus on arts and culture as a means of promoting Ireland globally, provide advice and input on strategic cultural initiatives and participate in key events and projects.

The first such event is a conference of cultural stakeholders being held on 24 January which will discuss and debate how best to advance Ireland's global visibility and strengthen global relationships. Further appointments of Cultural Ambassadors may be made over time in line with the Government's geographic and other priorities.

Of the five newly appointed Cultural Ambassadors two are originally from county Clare, i.e. musician Martin Hayes and architect Shelley McNamara.

Steeped in fiddle playing from an early age, Martin Hayes' soulful interpretations of traditional Irish music are recognised the world over for their exquisite musicality and irresistible rhythm. He has toured and recorded with guitarist Dennis Cahill for over twenty years, and has collaborated with extraordinary musicians in the classical, folk and contemporary music worlds including performing with Brooklyn Rider and the Martin Hayes Quartet. Martin has contributed music, both original and traditional arrangements to modern dance, theatre, film and television and has performed on stage with Sting and Paul Simon and recently recorded with Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road Project.

Martin has been recognized as Musician of the Year (Gradam Ceol) from TG4, Person of the Year by the American Irish Historical Society in New York City and is recipient of the annual Spirit of Ireland award from the Irish Arts Center in New York. He founded The Gloaming with whom he tours internationally and with whom he shared the prestigious Meteor Prize in 2014 for their debut album.

Shelley McNamara, graduate of UCD, is a co-founder with Yvonne Farrell of Grafton Architects established in 1978. Both, McNamara and Farrell, are Fellows of the RIAI (*Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland*), and International Honorary Fellows of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and elected members of Aosdána, the eminent Irish Art organisation. Teachers at the School of Architecture at University College Dublin from 1976 to 2002 and appointed adjunct Professors in 2015, they have held the Kenzo Tange chair at GSD Harvard and the Louis Kahn chair at Yale University and have been visiting professors at EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland; Accademia d'Architettura, Mendrisio, Switzerland, where they were appointed as full professors in 2013. They have been external examiners at numerous universities including Cambridge University and The London Metropolitan School of Architecture. As well as public lectures in Dublin and abroad, including the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin and the Royal Academy in London, they have lectured widely in European and American Schools of Architecture.

Grafton Architects are winners of numerous international awards including the World Building of the Year Award 2008 for their building for the Università Luigi Bocconi in Milan,

which is widely acclaimed and recognised as a seminal contemporary work. They are currently working on the commission to design the new Marshall Building for the London School of Economics, United Kingdom; the new School of Economics for University Toulouse 1 Capitole; the new Town House Building at Kingston University London; and the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter Project – The New City Library in Dublin, Ireland.

Farrell and McNamara were the curators for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Film Industry

92. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will commission a report on work and conditions in the Irish film industry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1709/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Last year, my Department published a wide-ranging comprehensive report on the Irish audiovisual industry which had been commissioned by Department along with the Departments of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Communications, Climate Action and the Environment. The Economic Assessment of the Audio-Visual Industry in Ireland was carried out by international consultants Olsberg SPI with Nordicity.

At the same time I launched the Audio-visual Action Plan an industry-wide, long-term plan, under the Creative Ireland Programme. This Plan represents the Government's ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of Film, TV drama and animation. The Plan is underpinned by significant research and extensive consultation with stakeholders across the industry.

Research was undertaken into the economic impact of the Audio-Visual Industry in Ireland and into training and skills development in the industry. The Action Plan places strong emphasis on actions relating to both training and the Section 481 tax relief.

The Government has established an Audiovisual High Level Steering Group to implement the Audiovisual Action Plan. The Steering Group provides for a whole-of-Government approach to the audiovisual industry with representatives from all Government Departments and State Agencies that have an involvement with the audiovisual industry.

As with every industry, the Irish film industry must observe employment law. In addition, everyone in the industry is entitled to a workplace which is dignified and free from bullying, harassment and intimidation of any kind. Screen Ireland is pro-active in this area and in recent years has provided a series of seminars on topics related to dignity in the workplace.

The Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2018 was enacted in December. This legislation introduces important new protections for workers in sectors where employment terms are perceived to be becoming more precarious.

Meanwhile my Department continues to work with the Audiovisual High Level Steering Group to address issues in the audiovisual industry, and to support the industry and to the people who work in it. In light of these measures, I have, at present, no plans to commission such a report.

Commemorative Events

93. **Deputy Brendan Howlin** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the role of her Department in planning for State commemorations in 2019. [48203/18]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As the Minister with responsibility for leading the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme, my priority is to ensure that the Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and related themes of the period from 1919 to 1923 is appropriate, measured, respectful, inclusive and sensitive to the different perspectives that persist on the events of this period.

At the Government's first cabinet meeting this year, I outlined my proposed overall approach to commemorations in 2019 and over the remainder of the Decade. This approach will continue to be informed by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations - specifically, the principles laid down in the Advisory Group's Second Statement, which was published in October 2017, and also the most recent specific guidance from this Group, which I published on 8th January. The All Party Consultation Group also has a significant contribution to make. I look forward to continued positive engagement and consultation with both groups over the coming period.

Plans to mark the centenary of the Soloheadbeg Ambush on 21st January 2019 are well advanced. Tipperary County Council is supporting this community-led commemoration as part of a broader commemorative programme across the county to mark the centenary of the Independence Struggle. My Department is collaborating with Tipperary County Council to support these plans, in accordance with the most recent guidance of the Expert Advisory Group, which states that:

'Many of the events of this period have great local significance; it is therefore appropriate for local authorities and local community organisations to be encouraged to lead the commemorative process. Some events have been commemorated annually for decades and it would be inappropriate for the State to compete with these established ceremonies.'

21st January also marks the centenary of the convening of the First Dáil. It is, I believe, very fitting that the Houses of the Oireachtas has a leading role in developing an inclusive and appropriate programme to mark this significant centenary and I understand that plans are well advanced in this regard.

My objective in developing the State Commemorative Programme for the years from 2019 – 2023 is to ensure that, in remembering this complex period in our history, which includes the Struggle for Independence, the Civil War, the Foundation of the State and Partition, we promote a deeper understanding of the significance of these events, which accepts that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to very different narratives and memories. It will also take account of sensitivities across communities in Northern Ireland and continue to recognise that very different perspectives persist on many of these events.

This Programme will be based on a four strand approach comprising:

- A State Ceremonial Strand which will comprise a limited number of symbolic acts of national commemoration focusing on themes of remembrance and reconciliation and on the commemoration of all of those who lost their lives during this period.

- A Historical Strand which will comprise a diverse range of activities designed to encourage authentic historical enquiry about this period and promote the use of primary archival sources. Initiatives will be developed in collaboration with State partners, National Cultural Institutions, institutions of learning and other stakeholders.

- A Community Strand, which will involve a collaborative approach – similar to that adopted for the 1916 centenary commemorations – between the State, local authority network and community organisations, including in Northern Ireland where appropriate.

- The Creative Imagination Strand, which will continue to encourage artistic and creative expression in remembrance of the significant historical events of the period from 1919 to 1923 and all of those who lost their lives.

Departmental Staff Data

94. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Taoiseach the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1895/19]

95. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Taoiseach the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1912/19]

The Taoiseach: I propose to take Questions Nos. 94 and 95 together.

There are currently 212.7 whole time equivalent staff working in my Department. Given the nature of the work and size of the organisation, the Department has no staff in a professional or technical grade.

My Department does not collect or collate this personal data except where the Department funds training undertaken by staff or the cost of individual membership of relevant organisations for the purposes of their work. In the case of the Institute of Public Administration, the Department funded the cost of training in respect of thirty five staff and refund of academic fees for twelve staff in 2018.

My Department has a procurement policy in place to direct and guide staff when engaging in procurement and relevant staff have availed of specific training in this area. My Department uses OGP framework agreements for a wide range of goods and services such as foreign travel management services, suppliers of IT equipment, managed print services, provision of taxi service, cleaning services and supplies, waste management services, printing and supply of stationery.

Through the Public Appointments Service the Department continues to employ staff recruited both at graduate and non-graduate level, including staff recruited through the Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service (IGEES).

A comprehensive learning and development programme is implemented by my Department to ensure that staff at all levels have the required skills and knowledge to perform their individual roles and deliver the strategic objectives of the Department. Staff are also encouraged to avail of the Refund of Fees Scheme which facilitates them to undertake third level academic courses relevant to their roles.

Exports Data

96. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Taoiseach the volume of exports and value in euro

terms on a percentage basis in 2017 and 2018, by country, in tabular form. [1992/19]

The Taoiseach: The data requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table. It shows the top 15 trading partners covering approximately 87% of total trade.

Table A : Exports of Goods by country 2017-2018 and percentage share of total trade

Country	Value €000 2017	Tonnes 2017	Value €000 Jan - Nov 2018	Tonnes Jan - Nov 2018	% of total Value of Ex-ports 2017	% of total Value of Exports Jan - Nov 2018
United States	33,283,714	805,036	36,606,734	569,552	27.1	28.5
Great Britain	14,526,485	6,566,167	12,795,055	6,356,127	11.8	10.0
Belgium	13,333,077	456,970	16,298,484	512,268	10.9	12.7
Germany	10,099,239	436,847	9,579,401	386,034	8.2	7.5
Switzerland	6,211,952	15,781	5,973,094	14,461	5.1	4.6
Netherlands	5,929,216	1,331,931	7,066,630	1,098,799	4.8	5.5
France	5,347,906	1,234,588	4,952,845	1,051,580	4.4	3.9
China	4,378,334	315,720	4,077,541	306,958	3.6	3.2
Italy	2,620,268	244,112	3,403,467	218,226	2.1	2.6
Japan	2,617,183	56,609	3,188,714	59,933	2.1	2.5
Spain	2,596,387	228,108	2,371,403	277,174	2.1	1.8
Northern Ireland	1,928,901	3,267,659	1,859,393	2,802,478	1.6	1.4
Mexico	1,427,471	30,917	1,333,332	32,699	1.2	1.0
Poland	1,329,457	99,252	1,069,341	90,883	1.1	0.8
Canada	1,091,129	168,593	1,286,350	254,045	0.9	1.0
Rest of World	15,990,578	3,184,190	16,611,046	2,878,983	13.0	12.9

Imports Data

97. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Taoiseach the volume of imports and value in euro terms on a percentage basis in 2017 and 2018, by country, in tabular form. [1993/19]

The Taoiseach: The data requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table. It shows the top 15 trading partners covering approximately 87% of total trade.

Table A: Imports of Goods by country 2017-2018 and percentage share of total trade

Country	Value €000 2017	Tonnes 2017	Value €000 Jan – Nov 2018	Tonnes Jan – Nov 2018	% of total Value of Im-ports 2017	% of total Value of Imports Jan - Nov 2018
Great Britain	17,494,876	13,215,307	16,618,681	12,784,921	22.1	20.5
United States	16,368,174	1,936,712	14,038,687	2,167,627	20.6	17.3
France	10,500,158	1,256,203	10,019,805	1,223,016	13.2	12.3
Germany	6,890,232	1,193,527	9,971,185	1,497,723	8.7	12.3
China	4,424,415	516,734	4,757,700	484,690	5.6	5.9
Netherlands	2,433,798	1,368,083	2,729,060	1,504,148	3.1	3.4
Italy	1,563,998	256,859	1,476,081	286,080	2.0	1.8
Belgium	1,393,801	884,241	1,536,902	821,572	1.8	1.9

Country	Value €000 2017	Tonnes 2017	Value €000 Jan – Nov 2018	Tonnes Jan – Nov 2018	% of total Value of Imports 2017	% of total Value of Imports Jan - Nov 2018
Northern Ireland	1,373,538	3,505,002	1,354,694	3,376,248	1.7	1.7
Spain	1,317,179	1,328,870	1,354,625	1,517,453	1.7	1.7
Japan	1,209,204	56,467	1,353,166	56,883	1.5	1.7
Norway	1,131,078	2,165,364	928,546	1,410,985	1.4	1.1
Unknown (Non-EU)	1,059,862	8,320	2,604,297	6,382	1.3	3.2
South Korea	975,876	56,455	749,825	55,199	1.2	0.9
India	811,315	419,625	526,516	176,802	1.0	0.6
Rest of World	10,323,426	12,187,880	11,143,700	13,199,861	13.0	13.7

Exports Data

98. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Taoiseach the amount in euro in value of goods only exported from Irish based firms by country in 2017 and 2018; and the percentage share of such exports to each country in this period as a proportion of the total share in tabular form. [1994/19]

The Taoiseach: The data requested by the Deputy is not available. The trade of Irish owned enterprises cannot be separately identified in the data as the country of ownership of trading enterprises is not currently available.

Small and Medium Enterprises Data

99. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Taoiseach the number of SMEs that account for total exports of goods and services on a percentage basis by each country in 2017 and 2018; and the number of persons employed in such SMEs. [1995/19]

The Taoiseach: The exact data requested by the Deputy is not available. Table A shows the most recent year data is available for exports of goods by SMEs is 2016. There is no breakdown by country available.

Table A : Goods exports by enterprise size 2016

Enterprise size	Value €million	% of total	Number of enterprises	% of total
Micro	6,917	6	5,007	59
Small	7,507	6	2,143	25
Medium	22,020	19	750	9
SMEs	36,443	31	7,900	92
Large	79,526	67	263	3
Unknown	2,261	2	382	4
Total	118,230	100	8,545	100

Micro (0-9 employees), Small (10-49 employees), Medium (50-249 employees), Large (over 250 employees).

The official measure of Ireland's trade in services is produced by the Central Statistics Office. The value of services exports on a percentage basis with a breakdown by country of des-

tinuation is shown in the International Trade in Services release. The following table is from the latest edition which contains data for 2017. The volumes of services are not available.

Exports of Services by country in 2017

Country	€ million	% Share
Argentina	170	0.11
Australia	3,654	2.29
Austria	939	0.59
Bahamas	28	0.02
Bahrain	62	0.04
Barbados	91	0.06
Belgium	2,920	1.83
Bermuda	624	0.39
Brazil	1,262	0.79
Bulgaria	96	0.06
Canada	1,903	1.19
Cayman Islands	555	0.35
China	4,042	2.53
Colombia	150	0.09
Croatia	71	0.04
Curacao	2	0.00
Czech Republic	426	0.27
Denmark	1,663	1.04
Dominican Republic	0	0.00
Ecuador	17	0.01
Egypt	218	0.14
El Salvador	16	0.01
Estonia	39	0.02
Ethiopia	91	0.06
Finland	1,222	0.77
France	6,704	4.20
Germany	11,939	7.48
Gibraltar	71	0.04
Greece	367	0.23
Guernsey	90	0.06
Hong Kong	685	0.43
India	2,972	1.86
Indonesia	451	0.28
International Organisations	18	0.01
Isle of Man	80	0.05
Israel	995	0.62
Italy	6,469	4.05
Jamaica	1	0.00
Japan	5,743	3.60
Jersey	113	0.07
Jordan	98	0.06
Kazakhstan	119	0.07
Kenya	88	0.06
Kuwait	123	0.08

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Country	€ million	% Share
Latvia	71	0.04
Lebanon	48	0.03
Libya	20	0.01
Lithuania	104	0.07
Luxembourg	-1,553	-0.97
Macao	20	0.01
Malaysia	344	0.22
Malta	109	0.07
Marshall Islands	2	0.00
Mexico	682	0.43
Netherlands	4,983	3.12
New Zealand	203	0.13
Nigeria	120	0.08
Norway	2,069	1.30
Oman	87	0.05
Pakistan	109	0.07
Panama	61	0.04
Philippines	224	0.14
Poland	1,267	0.79
Portugal	790	0.49
Qatar	389	0.24
Romania	119	0.07
Russian Federation	1,594	1.00
Saudi Arabia	646	0.40
Singapore	3,724	2.33
Slovakia	110	0.07
Slovenia	70	0.04
South Africa	1,063	0.67
South Korea	846	0.53
Spain	3,693	2.31
Sri Lanka	34	0.02
Sweden	3,441	2.15
Switzerland	3,728	2.33
Taiwan, Province of China	679	0.43
Thailand	300	0.19
Trinidad and Tobago	16	0.01
Tunisia	21	0.01
Turkey	685	0.43
Ukraine	88	0.06
United Kingdom	26,266	16.45
United States	18,475	11.57
Uruguay	4	0.00
Venezuela	19	0.01
Viet Nam	164	0.10
Virgin Islands, British	89	0.06
Virgin Islands, US	4	0.00
Countries not included above *	26,287	16.46
World total	159,701	100.00

Source: International Trade in Services 2017

** Confidential & not geographically allocated*

Departmental Staff Data

100. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1885/19]

101. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1902/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 100 and 101 together.

My Department's Contract Branch undertakes a procurement function in respect of the Defence Forces for defensive equipment and materials, and in respect of major procurement projects. It has a staffing complement of nine. The Branch leads on the procurement of major equipment platforms and other associated goods and services for the Defence Forces, e.g. land, sea and air capabilities, including the delivery of required procurement outcomes. The Branch is also responsible for the procurement of certain services on behalf of other branches of the Department. Occasionally, other branches may be involved in smaller scale procurements, using frameworks provided by the OGP and with access to the advice of Contracts Branch.

There are 359 staff currently in my Department. Recruitment of civil servants for my Department is provided by the Public Appointments (PAS) from the various competitions which it organises. Such recruitment to the Department is almost exclusively for civil service grades which do not require specific professional qualifications. The Department cannot compel an individual to declare qualifications held and therefore, the information sought by the Deputy in this regard is not available.

My Department is committed to the continuing development of its employees and its Learning and Development section provides access to a range of learning opportunities.

Defence Forces Equipment

102. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the sections of the Defence Forces using 5G communication technology here and-or abroad; if his Department use 5G here; his plans to make use of 5G; if he has received advice or consultancy on the use of 5G by the Defence Forces; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2016/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe): The Defence Forces are not currently using 5G communication technology in Ireland or abroad. Likewise, the Department of Defence is not using 5G in Ireland. I have not received advice or consultancy on the use of 5G by the Defence Forces. As with all new communication technology, the Department and Defence Forces will continue to monitor its development and applications into the future.

Brexit Issues

103. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has spoken to Mr. Juncker or Mr. Barnier since the vote on the withdrawal treaty took place in London; and if so, the issues that were discussed. [1715/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Government regrets the outcome of last night's vote in the House of Commons on the Withdrawal Agreement.

In the very short period since the vote, I have not spoken to Mr Juncker or Mr Barnier.

As President Juncker stated after the vote, what we need from the UK is clarity on how it proposes to move forward. This was reiterated by Michel Barnier in his address to the European Parliament today. Prime Minister May is required to inform Parliament no later than Monday 21 January as to what steps she now proposes to take. The EU response will then need to be considered and we will of course prioritise discussions with partners and the EU institutions in that context.

Departmental Staff Data

104. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1889/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The total number of full time equivalent staff in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is 1,763 including local staff engaged in diplomatic and consular missions abroad.

My Department employs staff with a range of qualifications both generalist and specialist including *inter alia* development specialists, architects, project managers, accountants, economists, HR specialists, ICT specialists and legal advisers. The Public Appointments Service (PAS) is the central provider of recruitment services to this Department and to the wider Civil Service.

The Department does not track the precise distribution of qualifications from professional bodies held by staff at any one time. However the importance of professional qualifications, particularly in specialised areas is recognised. The Department currently employs six accountants at headquarters who are qualified with either CIMA, ICPA, ACCA or Chartered Accountants Ireland for example.

The Department continually monitors its workforce planning requirements to inform plans for recruitment of new officers, both generalist and specialist, in Ireland and abroad to deliver against high-level goals, including in the context of the "Global Ireland" ambitions. Staff who wish to continue their professional development are supported as a way of contributing to excellence, innovation and career development.

Departmental Staff Data

105. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1906/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Procurement Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for the management, coordination and implementation of procurement processes, and procures services, goods and works on behalf of the Department. It oversees the implementation of procurement rules and procedures in accordance with national and European procurement regulations. The section engages with Departmental budget holders to develop their tenders, advises on procurement routes to market and assists with appropriate pre-market engagement when required. It provides procurement logistic support and advice to the Evaluation Committee.

The Procurement Unit has five staff, three of whom have obtained a relevant professional qualification.

In addition, the Department employs six accountants, all of whom are professionally qualified.

Northern Ireland

106. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will report on the lack of a Northern Ireland Executive in view of the fact it is absent for two years; and if it will be reinstated in 2019. [1717/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The continuing absence of vital institutions of the Good Friday Agreement is a source of deep concern for the Government, as it is for the British Government. The Government will continue to do everything in its power, in accordance with its responsibilities as co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, to secure the effective operation of all of its institutions. Both Governments are determined to find a way beyond the current impasse to get the institutions operating again and I remain in regular contact with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how this can be pursued.

I visited Belfast on 9 and 10 January last and held discussions with the leaders of all of the Northern Ireland political parties. These were constructive engagements with each of the party leaders and I emphasised that the two-year absence of the devolved institutions must not continue. There are pressing decisions and issues across a range of areas which require a functioning Executive and Assembly. Each of the party leaders confirmed to me their wish to participate in the institutions again and provided views on key concerns and issues for their parties.

Following these latest consultations, I do not underestimate the way to go in achieving a resolution, but I continue to believe that this can be achieved and that there is an increasingly urgent need for talks to begin.

The devolved institutions of the Agreement are urgently needed so that the mandated Assembly and power-sharing Executive can represent the interests of all of the people of Northern Ireland and address issues of concern, including the challenges for Northern Ireland of the UK decision to exit the European Union. The North South Ministerial Council is also essential to oversee and develop North South cooperation on matters of mutual interest, as provided for under the Good Friday Agreement.

The legislation that was brought forward by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, which temporarily suspends the requirement to call an Assembly election, underlines the urgent requirement for all with responsibilities to do everything in their power to get them operating again. The Secretary of State and I are agreed that a new political process is needed. I will continue to work with the Secretary of State and remain in regular contact with the leaders of each of the political parties, to get the necessary political process commenced to secure an agreement for a functioning Executive and Assembly.

I also met in Belfast last week with a range of civil society representatives, including trade unions, business organisations and those working in the education, voluntary and community sectors. In all of these discussions, I heard a clear and unambiguous desire for the Assembly and Executive to operate again, as well as acute concern at the impact of the current impasse for Northern Ireland and for progress with the Peace Process founded on the Good Friday Agreement. There was also serious apprehension on how the challenges raised for Northern Ireland by the UK decision to exit the European Union will be addressed and broad support for the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated between the UK and the European Union, in particular in providing an absolute guarantee that a hard border will be avoided and that the Good Friday Agreement will be fully protected. I also received a clear message in these civil society engagements that the UK exit from the EU is a further and pressing reason for political leaders to work together through the power-sharing Executive and Assembly, to represent and protect Northern Ireland's unique interests and concerns.

I believe that these calls from across all sections of the community in Northern Ireland for the devolved institutions to operate have to be heeded.

Official Engagements

107. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his plans to meet formally with the US Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Nancy Pelosi, the next time he visits the United States of America; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2020/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Government engages frequently with the US Administration and US elected representatives, both Republican and Democrat, on all aspects of the US-Ireland relationship and on other issues of mutual concern.

I plan to travel to Washington, D.C. in early February for a series of political and other engagements. The Embassy of Ireland in Washington, D.C., will prepare my programme for that visit and I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with key Congressional and Administration representatives, as well as the US Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Nancy Pelosi, at that time. I last met Ms. Pelosi on a visit to Washington DC in October 2017.

The St. Patrick's Day period also provides an excellent opportunity for substantive engagement. I expect that the Taoiseach will travel to Washington, D.C. for the traditional engagements at the White House and at Capitol Hill, and in that context, will meet with representatives of the US Administration and other political leaders.

Credit Availability

108. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn

to financial institutions refusing to close loans of bankrupt persons until the house is sold thus extending the five year term for credit restoration before bankrupt persons may reapply for a mortgage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1833/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The framework governing the treatment of a person's liabilities and assets in the context of bankruptcy is provided for in the Bankruptcy Act 1988 as amended. In respect of a mortgage or other secured loan, the secured creditor has the option of either

- continuing to rely on the security and not claiming for the debt in bankruptcy or
- surrendering the security for the general benefit of creditors and claiming for the full amount of the debt along with other unsecured creditors or
- realising (or valuing) the security and claiming for the balance (if any) on the debt after deducting the amount realised (or valued) in bankruptcy.

In terms of new credit, there is no provision to prevent a person either during or post bankruptcy from applying for new credit (subject to, in respect of credit for more than €650, the person disclosing the bankruptcy) and it will be a matter for the lender, subject to consulting the central credit register and complying with all relevant Central Bank macro prudential and consumer protection requirements in relation to the provision of new credit to consumers, to make its own commercial decision on any such application for new credit.

Tax Exemptions

109. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 178 of 6 November 2018, his plans to alter this relief to include a measure (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1836/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As the Deputy will recall, the advice that I have received from Revenue is that the leasing of land to the spouse or civil partner of a brother or sister of the lessor or the leasing of land to the brother or sister of a spouse or civil partner of a lessor is regarded as a lease between connected persons and is not eligible for relief on the long-term leasing of farm land.

Section 664 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 provides relief from income tax for certain income from long-term leasing. The relief is available, subject to a maximum limit, where farm land is leased to a qualifying lessee for a period of five years or more. In order to qualify as a qualifying lessee for the purpose of the relief, the lessee must not be connected with the lessor, or with any of the lessors if there is more than one. The rules for establishing whether or not persons are connected are laid down by Section 10 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 which sets out that a lessor is not entitled to relief where the land is let to family members or family members of their spouse or civil partner.

The restriction on leases between connected persons is intended to prevent the misuse of the exemption. In addition, allowing relief in cases where the land was leased to connected persons could delay succession or lead to the fragmentation of holdings.

The connected party restriction has applied since the introduction of the relief over 30 years ago and I have no plans at present to alter the restriction. However, as with all such reliefs, my Department regularly reviews tax expenditure measures. Proposals for change are dealt with in the context of the annual Budget and Finance Bill process.

Ireland Strategic Investment Fund Investments

110. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the investments including lending made by the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund in the area of residential and non-residential property since its inception; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1852/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) that the following table sets out the ISIF's commitments, in the area of residential and non-residential property, as at 31 December 2018.

ISIF Investment	Cherrywood	Activate Capital	Man Aalto	Ardstone Residential Partners Fund	Urbeo Residential
Amount	€52m	€500m	€25m	€30m	€58m
Purpose	Site infrastructure funding to unlock 360 acres of development land at Cherrywood, South County Dublin, for residential and commercial development	Lending on commercial basis to residential development projects in Ireland	Real-estate debt fund that provides loan finance to residential developers and builders working on smaller-scale projects in large urban areas	Residential equity investment fund	Investment in build to rent residential platform. The platform will partner with builders, developers, and housing associations to deliver new rental housing projects, which shall include an element of supported tenancies

ISIF Investment	Avestus Capital Partners	DCU Student accommodation	WLR Cardinal	Kilkenny Regeneration	Quadrant	Finegrain
Amount	€25m	€55m	€75m	€2m	€50m	€25m
Purpose	Residential property fund which will invest in the Irish Private Rented Sector. The fund is managed by Avestus Capital Partners. ISIF's equity capital will be exclusively used to forward purchase newly developed rental properties and support the construction of new homes in Ireland	ISIF has leveraged DCU's existing student accommodation programme to help unlock funding for the overall Campus Development Programme	Provides development and refinance capital. Focus on multiple real estate sectors, providing both pure finance & development capital. Some residential housing elements	Providing seed investment for a major urban regeneration project in the heart of Kilkenny City	Focus on office development projects. Provides development and refinance capital. Some residential housing elements	Invests in offices, business parks, logistics facilities and industrial properties. Primarily in regional locations.

Therefore, ISIF's commitment to the investments above as at 31 December 2018 is €897

million. Co-investors have invested an additional €2.7 billion bringing the total capital investment in the area of residential and non-residential property to €3.6 billion.

VAT Rate Application

111. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to apply VAT on health supplements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1857/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The standard rate of VAT applies to food supplements. However, a Revenue concession allowed the zero rate to be applied to certain types of vitamins, minerals and fish oils. Because of complications in interpretation, the Revenue Commissioners have decided to remove this concession with effect from 1 March 2019 so that all food supplements will be charged at the standard VAT rate.

However, independent of Revenue's decisions on interpretation, I agreed during the recent Finance Bill to put in place a process that will conclude in the 2019 Tax Strategy Group Paper to examine some of the policy choices around the VAT treatment of food supplements.

It should be noted, however, that human oral medicines, including certain folic acid and other vitamin and mineral products, licenced by the Health Products Regulatory Association will continue to apply at the zero rate of VAT. Infant foods will also continue to be zero rated.

Departmental Staff Data

112. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1888/19]

113. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1905/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 112 and 113 together.

As the Deputy is aware, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) was established in 2013 with the goal of reducing costs and maximising value for money and operational efficiency through instituting central management of the public procurement function. Staff members of the Department of Finance work closely with the OGP staff on procurement matters. Further details regarding the function of the OGP can be found at www.ogp.gov.ie

I wish to advise the Deputy that staff from across all areas of the Department may have an element of procurement in their work. I can advise the Deputy that my Department undertakes public procurements in line with the guidelines issued by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and with EU public procurement requirements.

During 2018, 46 staff of the Department attended public procurement training, the purpose of which was to increase the overall level of knowledge of public procurement throughout the Department and ensure that staff were aware of associated compliance requirements. The Department proposed to run further procurement training for staff during Q1 of 2019.

The Deputy may also wish to note that the Department's Procurement Officer and staff in the procurement unit have undertaken accredited training in public procurement and continue to keep up to date with procurement guidelines and regulations.

The following table provides details where the staff in the Department of Finance achieved their procurement qualifications:

-	Staff Numbers (Headcount 31-12-2018)	Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	Institute of Public Administration	Chartered Accountants Ireland	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	Institute of Certified Public Accountants	Other Relevant-Professional Qualifications
Department of Finance	332	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

I wish to advise the Deputy that 27 staff hold professional qualifications that allow those staff members to use a professional title. 6 of those staff members hold professional qualifications from the organisations supplied and a further 21 hold other relevant professional qualifications.

The following table provides details on the staff who hold professional qualifications:

-	Staff Numbers (Headcount 31-12-2018)	Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	Institute of Public Administration	Chartered Accountants Ireland	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	Institute of Certified Public Accountants	Other Relevant-Professional Qualifications
Department of Finance	332	0	0	0	4	1	1	21

Staff are not obliged to inform the Department that they hold a professional title or are a member of a professional organisation unless membership is a requirement for their post. This list is compiled from staff who have voluntarily informed the Department that they hold relevant professional qualifications.

The following table is a list of the "other relevant professional qualifications" held by staff in the Department of Finance and their corresponding titles:

Name of Organisation	Titles Arising from their Professional Qualification
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	Chartered Accountant
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	CIPD Associate
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	CIPD Fellow
Institute of Banking	Certified Bank Director
Institute of Banking	Member of the Institute of Banking
Irish Bar (King's Inns)	Barrister
Irish Computer Society	Member of the Irish Computer Society
Irish Taxation Institute	Chartered Tax Advisor

Name of Organisation	Titles Arising from their Professional Qualification
Law Society of Ireland	Solicitor
New York Bar	Member of the New York Bar

The purpose of the Department’s Learning and Development Strategy 2010-2021 is to deliver the capabilities, competencies and skills required to support and sustain a high performing Department. The Department values and invests in the staff and the aim of the Department is to enable staff to perform to their highest level and fulfill their potential –“To be the best that we can be”. This strategy aims to invest in the staff of the Department for the continued improvement across all areas of the Department.

Banking Sector

114. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Finance the reason the stakeholders forum which was promised as part of the valuation of the public banking model has not met to date; if this is due to the failure to appoint the relevant consultant in order to ensure that same can now progress; the date the stakeholders forum will be operating from; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2013/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As the Deputy will be aware, my Department, jointly with the Department of Rural and Community Development, published a report on “Local Public Banking in Ireland”. As the Deputy knows, the Report concluded that there is not a compelling case for the State to establish a new local public banking system in Ireland, based on the German Sparkassen model as proposed, for a number of reasons. However, the Deputy may rest assured that the Government is committed to encouraging greater competition in the banking sector and supporting the local provision of banking and financial services.

The Government recognises a number of positive aspects underlying the concept of community banking generally, including access to finance for SMEs and supporting local communities and economies. Indeed, many of the objectives of community banking align with Government policy and supports that have already been put in place. Consequently, a commitment was included in the Report that my Department would arrange for an independent evaluation to be carried out in order to consider how the objectives of community banking and how the local provision of banking and financial services could be furthered in Ireland, through other delivery mechanisms.

The Government is also committed to continuing to engage with stakeholders and other interested parties on this issue of community banking and the local provision of banking and financial services by way of a stakeholder forum, which will be conducted by the external consultants carrying out the evaluation that I referred to.

In line with the relevant Office of Government Procurement processes, my Department held a mini-competition to tender for the necessary policy and economics services to appoint consultants to carry out the independent evaluation and run the stakeholder forum on community banking and the local provision of banking and financial services. The tender was open for a period of four weeks and closed on 18th December 2018.

The responses received are currently being evaluated by my Department in conjunction with the Office of Government Procurement. I anticipate that this evaluation process will be completed and the contract awarded in the coming weeks. Once the consultants have been appointed, the stakeholder forum will be convened as soon as possible in accordance with the

agreed project plan and timeline.

Flood Relief Schemes

115. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the reason a review of the environmental impact assessment in respect of the flood relief for Glanmire, County Cork, is being carried out; when this review will be completed; if this review is causing a direct impact on the sanctioning of the €8 million committed to the scheme; if there is a start date; if the process will be expedited (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1827/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Office of Public Works has submitted the proposal for the Glashaboy Flood relief scheme to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform for formal Confirmation as required under the Arterial Drainage Act. In all such cases, the Minister is required to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and, in this regard, will procure independent specialists to review the Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted by the OPW as part of the scheme documentation. This approval process can take up to six months and is the final element of the planning process for the Scheme, after which the procurement process will commence to bring the scheme to construction stage.

The scheme is being funded from within the allocated €1 billion for flood risk management over the period 2018 – 2027. Provision for the cost of the Scheme is included in the Office of Public Works' multi annual capital allocation.

Tender Process

116. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if a company (details supplied) in County Kerry will be permitted to tender for a contract due to be published on the State procurement website; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1831/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): A National Framework Agreement was set up by the Office of Government Procurement in 2017 for Cleaning Services. This framework was advertised through the e-Tenders portal. The framework was open to all companies to apply for and see appointment to same. The named company did not apply for this framework.

The requirement identified is being conducted through the OGP framework and only companies who were appointed to the framework are eligible to compete for same.

Departmental Staff Data

117. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1893/19]

118. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number pro-

professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1910/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 117 and 118 together.

The number of staff in my Department, excluding the Office of Government Procurement, was 466 on 31 December 2018. The number of staff in the Office of Government Procurement was 222 on 31 December 2018.

Details of 2018 memberships of the professional bodies listed in the PQ are included in the following table:

	Staff Numbers (Headcount at end Dec 2018)	Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Manage- ment	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	Institute of Public Administration
DPER	466	0	0	n/a
OGP	222	0	1	n/a
	Chartered Accoun- tants Ireland	Chartered Institute of Management Ac- countants	Institute of Certi- fied Public Accoun- tants	Other Relevant Pro- fessional Qualifica- tions
DPER	4	2	0	15
OGP	1	0	1	9

As part of my Department's People@PER Strategy 2017-2020, all staff in the Department are actively encouraged and supported to develop and enhance the professional skills, attitudes and behaviours that lead to organisational success, embedding a culture of employee engagement, high performance and inclusivity across the Department.

In terms of the Deputy's question on procurement, while any member of staff may be engaged in a procurement process, the Department's internal procurement policy provides that a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) shall have oversight of each procurement process. The Principal Officer with responsibility for the Business Unit budget that the proposed procurement is to be paid from is the SRO in the case of procurements valued over €25,000, unless this role is otherwise formally assigned. The relevant Assistant Principal Officer in the Business Unit is the SRO in respect of purchases below €25,000, unless this role is otherwise formally assigned.

Finally, the Deputy may wish to note that due to the nature its role, a significant number of staff in the Office of Government Procurement hold procurement qualifications and have substantial expertise and experience in public procurement.

Flood Relief Schemes Status

119. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform when works for Carndonagh, County Donegal, will commence under the flood relief measure scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1925/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): In May 2018 I launched 29 Flood Risk Management Plans for all the main river basins identifying a total of 118 flood relief projects to protect the main flood risk areas throughout the country. These Plans

and projects are a key part of the overall flood risk management strategy set out in the National Development Plan 2017 - 2028 involving total investment of almost €1 billion over the ten year time frame of that Plan. As it is not possible to implement all of the 118 projects at the one time, a total of 50 projects were prioritised for the initial tranche of investment and delivery based on the level of risk and number of properties to be protected.

15 flood relief projects have been identified for County Donegal as part of the 118 projects in total included in the Flood Risk Management Plans. Following consultation and discussions between the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Donegal County Council, 6 of the Donegal projects have been identified to be progressed in a first phase of implementation and the OPW and the Council will be working closely over the coming year to progress these projects. Plans are currently being put together to appoint consultants over the coming months for each of the projects to be advanced in the first phase.

The proposed project at Carndonagh, Co. Donegal at an estimated cost of €5m, which includes the provision of hard defences along with the provision of upstream storage areas, will provide flood protection to approximately 42 properties when completed. The proposed scheme is not in the first phase of projects to be progressed but the OPW and Donegal County Council will work closely to ensure that it will be commenced in the coming years and within the 10 year timeframe for the programme of investment.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

120. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if she will address the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1931/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): My Department's policy in relation to the provision of Assistive Technology support for pupils with Special Educational Needs is set out in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0010/2013. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from schools for special educational needs supports. SENOs also make recommendations to my Department where Assistive Technology is required.

In order to qualify for equipment under the Assistive Technology scheme, a child must have been diagnosed with a physical or communicative disability and must also have a recommendation in a professional assessment that the equipment is essential in order to allow the child to access the curriculum. It must also be clear that the existing I.T. equipment in the school is insufficient to meet the child's needs. As part of the application process, for which parental consent is required, schools set out how and in what manner the equipment which has been recommended in the professional report will be used in the classroom.

Although equipment is sanctioned under the Assistive Technology scheme for use by particular pupils, it is the property of the school, and the school's management authority will have responsibility for maintenance, repair, and insurance of the equipment. The management authority will ensure safe custody and handling of the equipment, while a designated teacher in the school should take responsibility for the management of the equipment, and for monitoring its effective use within the school.

Equipment purchased should normally be kept in the school. However, as stated in Circular 0010/2013, a pupil may, with the consent of the management authority, use the equipment at

home.

Should a parent be dissatisfied with the manner in which the Assistive Technology which has been provided to support their child's education are being applied in school, they should raise this matter directly with their school Principal or the Board of Management of the school.

Higher Education Institutions

121. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1847/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): Universities are autonomous institutions within the meaning of the Universities Act 1997, and as such the management of their academic affairs, including all issues in relation to admissions criteria, are matters for the individual institutions concerned. Neither I nor the Department has a function in relation to the admission of students.

Departmental Staff Data

122. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1886/19]

123. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1903/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): I propose to take Questions Nos. 122 and 123 together.

My Department currently has 1499 employees (1414 Full Time Equivalent) . This number includes all temporary staff, secondees and those on long term leave, career break etc.

In relation to the organisations named by the Deputy, the Department has corporate IPA membership, one corporate member of Chartered Accountants Ireland and two corporate members of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We have no corporate members of the Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management, Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, or the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

The department does not have a dedicated procurement unit, rather procurement is undertaken by staff within a relevant business unit and all such procurement must adhere to public procurement policy, regulation and best practice. A total of 27 of my Departments staff received procurement training in 2018.

School Enrolments

124. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if his attention has been drawn to a shortage of places at second level in a school (details supplied); if

his attention has been further drawn to the fact that many children are on a waiting list for this school who meet the criteria for admission under category 2, that is, living and attending primary school in catchment area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1918/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): I wish to advise the Deputy that in relation to enrolment generally, it is my Department's responsibility to ensure that schools in an area can, between them, cater for all pupils seeking school places in an area. Parents can choose which school to apply to and where the school has places available the pupil should be admitted. However, in schools where there are more applicants than places available, a selection process may be necessary. This selection process and the enrolment policy on which it is based must be non-discriminatory and must be applied fairly in respect of all applicants. However, this may result in some pupils not obtaining a place in the school of their first choice.

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal by a parent or guardian to the Secretary General of my Department, or in the case of an Educational Training Board (ETB) school to the ETB in the first instance, where a Board of Management of a school, or a person acting on behalf of the Board, refuses to enrol a student in a school, expels a student or suspends a student for 20 or more days in any school year. Further information on the Section 29 appeals process is available on the Department's website www.education.ie.

The Education Welfare Service of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) is the statutory agency which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school place for their child. The EWS can be contacted at 01-7718500.

As the Deputy will be aware the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, which was signed into law by the President on the 18th July 2018, is an important piece of legislation which will introduce a more parent-friendly, equitable and consistent approach to how school admissions policy operates for the almost 4,000 primary and post-primary schools in this country and a fair and balanced school admission process for all pupils.

With regard to the provision of additional accommodation to meet demographic demand nationally, the Government announced plans in April 2018 for the establishment of 42 new schools over the next four years (2019 to 2022), including a new 600 pupil post-primary school to be established in September 2019 to serve the Drogheda and Laytown school planning areas as a regional solution. This school will be under the patronage of Educate Together.

An initial phased start-up is envisaged for the new schools, which typically involves the use of interim accommodation. The school will be established in the southern environs of Drogheda. It is intended that the interim accommodation for the school will be established in the southern environs of Drogheda.

Schools Building Projects Status

125. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the refurbishment and provision of an extension for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1939/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): A building project for the school referred to by the Deputy is included in my Department's 6 year Construction Programme.

A project brief has been finalised and the project will be delivered via the ADAPT programme. The ADAPT programme uses a professional external Project Manager to coordinate

and drive the respective design teams on each project.

In this regard, a tender competition is in train to establish a Project Manager framework which is expected to be in place by early March. The formulation of tender documentation is underway and once the framework has been established a tender exercise will be carried out to appoint a Project Manager for this particular project.

All schools with projects on the ADAPT programme will be contacted shortly by my Department to provide an update on the status of their respective project. I wish to confirm to the Deputy that my Department is committed to providing the necessary accommodation for the school in question.

Schools Building Projects Status

126. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the start date for prefab replacement for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1940/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): A building project for the school referred to by the Deputy is included in my Department's 6 year Construction Programme.

A project brief has been finalised and the project will be delivered via the ADAPT programme. The ADAPT programme uses a professional external Project Manager to coordinate and drive the respective design teams on each project.

In this regard, a tender competition is in train to establish a Project Manager framework which is expected to be in place by early March. The formulation of tender documentation is underway and once the framework has been established a tender exercise will be carried out to appoint a Project Manager for this particular project.

All schools with projects on the ADAPT programme will be contacted shortly by my Department to provide an update on the status of their respective project. I wish to confirm to the Deputy that my Department is committed to providing the necessary accommodation for the school in question.

Schools Building Projects Status

127. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the progress for the delivery of a new school for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1941/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware, the building project for the school in question is included on my Department's capital programme.

Agreement in principal for the acquisition of a suitable site for the school has been reached and this is currently at conveyance stage.

The advancement of the conveyance process, subject to no issues arising, will in due course allow my Department to initiate the architectural planning process for the project.

Schools Building Projects Status

128. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding progress on a permanent school building project for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1942/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The major building project referred to by the Deputy is at an advanced stage of architectural planning, Stage 2(b) which includes the application for statutory approvals and the preparation of tender documents. All statutory approvals have been secured.

Following the appointment of a replacement consultant architect, the Design Team has reviewed the previous Stage 2(b) documentation and is currently upgrading the design to ensure that the new school building is a Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) in compliance with the 2017 amendment to Part L of the current Building Regulations.

Upon receipt and review of the Stage 2(b) submission, my Department will revert to the Board of Management regarding the progression of the project.

Schools Building Projects Status

129. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a new secondary school for the Swords area of County Dublin as announced in November 2015; if he has identified locations for the proposed school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1943/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware, the proposed location for the new post-primary school to which he refers is in Mooretown, Swords.

This school building project is on my Department's Rapid Design & Build Programme and the project is at tender stage.

Schools Building Projects Status

130. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a new secondary school for the Malahide and Portmarnock areas of County Dublin as announced in November 2015; if he has identified locations for these proposed schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1944/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware, a project to provide permanent accommodation for Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School is included on my Department's capital programme.

With the assistance of officials from Fingal County Council a suitable site at Drinan has been identified and planning permission has been granted for the construction of the new post primary school thereon. It is intended to deliver this school building project as part of my Department's "Rapid" - Design and Build programme.

Site Acquisitions

131. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a permanent site for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1945/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware, with the assistance of officials in Fingal County Council, agreement in principle has been reached with the landowner in respect of the acquisition of a site at Broomfield, Malahide to accommodate the school to which he refers.

The schedule of accommodation and brief in respect of the building project has been finalised and the project will now be progressed into Architectural Planning. The urgency attached to this project is recognised by my Department and in that context it is intended that it will be delivered as part of my Department's Design and Build Programme.

In the interim, work will continue to complete the transfer of the site into my Department's ownership.

Site Acquisitions

132. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a new site for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1946/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The lands at the school referred to by the Deputy were purchased by the St Laurence O'Toole Diocesan Trust, on behalf of the Board of Management for the school.

An initial site adjacent to the school, was procured from Fingal County Council and transferred ownership on 1st June 2017.

The second site was purchased from a private vendor and ownership transferred on 18th October 2017.

My Department received copies of the deeds of transfer in November 2017.

Schools Building Projects Status

133. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding progress on a new school building project for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1947/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware the building project for the school in question is included on my Department's capital programme.

A new school site is required to accommodate this project and officials in my Department have been in contact with the school patron and trustees in relation to the site acquisition. The Patron has indicated that is not in a position to acquire a site at this time and on that basis officials in my Department have recently contacted officials in Fingal County Council for assistance under the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the identification and acquisition of a suitable site.

My officials will continue to keep the Patron apprised of developments in the site acquisi-

tion process.

Site Acquisitions

134. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a new site for a school (details supplied) as announced in November 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1948/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware, a project to provide permanent accommodation for the school in question is included on my Department's Capital Programme.

With the assistance of officials in Fingal County Council under the Memorandum of Understanding the Department has agreement in principal on a preferred site option on which it is intended to deliver permanent accommodation for the school subject to no issues arising during the conveyance process.

Officials in my Department will endeavour to advance the acquisition as expeditiously as possible.

Schools Building Projects

135. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to ensure that the works to provide a new school building for a school (details supplied) in addition to the associated refurbishment works commence as a matter of urgent priority; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1949/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): A building project for the school referred to by the Deputy is included in my Department's 6 year Construction Programme.

A project brief has been finalised and the project will be delivered via the ADAPT programme. The ADAPT programme uses a professional external Project Manager to coordinate and drive the respective design teams on each project.

In this regard, a tender competition is in train to establish a Project Manager framework which is expected to be in place by early March. The formulation of tender documentation is underway and once the framework has been established a tender exercise will be carried out to appoint a Project Manager for this particular project.

All schools with projects on the ADAPT programme will be contacted shortly by my Department to provide an update on the status of their respective project. I wish to confirm to the Deputy that my Department is committed to providing a new school building for the school in question.

Schools Building Projects

136. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason no playing pitches will form part of the planned new education campus (details supplied) in County Cork; if funding will be provided for the purchase of land for the development of play-

ing pitches as part of this campus development; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1969/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The project to which the Deputy refers has been devolved for delivery to Cork Education and Training Board (CETB). I wish to advise the Deputy that the provision of pitches for training purposes is not part of the specification for primary schools, and at post-primary level the inclusion of same is subject to space availability and school accommodation requirements.

However, I understand that the available space on site with respect to the project referred to by the Deputy may allow for the inclusion of a pitch for training purposes. CETB is exploring this possibility in consultation with my Department and we may give consideration to providing a contribution towards the cost of delivering same subject to value for money and other relevant considerations.

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service Staff

137. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of officials in his Department that are involved with co-ordinating Ireland's response to immigration cases from non-EU countries that arrive illegally. [1718/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As part of the wider functions of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department, staff members from a variety of INIS areas may be required to deal with issues relating to migrants residing in the State without an immigration permission.

Irregular migration touches upon the work of several different areas of INIS, as this requires policy consideration as well as the management of individual cases. Such cases, as with all categories of INIS customers, are dealt with on a case-by-case basis depending on how the person has fallen out of permission, and whether they are seeking regularisation of their status.

A recent example of cooperation across INIS on irregular migration is the launch of a recent scheme that allows certain non-EEA nationals, who came to Ireland to study between January 2005 and December 2010 and have subsequently fallen out of immigration permission, to apply for permission to remain in the State. This scheme was devised by INIS Policy Unit, and it is being operationalised by Residence Division, with statistical and technological support from INIS Corporate Affairs Division.

In total, INIS staffing amounted to 821 full-time equivalent staff at the end of 2018. Due to the variety of INIS areas which may be involved in policy and individual cases relating to irregular migration, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the number of staff within INIS who may be involved in such work.

Departmental Staff Data

138. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1892/19]

139. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally

qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1909/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 138 and 139 together.

There are currently 2,463 members of staff in my Department and in the agencies funded from the Justice Vote. Information is not readily available on the number of staff across the sector whose roles may include the procurement of goods. A team of five staff work directly in the Department's Procurement Strategy Group, which provides a central advisory and support function on procurement matters to the Department itself. There is also ongoing interaction with the Office of Government Procurement in the management of procurement and with the Chief State Solicitors Office on legal questions where necessary.

A number of employees have undertaken courses at various levels in the area of Procurement, and these are supported, where appropriate, through the 'Learning and Development' Strategy of my Department and the associated 'Refund of Fees' Scheme. The Department does not currently maintain a central record of staff who are professionally qualified with the named organisations or who hold relevant professional qualifications.

Family Reunification

140. **Deputy Jackie Cahill** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the rights given to a non-EEA citizen and their dependent children under 16 years of age in relation to visiting and or living here when an Irish citizen marries a non-EEA person in their country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1954/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the non-EEA spouses and dependent children under the age of 18 of Irish nationals may visit or reside in the State with the Irish national, subject to certain criteria being met as per the "Policy Document on non-EEA Family Reunification". Persons from visa-required countries need to apply and be granted a visa in advance of travelling to the State in the normal way.

I am further informed that marriage or other familial relationship to an Irish National does not confer an automatic right of residence in the State. A non-EEA national who wishes to reside in the State on the basis of their family relationship to an Irish National must apply for permission to remain in the State.

Full details on the relevant criteria and the application process is available on the INIS website at <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/WP07000024>. A successful spouse, or civil partner, of the Irish national may receive a renewable permission on Stamp 4 conditions. Other family members, such as the minor children of the Irish National may receive a permission on Stamp 3 conditions.

Further information on the overall family reunification policy titled "Policy Document on non-EEA Family Reunification" is also available on the INIS website: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Family%20Reunification%20Policy%20Document.pdf/Files/Family%20Reunification%20Policy%20Document.pdf>

The Policy Document is updated from time to time to reflect evolving circumstances and is currently being examined by my officials with a view to its update in the coming months.

Questions - Written Answers
Naturalisation Certificates

141. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of certificates of naturalisation issued in 2018 to persons who were born here. [2009/19]

142. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of applications for naturalisation that have been applied for on behalf of persons under 18 years of age in 2017 and 2018; and the number of these applications that were by persons born here. [2010/19]

143. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of certificates of naturalisation that were granted to persons under 18 years of age in 2017 and 2018; and the number of these certificates that were issued to persons born here. [2011/19]

144. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of certificates of naturalisation issued in 2017 and 2018. [2012/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 141 to 144, inclusive, together.

I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the number of certificates of naturalisation issued in 2017 and 2018 is 8,196 and 8,225 respectively. Of these a total of 1,395 and 1,261 were granted to persons under 18 years of age in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

The number of applications for naturalisation applied for on behalf of persons under 18 years of age for the years in question amount to 1,918 and 1,682 for the years in question. It should be noted that applications received in any particular year does not relate to those granted in that year due to the time taken to process applications.

The following table provides a further breakdown of the basis for naturalisation of those persons under the age of 18 who were granted certificates of naturalisation in 2017 and 2018.

Data in relation to those under 18 who were born in Ireland is not captured in a systematic manner as it is not directly applicable to the consideration of the grant of naturalisation. The criteria for grant of citizenship flows from the qualifying criteria including, in particular, the lawful residence of the parent or guardian of the person under 18, in accordance with the provisions of the citizenship acts.

To compile the information requested by the Deputy would involve a significant amount of staff time which would mean diverting those resources away from processing of cases which is the priority.

Tabulation of the grants relating to 2017 and 2018 – by classification type.

Classification Type	2017	2018
Naturalised Irish Parent	1,269	1,135
Irish Association	25	36
Born in the State post Jan 2005	53	76
Refugee, Parent Naturalised	48	12
Refugee, Irish Association	0	2
Total	1,395	1,261

Job Creation Targets

145. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the annual targets for attaining 70,000 returned emigrants as per the Programme for A Partnership Government commitment; and the progress to date, in tabular form. [1999/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The Government's goal is to support the creation of an additional 200,000 jobs by 2020, including 135,000 outside of Dublin, and to attract back at least 70,000 emigrants. The whole of Government effort to deliver on these objectives is supported by the annual Action Plan for Jobs, and from 2019, its successor, the Future Jobs programme.

The CSO estimates that between April 2017 and April 2018, 28,400 Irish emigrants returned to Ireland. As the economy continues to grow and approaches full employment, this trend is likely to continue.

Since the first Action Plan for Jobs was launched in early 2012, there are almost 385,700 more people at work bringing total employment in the State to 2,265,000 (as of Q3 2018). My Department and its agencies have a range of initiatives to connect with Irish emigrants (and others) to outline the careers and entrepreneurial opportunities in Ireland. These include:

- IDA Ireland actively promotes Ireland as a location for new investment and Enterprise Ireland has specific targets to attract entrepreneurs to Ireland with a focused marketing programme underway in international markets

- Since 2016, my Department has funded TechLife Ireland - a partnership with Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and the Irish Technology industry - to promote and brand Ireland as a top destination to pursue a career in technology and attract top tech professionals to Ireland. Industry is playing an important role in supporting the initiative and driving its development.

- Science Foundation Ireland encourages leading researchers to move to Ireland raising Ireland's profile as a location for research excellence and career advancement: for example, through SFI's Future Research Leaders and Research Professorships Programmes.

Finally, I would emphasise that ensuring a continued focus on attracting foreign direct investment and maintaining and improving competitiveness is critical to attracting talent back to Ireland.

Departmental Staff Data

146. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of employees in her Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1881/19]

147. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of employees in her Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1898/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 146 and 147 together.

There are currently 909 employees (864.92 FTEs) in my Department. While some staff in

my Department have undertaken procurement training, all staff are obliged to adhere to public procurement rules. Staff in my Department engaged in public procurement apply the guidelines published by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), in procurement undertaken across the various business units and Offices in the Department. Furthermore, staff are guided by the expertise that resides in the OGP, and where appropriate use existing framework agreements put in place by the experts in the OGP, ensuring my staff can be confident that they are meeting their compliance obligations.

The OGP organises procurement in the public service under a unified structure to ensure that the procurement expertise and experience that exists is harnessed and applied consistently to public procurement activities.

While my Department does not currently maintain a comprehensive database of employee qualifications, including procurement qualifications, a skills register is being developed by OneLearning, the Learning and Development Centre for the Civil Service, as part of a new learning and development platform technology, the Learning Management System. This will enable employees to populate and maintain their online profile with their professional qualifications and will allow Departments to identify the skills, knowledge and expertise that has been uploaded by them.

Notwithstanding the fact that the specific information regarding staff who hold, and don't hold professional qualifications, is not available, the Deputy may wish to note that there are a large number of professionally qualified personnel across many disciplines employed in the Department.

In this regard, there are a number of employees who are members of certain professional institutions for which the Department reimburse professional and affiliation fees, where it is deemed necessary to the performance of their official duties to maintain their membership of the professional body. At the end of 2018, the Department reimbursed fees for a total of 13 staff in respect of a number of professional bodies listed in the following.

Professional Institute
Chartered Accountants Ireland
Law Society of Ireland
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Certified Public Accountants
Irish Taxation Institute
Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors
Public Relations Institute of Ireland

There may be other employees that maintain their own membership with affiliated bodies not included in the table. Where professional and affiliation fees are not reimbursed by the Department, in the cases that membership is not a requirement for the performance of their official duties, data is not captured by the Department.

There are also a number of grades through which professional qualifications are a requirement. For example the following professionals currently hold positions within the Department: 11 Professional Accountants; 1 Head of Internal Audit; 9 Legal Services Personnel; 1 Statistician. There are also employees that have joined the Department through competitions that specified specific qualification requirements, but the information regarding the qualifications held is not captured by this Department due to the fact that recruitment is managed centrally by the Public Appointments Service. It should also be noted that many other staff may hold professional qualifications that are not recorded by the Department.

IDA Ireland Site Visits

148. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of IDA client visits to each county in each of the years 2011 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1982/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): IDA Ireland continues to highlight the benefits of expanding or locating in all counties to its client base. It is important to remember, however, that the final decision as to where to invest always rests with the company concerned. It is also the case that site visit activity does not necessarily reflect investment potential, as almost 70% of all new foreign direct investment comes from existing IDA Ireland client firm.

The following tables set out the number of IDA site visits to each county from 2011 to Q3 2018. Figures for Q4 2018 will become available later this month.

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Dublin	150	196	180	205	242
Kildare	3	1	1	1	7
Meath	2	0	1	2	7
Wicklow	3	6	1	4	7
Laois	2	0	2	0	4
Longford	0	0	0	0	2
Offaly	1	3	1	1	8
Westmeath	15	7	9	12	28
Clare	15	14	5	9	12
Limerick	40	30	23	22	40
Tipperary	1	5	4	3	12
Cavan	0	3	2	1	0
Louth	26	12	4	10	20
Monaghan	1	0	1	0	2
Donegal	2	1	7	6	5
Leitrim	0	0	1	2	8
Sligo	3	6	10	7	15
Carlow	2	4	1	2	1
Kilkenny	0	3	3	4	10
Waterford	11	26	14	11	31
Wexford	0	3	2	1	4
Cork	27	38	31	30	48
Kerry	2	1	1	3	6
Galway	35	18	15	19	41
Mayo	0	1	3	4	3
Roscommon	0	0	4	0	2
Total	341	378	326	359	565
County	2016	2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018
Dublin	284	327	69	72	68
Kildare	8	10	4	0	1
Meath	8	3	1	3	1
Wicklow	5	2	0	1	0
Laois	6	4	4	2	1

Questions - Written Answers

County	2016	2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018
Longford	6	7	0	0	2
Offaly	4	5	0	1	3
Westmeath	36	42	3	9	6
Clare	18	22	4	3	2
Limerick	49	42	8	7	10
Tipperary	8	8	1	1	2
Cavan	2	2	0	1	0
Louth	24	22	6	6	3
Monaghan	2	1	0	1	0
Donegal	7	2	0	3	3
Leitrim	8	5	2	3	0
Sligo	20	18	5	3	4
Carlow	9	8	1	2	0
Kilkenny	10	6	0	2	1
Waterford	17	11	5	9	5
Wexford	7	3	0	1	2
Cork	49	51	10	14	21
Kerry	3	9	0	5	3
Galway	42	62	10	20	12
Mayo	5	7	2	2	3
Roscommon	1	3	0	1	1
Total	638	682	135	172	154

IDA Ireland Jobs Data

149. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the level of IDA supported jobs by county at 31 December 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1983/19]

150. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of IDA supported jobs; the number of jobs created and lost, respectively, in 2017 and 2018 by county, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1984/19]

151. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number in employment in IDA Ireland supported companies in each region (details supplied) in each of the years 2011 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1985/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 149 to 151, inclusive, together.

IDA Ireland's performance in 2018 resulted in the sixth consecutive year of strong growth under the Agency's current strategy. By the end of last year, total employment in the Agency's client companies stood at 229,057. Every region in Ireland has seen foreign direct investment-driven employment gains and there are now over 132,000 people employed across 681 firms in IDA client companies located outside of Dublin. 58% of all IDA client-supported jobs, in fact, are now located outside the capital. I am determined, together with the IDA, to see this trend continue and we will be doing everything possible in 2019 to encourage more firms to invest further in the regions.

The following tables provide a breakdown of jobs created by IDA supported companies in

each county for 2018 and 2017 and the number of IDA jobs by county and region from 2011 to 2018.

Table A: IDA jobs created by county in 2018

	New Jobs Created (Gross Gains)	Additional Jobs Created (Net Change)	Total Jobs
Carlow	275	275	1,150
Cavan	15	-59	1,096
Clare	494	-58	6,948
Cork	3,177	2,087	38,867
Donegal	212	172	3,564
Dublin	11,039	6,231	96,760
Galway	1,971	1,466	19,969
Kerry	122	54	2,241
Kildare	639	386	8,838
Kilkenny	36	-5	711
Laois	4	-12	122
Leitrim	26	25	909
Limerick	1,458	1,189	11,796
Longford	171	155	900
Louth	349	139	3,903
Mayo	426	344	4,828
Meath	122	67	1,632
Monaghan	13	12	162
Offaly	78	65	1,232
Roscommon	123	32	1,171
Sligo	184	13	2,251
Tipperary	296	55	3,720
Waterford	471	374	7,064
Westmeath	502	493	3,466
Wexford	171	152	3,139
Wicklow	411	388	2,618
Grand Total	22,785	14,040	229,057

Table B: IDA jobs created by county in 2017

	New Jobs Created (Gross Gains)	Additional Jobs Created (Net Change)	Total Jobs
Carlow	75	73	875
Cavan	31	-48	1,155
Clare	653	260	7,006
Cork	2,697	1,445	36,780
Donegal	378	353	3,392
Dublin	12,340	7,148	90,529
Galway	2,253	1,462	18,503
Kerry	106	90	2,187
Kildare	499	-1288	8,452
Kilkenny	72	-46	716
Laois	5	3	134

Questions - Written Answers

	New Jobs Created (Gross Gains)	Additional Jobs Created (Net Change)	Total Jobs
Leitrim	84	81	884
Limerick	1,069	780	10,607
Longford	207	-38	745
Louth	346	161	3,764
Mayo	294	270	4,484
Meath	70	-96	1,565
Monaghan	14	13	150
Offaly	108	60	1,167
Roscommon	164	154	1,139
Sligo	66	-103	2,238
Tipperary	341	297	3,665
Waterford	522	437	6,690
Westmeath	240	224	2,973
Wexford	284	247	2,987
Wicklow	78	-4	2,230
Grand Total	22,996	11,935	215,017

Table C: IDA jobs by County 2011-2018

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Cavan	1,172	1,128	1,135	1,136	1,165	1,203	1,155	1,096
Donegal	2,101	2,223	2,382	2,607	2,918	3,039	3,392	3,564
Leitrim	1,017	856	606	682	745	803	884	909
Louth	1,511	1,881	2,568	3,060	3,245	3,603	3,764	3,903
Monaghan	352	348	365	275	146	137	150	162
Sligo	2,444	2,405	2,271	2,264	2,267	2,341	2,238	2,251
Dublin	59,114	63,181	67,923	71,362	76,090	83,381	90,529	96,760
Kildare	9,422	9,515	9,433	9,600	10,123	9,740	8,452	8,838
Meath	1,641	1,581	1,660	1,656	1,658	1,661	1,565	1,632
Wicklow	2,298	2,322	2,351	2,327	2,203	2,234	2,230	2,618
Laois	133	93	115	92	119	131	134	122
Longford	693	734	739	721	774	783	745	900
Offaly	986	1,041	1,058	1,059	1,080	1,107	1,167	1,232
Westmeath	2,260	2,403	2,366	2,561	2,689	2,749	2,973	3,466
Clare	6,403	6,173	6,090	6,252	6,373	6,746	7,006	6,948
Limerick	6,642	7,165	7,448	7,930	8,702	9,827	10,607	11,796
Tipperary North Riding	301	294	306	298	318	328	335	204
Carlow	514	645	735	749	768	802	875	1,150
Kilkenny	447	572	617	716	650	762	716	711
Tipperary South Riding	3,395	3,393	3,055	3,246	3,215	3,040	3,330	3,516
Waterford	5,259	5,112	5,183	5,248	5,574	6,253	6,690	7,064
Wexford	2,470	2,456	2,501	2,591	2,583	2,740	2,987	3,139
Cork	25,118	26,482	27,630	28,848	33,049	35,335	36,780	38,867
Kerry	1,512	1,625	1,659	1,895	1,948	2,097	2,187	2,241
Galway	13,101	13,756	14,342	14,746	15,463	17,041	18,503	19,969

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Mayo	3,488	3,511	3,702	3,912	4,050	4,214	4,484	4,828
Roscommon	873	935	962	916	994	985	1,139	1,171
Total	154,667	161,830	169,202	176,749	188,909	203,082	215,017	229,057

Table D: IDA jobs by region 2011-2018

Region	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
West	17,462	18,202	19,006	19,574	20,507	22,240	24,126	25,968
South-West	26,630	28,107	29,289	30,743	34,997	37,432	38,967	41,108
South-East	12,085	12,178	12,091	12,550	12,790	13,597	14,598	15,580
Mid-West	13,346	13,632	13,844	14,480	15,393	16,901	17,948	18,948
Midlands	4,072	4,271	4,278	4,433	4,662	4,770	5,019	5,720
Mid-East	13,361	13,418	13,444	13,583	13,984	13,635	12,247	13,088
Dublin	59,114	63,181	67,923	71,362	76,090	83,381	90,529	96,760
North-East	3,035	3,357	4,068	4,471	4,556	4,943	5,069	5,161
North-West	5,562	5,484	5,259	5,553	5,930	6,183	6,514	6,724
Total	154,667	161,830	169,202	176,749	188,909	203,082	215,017	229,057

IDA Ireland Jobs Data

152. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number in employment in IDA Ireland supported companies in the mid-east and Dublin regions, respectively, in each of the years 2011 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1986/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): IDA Ireland's results for 2018 underline how strongly Ireland continues to perform when it comes to attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). The Agency has seen its sixth consecutive year of growth with a record 229,057 people employed in FDI companies and 14,040 net new jobs added in 2018.

Dublin is now home to 763 overseas companies employing 96,760 people. There were 6,231 net new jobs added in Dublin in 2018, which is an increase of almost 7% over 2017. The Mid-East region also continues to perform well with employment in IDA client companies increasing by over 4% in Counties Kildare and Meath and 17% in County Wicklow from 2017 to 2018. The region remains attractive, in particular, as a location for second sites for IDA clients based in the Dublin area who are looking to expand their operations outside the capital.

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of employees in IDA Ireland-supported companies across the Mid-East and Dublin from 2011 to 2018.

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Dublin	59,114	63,181	67,923	71,362	76,090	83,381	90,529	96,760
Kildare	9,422	9,515	9,433	9,600	10,123	9,740	8,452	8,838
Meath	1,641	1,581	1,660	1,656	1,658	1,661	1,565	1,632

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Wicklow	2,298	2,322	2,351	2,327	2,203	2,234	2,230	2,618
Total	72,475	76,599	81,367	84,945	90,074	97,016	102,776	109,848

Enterprise Ireland Data

153. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of Enterprise Ireland supported jobs by county and, in the case of Dublin, by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin, in each of the years 2016 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1987/19]

154. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of Enterprise Ireland clients by county and, in the case of Dublin, by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin, in each of the years 2016 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1988/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 153 and 154 together.

On an annual basis Enterprise Ireland (EI) works with approximately 5,000 manufacturing and internationally traded services companies through the agency's network of 10 offices in Ireland and 33 international offices.

In 2018 EI client companies reported strong employment performance with 215,207 people employed in companies supported by the agency and 18,846 new jobs created. The tables below present the figures for the following:

- The number of EI supported jobs by county and in the case of Dublin by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin in each of the years 2016 to 2018

- The number of EI clients by county and in the case of Dublin by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin in each of the years 2016 to 2018

Support to client companies is tailored to meet the individual needs of each client company in order to equip them to succeed in global markets. Every EI client company is assigned a developmental adviser who works with them to identify areas that can be optimised and improved. These areas are not just addressed through direct financial assistance, but through a wide range of soft supports, such as mentoring and management development programmes. These soft supports are not captured in the following tables.

Table 1: The total number of EI supported jobs by county in each of the years 2016 to 2018

County	2016	2017	2018
Carlow	2,973	3,034	3,221
Cavan	5,221	5,451	5,842
Clare	3,444	3,709	4,102
Cork	24,936	25,975	23,902
Donegal	3,581	3,552	3,818
Dublin	70,365	72,461	76,815
Galway	7,294	8,103	8,091
Kerry	4,677	4,866	4,727
Kildare	8,632	9,134	8,923

County	2016	2017	2018
Kilkenny	4,167	4,276	4,549
Laois	1,385	1,473	1,527
Leitrim	922	559	607
Limerick	7,954	8,269	9,553
Longford	2,886	2,970	2,979
Louth	5,819	6,121	5,923
Mayo	3,856	4,118	4,692
Meath	7,007	7,302	7,135
Monaghan	5,168	5,366	5,626
Offaly	3,941	4,281	4,307
Roscommon	1,688	1,776	1,764
Sligo	1,546	1,733	1,916
Tipperary	5,352	5,907	5,921
Waterford	5,721	6,359	6,849
Westmeath	3,653	3,741	3,536
Wexford	4,816	4,670	4,674
Wicklow	4,104	4,132	4,208
Total	201,108	209,338	215,207

Table 2: The total number of EI supported jobs in each of the Dublin Boroughs in each of the years 2016 to 2018

County	2016	2017	2018
Dublin City	36,685	37,419	38,972
Dublin Fingal	8,855	9,979	10,482
Dublin South County	14,201	13,819	14,782
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	10,624	11,244	12,579
Dublin	70,365	72,461	76,815

Table 3: The total number of EI clients by county in each of the years 2016 to 2018

County	2016	2017	2018
Carlow	85	82	79
Cavan	79	78	76
Clare	143	131	125
Cork	580	568	541
Donegal	139	125	123
Dublin	2104	2,197	2,012
Galway	257	257	236
Kerry	114	127	113
Kildare	182	192	178
Kilkenny	114	116	109
Laois	54	55	51
Leitrim	29	25	22
Limerick	245	250	244
Longford	49	50	46

County	2016	2017	2018
Louth	156	154	146
Mayo	114	115	110
Meath	169	170	155
Monaghan	106	104	100
Offaly	67	69	59
Roscommon	53	51	45
Sligo	69	69	65
Tipperary	117	123	111
Waterford	138	143	135
Westmeath	99	114	91
Wexford	123	122	115
Wicklow	166	161	148
Total	5551	5,648	5,235

Table 4: The number of Enterprise Ireland clients in each of the Dublin Boroughs in each of the years 2016 to 2018

Dublin Borough	2016	2017	2018
Dublin City	1,109	1,174	1,054
Dublin Fingal	281	289	266
Dublin South County	350	370	349
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	364	364	343
Dublin Total	2,104	2,197	2,012

Local Enterprise Offices Data

155. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of local enterprise office clients by county and, in the case of Dublin, by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin in each of the years 2016 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1989/19]

156. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of local enterprise office supported jobs by county and, in the case of Dublin, by Dublin city, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and south Dublin in each of the years 2016 to 2018, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1990/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 155 and 156 together.

The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are the ‘first-stop-shop’ for providing advice and guidance, financial assistance and other supports to those wishing to start or grow their own business.

Details of the number of LEO supported clients and of the number of jobs in micro-enterprises supported by the LEOs for 2016 and 2017 is shown in the following tables on a county basis, including the four LEOs in Dublin.

Please note that the relevant details for 2018 will not be available until the results of the an-

16 January 2019

Annual employment survey of LEO clients is completed in Q1 2019.

LEO	No of LEO Clients 2016	No of LEO Clients 2017
Carlow	221	216
Cavan	208	206
Clare	197	224
Cork City	122	156
Cork South	188	261
Cork W / N	240	203
Donegal	183	200
Dublin City	349	397
DLR	229	256
Fingal	192	211
Dublin South	261	285
Galway	243	254
Kerry	437	425
Kildare	152	171
Kilkenny	266	254
Laois	102	115
Leitrim	162	155
Limerick	302	299
Longford	242	243
Louth	231	235
Mayo	220	207
Meath	207	242
Monaghan	153	152
Offaly	202	196
Roscommon	155	167
Sligo	215	231
Tipperary	295	297
Waterford	304	319
WestMeath	265	265
Wexford	187	213
Wicklow	116	127
Grand Total	6846	7182

LEO	Total Jobs 2016 (FT + PT)	Total Jobs 2017 (FT + PT)
Carlow	1092	1128
Cavan	1162	1252
Clare	1110	1339
Cork City	633	739
Cork South	977	1487
Cork W / N	1393	1098
Donegal	1358	1193
Dublin City	1670	1947
DLR	1308	1561
Fingal	831	970
Dublin South	1230	1410
Galway	962	1039
Kerry	1962	2067

Questions - Written Answers

LEO	Total Jobs 2016 (FT + PT)	Total Jobs 2017 (FT + PT)
Kildare	881	967
Kilkenny	1500	1361
Laois	485	568
Leitrim	422	454
Limerick	1856	1907
Longford	1061	1154
Louth	780	906
Mayo	1239	1224
Meath	927	1112
Monaghan	903	1052
Offaly	921	995
Roscommon	704	794
Sligo	1095	969
Tipperary	1437	1595
Waterford	1469	1620
WestMeath	1375	1497
Wexford	1192	1348
Wicklow	699	732
Grand Total	34634	37485

Departmental Staff Recruitment

157. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of additional staff to be appointed in her Department and in State agencies and bodies under the aegis of her Department in 2019; the estimated cost of hiring additional staff in her Department and in each State agency and body, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1991/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): My Department considers its overall allocation and resource needs on an ongoing basis and through a workforce planning process. The need for additional posts in 2019 was considered in conjunction with Budget 2019 and the Revised Estimates and taking account of the delivery of urgent business priorities that cannot be met with current staff resources.

This exercise was undertaken in the context of the expansion of responsibilities across the Department, in light of Brexit and other global challenges, the growing number of priorities facing the Department in 2019, including the significant increase in the number of employment permit applications.

In this regard, a total of 16 additional critical posts were identified to meet the Department's priorities for 2019. The overall cost of approving the additional staffing requests associated with the priority areas identified for the Department is €572,354.18. This information is set out in the following table.

Grade	Number of Additional Posts
Principal Officer	1
Assistant Principal Officer	3
Administrative Officer	7
Executive Officer	2
Clerical Officer	3

Grade	Number of Additional Posts
Total Estimated Cost	€572,354.18

It should be noted that this position may need to be reviewed later this year when the next cycle of workforce planning is undertaken, particularly in respect of the demand for employment permits.

In relation to the Offices of the Department, an additional pay budget was allocated to the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement (ODCE) and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) for 2019.

The ODCE was allocated an additional pay budget of €740,000 to assist with the transition of the Office into a statutory agency. Identification of the specific posts that will be required are part of the ongoing work underway, to progress the transition of the ODCE to agency status.

The WRC was allocated an additional €640,000 for pay to provide for additional resources to support the extension of their functions to include other sectors of employees who will gain access to their services.

The Agencies that come within the remit of my Department, carry out their own workforce planning exercises and have at this early stage identified the following additional positions and costs associated with these for 2019.

Agency	Number of Additional Posts	Estimated Cost
Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	11	€553,170
Enterprise Ireland	14	€867,000
Health and Safety Authority	7	€412,000
IDA Ireland	14	€1,045,940
National Standards Authority of Ireland	5	€400,000

Economic Competitiveness

158. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation her views on the latest report of the National Competitiveness Council, Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2017; and the timeline for implementation of recommendations in this publication. [1996/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): Improving Ireland's competitiveness and ensuring Ireland is an attractive location to do business is a key economic priority for this Government.

By highlighting the competitiveness challenges that the economy faces and identifying the actions to address those issues within our control, the National Competitiveness Council makes a valuable contribution in this regard, and I welcome the Council's most recent report, *Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2018* .

In this report, the NCC's message is clear. While Ireland's overall competitiveness performance remains positive, as the risks to Ireland's prosperity are increasing, there can be no room for complacency. The threats posed by Brexit, and the evolving global trading and tax landscape, mean we must enhance our competitiveness position and make the economy resilient to withstand external shocks.

I share the Council's view that to further improve competitiveness, we need sustainable public finances, continued investment in infrastructure, and the talent to drive innovation and productivity across all sectors of the economy.

Moreover, several initiatives are in train across Government to enhance our competitiveness performance, including:

- The review of SME policy designed to assess the SME business ecosystem and the range of supports offered to SMEs undertaken by my Department in conjunction with the OECD;
- The development of an Industry 4.0 strategy to respond to the challenges and opportunities arising from the impact of digital technologies;
- The development of sectoral strategies for Enterprise Ireland's client base;
- The Future Growth Loan Scheme that will allow businesses to borrow for up to 10 years to support capital investment and enhance their competitiveness.

My Department and the Department of the Taoiseach are also preparing the Future Jobs Programme, a cross-government initiative with a strong focus on improving productivity, that will be published in February. This initiative will propose concrete and ambitious actions to enhance our productivity and competitiveness and will ensure that we are well positioned to adapt to transformational changes the economy will face in the years ahead.

Alongside the Competitiveness Challenge, the NCC have made a submission to the Future Jobs initiative that highlights key actions for the Government. We will reflect on the findings of the Competitiveness Challenge – and the contents of the NCC's submission - as the Future Jobs initiative is finalised.

Work Permits Data

159. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of employment permits granted for non-EEA workers in each of the years 2010 to 2018, by occupation and sector, in tabular form. [1997/19]

160. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of applications for work permits received in each of the years 2015 to 2018; and the number of applications that remained to be processed by 31 December in each year, in tabular form. [1998/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I propose to take Questions Nos. 159 and 160 together.

The information requested by the Deputy regarding the number of employment permits granted for non-EEA workers in each of the years 2010 to 2108, listed by occupation and sector, is set out in tabular form.

The Employment Permits Section of my Department has used the international Standard Occupational Classification (SOC Codes) system to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data since 2013.

The following table sets out the information requested by the Deputy in regard to the number of applications accepted in each of the years 2015 to 2018, and the number of applications that remained to be processed by 31 December in each year in tabular form.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Applications Accepted	9,021	11,317	13,217	16,735
Applications that remained to be processed by 31 December	*1,134	*1,140	1,192	2,630

* The figures for applications that remain to be processed at 31 December 2015 and 2016 are approximates.

[Occupation and Sector]

Work Permits Eligibility

161. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the occupations and sectors on the highly skilled eligible occupations list and the ineligible categories of employment list, respectively, in tabular form. [2000/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The employment permits system is managed through the operation of the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and the Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL).

Occupations listed on the HSEOL are highly skilled jobs such as professional positions in medicine, ICT, sciences, finance and business. Occupations listed on the ICEL are generally occupations with lower skills requirements, e.g. personal services, trades, operatives and there is evidence that there are more than enough Irish/EEA workers to fill such vacancies. Every other job in the labour market, where an employer cannot find a worker, may be eligible for an employment permit.

In order to ensure that the employment permits schemes are responsive to changes in economic circumstances and labour market conditions, these occupations lists are reviewed twice yearly to keep pace with rapid labour market changes and to be proactively identifying and addressing shortages as they arise.

Ireland is a leader EU -wide in linking labour market intelligence to economic migration policy and is guided by research undertaken by Solas, the Expert group of Future Skills Needs, Government Strategies as well as through a public consultation process

A Review of these lists is underway at present and is expected to be finalised before the end of January 2019. The review commenced with a public call for submissions from stakeholders and interest groups requesting changes to the lists. Submissions have been received in respect of a range of occupations and those submissions and other relevant research and data are now being examined.

Comprehensive information on the employment permit system is available on my Department's website *www.dbei.gov.ie*

Attachment No: 1

[HSEOL]

Attachment No: 2

[ICEL]

Personal Injury Claims

162. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation if she will provide data (details supplied) for the period 2011 to 2018. [2001/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The detail requested by the Deputy is an operational matter for the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB). PIAB is an independent statutory agency and I, as Minister, am not permitted in my executive function to interfere in any way with the day to day operations and functions of PIAB.

However, in order to assist the Deputy, I have set out in the following tables the relevant information published in the PIAB Annual Reports for the years 2011-17, the Annual Report for 2018 has not been published yet.

Table 1 – Applications to PIAB*

Year	Applications Received	Total Motor Claims Received	Total Public Liability Claims Received	Total Employer Liability Claims Received
2011	27,669	16,351	7,452	3,866
2012	29,603	17,443	8,602	3,828
2013	31,311	18,877	8,394	4,040
2014	31,576	18,994	8,214	4,368
2015	33,561	19,812	8,906	4,843
2016	34,056	19,633	9,182	5,241
2017	33,114	18,623	5,634	8,857

*source data from PIAB Annual Reports 2011-17

Table 2 – Awards Made and Awards Accepted*

Year	Awards Made	Number of Accepted Awards
2011	9,833	5,875
2012	10,136	6,124
2013	10,656	6,476
2014	12,420	7,519
2015	11,734	6,716
2016	12,966	7,071
2017	12,663	6,788

*source data from PIAB Annual Reports 2011-17

Medical Aids and Appliances Provision

163. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) will receive a new wheelchair; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1822/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy.

Home Help Service Provision

164. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he is satisfied with the level and quality of service being provided by a home care company (details supplied) on behalf of the HSE; his plans to ensure that action is taken immediately to resolve the care issues being experienced by a person; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1824/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Medicinal Products Availability

165. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if the decision to refuse a person (details supplied) with allergies preventing other forms of pain relief from obtaining Lidocaine patches will be reviewed as a matter of urgency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1835/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Medicines play a vital role in improving the health of Irish patients. Securing access to existing and new and innovative medicines is a key health service objective. However, the challenge is to do this in a safe and sustainable manner. Treatment must be appropriate and proportionate and clinical decision-making, such as prescribing, should be based on both patient needs and sound medical evidence.

Lidocaine 5% medicated plasters are licensed for localised relief of post-shingles pain in adults. This is the patch's only licensed use in Ireland. It has been reimbursed in the community drug schemes since 2010.

Clinical concern arose as usage increased significantly, to the point where more plasters were being used in Ireland than in the entire UK National Health Service. In such situations, it is important and appropriate for clinicians to review usage and, in 2016, the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) reviewed the use of the plasters. The review estimated that only 5-10% of prescribing was for the licensed indication.

From September 2017, following the clinical review, the HSE introduced a new reimbursement approval system for the patches, to support appropriate use and patient care. Under these arrangements, the patient's GP or consultant applies to the MMP for reimbursement approval on behalf of the patient. If an application is refused, the clinician may submit an appeal to the MMP, making a clear clinical case for the patient. Information for patients and practitioners is on the HSE MMP website at: hse.ie/yourmedicines.

The outcome of an application or an appeal for reimbursement of lidocaine patches is a matter between the MMP and the treating clinician. The Deputy will appreciate that, as Minister for Health, I cannot intervene in individual cases.

The decision to introduce a new reimbursement approval process for a particular treatment is a matter for the HSE. However, I fully support the objectives of the HSE Medicines Management Programme.

Hospital Groups

166. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position in relation to the spending or revenue allocation for 2019 to the maternity directorate in the South/Southwest Hospital Group; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1845/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to you directly as soon as possible

Hospital Groups

167. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health his views on the request for a capital budget of €7.5 million in 2019 for the maternity directorate in the South/Southwest Hospital Group to enable the second operating theatre to open at Cork University Maternity Hospital and deal with other service improvements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1846/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As the Health Service Executive is responsible for the delivery of healthcare infrastructure projects, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly in relation to this matter.

Hospital Procedures

168. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons that have undergone cataract surgery in each of the years 2016 to 2018; and the cost of this surgery in each of these years. [1848/19]

169. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the HSE locations at which cataract surgery is performed. [1849/19]

170. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons in each county awaiting cataract surgery; and the length of time they have been waiting. [1850/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): I propose to take Questions Nos. 168 to 170, inclusive, together.

Improving access to hospital treatment is a key priority for Government.

Waiting list figures for December 2018, published last week by the NTPF show that considerable improvements have been made to the number of patients waiting for an Inpatient or Day case procedure which have fallen to 70,204 from the peak of 86,100 in July 2017. This represents a reduction of over 18% in the overall number of patients waiting for a procedure. Over the same period, the waiting lists for Cataracts has reduced from over 10,000 to 6,440 representing a reduction of 36%.

Furthermore, the number of patients waiting over 9 months has almost halved since July 2017 from 28,100 to 14,900. The impact is particularly noteworthy when one considers the improvements to the Waiting Lists for those particular specialties which were the focus of the Inpatient/Daycase Action Plan in 2018 including the numbers waiting over 9 months for a Cataract procedure which have fallen by 87% since July 2017.

My Department is working closely with the NTPF and the HSE to finalise a Scheduled Care

Access Plan for inpatients/daycase and outpatients for 2019. In this regard, the NTPF and HSE will continue to work closely with Hospital Groups, inviting proposals to improve access for patients waiting for hospital procedures. .

The number of persons treated for Cataracts in 2017 was 2,983 and in 2018 was 6,764. The NTPF did not have a direct role in the commissioning of patient treatments in 2016. At that time, the procurement of treatments was carried out by the HSE and the role of the NTPF was in the administration of the payments to the hospitals. The expenditure on Ophthalmology was €5.7m in 2017 while the 2018 Annual Financial Statements have not been finalised.

The HSE locations at which cataract surgery is performed are:

- Children's University Hospital Temple Street;
- Galway University Hospital;
- Letterkenny General Hospital;
- Mater Misericordiae University Hospital;
- Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital;
- Sligo Regional Hospital;
- South Infirmar-y-Victoria University Hospital;
- St. Vincent s University Hospital;
- University Hospital Limerick;
- University Hospital Waterford;
- Nenagh Hospital; and
- Louth County Hospital.

The information requested by the Deputy regarding the number of persons in each county awaiting cataract surgery, is set out in the document in the following link.

[Cataracts]

Vaccination Programme

171. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Health the age children who may not have been previously vaccinated for the meningococcal B disease are now entitled to vaccination from the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1853/19]

179. **Deputy John Brassil** asked the Minister for Health if the HSE has undertaken a cost analysis for the provision of the meningitis B vaccine to all children born before October 2016; if he will consider same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1934/19]

180. **Deputy John Brassil** asked the Minister for Health if the HSE has established the number of persons affected by the meningitis B strain in relation to the recent meningitis outbreak; the number of persons that recently died due to the meningitis that were affected by the meningitis B strain; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1935/19]

181. **Deputy John Brassil** asked the Minister for Health his plans to extend the meningitis B vaccine to all children born before October 2016; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1936/19]

183. **Deputy John Brassil** asked the Minister for Health his plans to establish a public awareness campaign to encourage the uptake of the meningitis B vaccine and the booster programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1938/19]

190. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health if a catch-up meningitis B programme will be provided for all children; the estimated cost of providing such a programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1971/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): I propose to take Questions Nos. 171, 179 to 181, inclusive, 183 and 190 together.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) is an independent committee of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland which is comprised of experts in a number of specialties, including infectious diseases, paediatrics, and public health, which makes recommendations on vaccination policy in Ireland. Its recommendations are based on the prevalence of the relevant disease in Ireland and international best practice in relation to immunisation. All relevant and appropriate information is taken into account when deciding to make changes to the State's immunisation programmes. NIAC submits its recommendations to my Department for consideration.

On foot of a recommendation by NIAC, the Primary Childhood Immunisation Schedule was amended in 2016 to include the introduction of the Meningitis B vaccine for all babies born on or after 1 October 2016. This change to the immunisation schedule took effect from 1 December 2016. The first dose of the vaccine is administered to children when they reach two months of age; a second dose is administered at four months and a third and final dose at twelve months. Meningitis B disease is most common in babies under the age of 1 year old and the timing of the administration of the vaccine under the immunisation programme takes account of this.

All vaccines administered through the Primary Childhood Immunisation Schedule are provided free of charge. Ireland is the second country in Europe to make the Men B vaccine available free of charge as part of its national immunisation programme. A vaccine that protects against meningococcal C disease (Men C vaccine) is given at 6 months and at 13. It should also be noted that adolescents are routinely offered the Men C vaccine in the first year of secondary school. Parents are strongly advised to ensure that their children are immunised according to the vaccination programme. Other vaccines that protect against other forms of meningitis and septicaemia are included in the routine child vaccination programme (Hib vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine (PCV)).

There are no plans to introduce a catch-up programme for the Men B vaccine to older children. Those who have a medical card are eligible to have the vaccine administered by their GP free of charge. However, the purchase of the vaccine is not covered by the medical card scheme.

Eleven cases of meningococcal disease have been notified to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) since the last week in December. Three deaths were among these cases. This is due to an increase in incidents of meningococcal disease over the last two weeks. The eleven cases notified compares to 5 cases for the same time period last year. In 2018 a total of 89 meningococcal cases were notified compared to 76 in 2017. Provisional data on the strain types identified indicate that different strains of the organism are circulating. All age groups

have been affected, ranging from infants to the elderly. Two of the 11 cases notified were related to the Meningitis B but none of the three deaths have been attributed to this strain of the disease.

Members of the public are advised that, if they (including those already vaccinated) have any concerns or are showing symptoms, they should contact their GP in the first instance and ensure that medical expertise is sought.

Medicinal Products Availability

172. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Health his plans to ensure the drug Pembrolizumab is made available for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1854/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The HSE has statutory responsibility for medicine pricing and reimbursement decisions, in accordance with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013. As Minister for Health, I do not have any statutory power or function in relation to the reimbursement of medicines. In addition, Section 10 of the Health Act 2004 precludes me from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the particular circumstances of any individual patient.

In Ireland the majority of patients access medicines through the publicly funded Community Drug Schemes.

In line with the 2013 Act and the national framework agreed with industry, if a company would like a medicine to be reimbursed by the HSE, it must apply to have the new medicine added to the reimbursement list.

Reimbursement is for licensed indications which have been granted market authorisation by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) or the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA).

HSE decisions on which medicines are reimbursed by the taxpayer are made on objective, scientific and economic grounds, on the advice of the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE).

Pembrolizumab has market authorisation in Ireland/the EU for a number of indications.

The HSE has approved the reimbursement of Pembrolizumab for the following indications:

- as monotherapy for the treatment of advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma in adults;

- as monotherapy for the first-line treatment of metastatic non-small cell lung carcinoma (NSCLC) in adults whose tumours express PD-L1 with a $\geq 50\%$ tumour proportion score (TPS) with no EGFR or ALK positive tumour mutations;

- as monotherapy for the treatment of adult patients with relapsed or refractory classical Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL) who have failed autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT) and brentuximab vedotin (BV), or who are transplant-ineligible and have failed BV.

It should be noted that the first part of the last indication is not reimbursed because the HSE is already reimbursing another immunotherapy with similar efficacy (nivolumab) at lower cost. Patients who are transplant-ineligible and have failed BV can receive reimbursement support

for pembrolizumab, as nivolumab does not have market authorisation for this sub-group of patients.

The HSE Drugs Group are reviewing the indication below:

- as monotherapy for the treatment of locally advanced or metastatic urothelial carcinoma in adults who are not eligible for cisplatin-containing chemotherapy and whose tumours express PD-L1 with a combined positive score (CPS) ≥ 10 .

The following indications are currently under health technology assessment with the NCPE:

- in combination with pemetrexed and platinum chemotherapy, for the first-line treatment of metastatic non-squamous NSCLC in adults whose tumours have no EGFR or ALK positive mutations;

- as monotherapy for the treatment of locally advanced or metastatic urothelial carcinoma in adults who have received prior platinum-containing chemotherapy.

No reimbursement application has been received to date for the following indication:

- as monotherapy for the treatment of recurrent or metastatic head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC) in adults whose tumours express PD-L1 with a $\geq 50\%$ TPS and progressing on or after platinum-containing chemotherapy .

However, the HSE has approved reimbursement of nivolumab for the treatment of recurrent or metastatic squamous cell cancer of the head and neck in adults progressing on or after platinum-based therapy.

In October 2018, the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP), which is the European Medicines Agency's committee responsible for human medicines, adopted a positive opinion recommending a change to the terms of the marketing authorisation for pembrolizumab to include a new indication as follows:

- as monotherapy for the adjuvant treatment of adults with stage III melanoma and lymph node involvement who have undergone complete resection.

The HSE has commissioned a rapid review assessment for this indication.

There are no other indications for pembrolizumab approved in the European Union at this time. Clinical trials for various immunotherapies, including pembrolizumab, are ongoing globally for a range of other possible indications, which may receive marketing authorisation in the EU over the next number of years. Each of those indications will be considered for reimbursement as market authorisations are granted and applications receive

Departmental Staff Data

173. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Health the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1890/19]

174. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Health the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and

the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1907/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): I propose to take Questions Nos. 173 and 174 together.

The number of employees in my Department at the end of December 2018 was 498 in terms of headcount. My Department does not hold records of all of the professional qualifications held by its employees. Some employees may be members of professional organisations in a personal capacity and pay their own membership fees. The Department would have no record of such memberships.

The Department pays for corporate membership of the Institute of Public Administration. In 2018, three individual annual memberships of Chartered Accountants Ireland and one individual membership of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants was reimbursed by the Department.

Various members of staff are engaged in procuring goods and services for the Department alongside their main duties. These staff abide by the procurement guidelines and procedures laid down by the Office of Government Procurement and act on its advice as appropriate. The staff involved would not require a professional qualification in procurement in order to undertake this work.

Hospital Equipment

175. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 159 of 23 October 2018 and the response from the HSE, when capital works, that is, new building works to accommodate a CT scanner will be completed at the Midlands Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath. [1923/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As the Health Service Executive is responsible for the delivery of healthcare infrastructure projects, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly in relation to this matter.

Medical Card Applications

176. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Health if a medical card application by a person (details supplied) will be expedited; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1926/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to the Deputy directly.

Services for People with Disabilities

177. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will address a matter in relation to a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1930/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath): The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the servic-

es they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Procedures

178. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the number of procedures carried out in UHK (details supplied) for certain time periods; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1932/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

Questions Nos. 179 to 181, inclusive, answered with Question No. 171.

Hospital Services

182. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health if a new 50-bed permanent unit is in the HSE capital plan; if so, when it will be delivered; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1937/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As the Health Service Executive is responsible for the delivery of healthcare infrastructure projects, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly in relation to this development at South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel.

Question No. 183 answered with Question No. 171.

Hospital Services

184. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health his plans for future services in Our Lady's Hospital, Cashel; if there will be an increase of service provision at the hospital; if so, the details of same; when they will become operational; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1950/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Hospital Appointments Status

185. **Deputy Michael Harty** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Clare will receive an appointment with University Hospital Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1951/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Ser-

vice 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, since 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 HSE, 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 the Deputy directly.

Vaccination Programme

186. **Deputy John Brassil** asked the Minister for Health the steps being taken to prevent further meningitis outbreaks; the steps being taken to encourage update of the vaccine and the booster shot for persons under 16 years of age; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1952/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

Mental Health Services

187. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health the assistance which will be provided to a group (details supplied) that provide a service in the area of mental health services in securing a long-term premises to lease. [1953/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme

188. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will address a matter (details supplied) regarding section 3B of the fair deal scheme application; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1964/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): The Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) is a system of financial support for those in need of long-term nursing home care. Participants contribute to the cost of their care according to their income and assets while the State pays the balance of the cost. The Scheme aims to ensure that long-term nursing home care is accessible and affordable for everyone and that people are cared for in the most appropriate settings.

Under the primary legislation an NHSS applicant may apply for certain items of expenditure to be taken into account and netted off against their means prior to the calculation of their

contribution. These items are referred to as allowable deductions. An applicant can apply for the following to be deducted:

- Health Expenses such a doctors' fees, pharmacy costs and prescription charges;
- Interest on loans related to the applicants principal primary residence;
- Rent Payments; and
- Property Tax.

As the deputy makes reference to health expenses and medical cards I wish to confirm that eligibility for a medical card has no relevance as to what health expenses an applicant can apply for as an allowable deduction when applying to the scheme.

Vaccination Programme

189. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the number of children that have been vaccinated with the meningitis B vaccine since it was introduced in October 2016; the rates of incidence of meningitis B since 2010 per age group; the rates of meningitis B versus meningitis C since 2010; and the rates of meningitis B and C compared to EU rates since 2010. [1970/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

Question No. 190 answered with Question No. 171.

Primary Care Centres Provision

191. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the details, including locations and indicative timelines, of plans for the roll-out of primary care centres across Cork city and county; the details of the various stages in the process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2002/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As the HSE has responsibility for the provision, along with the maintenance and operation of Primary Care Centres and other Primary Care facilities, the Executive has been asked to reply directly to the Deputy.

Services for People with Disabilities

192. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Health the steps he will take to ensure that a replacement nurse with expertise in disability services is appointed to the child disability services team in Springfield, Mullingar, County Westmeath (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2015/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath): The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government,

which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

Infectious Diseases

193. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the strains of meningitis responsible for the latest outbreak; the age breakdown of those affected; the regions they were based; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2018/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Accommodation Provision

194. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the amount of funding required to reopen and fully staff the 20-bed short-stay ward of €1.8 million sought by the management of Letterkenny University Hospital allocated to date; and if the 20 beds in the ward will reopen as soon as possible. [2021/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Increasing capacity is a priority for the Government in line with the recommendations of the Health Service Capacity Review. In this context, an additional 240 beds have been opened over the past 12 months and the HSE's National Service Plan provides for a comprehensive capacity programme for 2019. The main elements of the programme are:

- the opening of 78 new beds by the end of the first quarter of 2019;
- the opening of an additional 75 acute beds and 70 community beds during 2019, as part of the Winter Plan, including 5 beds in Letterkenny University Hospital;
- preparation of 202 beds this year, to be operational in the first quarter of 2020, including beds in Letterkenny Hospital.

Hospital Overcrowding

195. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of days in 2018 that Letterkenny University Hospital deployed the full capacity protocol. [2022/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The HSE National Escalation Framework, issued to the system in late 2015, consists of a tiered and incremental suite of actions to be adapted and implemented in hospitals with an ED during times when such hospitals are challenged in matching capacity and demand for acute inpatient care.

The full capacity protocol is the last escalation step in the HSE National Escalation Framework

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

Questions - Written Answers
Ambulance Service Funding

196. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health if the funding required to provide a second 24-hour ambulance based in Buncrana, County Donegal and serving the Inishowen Peninsula will be provided by the HSE as requested by the national ambulance service, NAS. [2023/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this is a service issue, I have asked the HSE to reply to you directly.

Hospitals Data

197. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Buncrana Community Hospital and nursing unit, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2024/19]

198. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Buncrana Community Hospital and nursing unit, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018, in tabular form. [2025/19]

199. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Carndonagh Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2026/19]

200. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Carndonagh Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2027/19]

201. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Ramelton Community Hospital and nursing unit, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2028/19]

202. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Ramelton Community Hospital and nursing unit, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2029/19]

203. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Lifford Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2030/19]

204. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Lifford Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2031/19]

205. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at St. Joseph's Community Hospital, Stranorlar, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2032/19]

206. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at St. Joseph's Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2033/19]

207. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Falcarragh Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date

in 2019, in tabular form. [2034/19]

208. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Falcarragh Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2035/19]

209. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of hospital beds at Dungloe Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2036/19]

210. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the number of nurses based at Dungloe Community Hospital, County Donegal in each of the years 2004 to 2018 and to date in 2019, in tabular form. [2037/19]

211. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the temporary replacement beds available to Carndonagh Community Hospital, County Donegal in other hospitals in the county during the refurbishment works in the time ahead to ensure that there will no loss of beds and service to the local community. [2038/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): I propose to take Questions Nos. 197 to 211, inclusive, together.

As these are service matters I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

TAMS Payments

212. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a supplementary TAMS payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1815/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The applicant in question made an application for mobile sheep handling equipment in the Animal Welfare, Safety and Nutrient Storage Scheme of TAMS II. The payment claim had a penalty applied and the application of this penalty has been reviewed following a request from the applicant. A balancing payment due following the outcome of the review will issue to the applicant shortly.

Forestry Premium Payments

213. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a forestry grant premium will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1837/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): Payment to forest owners who applied for their 2019 forestry premium payment online through the Department's online services portal were issued on 10/01/2019. I can confirm that annual premium payments to the person named for both ongoing contracts were included in this payment run.

GLAS Payments

214. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

when a 2018 GLAS payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1838/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The person named was approved into GLAS 1 with a contract commencement date of 1 October 2015 and has received all payments in respect of scheme years 2015 2016 and 2017.

The 2018 advance payment was delayed due to an issue relating to the Low Input Permanent Pasture claim. This issue has now been resolved. The application will continue to go through the required validation checks and once these are complete payment will issue. GLAS payments continue to be issued on a weekly basis.

Departmental Staff Data

215. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications in tabular form. [1880/19]

216. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications in tabular form. [1897/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): I propose to take Questions Nos. 215 and 216 together.

My Department is committed to ensuring that a highly skilled, motivated and efficient workforce is in place to meet its ongoing and continually evolving business needs. One of the goals outlined in my Department's current Statement of Strategy is to continue to develop a highly skilled, diverse and gender balanced workforce and to support a positive working environment for all that provides equality of opportunity and career opportunities.

There are 3,227 (Full time equivalent) employees in my Department working in various locations nationwide and the workforce comprises of a number of specialist grades in addition to the standard civil service grades.

There is a dedicated Procurement Unit comprising of nine staff within my Department which is led by the Head of Finance Division. This Unit develops, disseminates, monitors and enforces Procurement Policy and provides advice to staff on Procurement matters. They also avail of the expertise of the staff of the Office of Government Procurement, as appropriate.

I can confirm that Public Procurement in my Department is undertaken as needs arise in line with relevant legislation, policy and public procurement guidelines.

Whilst staff in my Department are not obliged to provide details of their professional qualifications, I can confirm they are encouraged and supported in developing, refreshing and augmenting their knowledge and skills. As part of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), each staff member completes a Learning and Development Plan at the beginning of the year. In addition the Civil Service Refund of Academic Fees Scheme provides an opportunity for staff to pursue third level professional educational programmes relevant to their work area. Professional membership fees in respect of two staff members have been paid by

my Department to two of the organisations listed in recent years.

I am confident that staff in my Department are equipped to provide our customers and stakeholders with a high level of service delivery in the area of procurement, within the broader scope of driving a dynamic Agri-Food Sector.

Meat Processing Plant Inspections

217. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of inspections carried out on adult sheep carcasses, that is, those over one year of age, in processing factories in each of the years 2016 to 2018, respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1919/19]

218. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of inspections carried out on lamb carcasses, that is, those under one year of age, in processing factories in each of the years 2016 to 2018, respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1920/19]

219. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of instances of non-compliance in relation to carcass trimming regulations detected when adult sheep carcasses over one year of age and lamb carcasses under one year of age were inspected in processing factories in each of the years 2016 to 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1921/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): I propose to take Questions Nos. 217 to 219, inclusive, together.

Carcase Classification and carcass presentation (Trim) for Beef, Pigs and Sheep is governed by the following EU legislation: Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. This legislation applies across the entire EU. Article 10 of this legislation defines the rules for the compulsory classification of Beef and Pigs.

Unlike bovines and pigs there is no EU legislative requirement for processors to classify sheep carcasses.

While the 5 main Irish processors that slaughter sheep also classify carcasses, they do so on an entirely voluntary basis. No machine grading is carried out; where grading is carried out, factory operatives are involved in manual classification. There is therefore no legal basis for any statutory inspections.

My Department gives guidance and training for the voluntary classification of sheep carcasses in the 5 factories. In the years 2016-2018 there were 80 visits conducted in this regard. No differentiation between adult sheep and lambs is made regarding sheep classification at factory level.

Animal Identification Schemes

220. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of times food business organisations have accessed herd numbers of farmers through the AIM system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1922/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): It is under-

stood that the Deputy is referring to access to details of herd keepers on the Animal Identification and Movement System (AIMS) that is available to the Food Business Operator (FBO) of slaughter plants. FBOs have access on the AIMS database to information on the specific animals presented for slaughter by herd keepers, such as the date of birth, breed, gender and disease history - all of this information is required by the FBO under legislation and is also available on the animal's passport. The only personnel with access to herd numbers of herd keepers in FBO premises are Department personnel with secure logins that are present in FBOs as representatives of the Competent Authority to supervise operations.

Climate Change Policy

221. **Deputy Eamon Ryan** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the reason the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration was not signed; the reasons for signing or not signing respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1816/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): The 24th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 24) took place in Katowice, Poland, from 2 to 15 December 2018. COP 24 had two major outcomes - the completion of negotiations aimed at enabling the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and the conclusion of a year-long process of reflection on the imperative of scaling up global efforts to address climate change, the Talanoa Dialogue. COP 24 also saw three Declarations presented by the Polish Presidency and adopted by a range of Party and non-Party stakeholders.

The Silesia Declaration on Just Transition reiterated the importance of managing the transition away from emission-intensive activity in a structured manner, taking into account the societal needs for alternative employment and opportunities.

The Ministerial Katowice Declaration on Forests for the Climate recognised the importance of forests and calls on all sectors to pursue afforestation measures and support the enhanced scientific understanding of the role of forests as carbon sinks.

The third Declaration, Driving Change Together - the Katowice Partnership for E-mobility, was presented jointly by Poland and the United Kingdom, recognising the challenges faced by societies in reducing transport emissions. It called on Parties, regions, cities and NGOs to promote electro-mobility and clean transport and encouraged the development of electro-mobility, sustainable patterns and innovation in transport, with the ultimate goal of reducing emissions in this sector and improving the health of the planet's population.

Ireland supported all three Declarations at COP 24. Officials from my Department are in contact with the Polish COP Presidency to ensure that Ireland is listed as a signatory to all three Declarations.

Fuel Prices

222. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the reason there is such disparity nationally in prices for a litre of petrol and diesel; if his attention has been drawn to the reason for same; his plans to address same with better regulation or an alternative solution; and if his Department has carried out an investigation into this price disparity. [1840/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): The Irish retail oil sector is an open and competitive market. As such, I have no role in the setting of fuel prices. The retail price of gasoline and diesel at the pumps is determined by a number of factors, including the price of crude oil and refined product on the international markets. Oil prices are subject to many factors, including market supply and demand levels and as oil is traded almost exclusively in US Dollars, the strength of that currency against the Euro.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC, under the aegis of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation) is responsible for ensuring that the market is functioning correctly and that consumers are not being unfairly disadvantaged.

National Broadband Plan

223. **Deputy Mary Butler** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the position regarding the national broadband plan; when an area (details supplied) will have full broadband cover; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1863/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): The National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to ensure high speed broadband access (minimum 30 megabits per second) to all premises in Ireland, regardless of location. This is being achieved via a combination of commercial investment and a State led intervention.

The NBP has been a catalyst in encouraging investment by the telecoms sector. In 2012, less than 700,000, or 30% of all 2.3 million Irish premises had access to high speed broadband. When this Government came into office, this had risen to 52%. Today, 74% of premises can access high speed broadband.

The premises referred to by the Deputy is in the AMBER area on the National Broadband Plan (NBP) High Speed Broadband Map, which is available on my Department's website at www.broadband.gov.ie. The AMBER areas represent the target areas for the proposed State led Intervention under the NBP. This intervention is the subject of an ongoing procurement process.

The procurement process to appoint a bidder for the State intervention network is now at the final stage. My priority is to bring the procurement process to a fair and impartial conclusion as quickly as possible and I will bring a recommendation to Government in the coming weeks.

For those premises currently awaiting access to high speed broadband, practical initiatives will continue to be addressed through the work of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce to address obstacles and improve connectivity in respect of existing and future mobile phone and broadband services.

Under this Taskforce, engagement between telecommunications operators and local authorities through the Broadband Officers is continuing to strengthen. These Broadband Officers are acting as single points of contact in local authorities for their communities. The appointment of these officers is already reaping rewards in terms of ensuring a much greater degree of consistency in engagements.

Departmental Staff Data

224. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and

Environment the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications in tabular form. [1883/19]

225. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications in tabular form. [1900/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 224 and 225 together.

There are currently 413 staff employed in my Department.

A number of staff are qualified members of various professional bodies. Details of the professional organisations where membership is supported by the Department, are set out in Table 1.

This data does not include the professional qualifications with organisations which may be maintained individually by officers.

Table 1

Staff Number	Professional Body
2	Engineers Ireland
1	The Geological Society
2	Law Society Ireland
2	Irish Association for Economic Geology
1	Institute of Geologists
1	Institute of Acoustics
1	European Federation of Geologists
1	Energy Institute
3	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
1	Institute of Certified Public Accountants
1	Chartered Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors
1	Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management
1	Irish Planning Institute
1	Dublin Solicitors Bar Association

While currently the Department does not retain a central Skills Register, the details of employees that have been supported by the Department since 2015 in applications for professional qualifications are listed in Table 2. This data does not include professional qualifications completed by officers prior to their commencement of employment in the Department or professional qualifications which may have been achieved privately by officers. The Civil Service Shared Service for Learning and Development, One Learning, are developing a Skills Register which will allow for such reporting in the future.

Table 2

Number	Professional Qualifications
1	ACCA – Governance Risk and Ethics – Corporate Reporting
1	Account Technician
1	Administrative Law
1	Advanced Diploma in Data Protection Law
1	Advanced Taxation & Advanced Audit & Assurance
1	BA (Hons) Visual Communications
1	BA Hons Business Studies
1	BA Hons in HRM Strategy and Practice
2	BA Hons Public Management
1	BA in Law
1	BA in Public Administration
2	Bachelor in Business Studies
1	Bachelor of Arts – IT Management
1	Barrister at Law Degree
1	Behavioural Economics Module
1	Bookkeeping (Manual & Computerised)
1	BSc Hons Information Systems
1	BSC in Computing, IT and Mathematics
1	BSc Natural Sciences
1	Certificate in Management & Development
4	Certificate in Civil Service and State Agency Studies
5	Certificate in Human Resources Management
1	Certificate in Finance
1	Certificate in Procurement
1	Certificate in Project Management
3	Certificate in Public Management
1	Certified Project Management Diploma
1	Comp TIA A+
1	Digital Marketing & Social Media
1	Digital Photography
2	Dioplóma Iarchéime san Aistriúchán
1	Diploma in Business Management
1	Diploma in Business Studies
1	Diploma in Civil Service and State Agency Studies
1	Diploma in Corporate Governance
1	Diploma in Event Management & PR
1	Diploma in Executive & Life Coaching
2	Diploma in Legal Studies
1	Diploma in Organisation Development & Transformation
2	Diploma In Public Management
1	Evaluating Contemporary Science
3	Forensic Computing & Cybercrime Investigation
1	Higher Diploma in Business Management
1	ICM Cert Desktop Publishing
2	Introduction to the Irish Legal System
4	Diploma in Human Resource Management
1	Diploma in Legal Practice & Procedure

Questions - Written Answers

Number	Professional Qualifications
1	LL.B (Hons) in Law
2	MA Financial Management
1	MA in Leadership and Strategy
2	MA in Public Management
1	MA in Social Media Communications
1	Master of Arts - Human Resource Management
2	Master of Economic Science in Policy Analysis
2	MBA
1	MSc in Forensic Computing and Cybercrime Investigation
2	MSc in Human Resource Strategies
1	MSc in Policy Analysis
1	PhD in Adult and Community Education
1	PhD in Coastal Vulnerability
1	Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Marketing
3	Postgraduate Diploma in Public Management
1	Professional Diploma in Accounting
2	Professional Certificate in Governance
3	Professional Diploma in Official Statistics for Policy Evaluation
1	Professional Diploma in Project Management
1	Certificate - Programme for Senior Leaders

While there is no CPD requirement for procurement in my Department, two officers are currently completing a professional qualification in procurement.

The Procurement Officer in the Department operates in a support and advisory capacity to line Divisions who are individually responsible for the preparation, tendering and awarding of contracts for goods and services within their respective areas. These procurement activities form part of the day-to-day duties of certain officials.

National Broadband Plan

226. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the status of the awarding of a contract in respect of the national broadband plan; if his officials have provided him with an interim report and-or made recommendations on the awarding of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2017/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): The procurement process to appoint a bidder for the NBP State intervention network is now at the final stage. My Department's assessment of the final tender submission received from the bidder on 18 September 2018 is reaching a conclusion.

While I have received briefings from officials in my Department in relation to the NBP procurement process, I have yet to receive an interim or final report with a recommendation.

My priority is to bring the procurement process to a fair and impartial conclusion as quickly as possible and I will bring a recommendation to Government in the coming weeks.

Aviation Policy

227. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reason for the pending introduction of a requirement of customs officials and airport police to be searched as a matter of routine when they enter and exit airport facilities and when they are entering and exiting different areas within the airport campus itself including from airside to landside; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1834/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The enhanced procedures the Deputy asks about were decided by my Department and adopted by the National Civil Aviation Security Committee on the basis of a risk assessment by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA), which has responsibility for regulating aviation security in Ireland. The Security Committee has members taken from key Government Departments (including Revenue), An Garda Síochána, the Defense Forces, and industry (both airports and airlines). These new, enhanced staff screening procedures are being put in as part of an ongoing programme of security improvements at our State airports.

The overall approach to reviewing and assessing airport security represents the honouring of commitments made in the 2015 National Aviation Policy (NAP), which was developed by the Department following extensive industry and stakeholder consultation. The NAP committed to introduce a risk-based approach to ensure Ireland has a robust and efficient aviation security system.

A number of reviews/audits of security practices and procedures at the State airports pointed to the need to make improvements. In particular, in 2017 the Department invited the Paris-based European Civil Aviation Conference (a long-established pan European organisation with expertise in aviation security) to review security at Dublin Airport. That review - the contents of which are confidential - made a number of recommendations, which the Department and the regulator (the IAA) have set about implementing nationally.

The reality is that aviation security is a highly regulated area by international agreements - under the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and under the European regulations - and the State is committed to implementing best international practice in this field. The principal regulation in Europe for setting out the standards for civil aviation security is Regulation (EC) No. 300/2008, and Ireland is required to adhere to the baseline requirements laid out in this Regulation, including a requirement that:

“All persons other than passengers, together with their items carried, shall be screened upon entering critical parts of security restricted areas in order to prevent prohibited articles from being introduced into these parts.”

I wish to assure the Deputy that personnel are and will continue to be exempt from screening if they are responding to any emergency situation, without any delay.

Air Safety

228. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the contingency plans in place for drone attacks and illegal use of drones at Irish airports, in particular Dublin, Shannon and Cork airports; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1820/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As the Deputy may be aware, I asked my officials to convene a meeting of the National Civil Aviation Threat and Risk Group to examine the issue of illegal operation of drones in and around prohibited airspace at Irish airports. This was in light of the recent drone events at Gatwick and Heathrow airports. The Group, which included representatives of all the relevant Government departments and

State authorities, airports and airlines, discussed preparedness at Irish airports in the event of an illegal infringement into restricted airspace of a drone, including current arrangements and on-going developments at the EU level.

There are already very strong regulatory provisions in place in Ireland, which control and restrict the use of drones. Ireland was an early mover in this respect. These include an exclusion zone of 5 kilometres around airports, which is something I understand the UK authorities are now moving to. There are also operational protocols in place for dealing with illegal drone activity at the airports, which serve to coordinate the response of the airport authority, air traffic control and An Garda Síochána.

It would of course be inappropriate to provide specific information on what contingency plans might entail - as this would risk compromising the effectiveness of any response - but I can assure you it is a matter being treated very seriously by the airport operators, by the airlines, by my Department and the safety regulator - the Irish Aviation Authority.

Departmental Expenditure

229. **Deputy Gino Kenny** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the capital expenditure to the end of December 2018 under the heading of walking and cycling; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1821/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As the Deputy may be aware I have secured significant improved funding allocations over the period 2018-2021 which will benefit both cyclists and walkers.

These improved allocations over this period include:

- €110 million specifically dedicated to cycling and walking infrastructure in our major urban areas;

- €135 million for sustainable urban transport measures;

- €750 million approximately towards the BusConnects programme in Dublin which will include the delivery of around 200 kilometres of segregated cycling lanes, where possible; and

- €53 million to support the development of new Greenways.

In addition to the above, Government has also made additional money available for cycling projects through both the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds under the National Development Plan.

End year figures for 2018 are currently being finalised; in the meantime, the provisional capital expenditure figures for sustainable transport measures that benefit walking and cycling are as follows:

- €18 million approximately spent specifically on cycling and walking infrastructure in our major urban areas;

- €15 million approximately spent on sustainable transport measures, which will benefit both cyclists and walkers; and

- €2.5 million approximately spent on Smarter Travel initiatives, which includes behavioural change measures.

Funding under these programmes as detailed above will increase again in 2019 with approximately €48 million allocated toward the programmes.

I believe that the improved multi-annual capital expenditure figures outlined above will positively assist with the better development and provision of cycling infrastructure across the State, while improving the safety for all road users.

Road Network

230. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the time-frame for the completion of works (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1851/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. Under the Roads Acts 1993-2015, the planning, design and construction of individual roads is a matter for the relevant road authority (i.e. local authorities) in relation to local and regional roads, or for Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), in conjunction with the local authorities concerned, in relation to national roads.

Noting the above position, I have referred the question to TII for a direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Departmental Staff Data

231. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1896/19]

232. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1913/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I propose to take Questions Nos. 231 and 232 together.

The number of employees in the Department at 1st January 2019 is 557. A number of staff are qualified members of various professional bodies where Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a requirement of their role. There is currently no CPD requirement for procurement. Details of the professional associations/institutes, identified by the Deputy, where staff membership is supported by the Department, are set out in Table 1. In the absence of a central register of staff qualifications the Department does not currently have information on the number of staff who are professionally qualified via the Institute of Public Administration.

The procurement of goods and services (where requirements are identified) by the Department is devolved to Divisions who manage the process directly in line with Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Guidelines and Frameworks. Where it is a requirement of their role, employees from Higher Executive Officer and above are authorised to approve payments in respect of the procurement of goods and services.

TABLE 1

Organisation	Number of staff
Chartered Accountants Ireland	2
Institute of Certified Public Accountants	1

Railway Stations

233. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the position regarding persons who have the free travel pass and are travelling with Iarnród Éireann when the new system comes into effect in train stations in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1924/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The issue raised is an operational matter for Iarnród Éireann and I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the company for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.

Sports Capital Programme Applications

234. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if an application for capital funding under the sports capital grants scheme has been received from a club (details supplied); if so, if same will be considered for an allocation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2014/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Brendan Griffin): The 2018 round of the Sports Capital Programme opened for applications on Friday 7 September and the application period closed on Friday 19th October. By that deadline, a record 2,337 applications were submitted seeking a total of €162m in funding.

I can confirm that an application has been submitted by the organisation referred to by the Deputy.

For the first time, applicants who have submitted incorrect documentation under this round will be given the opportunity to correct their application during the assessment period. While there will be no undue delay in completing the assessment process, in view of the opportunity to correct documentation, the record number of applications received and the detailed information contained in each application, it is likely to take a number of months to have all of these new applications fully assessed.

Departmental Staff Data

235. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of employees in her Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1882/19]

236. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of employees in her Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1899/19]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone): I propose to take Questions Nos. 235 and 236 together.

At 31 December 2018, there were 277 employees (headcount) in my Department.

Of these, 221 are at the grade of Executive Officer or higher and therefore have sanction to authorise payments, subject to the following limits, as well as other restrictions:

Grade	Authorisation Limit
Executive Officer or higher	€1,000
Higher Executive Officer / Administrative Officer or higher	€25,000
Assistant Principal Officer or higher	€100,000
Principal Officer or higher	€1m
Assistant Secretary or higher	€10m
Secretary General	€10m

Note: The Secretary General has authorised different authorisation levels for Tusla draw-down and Early Years/Childcare drawdowns.

My Department does not hold comprehensive records on employee qualifications as it cannot compel employees to disclose their qualifications, whether in respect of the organisations mentioned in the Details Supplied or otherwise.

A dedicated Procurement Unit is in place in DCYA. A contracts register of all contracts which have been live at any time since January 2017 to date with a value of more than €20,000 has been set up and the Procurement Unit monitors these contracts relating to approaching expiry dates etc. A central repository of all the corresponding tender documentation is also in place.

Detailed Procurement Policies and Procedures which includes a policy framework and user guidelines are in place. Staff within the Procurement Unit have attended procurement training, including eTenders training, and two Unit members have completed a Certificate in Procurement.

In addition, 49 employees in my Department have received non-certified training in procurement since its establishment in 2011.

Legislative Process

237. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the status of the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016; and the timeframe for the Bill to progress to Committee Stage. [1928/19]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone): It is the Minister's intention to progress to Committee Stage of the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016 in the Seanad Éireann as quickly as possible.

This is an important piece of legislation as it provides adopted people and other relevant people with statutory rights to information and to a tracing service. It will also protect relevant records by bringing them into the custody of the Adoption Authority of Ireland and it will create offences for the concealment, destruction, mutilation or falsification of such records.

The Bill must operate within the current constitutional framework and must seek to balance the rights to identity and to privacy, which may sometimes be in conflict. However, the Bill operates on the basis of a presumption in favour of disclosing information in so far as is legally and constitutionally possible. I am continuing to actively explore all options in relation to facilitating the release of as much information as possible to adopted and other relevant persons and will introduce any necessary amendments at Committee Stage.

Legislative Process

238. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if consideration has been given to amendments of the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016, the scope of the amendments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1929/19]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone): It is my intention to progress to Committee Stage of the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016 in the Seanad Éireann as quickly as possible.

It is intended that a number of Government amendments will be proposed at Committee Stage or Report Stage. These are still being finalised.

Some of these amendments seek to address concerns raised about elements of the Bill during the debate on Second Stage in the Seanad and by advocates and lobby groups. I am continuing to actively explore all options in relation to facilitating the release of as much birth information as possible to adopted and other relevant persons.

In addition, my Department is consulting with the Data Protection Commissioner to determine if amendments are required to ensure compliance with the GDPR.

Departmental Staff Data

239. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1894/19]

240. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1911/19]

Minister for Rural and Community Development (Deputy Michael Ring): I propose to take Questions Nos. 239 and 240 together.

My Department pays subscriptions for professional membership fees for staff as required for them to undertake their official duties. The Department currently pays professional membership fees for two staff for the bodies specified in Table A.

In addition, the Department holds corporate membership with the Institute of Public Administration.

Table A

Organisation	Staff Membership
Chartered Accountants Ireland	1
Institute of Internal Auditors	1

The procurement of goods and services within the Department takes place in the context of the Office of Government Procurement framework arrangements. All procurement must be authorised by the relevant budget holder, which in practical terms means that authorisation can take place at HEO level and above. Employees have authorised approval limits and all procurement expenditure must be certified and authorised by different individuals holding the appropriate authorisations.

Illness Benefit Data

241. **Deputy Kevin O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the amount and dates of payment of illness benefit to a person (details supplied) in County Cork in respect of 2019. [1823/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The Person concerned is currently in receipt of Illness Benefit and two payments have issued to him thus far. The first payment of €1551 issued to him on the 31st December 2018 which included arrears and that weeks payment.

A further payment of €231 issued to him on the 11th January 2019 which was for the current medically certified period of up to 7th January 2019. If they remain ill and unfit for work, a further medical certificate should be submitted to the Department as soon as possible in order for further payments to issue.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the deputy.

Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme Appeals

242. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if a file for an appeal for partial capacity benefit for a person (details supplied) in County Kildare will be forwarded to the appeals office for processing; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1828/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) allows a person who has been in receipt of Illness Benefit for six months and who may not have full capacity for work, to return to employment and continue to receive a partial or full payment from the Department.

The Partial Capacity Benefit file and relevant reports in respect of the person concerned was sent to the Social Welfare Appeals Office on the 9th January 2019.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the appeal by the person concerned will now be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Departmental Staff Data

243. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the number of staff working within the carer's allowance section; the number in each area within the section; when staff were last taken on in the section; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1829/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): My Department, like all Government departments and agencies, is required to operate within a staff ceiling figure and a commensurate administrative staffing budget, which for this Department has involved reductions in staff numbers.

At the end of December 2018, there were 75.02 FTE's (77 people) assigned to the Carers Allowance section.

There are two areas within the Carers Allowance Section:

(i) Maintenance Section – Currently, there are 38.55 FTE's (39 people) assigned to this area.

This section maintains the claims of 79,914 carers and their 47,973 qualified children as well as dealing with queries in relation to their 87,589 care recipients. On a weekly basis the section replies to emails, processes PQs, replies to written/email representations, re-assesses customer requests for re-assessment, reviews decisions on foot of pre-appeal reviews and appeals as well as answering phone-calls on a dedicated Oireachtas phone-line.

(ii) New Claims section – Currently, there are 36.47 FTE's (38 people)

This section processes approx. 400 applications per week, issuing arrears and implementing Appeals Officer decisions on a weekly basis.

My Department is focusing on prioritising the filling of critical posts. The staffing needs for all areas within the Department, including the Carers Allowance Section, are continuously reviewed, taking account of workloads, management priorities and the competing demands arising, to ensure that the best use is made of all available resources with a view to providing an efficient service to those who rely on the schemes operated by the Department.

Since 1st June 2018 there has been 6 new staff assigned to the Carers Allowance section, (6 FTE).

Social Welfare Benefits Data

244. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the number of applications received, awarded and refused, respectively for carer's allowance and carer's benefit in 2018. [1830/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The information requested by the Deputy is detailed in the following tabular statement.

The number of claims in respect of Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit registered, awarded or rejected in 2018

Scheme	Registered	Awarded	Rejected*
Carer's Allowance	20,122	17,242	9,291

Scheme	Registered	Awarded	Rejected*
Carer's Benefit	4,101	2,774	1,026

* The rejected claim total may include claims which were subsequently awarded on review following receipt of additional information from the applicant.

Carer's Allowance Payments

245. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if the resumption of full payment in the case of a person (details supplied) will be expedited; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1914/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): Carer's allowance (CA) is a means-tested social assistance payment made to a person who is habitually resident in the State and who is providing full-time care and attention to a child or an adult who has such a disability that as a result they require that level of care.

The person concerned has been in receipt of a half-rate CA since 1 March 2018 as her husband has been claiming an increase for a qualified adult for her on his jobseeker's benefit.

On 23 October 2018 she requested a review of her CA entitlement as her husband has returned to work and has ceased claiming jobseeker's benefit.

The outcome of the review is that the person concerned has been awarded full rate CA with effect from 4 October 2018.

Arrears of allowance from 4 October 2018 to 16 January 2019 will issue shortly.

The person concerned was notified on 12 January 2019 of this outcome, the reason for it and of her right of review and appeal.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Social Welfare Appeals

246. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if a decision has been made on a carer's support grant appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1915/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an appeal was registered on the 17th October 2018 and, in accordance with the statutory requirements, the Appeals Office had contacted the appellant and asked her to set out the complete grounds of her appeal.

I am informed that these grounds of appeal were received in the Social Welfare Appeals Office on the 7th November 2018. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these papers have been received back from the Department the case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals

against decisions in relation to social welfare entitlements.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Rural Social Scheme Eligibility

247. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the reason the rural social scheme is not available to those in receipt of a blind pension in view of the fact that it is available to those in receipt of disability allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1917/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The Rural Social scheme (RSS) provides part-time employment opportunities in the community and voluntary organisations for low-income farmers and fishermen/women in receipt of certain social welfare payments who are actively farming /fishing and underemployed in their primary occupation. It also gives participants an opportunity to develop new skills.

The blind pension is not currently a qualifying payment for RSS. A person in receipt of the blind pension may qualify for participation on Community Employment (CE) scheme provided they satisfy the eligibility criteria pertaining to the scheme.

I will ask my Department officials to give consideration to the possibility of extending the eligibility criteria for RSS to include recipients of the blind pension.

Invalidity Pension Applications

248. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of an application for invalidity benefit by a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1927/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath): Invalidity pension (IP) is a payment for people who are permanently incapable of work because of illness or incapacity and who satisfy the pay related social insurance (PRSI) contribution conditions.

The department received a claim for IP from the lady referred to on 08 November 2018. Her claim was disallowed on the grounds that the medical conditions for the scheme were not satisfied. She was notified on the 11 January 2019 of this decision, the reasons for it and of her right of review and appeal.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Brexit Issues

249. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if she will publish the analysis being undertaken examining all scenarios of Brexit on the reciprocal arrangements in place between Ireland and the United Kingdom in relation to social security payments; when she will publish same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1933/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The

Government and the EU remain committed to securing a negotiated Brexit outcome. We have been planning for all Brexit scenarios but in light of uncertainties in London and the Brexit deadline of 29 March, the Government decided at its meeting of 11 December that immediate priority must now be given to preparations for a no deal Brexit and that Government Departments and state agencies should urgently take forward work on that basis.

The Contingency Action Plan which the Government published on 19 December sets out in comprehensive terms, the challenges to be faced and the actions taken and planned by the Government across key sectors in the event of a no deal Brexit scenario.

My key area of interest is the impact of Brexit on the current reciprocal arrangements for social insurance schemes, social assistance schemes and child benefit between Ireland and the UK, including Northern Ireland. I met with the then UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Right Honourable Esther McVey, on 23 April 2018. We agreed on our objective in ensuring that the reciprocity of social welfare rights and entitlements, which currently exist for Irish and UK citizens moving within Ireland and between Ireland and Britain under the Common Travel Area, are safeguarded and maintained.

During the passage of the Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2018 through the Oireachtas I gave a commitment to share the analysis being conducted by my Department on the impact of Brexit on the reciprocal arrangements for social insurance schemes, social assistance schemes and child benefit between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I will do that at the appropriate time.

Legislative Process

250. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the stage plans are at to move the Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2017 to Committee Stage; the timeframe for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1963/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2017 proposes a number of amendments to the Social Welfare Acts, the Pensions Act 1990 and the Civil Registration Act 2004.

The amendments to the Pensions Act contain a number of key measures relating to Defined Benefit pension schemes. It is intended that these measures will act to support existing provisions in the Pensions Act by providing for further protection for scheme members' benefits and enhancing employer responsibilities for their schemes. These provisions in particular are very technical and involve complex policy issues. In order to achieve a resilient solution it has been necessary to consult in detail with other Government Departments and obtain numerous legal advices from the Office of the Attorney General on various aspects of the provisions. When these matters have been resolved and amendments approved by Government, an early date for Committee Stage will be requested.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Back to Work Family Dividend Scheme Data

251. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the number of persons in receipt of the back to work enterprise allowance and the short-term

enterprise allowance as of the end of 2018. [2003/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The back to work enterprise allowance (BTWEA) is designed to provide a monetary incentive for people who are in receipt of social welfare payments to enter self-employment and develop a business while allowing them to retain a reducing proportion of their qualifying social welfare payment over two years - 100% in year 1 and 75% in year 2. The BTWEA is generally available to persons who are on a qualifying social welfare payment, such as jobseekers allowance/benefit, for 9 months or longer.

The short term enterprise allowance (STEA) provides immediate support to those who qualify for jobseekers benefit wishing to set up a business. Payment under the scheme is at the same rate and for the same duration as their entitlement to jobseekers benefit

The information requested by the Deputy in respect of people who are in receipt of BTWEA and STEA as of the 31st of December 2018 is detailed in the following table:

Scheme	Recipients December 2018
BTWEA	6,666
STEA	335

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Planning Issues

252. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the measures an individual can take to remove an association between them and planning applications made in their name without their knowledge. [1832/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): Any person who has reason to believe a planning application has been made in their name without their consent should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the relevant planning authority, who will decide what course of action is appropriate.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, section 34(13) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the 2000 Act), provides that a person shall not be entitled solely by reason of a permission granted under that section to carry out any development. The legal interest of an applicant for planning permission in the land or structure concerned has to be stated in the completed planning application form. Where the applicant is not the owner of the land or structure, the name and address of the owner has to be stated on the planning application form, and the written consent of the owner to the making of the planning application must also be submitted as part of the application.

Furthermore, an applicant for planning permission or an agent acting on behalf of the applicant is required to sign a declaration as part of the planning application form, stating that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the information provided on the completed form is correct and accurate and fully compliant with the 2000 Act and Regulations made thereunder.

In considering a planning application, it is a matter for the planning authority to decide if the information it receives is correct, accurate and fully compliant with planning legislation. A planning authority may invalidate an application if it does not comply with the relevant requirements under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (the 2001 Regulations). These requirements include the need to publish a newspaper notice and erect a site notice in

respect of a proposed development before submitting a planning application to the planning authority.

In addition and where considered necessary, a planning authority may request further information in relation to a planning application, and also further request clarification of that information, under the 2001 Regulations. Such a request may include the submission of any information from the applicant concerning any estate or interest in or right over land, which the authority considers necessary to enable it to deal with the application, or any evidence, which the authority may reasonably require, to verify any particulars or information given in, or in relation to, a planning application.

Building Energy Rating Compliance

253. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if he will provide a progress report on the efforts to meet near zero energy building requirements in 2018; if all public buildings, whether owned or leased by the State, are now fully compliant with the relevant EU directive; if not, the level of compliance; when full compliance will be achieved; the measures implemented and that will be implemented to ensure compliance with the directive's targets for 2020; the method for tracking the reduction in carbon energy consumption in residential and commercial properties; and if there are interim targets for the reduction in carbon emissions from residential and commercial buildings from the current level of approximately 30% of all carbon emission. [1841/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Damien English): The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive sets requirements at an EU level for Member States to improve the energy performance of buildings and to make an important contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Article 9(1) of the Directive requires Member States to ensure that:-

- by 31 December 2020, all new buildings are nearly zero-energy buildings; and
- after 31 December 2018, new buildings occupied and owned by public authorities are nearly zero-energy buildings.

The Directive defines a Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) as a building that has a very high energy performance and that the nearly zero or very low amount of energy required should be covered to a very significant extent by energy from renewable sources, including energy from renewable sources produced on-site or nearby. This definition was incorporated into the Building Regulations in January 2017.

The NZEB performance requirements are based on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive cost optimal calculations which were issued in 2013 and 2015. Cost-optimal levels are defined as “the energy performance level which leads to the lowest cost during the estimated economic lifecycle”. The NZEB performance for new dwellings represents an improvement in energy and carbon dioxide emissions performance of 70% over 2005 standards and requires renewables on all new dwellings. This is typically equivalent to a Building Energy Rating (BER) of “A2” and is recognised internationally as a very advanced performance requirement. The Part L performance requirements of the Building Regulations have been advanced incrementally since 2007, and the final improvement to move from the current standard of 60% better than 2005 standards or a typical BER of “A3”, to a performance of 70% better than 2005 standards or an “A2” BER, can be more easily achieved as a result of these incremental improvements. The draft regulations and accompanying technical guidance to implement this have completed

public consultation and the regulations are expected to be signed into law shortly. These regulations will also require that where Major Renovations take place which are greater than 25% of the surface area of the dwelling, the dwelling should achieve a cost optimal performance where feasible. This is equivalent to a B2 building energy rating for a typical dwelling.

For buildings other than dwellings (non-residential), the requirement to carry out a maximum permitted energy performance calculation and a maximum permitted carbon dioxide emissions performance calculation was introduced into Part L of the Building Regulations in 2008. The 2013 cost optimal calculations showed the potential for improvement in energy performance and carbon dioxide emissions performance in the order of 60% in these regulations.

This improvement in performance in the order of 60% along with a requirement for renewables on all new buildings was introduced into Part L Conservation of Fuel and Energy in Buildings in November 2017, and applies to all new Buildings other than Dwellings commencing construction from 1 Jan 2019, subject to transition arrangements. These regulations also require that existing buildings other than Dwellings will achieve cost optimal performance when undergoing major renovations affecting more than 25% of the surface area of the building envelope.

With regards to new buildings owned and occupied by Public Authorities, in December 2016 my Department issued a circular to all public service bodies advising them of the requirement for all new buildings owned and occupied by public authorities to achieve NZEB performance after 31st December 2018. It was accompanied by specifications and guidelines on how this could be achieved in practice, and to apply to all buildings owned and occupied by public authorities commencing design from 1 January 2017.

My Department has worked closely with the Department of Education and Skills, the Office of Public Works and Health Services bodies, as well as many Construction Industry bodies, to develop, elaborate and introduce the regulations and guidance.

The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive requires that a Building Energy Rating is issued when a new building is offered for sale or rent or prior to occupation. The Central Statistics Office analyses all BERs and issues a report on this analyses including the BERs issued for new buildings on a quarterly basis. Currently, based on CSO statistics, 98% of all new dwellings are built to an A3 rated BER standard.

Under the Building Control Acts 1990 to 2014, primary responsibility for compliance of works with the requirements of the Building Regulations, rests with the owners, designers and builders of buildings. Enforcement of the Building Regulations is a matter for the 31 local building control authorities, who have extensive powers of inspection and enforcement under the Acts and who are independent in the use of their statutory powers.

My Department has responsibility for improvement in the energy and carbon emissions performance of buildings through building regulations. My colleague, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment has responsibility for improving the energy performance of existing buildings more generally including those which are not undergoing works which are subject to building regulations. Together the policy measures from both our Departments will improve the performance of the building stock.

The Building Regulations measures will contribute to emissions reductions from 1 January 2021 and are key actions in contributing to Ireland's National Low Carbon Transition and Mitigation Plan and the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP). It is under these policies that reductions in carbon emissions will be tracked and reported on by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment.

Water and Sewerage Schemes Grants

254. **Deputy Kevin O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if the provision of a septic tank grant for those who require to replace their existing septic tanks and do not have the resources to do so themselves but that have not been inspected will be considered. [1842/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): The Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2013, a copy of which is available in the Oireachtas library, brought into operation a grant scheme to assist with the cost of remediation of domestic waste water treatment systems / septic tanks, which are deemed, following inspection under the Environmental Protection Agency’s National Inspection Plan, to require repair or upgrading.

In April 2018, I established a Working Group to conduct a review of the wider investment needs relating to rural water services. The Group’s aim is to recommend measures to ensure an equality of outcome between those who receive water services from Irish Water and non-Irish Water customers. The Working Group is considering all elements of rural water services including Group Water Schemes, Group Sewerage Schemes, domestic waste water treatment systems / septic tanks and individual domestic water supplies / private wells. This include enhancements to the scheme for septic tanks to better support the programme of measures in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 - 2021, published in 2018.

The terms of reference of the review provide for a two-strand approach. Strand 1 was to consider the composition and distribution of funding for the Multi-annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021. Strand 2 is considering the more complex longer-focus issues surrounding the long-term future resourcing of the rural water sector.

I recently received a report on Strand 1 of the Working Group’s deliberations. Following my consideration of its recommendations, I expect to announce details of the programme priorities for the 2019 to 2021 funding cycle shortly. This is to include revisions to the grant scheme for domestic waste water treatment systems / septic tanks.

Departmental Staff Data

255. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of employees in his Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1891/19]

256. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of employees in his Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1908/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): I propose to take Questions Nos. 255 and 256 together.

There were 719.35 full time equivalent staff in my Department at the end of December 2018, of which 223.28 FTE were professional/technical grades and 496.07 FTE were gen-

eral administrative grades. The vast majority of staff in the professional and technical stream would require professional qualifications relevant to their specific job for example, planners, engineers, architects, accountants. However a large proportion of staff in general administrative grades also hold qualifications in a wide range of areas such as law, economics, business, HR and finance. My Department does not hold a central register of the professional institute memberships of individual staff members.

My Department is committed to providing opportunities for staff for continuing career and professional development, through both general and targeted training programmes. In that context, and in addition to the internal policy and procedures documents in place to support the range of staff who may, from time to time, be involved in procurement of goods/services, my Department supports staff to undertake training and education to support delivery of those functions. My Department also engages on an ongoing basis with the Office of Government Procurement to utilise frameworks that are in place or to seek advice in respect of specific procurement matters. In addition, given the extent to which the procurement of goods and services funded by my Department is undertaken through the local government sector, a comprehensive shared service arrangement, at both the strategic and operational levels, has been in place in the sector for a number of years in order to support the professional delivery of procurement services.

Legislative Process

257. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government when he plans to introduce the residential tenancies (amendment) Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1955/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): The Residential Tenancies (Amendment)(No. 2) Bill 2018 was published on 19 December 2018. I intend to bring the Bill through the legislative process in the Houses of the Oireachtas as soon as possible during the current Oireachtas session.

National Cultural Institutions

258. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if the board of a theatre (details supplied) ratified the annual plans for the theatre; the corporate governance model that is applied between the board and artistic directors; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1817/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The Board of the theatre referred to by the Deputy appoints the Director(s) and sets overall strategy policy. On artistic programming, the Board's role is to ensure the Directors' programming choices reflect strategy, showing creativity, diversity and ambition while maintaining financial sustainability and meeting the Board's commitment to increased gender equality. Artistic decisions and the day-to-day running of the theatre are the remit of the Directors.

As Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, I acknowledge the necessity for the theatre referred to by the Deputy, as with all theatres, to have a level of artistic freedom in terms of its programming. However, I also recognise the necessity for a strong working relationship with all stakeholders including theatre practitioners. This is vital for the continued success of theatre in this country.

The theatre is a recipient of public funding from both my Department and the Arts Council. The Board and Directors of the theatre concerned have stated that their commitment to supporting the widest range of artists, making best use of its resources to bring their work to a growing and diverse audience.

The theatre's Board regularly engages with the Arts Council and with my Department, and some of the issues raised in the letter I received from theatre practitioners on 7 January had already been under active discussion between the theatre and the Arts Council in recent months. The Board of the theatre Board has also stated that the Directors' programming over the past two years, and into 2019, reflects the policy and strategic direction.

The theatre's five-year strategy (2019-2023) is published on its website. Central to the vision is for creativity to drive the theatre, developing the artists and audiences of the future.

National Cultural Institutions

259. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her contacts and meetings with a theatre (details supplied) in 2018; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1818/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht I have had a number of contacts and meetings with the theatre referred to by the Deputy in 2018. On 13 June, I met with the Chair of the Board. On 13 December, I met with the Chair of the Board and the co-directors at an event to mark the launch of the theatre's 5-Year Strategy.

I also attended two performances at the theatre in 2018.

National Cultural Institutions

260. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the role she has in relation to the operation of a theatre (details supplied); the reason for policy interventions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1819/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): As Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht I have responsibility for setting overall vision and strategic direction for Ireland's cultural sector. I acknowledge the necessity for this theatre, as with all theatres, to have a level of artistic freedom in terms of its programming but I also recognise the necessity for a strong working relationship with all its stakeholders.

This theatre to which the Deputy refers is not a State Body as defined by the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. It is a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts. Its Board consists of the Chair and 10 ordinary members.

My Department undertakes the following main functions in relation to this theatre:-

- As Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, I appoint the Chair and two of the ordinary members of the Board. Of the remaining members, one is a staff representative and seven are appointed by a Selection Committee.

- My Department provides the theatre's annual capital grant. The Arts Council provides the theatre's annual current grant.

- Funding for the theatre's development project under Project Ireland 2040.

Arts Funding

261. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the €2.13 million in funding through Culture Ireland for Irish arts globally in 2019; the projects with County Offaly involvement; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1825/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): On Monday 31 December, 2018 I announced approval of over €2.13m in funding by Culture Ireland for the promotion of Irish arts globally in 2019.

Included in the awards is a total of €975,000 in annual funding for the promotion of Irish literature, music and film through resource organisations and Ireland's cultural centres in Paris and New York who partner Culture Ireland to present ongoing programmes of Irish artists abroad.

The breakdown of the annual funding is as follows:

Body	Amount allocated
Centre Culturel Irlandais	€180,000
First Music Contact	€160,000
Irish Arts Center	€245,000
Irish Film Institute Intl.	€100,000
Literature Ireland	€290,000
Total	€975,000

The remaining €1.16m is awarded to over 160 projects enabling Irish artists and arts organisations to present their work covering architecture, circus, dance, film, literature, music, opera, theatre and the visual arts in more than 40 different countries and build on Ireland's strong global reputation for creativity.

At present the Culture Ireland website lists funding of €1,094,190 as two multi-disciplinary applications totalling €62,000 were approved in principle pending meetings with the applicants and details of these projects will be published shortly.

In relation to the projects with County Offaly involvement, Culture Ireland offers support to Irish professional artists, arts organisations and international presenters to present work by Irish artists at significant international venues and festivals. As applications are made by organisations and international presenters and it is the applicant's address which is provided to Culture Ireland, it is not possible to say which artist have a County Offaly involvement.

Applications made throughout the year are assessed in three funding rounds. Following completion of first round there are currently no Culture Ireland applications from Co. Offaly artists or arts organisations being funded in 2019 however, there will be a further two rounds of funding from Culture Ireland for projects taking place in 2019.

Cultural Policy

262. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and

the Gaeltacht the details of the cultural ambassadors initiative; the ambassador from County Offaly; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1826/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): On Monday 7 January, 2019 I announced the appointment of five Cultural Ambassadors to assist in and enhance the promotion of Ireland in the global arena under the Government's Global Ireland 2025 initiative.

Master musician and founding member of The Gloaming, Martin Hayes, leading architects, Shelly McNamara and Yvonne Farrell of Grafton Architects, awarding winning actress Ruth Negga and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Paul Muldoon have all accepted the role of Cultural Ambassador for a period of three years.

The Cultural Ambassadors will endeavour to raise the public focus on arts and culture as a means of promoting Ireland globally, provide advice and input on strategic cultural initiatives and participate in key events and projects. The first such event is a conference of cultural stakeholders being held on 24 January which will discuss and debate how best to advance Ireland's global visibility and strengthen global relationships.

Further appointments of Cultural Ambassadors may be made over time in line with the Government's geographic and other priorities.

Yvonne Farrell is originally from County Offaly. Yvonne, a graduate of UCD, is a co-founder with Shelley McNamara of Grafton Architects established in 1978. Both, Farrell and McNamara, are Fellows of the RIAI (*Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland*), and International Honorary Fellows of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and elected members of Aosdána. Grafton Architects are winners of numerous international awards including the World Building of the Year Award 2008 for their building for the Università Luigi Bocconi in Milan, which is widely acclaimed and recognised as a seminal contemporary work. They are currently working on the commission to design the new Marshall Building for the London School of Economics, the new School of Economics for University Toulouse 1 Capitole; the new Town House Building at Kingston University London; and the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter Project – The New City Library in Dublin.

Farrell and McNamara were the curators for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, the first Irish architects ever to have been awarded this honour.

Departmental Staff Data

263. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of employees in her Department; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1884/19]

264. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of employees in her Department authorised to engage in procurement; the number professionally qualified with organisations (details supplied); the number with other relevant professional qualifications; and the number with no professional qualifications, in tabular form. [1901/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 263 and 264 together.

I am informed that the number of employees in my Department is 642. I am further informed that my Department employs professionally qualified staff in many areas: finance; legal; architecture; natural heritage; archaeology; IT; HR and communications.

I am also informed that information garnered during recruitment and promotional competitions indicates that many employees across my Department hold professional qualifications in a wide variety of disciplines; however, individual employees' professional qualifications are not a matter for the Department record unless an employee is in a post for which a particular qualification is a pre-requisite. The Department does not, therefore, hold records which would supply the information requested by the Deputy. With regard to the particular institutions that the Deputy names: the Department employs a chartered accountant in the role of Department Accountant.

The Department ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines. While any officer in the Department can be required to engage with the procurement process, payment authorisation levels are set by grade. There is no role in the Department for which a procurement qualification is a pre-requisite.

Heritage Promotion

265. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the degree to which she expects to encourage participation in heritage projects at community level in the foreseeable future; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1972/19]

266. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she expects to support community heritage groups at local level in 2019; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1973/19]

268. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the discussions she has had with local heritage groups and historical societies with a view to promoting greater interest in history and heritage; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1975/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 265, 266 and 268 together.

I refer the Deputy to my response to Parliamentary Question 1720/19, answered today, which sets out in detail the consultation process for Heritage Ireland 2030 and the various ways in which my Department is engaging in the course of that process with groups, communities and individuals who have an interest in our heritage.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, has community engagement as a primary focus, and this focus is now enhanced and strengthened under the provisions of the Heritage Act 2018. The allocation of its resources across the range of programmes and initiatives it supports is a matter for the Heritage Council, which is independent in the performance of its functions. Details of the programmes and supports operated by the Heritage Council may be found on its website *www.heritagecouncil.ie*.

National Monuments

267. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

tacht her plans for archaeological excavation of historical sites that have not been investigated with particular reference to encouragement of local interest in such projects from both a tourist and archaeological point of view; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1974/19]

270. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the degree to which she has earmarked historical sites and buildings throughout County Kildare for protection and promotion; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1977/19]

271. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of listed historical sites and buildings throughout County Kildare which need further protection or are endangered; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1978/19]

273. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department has monitored the number of semi-derelict or derelict castles or historical buildings in need of extra preservation nationally; her plans for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1980/19]

274. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department has surveyed listed buildings and historical sites throughout County Kildare with a view to remedial, restoration and or preservation works; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1981/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 267, 270, 271, 273 and 274 together.

As Minister, I am the owner or guardian under the National Monuments Acts of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites. The Acts allow me to make a preservation order where I consider a national monument to be at risk. Local authorities are responsible under the Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are owners or guardians. Any works to national monuments either managed by the OPW or those in the care of a local authority require my consent under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930 as amended.

Under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, my Department has established and maintains the Record of Monuments and Places, which affords legal protection to over 120,000 recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the State. Anyone proposing works in relation to a monument that is included in the Record of Monument and Places must give my Department two months prior notice before works can start. The National Monuments Service of my Department also continually updates an inventory of archaeological monuments in the State, to ensure protection of newly-discovered archaeological sites. Furthermore, investigations are carried out where my Department receives a report of a threat or damage to a monument. The Record of Monuments and Places for County Kildare may be found on the National Monuments Service's website.

My function as Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to archaeological excavation is to regulate this activity through the licensing system under section 26 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended. The majority of archaeological excavations are carried out by private sector archaeological consultants for the purpose of assessing the impact of proposed development on possible archaeological features or mitigating the impact of development on archaeological heritage. A much smaller number are carried out for conservation or research purposes. In deciding whether to grant an archaeological excavation licence, appropriate consideration is given to the need to maintain the integrity of affected archaeological sites. All archaeological excavation licences are granted subject to conditions requiring the excavations to be conducted to an appropriate standard and that reports on the results are furnished to

my Department's National Monuments Service.

My role in relation to the protection of our architectural heritage is set out in relevant legislation, as are the roles of local authorities and owners.

The Planning and Development Acts give primary responsibility to planning authorities to identify and protect our architectural heritage by including particular structures in the *Record of Protected Structures (RPS)*. Inclusion in the *RPS* places a duty of care on the owners and occupiers of protected structures and also gives planning authorities powers to deal with development proposals affecting them and to seek to safeguard their future.

As Minister, I can make recommendations to planning authorities for buildings and structures to be included in the *Record of Protected Structures*. These recommendations arise from the survey of the *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)*, which is managed by my Department. I recommend structures rated as being of regional importance or above by the *NIAH* to the planning authorities for inclusion in their *Record of Protected Structures*. However, the making of an addition to, or a deletion from, a *Record of Protected Structures* is a reserved function of the relevant planning authorities. Details of County Kildare buildings that are listed on the Record of Protected Structures are available on the Kildare County Council website.

Responsibility for management and maintenance of historical buildings and sites in State ownership, and management of the visitor facilities at those sites and buildings, rests with the Office of Public Works.

Question No. 268 answered with Question No. 265.

Heritage Promotion

269. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she can engage in the promotion of historical heritage sites with a view to maximisation of interest from tourists and young persons; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1976/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): I refer the Deputy to my reply today to PQ 1757 on 16 January 2019.

Questions Nos. 270 and 271 answered with Question No. 267.

Waterways Ireland

272. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she continues to liaise with Waterways Ireland in order to address outstanding issues arising in respect of canal property and local interests; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [1979/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): Representatives from my Department meet with Waterways Ireland on a regular basis through formal Monitoring Committee meetings which address set agenda items as well as any other business including issues relating to the canal network. My Department also liaises with Waterways Ireland on an on-going basis outside of these meetings on other matters that arise.

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Waterways Ireland continues to work closely with boat owners using the canals, adjacent land owners and local committees. Meetings are also held with the key stakeholder interest groups, the Royal Canal Amenity Group, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) and the Heritage Boat Association (HBA).

Waterways Ireland Operational staff, lockkeepers and waterway patrollers meet canal users on a daily basis and provide a wide range of services to all our recreational users.

In addition, Waterways Ireland works alongside the Friends of the Grand Canal and Royal Canal Clean-Up Group in Dublin and the newly established Grand Canal Dock Group, who like many of the communities throughout the waterways support the maintenance of our waterways.

Questions Nos. 273 and 274 answered with Question No. 267.