

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 3, inclusive, answered orally.

Nursing Staff Remuneration

4. **Deputy Danny Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the consideration that has been given to the requests by nurses for restoration of pay in view of the fact that this was introduced as a temporary measure (details supplied). [6164/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I would first like to assure the Deputy that all nurses and midwives are benefitting from the dismantling of the temporary Financial Emergency legislation under the terms of the Public Service Stability Agreement. This Agreement is delivering pay benefits of 2-2.5% per annum and will result in the restoration of salary rates up to €50,000 for all public servants (including nurses) by end 2019, while salary rates up to €70,000 (90% of public service) will be restored by end 2020. As a result all staff nurses will be fully restored by the end of this year.

The Rainy Day Fund is designed to increase the State's resilience to external shocks such as Brexit in order to act as a counter-cyclical buffer in the event of a particularly severe economic downturn.

To spend this on current expenditure would have the following effects:

Firstly we would have permanently increased expenditure and reduced our safety buffers at a time when our economy and our tax base is at risk from external shocks such as Brexit;

Secondly, with a balanced Budget and in the absence of new revenue raising measures, we would be reducing the amount of money available to recruit new staff;

Finally we would be potentially fuelling a wage inflation spiral, where increases in wages for one group results in higher demands from other groups both in the public service and the private sector.

Questions Nos. 5 and 6 answered orally.

Departmental Properties

7. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the lands and properties owned by his Department deemed suitable and made available for social and affordable housing in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5758/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Commissioners of Public Works, on behalf of the State, manage a large and diverse property portfolio, which ranges from office accommodation to heritage properties, visitor centres, Garda stations, among others. As is typical of such large portfolios, there will always be a number of properties, at any given time, that are vacant.

The majority of the properties currently vacant are those Garda stations closed under the 2012/2013 policing plans of An Garda Síochána. The remainder consists of properties such as customs posts, former coastguard stations and sundry other properties located throughout the country.

The provision of social/affordable housing is a function of the Local Authorities and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

However, the Office of Public Works (OPW) has actively engaged with that Department in providing information on any non-operational, vacant properties we own. That Department then assesses those properties in terms of what might be suitable for residential use.

The Land Development Agency (LDA) have been given access to information on all properties held by the CPW. Given the LDA's remit to increase the supply of housing, including the re-purposing of State land for housing where appropriate, it is expected that the LDA will express interest in some lands held by the CPW. The OPW will engage constructively with any requests from the LDA.

As a matter of course, the OPW provides information on its non-operational properties to the relevant authorities/housing agencies, for assessment.

In the past two years, this process has identified a number of properties as being feasible for adaption for residential use. These include:

Property	Transferred To	Use
8 residential units in Dublin City Centre	Dublin City Council	Peter McVerry Trust
Property at Clonard Road, Crumlin, Dublin	Dublin City Council (under Licence)	Family Hub

A further 15 properties are being considered by various local authorities in terms of their potential for investment and adaptation for social housing. These include:

Property	Under Consideration By	Use
7 properties and 1 site, Crosshaven, Cork	Cork County Council	Social Housing
5 properties, Templemore, Tipperary	Tipperary County Council	Social Housing
3 properties, Limerick City	Limerick City & County Council	Social Housing

Questions Nos. 8 to 12, inclusive, answered orally.

13. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his plans to enhance the oversight of major construction contracts in order to prevent costs escalating and to safeguard taxpayer funds in view of cost overruns to date in respect of major public construction contracts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5802/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform requires those charged with the delivery of public works projects to comply with the Public Spending Code and the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF).

The Public Spending Code sets out the high level principles which apply in relation to project governance and, in particular, the procedures that must be followed by bodies with delegated sanction for capital expenditure. All projects are required to complete the review stages set out in the Code before sanction is given to go to tender. This process is undertaken between the sponsoring agency and the sanctioning authority.

A review of the Public Spending Code is currently underway in my Department. As elements of the review are completed, the associated updated guidance will be published. Work is ongoing on updating the requirements in relation to the different stages involved in the process of selection, appraisal, approval, and delivery of capital investment projects. This will be completed in Q1 2019.

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) represents the tools that a public body must use to procure and manage the external resources necessary to deliver a public works project that is to be delivered under the Exchequer-funded element of the National Development Plan. The CWMF is maintained by the Office of Government Procurement in consultation with the Government Contracts Committee for Construction.

The performance of a key component of the CWMF; the public works contract, was reviewed in 2014 and a series of recommendations that apply to the conditions of contract have been implemented since 2016. The OGP is shortly to commence on a more comprehensive review of the manner in which public works projects are procured in order to develop the next generation of the CWMF.

The review will incorporate consultation with industry and the public bodies charged with the delivery of public works projects on a broad range of issues such as risk management, information quality standards, managing price inflation and the adoption of digital technologies in project delivery.

Protected Disclosures

14. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the nature of the discussions that took place between his Department and the Department of Justice and Equality that led to the establishment of a panel of barristers to assess the protected disclosures of current and former members of An Garda Síochána. [5769/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Last year, the Department of Justice and Equality sought sanction from my Department for payment of a proposed fee structure to legal Counsel as part of a new independent panel for reviewing allegations of Garda misconduct. The correspondence from that Department noted that the Minister for Justice and Equality had decided to set up this panel to consider allegations made to the Minister for Justice and Equality under the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

The stated rationale for the new panel was to provide independent advice to the Department of Justice and Equality regarding how each case should be treated and to make recommendations about possible options based on the documentation provided. According to the request for sanction, the Minister for Justice and Equality was of the view that the panel would help foster confidence in An Garda Síochána that allegations would be treated in a proper and unbiased manner because of its independent nature. The correspondence also referred to the additional benefit of the practical legal expertise of the panel members which not be available in the Department of Justice and Equality.

Overall, I gather that the motivation of the Minister for Justice and Equality was to ensure that disclosures can be dealt with in a proper, fair, professional and independent manner.

There were no other discussions with the Department of Justice and Equality on the policy matter of setting up the panel, especially given that the Minister for Justice and Equality had already consulted with the Attorney General's Office regarding the setting up of this panel structure. Rather, my Department considered the merits of the fee structure for the panel and engaged with the Department of Justice and Equality on this issue. Ultimately, my Department provided sanction for the proposed fee structure on condition that this would represent value for money.

Questions Nos. 15 to 18, inclusive, answered orally.

National Children's Hospital Expenditure

19. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if his attention has been drawn to the fact that officials in his Department voiced concerns regarding the National Children's Hospital in 2017 on cost and governance; if these concerns were relayed to him at the time; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5946/19]

20. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he has discussed offsetting the growing costs of the National Children's Hospital by using funding for other health development projects with the Minister for Health as suggested by his officials in November 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5947/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 19 and 20 together.

In April 2017 the Department of Health submitted a Memorandum to Government which included a section on the proposed new governance arrangements for the NCH project. This proposal included the establishment of the Children's Hospital Project and Programme Board, to be chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of Health, and with responsibility for monitoring the progress of the Children's Hospital Project and Programme against the agreed parameters for the programme in relation to timeline, scope and funding.

As the Deputy is aware in advance of any Memorandum being taken to Government there is engagement between Departments relating to the Memorandum.

The Government took a decision to proceed with the new Children's Hospital project on the basis of this Memorandum.

The role of my Department is in respect of the monitoring of overall expenditure by Departments, and not the oversight of individual projects. The management and delivery of individual projects within allocation is primarily the responsibility of the relevant sponsoring Department

and Minister.

My Department is engaging with the Department of Health and other Departments on how the increased costs of the project will be managed within the overall agreed NDP capital allocations. When that engagement is complete, I expect to revert to Government with further proposals in relation to how the increased costs of the project will be managed within the existing agreed annual NDP ceilings.

Brexit Preparations

21. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which he is making the necessary preparations to combat the effects of Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5913/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Extensive Brexit preparedness and contingency planning has been underway across Government since before the UK referendum on EU membership.

In the aftermath of the referendum a Contingency Framework was published by the Government that identified the key policy issues to be managed by Departments. The Contingency Framework was central to the development of Ireland's position in the negotiations on the Withdrawal Agreement and also served as the basis for the work that has been underway across all Departments and Agencies to prepare for Brexit. This has included the preparation of Preparedness Action and Contingency Plans by all Departments, including my own. These plans identified key challenges and the associated mitigation approaches.

At its meeting on 11 December 2018 the Government decided to give greater immediate priority to the preparations for a no-deal Brexit. This is being co-ordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, and involves all Government Departments and agencies.

As I know the Deputy will agree, central to our preparations for Brexit is a sound economy. Since the UK referendum in 2016, all of our national Budgets have been framed to prepare for the challenge of Brexit. The economic and fiscal policies that we have pursued mean that the economy is now in a better position to weather the impacts of Brexit. The possibility of a no-deal Brexit has influenced policy decisions made in relation to the public finances in terms of our stated aim of balancing the books and investing in capital infrastructure.

Public Private Partnerships

22. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the expected role public private partnerships will play in capital projects under the National Development Plan 2018 to 2027; and if projects will be designed and tendered on that basis. [5956/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Since the late 1990's, significant infrastructure projects have been delivered on behalf of the State using the PPP approach, including the Pilot Schools Bundle (2002), the National Maritime College (2004), the Cork School of Music (2007), the Criminal Courts Complex (2009), the National Conference Centre (2010), further Schools Bundles and of course a number of major motorway projects from 2005 onwards.

In July 2012, the Government announced plans for a major new €1.4 billion PPP programme

(as part of a €2.25 billion stimulus programme of investment in public infrastructure projects). This comprised 8 new PPP projects across the Health, Justice, Transport and Education sectors. This was followed up with a second phase of the PPP programme announced in 2014, to deliver 1,500 social housing units with a value of c€300m, and a third phase announced in 2015, to deliver projects to a value of c€500m across the Higher Education, Health and Justice sectors. These projects are, and will be, pursued under the PPP model.

As outlined in the National Development Plan, PPPs will continue to feature as a procurement option available to Government for appropriately structured projects which demonstrate value for money over a traditional procurement option and which meet the robust and rigorous tests for project appraisal that apply to all public investment projects under the Public Spending Code.

As also outlined in the NDP, all potentially suitable large scale projects within the Plan are to be assessed, as part of the Public Spending Code requirements, in terms of the optimal procurement option for the project – traditional or PPP.

Accordingly, decisions on pursuing further projects by PPP, over and above the existing pipeline of future projects already mentioned, will in future be taken on a case by case basis rather than as a specific programme of PPP projects - based on the merits of using PPP in the case of each individual project as compared with the alternative traditional procurement option.

Brexit Staff

23. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the Brexit preparations under way in his Department in the event of a hard Brexit; the number and grade of staff assigned to Brexit issues; the qualifications held by the staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5801/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Government's Contingency Action Plan which was published in December 2018 sets out the comprehensive, cross-Government preparations that have been underway since before the UK referendum on EU membership in 2016. This work is continuing at both a national and EU level, and on 30 January 2019 the Government published an update outlining the progress that has been made since the original Plan was published.

Central to preparations within my own Department is ensuring that the overall approach of prudent financial management is maintained to strengthen the resilience of Ireland's economy against the backdrop of heightened uncertainty, including from Brexit. Since the UK referendum in 2016, all of our national Budgets have been framed to prepare for the challenge of Brexit. The economic and fiscal policies which we have pursued mean that the economy is now in a better position to weather its impacts.

Budget 2019 introduced specific measures to ensure that Ireland is in the best possible position to respond to Brexit. Budget announcements include investment to build on initiatives aimed at supporting those sectors most affected.

Within the Department, Brexit issues are coordinated by a dedicated Unit dealing with Brexit and EU issues. The Unit supports me in my work on Brexit, leads work across the Department and its agencies, and represents the Department on the various groups that coordinate the Government's response to Brexit. Brexit issues are addressed by staff with relevant experience in areas across the Department.

Brexit Preparations

24. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform when the detailed action plan on the requirements of Rosslare Europort in advance of Brexit is due for publication and or finalisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5806/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): On the 19 December 2018, the Government published its Contingency Action Plan which gives an overview of the comprehensive, cross-Government preparations that are underway. This includes putting in place the infrastructure required at ports and airports as a consequence of the UK leaving the EU.

The Office of Public Works has been mandated to secure the property required Rosslare Harbour and to undertake the necessary work to ensure that the additional infrastructure required as a consequence of the UK leaving the EU becomes operational in a timely manner. This work is ongoing.

Brexit Supports

25. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the engagement to date his Department has had with the European Commission regarding flexibilities and additional supports from the EU through EU funding programmes and capital investment in view of Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5960/19]

28. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the actions in place to secure additional emergency funding from the EU in the event of a no-deal or hard Brexit; the key areas of additional expenditure across each Department which may be necessary in the event of a very disruptive Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1095/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 25 and 28 together.

Making the case for supporting measures at an EU level that recognise where Brexit represents a serious disturbance to the Irish economy is a key pillar of the Government's response to Brexit. I am satisfied that there is a firm understanding at an EU level of the unique and disproportionate impact that Brexit will have on Ireland. As far back as last March the Tánaiste met EU Budget Commissioner Oettinger when he visited Ireland and discussed with him the negative consequences to the Irish economy resulting from Brexit and the possibility of EU assistance. In November, in its Contingency Action Plan, the Commission confirmed that it would support Ireland in finding solutions addressing the specific challenges of Irish businesses. Last month, on a visit to Dublin, Commissioner Vestager emphasised that the Commission stands ready to act urgently in mitigation against the impacts of Brexit on Irish firms.

At his meeting with the Taoiseach in Brussels yesterday President Juncker was clear that the Commission stands ready to support Ireland in finding solutions answering the specific challenges that Ireland and Irish citizens, farmers and businesses will face and that it will work closely with Ireland to this end over the coming weeks.

Brexit Preparations

26. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the key areas administered by his Department in circumstances in which emergency legislation may be necessary in the event of a no-deal Brexit or a hard Brexit; if such legislation has been prepared and is ready to be presented to the Houses of the Oireachtas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1094/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As the Deputy will be aware, the Government has published the general scheme of legislative measures required in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The draft Omnibus Bill focuses on measures protecting our citizens and supporting the economy, enterprise and jobs, particularly in key sectors of the economy. The Bill complements the steps currently underway at an EU level to prepare for the UK's withdrawal, notably the implementation of the European Commission's Contingency Action Plan and the associated legislative measures.

In the event of a no-deal Brexit, areas administered by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform will be covered by EU legislation. In particular, the Commission has brought forward a proposal for a Regulation that will enable the PEACE and INTERREG programmes to continue even in the event of no-deal.

Estimates Process

27. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the work carried out in improving annual expenditure forecasting models across each Department; his views on the level of Supplementary Estimates in 2018; his plans for 2019 in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1097/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Managing the delivery of public services within allocations and meeting our budgetary targets forms a key part of the responsibilities of every Minister and Department. My own Department is in regular contact with all other Departments and Offices to ensure that expenditure is being managed within the overall fiscal parameters. Monthly expenditure profiles for each Government Department for 2019 will be published this month. The January Fiscal Monitor, published this week, presents a year-on-year comparison. From February on, as is usual, the drawdown of funds from the Exchequer will be reported on each month against expenditure profiles, in the Fiscal Monitor published by the Department of Finance.

Due to the scale of Government expenditure and the cash basis of Government accounting, the need for Supplementary Estimates can arise for a number of reasons, including policy decisions, timing issues and overspends. Supplementary Estimates are an important element of our expenditure management toolkit, allowing for the proper alignment of resources with allocations. However, they can only be provided within the context of our overall fiscal parameters.

In 2018, Supplementary Estimates made provision for additional funding in a number of areas, including for:

- Overruns in the Health sector;
- Superannuation pressures in Education;
- Garda pay and overtime;
- Overseas Development Aid;

- Housing and homelessness services;
- A 100 per cent Social Welfare Christmas Bonus;
- Costs relating to the Papal visit;
- The Community Childcare Scheme; and
- Army pensions.

In some cases, there were underspends within Vote groups that could be used to offset overspends in other areas. After taking account of additional expenditure funded by way of Supplementary Estimates, the net voted expenditure outturn for the year of €50.4 billion, published in the December 2018 Fiscal Monitor, was €0.8 billion above the level set out in the Revised Estimates Volume (REV) 2018, but close to the 2018 net voted expenditure amount set out in Expenditure Report 2019 published on Budget day last October. Taking into account the various moving parts within the overall tax and spending figures reported in the end-year Exchequer returns, based upon the Exchequer figures, a small general government surplus is now possible for 2018. A modest deficit of 0.1% was projected for 2018 in the recent Budget last October.

In setting out the proposed allocations for 2019, published in the Expenditure Report 2019, account was taken of the ongoing impact into 2019 of the increased level of resources that it was proposed to allocate to Departments by way of Supplementary Estimate in 2018. Given this context and the increased allocations set out in REV 2019 it is important that Departments manage the delivery of services this year within these allocations.

Question No. 28 answered with Question No. 25.

Public Private Partnerships

29. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he has carried out a review of the cause of the recent collapse of public private partnership contracts; if he has reconsidered the approach to such contracts to ensure the appropriate protection of subcontractors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5804/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): My Department has already given a commitment to the Oireachtas to review any PPP policy issues that might be highlighted by the impact of the recent collapse of Carillion, and the subsequent liquidation of Sammon, on the Schools Bundle 5 PPP project. The commitment indicated that the review will be timed to take account of the final outcome of that particular PPP project, and as such will take place in the latter part of 2019.

However, as an interim step in that process, a ‘learnings’ workshop involving the NDFA, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform was held in Tullamore, on Tuesday, 15 January 2019, to review the experience to date with the Schools Bundle 5 PPP project and the difficulties encountered with it. (The NDFA had already, previously, conducted its own internal review, specifically in relation to the impact of the Carillion/Sammon liquidation on the project, subsequent to the first three schools being delivered in September 2018, but clearly a wider review with all relevant stakeholders needed to be conducted and the January ‘learnings’ workshop is the first step in that process.)

While the construction process on the remaining schools is now progressing well, the fact is that there are still 3 schools within the Schools Bundle 5 PPP project which have yet to be

completed and handed over by the PPP partner. It would therefore be premature to seek to reach any definitive conclusion in relation to learnings from this PPP project at this point. The final review exercise will be completed once these remaining schools have also been delivered and are fully operational. This is currently expected to be in Quarter 2 of 2019 and a final review will be conducted thereafter.

With regard to the Deputy's reference to the collapse of PPP contracts, I am not aware of any Irish PPP contract ever collapsing. In accordance with international best practice, Irish PPP contracts are particularly robust and typically include detailed provisions that apply in the event of the liquidation of a consortium member of the PPP company, or an entity under the contract, to protect the State and ensure that the project proceeds to completion.

Under the terms of such PPP contracts, in the case of the liquidation of a consortium member, or an entity under the contract, the PPP consortium's funders and remaining shareholders are required to intervene and implement rectification measures to ensure that the project is completed to the satisfaction of the State. Liquidation of a company involved in delivering a public infrastructure project is an unfortunate and unforeseen development but would impact on any project where a supplier became insolvent during the delivery process, regardless of whether the project was being procured by PPP or by traditional means.

Finally, with regard to the issue of protection for subcontractors, this is not a matter that is intended to be addressed in a PPP contract, as the State does not negotiate or hold contracts with subcontractors in relation to such PPP contracts. However, there is already legislation in place which was introduced to protect subcontractors under construction contracts, which is applicable to all contracts entered into since July 2016. The Construction Contracts Act imposes minimum terms on all construction contracts, public or private, whether they be written or oral and provides the tools necessary to enforce payment. While the legislation does not apply to a contract between a State authority and its partner in a PPP arrangement, it does apply to all contracts that are subsequently awarded by the private partner to any subcontractors.

Public Sector Staff

30. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the steps he is taking to facilitate more civil servants who wish to relocate out of Dublin to other locations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5809/19]

37. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the steps he is taking to encourage greater staff mobility within the wider public service; the progress made in 2018 to achieve same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5808/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 30 and 37 together.

As the Deputy is aware, the Civil Service Mobility scheme which comes under the remit of my department, and is administered through HR Shared Services, National Shared Services Office, offers an opportunity for staff members to apply for mobility through an open and transparent system. The establishment of the scheme fulfils one of the requirements of Action 15 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan; and Action 14 of the People Strategy for the Civil Service, which calls for the further expansion of a coherent mobility policy to facilitate staff development and strategic alignment with other HR policies, builds upon this.

The scheme is being introduced on a phased basis. Phase 1A of the scheme is for the general Civil Service grades of Clerical Officer (CO) and Executive Officer (EO) to apply for mobil-

ity between and within 46 zones - excluding mobility within Zone 46 (Dublin) which will be included in Phase 1B.

There has been a high level of interest in the scheme since Phase 1A opened for applications on 13th November 2017 with c. 3,800 staff members (22% of the 17,000 participating staff members - 60% CO: 40% EO) applying for mobility and making an average of 10 organisational choices. Over 50 moves have taken place since the operational launch of the scheme on 10th September 2018.

The location choices in the scheme are divided into mobility zones rather than county or province. An applicant may express a preference for mobility for a maximum of 3 zones from the list of 46 zones with a choice of any or all organisations in each zone (a full list of zones and organisations per zone can be viewed at www.hr.per.gov.ie). Staff members can apply for mobility within their current zone (excluding Phase 1B, Zone 46 Dublin) as well as other zones. A number of mobility zones also have an option to include or exclude a choice of satellite towns.

There are currently 855 staff members based in zone 46 (Dublin) that have applied for mobility to other zones. This equates to 12% of the 7,000 participating staff members in Dublin (55% CO: 35% EO), while 88% wish to remain in their chosen location.

It should be noted that the Mobility scheme launched following an era of moratorium and low levels of staff transfers in the Civil Service and these factors would contribute to the initial high surge of interest in the scheme.

It should also be noted that over 50% of the staff members who were made offers of mobility since the operational launch have now declined the offer. Therefore with regard to the percentage of declines of offer, I am confident that the actual number of staff members who want to move from Dublin to other zones is lower than the reported figure of 855, which shows those who have put in an initial request.

Following the full roll out of the Civil Service Mobility Scheme, it is the intention to review and extend mobility over time to provide additional development opportunities and enable greater mobility across the Public Service.

Public Sector Reform Review

31. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the degree to which reforms throughout the public sector remain in place to ensure accountability, collective responsibility and good value for money; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5914/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As I have previously informed the House, significant public service reforms have occurred in recent years that continue to deliver improved services and value for money across a range of specific areas such as governance, accountability, procurement, shared services, organisational reform and property management.

The current phase of public service reform - Our Public Service 2020, which I launched in 2017 – represents a whole-of-public-service initiative designed to build on these previous reforms while expanding the scope of reform to focus on collaboration, innovation and evaluation. This new policy framework has been designed to deliver better outcomes for the public and will ensure that the citizen is at the centre of policies and service delivery across the whole of the public service.

As Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform I must ensure that our fiscal and public expenditure policy is prudent and sustainable. There are a number of budgetary reforms introduced in recent years to guide my decisions on overall fiscal policy in this regard, including fiscal rules, expenditure ceilings and spending reviews. The actions in Our Public Service 2020 will ensure that the focus of the public service is very much on delivery of quality public services, while operating within these prudent limits.

A Public Service Leadership Board (PSLB) has been established to lead the delivery of Our Public Service 2020. For the first time, both civil and public service leaders and managers will work jointly to drive the reform programme. This will ensure there is shared ownership for the actions on reform right across the public service.

Our Public Service 2020 contains an added focus on evaluation and on the importance of building a reform evaluation culture and in developing indicators to support an outcomes focus. With this goal in mind, within my Department we have established a Reform Evaluation Unit to focus on monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of reform as well as creating greater links between expenditure and reform.

Garda Stations

32. **Deputy Michael Collins** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the progress made in the reopening of Ballinspittle Garda station (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [49979/18]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The reopening of Ballinspittle Garda Station is scheduled for mid-2019. The Office of Public Works is about to tender for the necessary works that are based on the approved Garda Síochána ‘brief of requirements’.

It is an operational matter for An Garda Síochána to determine Garda numbers and policing needs for the area.

EU Directives

33. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the plans of the OPW and the Department for Infrastructure Rivers in Northern Ireland to advance their work on a cross-Border basis to implement the EU floods directive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5950/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The EU ‘Floods’ Directive came into force in 2007, and requires the Member States to undertake a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment to identify the areas of potentially significant flood risk within their territories, to prepare maps of the flood hazard and risk for these areas, and then to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans setting out measures aimed at managing and reducing the flood risk within these areas. The ‘Floods’ Directive also requires Member States to exchange information and coordinate in undertaking these steps in cross-border river basins.

It was agreed in 2009 by the Office of Public Works and the Department for Infrastructure, Rivers of Northern Ireland that a Cross-Border Coordination Group, supported by a Cross-Border Technical Coordination Group, would be established to facilitate the exchange of information and coordination in the implementation of the Directive. The Group has met on a number

of occasions, and has ensured that information has been exchanged as necessary, and that there is a good mutual awareness of the approaches to implementation in both jurisdictions. In particular, for areas of potentially significant flood risk that are on or near the border such as Lifford in Co. Donegal and Strabane in Northern Ireland, the two organisations have liaised closely to ensure a common understanding of the risk and the appropriate measures for such areas.

In addition, representatives from the OPW have attended and participated in relevant meetings in Northern Ireland during the implementation of the Directive. Similarly, representatives from the Department for Infrastructure, Rivers have been members of the Steering Groups for the relevant Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Projects, and are also members of the National Floods Directive Coordination Group that is chaired by the OPW. This has helped ensure coordination and exchange of information on a regular basis at the strategic and operational levels.

The matter of joint, cross-border activity was considered by the Group during its early meetings, and it was concluded that due to legacy work and for technical and administrative reasons, the implementation of the Directive would not be undertaken by joint action. The Department for Infrastructure, Rivers and the OPW have however coordinated closely in the implementation of the Directive within their respective jurisdictions, as previously noted, and have also liaised in more detail on particular matters such as flood forecasting and hydrometric monitoring.

Further, more general cross-border coordination has also been ongoing in the field of flood risk management through bilateral meetings of the two organisations for many years, and through the Irish National Hydrometric Working Group and Joint National Committee of the International Hydrological Programme and the International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage that the Department for Infrastructure, Rivers are members of.

Garda Station Refurbishment

34. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the timeline for works on Rush Garda station; the date the station is scheduled to be reopened by; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4361/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): On 6th December 2018, An Garda Síochána (AGS) confirmed final agreement to proposed plans for the reopening of Rush Garda Station. The Office of Public Works is now progressing with the procurement of the required works and these are expected to be completed and handed over to AGS by mid-2019. The actual opening date will be an operational matter for An Garda Síochána.

Public Procurement Contracts

35. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his plans to ensure detailed oversight of public contracts for building works in view of the recent closure of publicly built schools; if he has had contact with the Departments affected including the Department of Education and Skills; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5803/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): All public works projects that are delivered under the Exchequer-funded element of the Government's capital plan must be procured in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF). The CWMF is maintained by the Office of Government Procurement in consultation with the Government Contracts Committee for Construction.

The CWMF is mandated for use on all capital funded construction projects. The provisions include the conditions of the Public Works Contract which outline the functions of the contract administrator; the Employer's Representative (ER) during the construction stage of a project and dedicated guidance on the management and oversight of the project once works commence.

The conditions of the public works contract provide the contractual tools necessary to ensure that a contractor completes a project to the required standard. These include:

- Provision for inspections of the works whether they are executed on or off site;
- A prohibition on the covering up of work without notification to the ER in advance;
- A requirement for all the materials and products that are to be incorporated into the works to be fit for their intended purpose and to meet the required standards;
- A fitness for purpose obligation on the works themselves in design and build contracts;
- The requirement for a detailed inspection notification framework and testing plan;
- An obligation on the contractor to keep the ER up to date on all matters related to the management and supervision of the works;
- To instruct the removal or replacement of works that are not completed in accordance with the specification;
- Where work is not completed in accordance with the specification, to withhold payment until the matter is rectified; and
- To appoint another contractor to rectify the works where the contractor fails to respond in a timely fashion.

The extent to which these tools are utilised and the resources associated will vary depending on a project's scale and complexity and is a matter for the Contracting Authority with responsibility for the delivery of the project.

In relation to the recent structural issues of schools I understand that there has been engagement between officials from my Department and officials from the Department of Education.

Outdoor Events Licensing

36. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the plans of the Office of Public Works to host large scale concerts and events in the Phoenix Park during 2019; his plans to ensure that local residents have adequate access during such events to and from their homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5805/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Office of Public Works will host 'Bloom in the Park,' which is presented by An Bord Bia, on the June bank holiday weekend. Aside from this, no other large-scale public events or concerts are planned for the Phoenix Park in 2019.

As in previous years, the Phoenix Park will host a number of active events such as cycling races, road races and charity walks.

All Road Closure Orders relating to roads within the Phoenix Park are notified to stakeholders, Park institutions, local resident associations and sporting bodies. This information is also

available on www.phoenixpark.ie and through our social media channels.

The management of traffic on roads surrounding the Phoenix Park is a matter for the local authority and An Garda Síochána.

Question No. 37 answered with Question No. 30.

Flood Relief Schemes Status

38. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his plans for flood relief schemes in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5760/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As the Deputy is aware, the River Slaney (Enniscorthy) Flood Relief Scheme is at an advanced stage of planning and design, and it is hoped to proceed to formal Exhibition as required under the Arterial Drainage Acts (ADA) in late March/early April this year, following which, if the scheme proposals are generally well received, the design will be finalised and all required documentation will be submitted to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, requesting formal confirmation of the scheme under the ADA. It is hoped therefore that the tender process for contractors to construct the scheme will begin in June 2019, and if all goes well, it is hoped to commence construction in late 2019/early 2020.

Works are also ongoing and/or planned in a number of other areas in County Wexford –

Wexford Town

The Flood Risk Management Plan for the South East River Basin District includes proposed structural flood relief measures for Wexford town. These will consist of building hard defences and improvement of channel conveyance. These measures for Wexford were included in the initial tranche of investment which I announced on 3rd May 2018 with €257m funding for 50 new projects to proceed to detailed project level design and construction. Work on the Wexford project has commenced with Wexford County Council (WCC) leading on its implementation and a Project Steering Group has been established.

New Ross

Flood defence works have been carried out by contractors on behalf of WCC and some funding for these works has been provided by the Office of Public Works (OPW). Additional works in the area require to be carried out by WCC to ensure protection to the 1 in 200 year standard, and funding for this will be provided by the OPW.

Rosslare

The flood and erosion risk in the Rosslare area north of the seaport and the options for mitigating that risk are under consideration by WCC. A meeting was held between WCC and its consultants RPS and the OPW in December 2018 in this regard.

Flood Relief Schemes Status

39. **Deputy Aindrias Moynihan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the status of the outline design stage for the construction of the flood relief works on the Sullane

River at Ballyvourney, County Cork; if the preferred options for the scheme are finalised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5958/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by the Commissioners of Public Works that the Baile Mhúirne and Ballymakeera Flood Relief scheme is currently at outline design stage, and the preferred options for the scheme are in the process of being finalised.

The River Sullane has a history of freshwater pearl mussels, which have protected status as an Annex II listed species under the EU Habitats Directive. An environmental survey was carried out to establish the status of the population and the likely impact of any works.

Given the impact the proposed works could have on the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel population, a proposal to translocate Fresh Water Pearl Mussel from the River Sullane and reintroduce them post works was submitted to, and has now been approved by, the NPWS and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, allowing the scheme preparations to progress to site investigation, which will inform the preferred options for the scheme. A site investigation was completed in Q3 2018 and the results will further assist in determining the preferred options, and in refining construction cost estimates.

The emerging preferred option was presented to members of the public and relevant stakeholders at a second Public Information Day in March 2018. A public exhibition of the preferred scheme is expected to take place in Spring 2019.

When these stages are successfully completed and, subject to the proposals being accepted by the public and the stakeholders, and the scheme being technically, environmentally and economically viable, the scheme will then proceed to formal Confirmation by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform under the Arterial Drainage Acts 1945 and 1995, and then move onto detailed design stage, following which the scheme can progress to construction stage.

In the interim, the OPW has approved funding of €187,248 for temporary flood defence works in Ballymakeera under its Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Scheme. In addition, OPW environmental consultants (RPS) for the Scheme have prepared a Preliminary Invasive Alien Species Management Plan (IASMP) for the OPW in response to the findings of ecological survey work undertaken during 2017 and 2018. This plan identifies the presence and location of invasive species around or close to the works area of the FRS. These include Giant Knotweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Knotweed.

The preliminary IASMP has been prepared in order to commence treatment of Invasive Species in the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme works area in advance of interim and main scheme works and has been provided to Cork County Council, who have agreed to undertake treatment of invasive species for the Scheme on behalf of the OPW.

The optimal time to begin treatment of knotweed will be late summer / early autumn 2019.

My Office continues to liaise with Cork County Council and local representatives on this Scheme.

Brexit Preparations

40. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the work carried out to cost and estimate additional expenditure for the actions outlined in preparing for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019,

a contingency action plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [1096/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Since the UK referendum on EU membership in 2016, all of our national Budgets have been framed to prepare for the challenge of Brexit, and Budget 2019 set out specific measures aimed at making Ireland Brexit ready.

Work across Government has identified key issues arising in each Brexit scenario, in particular based on the Withdrawal Agreement and in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

At its meeting on 11 December 2018 the Government agreed that, while work on Brexit preparedness based on the Withdrawal Agreement should continue, greater immediate priority should be given to preparations for a no-deal Brexit, in light of ongoing political uncertainties and the Brexit deadline of 29 March 2019.

Following this, the Government published its Brexit Contingency Action Plan on 19 December 2018. This set out detailed sectorial analyses and approaches to mitigating the impacts of a disorderly Brexit. Since the publication of the Contingency Action Plan, the Government has continued to intensify its preparations for a no deal scenario across a range of sectors. This work is ongoing and an Update to the Contingency Action Plan was published on 30 January 2019.

Question No. 41 answered with Question No. 16.

Capital Expenditure Programme

42. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the capital projects to be delayed or deferred in each of the years 2019 to 2022 as a result of the cost overruns in the National Children's Hospital; when the details of these deferrals will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5953/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): In my role as Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform I am responsible for setting the overall capital allocations across Departments and for monitoring monthly expenditure at a Departmental level. Decisions on how and where those allocations are invested by Departments are a matter, in the first instance, for my Ministerial colleagues.

My Department is engaging with the Department of Health on the topic of the National Children's Hospital, and how the increased costs of the project will be managed within the overall agreed NDP capital allocations. To that end, the Government has decided that in relation to the 2019 increased costs, €50 million will have to be found within the existing 2019 capital allocation for the Department of Health, with the remaining €49 million to be met by reallocation from within the overall €7.3 billion capital allocation for 2019.

To put this amount into context, the 2019 capital allocation has increased by €1,325 million or just over 22% above the 2018 provisional outturn figures. The Deputy will appreciate that, even with this adjustment, all sectors will still receive substantial additional resources in 2019 to pursue their priority projects. Public investment this year will reach 3.5% of national income (GNI*) compared to an EU average in recent years of 2.7% (GDP).

My officials are currently engaging with the Department of Health on the funding requirements for the National Children's Hospital over the period to 2022. When that engagement is complete, I expect to revert to Government with proposals in relation to how the increased costs

of the project will be met, within the existing agreed annual NDP ceilings.

Finally, a major capital projects tracker is available on my Department's website. The tracker sets out details of the key projects being implemented under the National Development Plan, including expected commencement dates. My Department is currently in the process of updating this projects tracker, informed by the latest information available from Departments, which information will then assist me in developing my proposals for meeting the increased costs of the National Children's Hospital within existing agreed annual NDP ceilings.

Protected Disclosures

43. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the resources put in place to support the work of a panel of barristers to assess protected disclosures by members or former members of An Garda Síochána. [5768/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The request for sanction from the Department of Justice and Equality on this matter estimated total expenditure of €22,000 on fees for the independent panel. This is based on a payment structure which sets a fee per case depending on the level of complexity and takes into account the current level of protected disclosures on hand. The fees range from €300 to €1,000 per case. However, the maximum amount payable to counsel is €1,000 per case.

Overall, the Department of Justice and Equality estimates that maximum annual costs would fall to €5,000 - €6,000 in future years. It is a matter for the Department of Justice and Equality to fund panel fees as well as any other administrative supports within existing resources.

Finally, as regards the establishment of the independent panel, I gather the motivation of the Minister for Justice and Equality was to ensure disclosures can be dealt with in a proper, fair, professional and independent manner.

Military Medals

44. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence if he will consider awarding a posthumous Distinguished Service Medal to a person (details supplied); and if the promotion for which they had been recommended will be put on their Army record. [5986/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe): The siege of Jadotville was a prominent event that occurred during Ireland's peacekeeping mission in the Congo in September 1961. "A" Company, 35th Infantry Battalion took responsibility for the UN post at Jadotville on 3rd September 1961. On the 9th September, a large force of Katangese Gendarmerie surrounded them and early on the morning of the 13th September "A" Company came under attack. From the 13th to the 17th September they endured almost continuous attack. They were taken into captivity on the 17th September and remained in captivity until finally released on the 25th October 1961.

In accordance with Defence Forces regulations, the award of medals for bravery is time bound. These may not be awarded in any case unless a recommendation is made through the usual channels to the Chief of Staff, not later than two years in the case of the Military Medal for Gallantry, and not later than four years in the case of the Distinguished Service Medal, after the performance of the act in respect of which the recommendation is made. Such awards are

made on the recommendation of a Military Board appointed by the Chief of Staff for the purpose of examining and reporting on every recommendation for an award.

The issue of the award of medals to the men of “A” Company, 35th Infantry Battalion was comprehensively addressed in 1965. A properly constituted Medals Board considered the recommendation for the award of a medal to the person whose details are supplied and the other various cases presented and made a decision that no medals would be awarded. Defence Forces records indicate that recommendation for the award of a medal to the person referred to in the details supplied was considered by this board, but not upheld. The Chief of Staff of the day considered the decision of the Board and was satisfied with the findings. Subsequently, at that time, the question was raised again in a letter to a newly appointed Chief of Staff. He forwarded the letter to the original Medals Board and asked that they reconvene and review their decision. The Board indicated that the issues raised had received due consideration and that they were not prepared to alter their findings. There is currently no regulatory provision either to revisit the findings of a Medals Board or to effect a meritorious promotion posthumously.

Over the past number of years various representations have been received in my Department outlining the courage and bravery of “A” Company. All representations have been considered and responded to acknowledging their valiant actions while under siege in Jadotville.

A review was conducted in 2004 by military officers for the purpose of a broader examination of the Jadotville case. This Board recommended that the events of Jadotville and the contribution of the 35th Battalion be given recognition. In this context, a number of measures have taken place to honour and to commemorate the events at Jadotville and the very significant contribution of “A” Company and of the 35th Battalion, as a whole, to the UN Peace Support Mission in the Congo.

Recognition of their contribution over the years include:

- A. A presentation of scrolls to “A” Company in 2006.
- B. Portraits of Lt Col McNamee (35th Battalion Commander) and Comdt Quinlan (Company Commander “A” Company) were commissioned in 2006.
- C. In July of 2010 the 50th anniversary of the first deployment to the Congo was commemorated in a highly publicised and well attended event in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel.
- D. A nominal roll of “A” Company, printed in copper, was affixed to the monument in Costume Barracks and was unveiled as part of the 50th Anniversary of the Jadotville affair in September 2011.
- E. On the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Siege of Jadotville, I decided to issue a Unit Citation to honour the collective actions and bravery of the men of “A” Company. This was the first time a Unit Citation was awarded within the Defence Forces and I was delighted to be able to formally recognise the brave actions of these men.

Furthermore, on 13th June 2017, the Government decided, as an exceptional step, to award a medal known as “An Bonn Jadotville” or “The Jadotville Medal” to each member of “A” Company, 35th Infantry Battalion and to the family representatives of deceased members to give full and due recognition in honour of their courageous actions at the Siege of Jadotville. I was delighted to present these Jadotville Medals at a ceremony that took place on 2nd December 2017 in Custume Barracks, Athlone. At this presentation, a medal was presented to a family representative of the person whose details are supplied. Custume Barracks was the location for this event as it is considered the spiritual home of “A” Company and it is from here that “A” company assembled in advance of their fateful deployment to the Congo.

I am satisfied that the events and happenings to date properly honour the collective bravery of the men of "A" Company and full and due recognition has been afforded to them in their honour.

Departmental Budgets

45. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the breakdown of the €106 million capital allocation in Vote 36 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6048/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe): A total of €106 million has been allocated for 2019 for capital expenditure in Vote 36 Defence. This is in accordance with the National Development Plan, which provides for an overall capital allocation of €541m for Defence for the period 2018 to 2022. This capital funding will allow the Defence Organisation to undertake a programme of sustained equipment replacement and infrastructure development as identified in the White Paper.

The main categories of expenditure in the 2019 capital allocation are as follows:

- Capability Development = €70m;
- Built Infrastructure = €19m;
- Military Transport = €6m;
- Defence Forces Communication and Information Technology Equipment = €5m;
- Other Equipment = €6m.

The following major projects are being progressed during 2019:

- Mid-life upgrade of the Mowag Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) fleet;
- Procurement of Fixed Wing Utility aircraft (Pilatus) as replacement for Cessna aircraft;
- Procurement of replacements for the two CASA 235 Maritime Patrol aircraft;
- Mid-life refit of the Naval Service vessels LÉ Niamh and LÉ Roisín and ongoing planning for the acquisition of a multi-role vessel;
- Virtual Desktop Architecture (VDA) project for Defence Forces IT infrastructure;
- Equipment renewal and replacement programmes along with investment in further force protection, transport, communications and information technology, weapons and ammunition systems;
- Investment in the Defence Forces built infrastructure, including the following specific projects -
 - Secure storage facilities in the Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh Camp;
 - Target range facilities in the Defence Forces Training Centre;
 - Training facilities in Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick and Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny;

- Accommodation facilities in the Defence Forces Training Centre and Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin;
- Accommodation upgrade in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell;
- Catering facilities in Custume Barracks, Athlone;
- Fuel storage safety system upgrade in the Naval Base, Haulbowline.

Major Defence capital projects are multi annual in nature and expenditure on these can span a number of years. I am satisfied that the capital allocation for Defence for 2019 and for the period to 2022 will allow the Defence Organisation to undertake a programme of sustained equipment replacement and infrastructural development as identified and prioritised in the White Paper.

Defence Forces Data

46. **Deputy Jack Chambers** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the number of personnel serving in the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service on 31 December 2017 and 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6078/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe): I am advised by the Military Authorities that the strength (Whole Time Equivalent) of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF), as on 31st December 2017 and 31st December 2018, were as set out below: -

	Army	Air Corps	Naval Service	Total
31/12/2017	7,386	734	1,053	9,173
31/12/2018	7,243	725	989	8,957

The Government is committed to retaining a Permanent Defence Force with a strength of 9,500 personnel. Recruitment plans for 2019 will seek to replace personnel who depart the PDF and increase the strength of the PDF by year end.

Question Heading

47. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the details of the €5.5 million capital allocation under A our people, in Vote 28 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6024/19]

48. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the details of the €4 million capital allocation under D our prosperity, in Vote 28 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6025/19]

49. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the details of the €9 million capital allocation under E our influence, in Vote 28 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if

he will make a statement on the matter. [6026/19]

50. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the details of the €2.5 million capital allocation under international co-operation, that is, Vote 27 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will commence in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6027/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 47 to 50, inclusive, together.

The total capital allocation for my Department in 2019 across its two Votes – Vote 27: International Co-operation and Vote 28: Foreign Affairs and Trade - will be €21 million. The 2019 allocation represents an increase of €8m on the 2018 capital allocation.

The main focus of capital investment in 2019 will be the cost of constructing and maintaining State properties overseas under Global Ireland 2025, the on-going Passport Reform Programme, the continuing investment in ICT to support the Department's global ICT network and Ireland's participation at EXPO 2020.

The projected breakdown of the 2019 capital allocation of €21 million, across the various areas referred to above, is as follows:

-	2019
State properties overseas	€8.5 million
Passport Reform Programme	€5.5 million
EXPO 2020	€4.0 million
ICT	€3.0 million
Total	€21 million

Insofar as the budget for State Properties overseas is concerned, it is planned to complete building works in 2019 at the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, continue the preliminary works to facilitate the construction of the new Embassy/Ireland House in Tokyo, commence works on a new Embassy building in Abuja and to possibly purchase a property for a new Embassy opening in 2019. The details of the proposed purchase remain commercially sensitive at this time.

Under the on-going Passport Reform Programme the main projects due for completion in 2019 will be the automated mailing project, the business process automation project, the bedding in of the improvements to the on-line renewals service, on-going improvement to customer systems, and the commencement of the Passport Integrated Processing System.

An allocation of €4 million in 2019 is provided for building and exhibition costs associated with Ireland's participation in Expo 2020 in Dubai. Ireland's national Pavilion is being designed by the Office of Public Works. Expo 2020 is expected to attract some 25 million visitors. In a competitive global environment, participation will promote increased awareness of Ireland in the UAE and other key markets as a place to do business and as a destination for FDI post-Brexit. Ireland's presence will also aim to support trade and tourism opportunities for Ireland in the UAE and wider Gulf region.

For 2019 there are planned projects in respect of ICT Services comprising infrastructure upgrades, roll-out of new business systems and improved communications technology. Provision is also being made for ICT services to new Missions under Global Ireland 2025.

Economic Sanctions

51. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if the application of the Helms-Burton Act in the USA has been discussed at EU level recently; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6088/19]

56. **Deputy Brendan Howlin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has been contacted by the ambassador of Cuba on the proposed imminent implementation of title 3 of the Helms-Burton Act; the response of the EU to this development; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6168/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 51 and 56 together.

The 1996 Helms Burton Act is a US federal law which strengthens and continues the US's long standing economic embargo against Cuba.

Since 1996, European persons or entities have remained potentially affected by the extra-territorial elements in Titles III and IV of the Act, but a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and US has waived Title III every six months and, as a result, European persons and entities have been protected from the relevant provisions of the Act.

On 16 January 2019, the US State Department announced that the next waiver, effective from 1 February 2019, would have a duration of 45 days only, the first time since the Act's promulgation that the US has not waived Title III for six months.

This development has been noted by Ireland and our EU partners and I can confirm that the Helms-Burton Act was recently discussed at the EU Council Working Party on Transatlantic Relations (*COTRA*), at which Ireland was represented at official level. A presentation was given by the European External Action Service on this development and on the potential risks impacting the EU and its economic operators.

It is not clear at this stage what this move to a 45-day waiver period means for Irish and other EU entities that have operations in/with Cuba. My officials are in close contact with the EU Commission on this matter and are monitoring the situation closely.

This issue was also raised in a recent meeting between officials from my Department and the Ambassador of Cuba to Ireland. Officials reiterated Ireland's longstanding position on the US embargo against Cuba, which I have voiced myself on a number of occasions. We believe that the embargo serves no constructive purpose and that the lifting of the embargo would facilitate an opening of the island's economy to the benefit of its people. In addition, we and our EU partners are not persuaded that the continued embargo is contributing in a positive way to the democratic transition in Cuba.

Together with our EU partners, we have firmly and continuously opposed extraterritorial measures that seek to extend the US embargo against Cuba to third countries as contrary to commonly accepted rules of international trade. Our position in this regard was set out most recently at the UN General Assembly on 1 November last year in the context of the resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the US against Cuba.

Departmental Meetings

52. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has been contacted by representatives of the Chinese Administration with regard to the use of technology by a company (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6112/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): In meetings and other contacts with representatives of the Chinese Government, we have engaged in discussions on a range of bilateral issues, including our political engagement, our trade and investment relationship, cultural and educational exchanges and other matters of shared interest, including issues of regional and international interest.

I have not however been contacted by representatives of the Chinese Government with regard to the use of technology by the company referenced by the Deputy.

Passport Applications Administration

53. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade further to Parliamentary Question No. 53 of 31 January 2019, the reason Part 10 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 does not address those that conceive through assisted human reproduction; the amendments that would need to be made in order to recognise mothers here legally regarding their legally registered child; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6113/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Passports Act 2008 (the “2008 Act”) does not deal with the attribution of legal parentage for the purposes of Irish law. The 2008 Act deals with the issue of passports by my Department to Irish citizens and sets out a number of conditions in this regard. The 2008 Act contains a number of provisions in relation to the issue of passports to children. In particular section 14 of the 2008 Act deals with the requirements governing the consent of guardians to the issue of a passport to a child. Section 14 requires the consent of a child’s guardian(s) before a passport can issue to the child, subject to very limited exceptions. In line with Section 2 of the 2008 Act, guardianship is a term with a defined legal meaning.

For the purposes of Section 2, a ‘guardian; of a child means a person who:

- a) is a guardian of the child pursuant to the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1964, or
- b) is appointed to be the guardian of the child by: (i) deed or will, or (ii) order of a court in the State, and has not been removed from office.

The purpose of Part 10 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 was to introduce a number of amendments to section 14 of the 2008 Act in relation to the requirements concerning the consent of guardians to the issuing of a passport to a child. Part 10 introduced amendments relating to the number of guardians required to give consent to the issuing of a passport to a child. It also introduced provisions to enable my Department to issue a passport to a child who is ordinarily resident outside the State on application by a guardian of that child, without the consent to such issue by the other guardian(s) of that child, where that child is ordinarily resident in a state which is a party to the 1996 Hague Convention on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement and co-operation in respect of parental responsibility and measures for the protection of children, where a court or competent judicial or administrative authority of the state in which the child is resident has taken a measure directing that a passport can be issued without the consent of the other guardian(s), or where by operation of the law of that state, the requirements relating to consent of the other guardian(s) have been fulfilled.

Middle East Issues

54. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if his attention has been drawn to the most recent report by EU diplomats in Ramallah (details supplied); his views on the report; if he has discussed the report with his counterparts in other EU member states; if his attention has been further drawn to the comments by a person (details supplied); and his views on whether such systemic legal discrimination amounts to apartheid. [6114/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Irish Mission in Ramallah played an active part in the production of the report to which the Deputy refers. It was completed in August 2018. It therefore reflects and incorporates our own views and analysis of the situation and issues in the West Bank. The report underlines the views I have expressed many times here in the Dáil, highlighting the many difficulties and injustices faced by Palestinians under the continuing occupation by Israel of their land. The easing of these injustices, and the end of the occupation, have been the object of all my work in relation to the Middle East conflict. Later this month, for instance, I will host a number of Foreign Minister colleagues from EU and Arab countries at a meeting in Dublin to discuss these issues.

I am aware that a number of respected observers have drawn parallels with South Africa in times past. I do not intend to get tied up in comparing one situation to another. I have however consistently drawn attention to areas where different legal and justice regimes and standards are applied to Israelis and Palestinians - including in the planning system, the treatment of prisoners and of young people in detention, in access to resources and in the accountability of the state and its forces. I have repeatedly stated the clear principle that all people subject to Israeli jurisdiction and control should enjoy the same protection and safeguards as Israel considers appropriate for its own citizens.

Brexit Preparations

55. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the preparations made to protect the interests and entitlements of frontier workers here when the UK leaves the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6150/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): The Withdrawal Agreement covers all elements of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This includes the protection of the ongoing rights of EU frontier workers, who have exercised these rights prior to the end of the Transition period provided for under the Agreement. The focus of my Department, and of this Government, continues to be on securing ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement. This is the best way to ensure that such rights are protected post-Brexit.

In the absence of the Withdrawal Agreement these rights will not apply. The rights of EU citizens working in Ireland remain fully protected. However, it will be a matter for the UK Government how it will address EU frontier workers in the UK.

The Government is acutely conscious of the concerns of border communities and of cross-border workers as a result of Brexit. The continuation of the Common Travel Area (CTA) is also important in that context.

The Common Travel Area is a long-standing arrangement between Ireland and the UK which means Irish citizens can move freely to live, work, and study in the UK on the same basis as UK citizens and vice versa. It is an arrangement that is valued on both islands and the

continuation of this arrangement is a stated commitment of both the Irish and UK Governments. It is important to note that the Common Travel Area applies to Irish and UK citizens only.

In the context of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, it is important that any arrangements necessary to maintain the Common Travel Area are made.

The Common Travel Area provides for associated rights and entitlements which enable Irish and UK citizens to move freely between and reside in both jurisdictions. These rights and entitlements include access to employment, healthcare, education, and social benefits, as well as the right to vote in certain elections. The CTA pre-dates Irish and UK membership of the EU and is not dependent on it. It is recognised in Protocol 20 to the EU Treaties and is also acknowledged in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Agreement on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU which was endorsed by the European Council and the UK Government on 25 November 2018.

The maintenance of the CTA is a bilateral matter. Work is at an advanced stage both with the UK and domestically to ensure that the necessary provisions are made in both jurisdictions so that the CTA continues to function effectively after the UK leaves the EU.

Question No. 56 answered with Question No. 51.

Northern Ireland

57. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the discussions he has held with the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the activation of the legacy issues aspects of the Stormont House Agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6190/19]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney): Comprehensive progress on legacy issues from the Troubles is crucial in order to meet the legitimate needs and expectations of victims and survivors, and to contribute to broader societal reconciliation as an integral part of the Peace Process. The Government will continue to engage in support of that, consistent with our role and responsibilities as a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement.

The Programme for a Partnership Government commits to building on the progress made to establish the comprehensive institutional framework for dealing with the past that is provided for under the 2014 Stormont House Agreement, maintaining the needs of the victims and survivors at the core of our approach. Victims and survivors have had to wait for far too long for a suitable and effective system in Northern Ireland to deal with the legacy of the Troubles. Successive efforts over the last ten years, from the commencement of the Eames-Bradley process in June 2007, have sought to address legacy issues, in particular to meet the legitimate needs and expectations of victims and survivors. However, this is still sought and is urgently needed.

I have engaged extensively with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and with all of the political parties to support a way forward on the implementation of the comprehensive legacy framework that was agreed under the Stormont House Agreement of 2014. I have also consistently emphasised in these discussions the need to ensure proper resourcing of legacy inquests in Northern Ireland, and I continue to raise this matter with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, seeking urgent progress.

Secretary of State Bradley and I are agreed on the imperative of moving ahead with the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework.

On 11 May, I welcomed the launch of a public consultation by the British Government on their draft legislation to establish the legacy bodies provided for in the Stormont House Agreement as an important step forward. The consultation closed for submissions on 5 October and the responses are now being considered by Secretary of State Bradley ahead of a British Government response to the consultation.

While that consultation is about UK legislation to establish the institutions, legislation will also be required in this jurisdiction to provide for cooperation with the Stormont House Agreement legacy bodies. The drafting of legislative proposals for consideration by the Government and Oireachtas is advancing, led by my colleague, the Minister for Justice and Equality.

Irish Aid

58. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the arrangements Irish Aid has made in recent years to encourage disabled volunteers as part of the volunteer rosters maintained by his Department; the way in which Irish Aid staff would respond to an issue requiring consideration of an accommodation which was raised by a disabled volunteer; the training provided to desk staff on disability and public sector equality duties; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6197/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Ciarán Cannon): The Development Cooperation and Africa Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade facilitates participation in a range of volunteering opportunities overseas. Typically these opportunities involve placement with, or by, third party organisations, and are facilitated by the Department through a range of rosters, registers, initiatives and programmes. Depending on the role and local context, volunteers may need to be able to operate in challenging circumstances.

Where prospective volunteers with a disability request that a reasonable accommodation arrangement be made, including to facilitate their mustering as a volunteer, my Department will liaise with the individual and the third party organisation concerned with a view to determining whether a reasonable accommodation can be made having regard to the specific circumstance of the individual and the nature of the volunteering role envisaged.

More broadly, Ireland's policy on overseas volunteering is set out in the Volunteering Initiative, which promotes skills-based, sustainable volunteering overseas, working in partnership with third parties. The forthcoming launch of a new White Paper on International Development provides an opportunity to review our approach to overseas volunteering to ensure that it keeps pace with the evolving discourse on volunteering for development, and also with the development of best practice on promoting equality and diversity at home and abroad. The Department will consult with relevant stakeholders to take this work forward.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides regular training for staff members on diversity and equality matters, including at induction training and specific training on unconscious bias.

Insurance Coverage

59. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to issues regarding farm insurance that farmers are unable to attain cover for livestock other than sheep that are worried or attacked by dogs; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[6091/19]

60. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to issues regarding farm insurance by which farmers cannot obtain insurance cover for the theft of livestock; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6095/19]

61. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to issues regarding farm insurance by which insurance companies are refusing to provide cover for working dogs over five years of age; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6097/19]

67. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the fact that insurance companies are refusing to provide insurance cover to farmers for worrying of livestock other than sheep, theft of livestock and for working dogs over five years of age; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6096/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 59 to 61, inclusive, and 67 together.

As the Deputy is aware, the Cost of Insurance Working Group (CIWG), chaired by the Minister of State for Financial Services and Insurance, Mr. Michael D'Arcy T.D., has undertaken an examination of the factors contributing to the increasing cost of insurance in order to identify what short, medium and long-term measures could be introduced to help reduce the cost of insurance for consumers and businesses. I refer the Deputy to recent responses to Parliamentary Questions for more detail on the CIWG's two primary reports, the Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance (4215/19) and the Report on the Cost of Employer and Public Liability Insurance (4742/19), respectively.

As part of the formal consultation processes for the two reports, there was engagement between the CIWG and representatives from the Irish Farmers' Association and Meat Industry Ireland, as well as some of the main providers of insurance for the agriculture sector in Ireland. I am also aware that Minister of State D'Arcy met with a delegation from the Irish Co-operative Organisation Society in March 2018. I have been informed that issues related to the specific types of insurance referred to by the Deputy were not raised during any of these consultations, nor have recent representations been received in that regard.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding that I have no role regarding how insurance companies price specific risks or the type of cover they provide, my officials contacted Insurance Ireland in relation to the matters raised in your question. I understand from their response that at least one prominent provider of insurance to the agriculture sector in this country offers products which include cover for accidental injury to livestock, for livestock theft, and for working dogs up to and including the age of 8 years.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission website recommends that consumers "shop around" and "always get quotes from several insurance providers when you need to get or renew insurance". While this advice specifically refers to car insurance, it can also be applied to other forms of insurance.

Finally, the free Insurance Information Service run by Insurance Ireland may be in a position to impart useful relevant information to the Deputy and/or his constituent(s), as applicable – the contact details are: feedback@insuranceireland.eu or 01-6761914.

VAT Rate Increases

62. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Finance if the 23% increase on certain health supplements will be reviewed in view of the possible negative impact the hike will have on persons (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6161/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Under the VAT Consolidation Act, the standard rate of VAT applies to all food supplements, which are not foods in the ordinary and everyday meaning of the word. However, a longstanding concession provided through Revenue guidance permitted the zero rating of certain types of food supplements (vitamins, minerals and fish oils).

Revenue published new guidance on 27 December 2018 concerning the rate of VAT that applies to food supplements. The new guidance withdraws the concessionary application of the zero rate to certain food supplements provided for in previous guidance and these products will be liable at the standard rate from 1 March 2019. Food supplement products that did not fall within the withdrawn concession were already liable at the standard rate and this remains unchanged. Human oral medicines and other health products, including folic acid and vitamin products, that are licensed by the Health Products Regulatory Agency (HPRA) are liable at the zero rate.

Independent of the Revenue Commissioners' 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.

Brexit Preparations

63. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Finance the contingency plans in place to deal with possible customs checks at the Border; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6086/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe) (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The EU and Ireland have said that we are determined to do all we can, deal or no deal, to avoid the need for a border and to protect the peace process. In a no deal, Ireland, the EU and the UK would need to work together to achieve this. But it is preferable for us all to resolve this now, as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement.

I am informed by Revenue that their preparations do not include any plans for infrastructure at the border and this is in line with the Government's position that there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland. Revenue Chairman, Niall Cody, set out this position clearly when he and Revenue officials appeared before the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach on 24 January 2019.

The Government has made it clear that it is committed to avoiding the return of a hard border on the Island of Ireland. In the event of no deal, then there will be intensive discussions between the Government, the EU Commission and EU partners regarding the movement of goods North-South. I am assured by Revenue that they will provide whatever technical expertise and assistance is required by the Government.

Departmental Budgets

64. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the breakdown of the €945,000 capital allocation under A economic and policy division in Vote 7 of the budget 2019 expen-

diture report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5997/19]

65. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the breakdown of the €945,000 capital allocation under B banking and financial service policy in Vote 7 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5998/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 64 and 65 together.

My Department received a Capital Allocation of €1,890,000 in the 2019 Estimates.

Due to changes in the programme structure for 2019 it has been decided to allocate certain support costs such as IT and Office Premises Costs on a 50:50 basis to my Department's two remaining programmes. As such the Capital Allocation which is a provision for Office Premises and IT and Office Equipment expenditure has been allocated on that basis.

The Capital budget for 2019 is to cover the projects outlined in the table below.

The amount relating to Various Office Premises Projects is a provision to allow us to engage OPW to carry out various necessary works on our buildings on a case by case basis as their resources become available.

As of today's date it is planned that projects will be commenced and completed in 2019 that will use the entire allocation.

Capital Expenditure Estimate 2019

Description	€
Various Office Premise Projects (Including new meeting rooms)	1,630,000
IT Capital	150,000
Registry Scanning project	80,000
Data Connection to Finglas	30,000
Total	1,890,000

Departmental Budgets

66. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Finance the breakdown of the €24 million capital allocation to the Revenue Commissioners, that is, Vote 9 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5999/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by Revenue that their capital expenditure largely relates to Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Continued investment in ICT has been and will continue to be a major driver of and underpinning for significant productivity growth in Revenue, for the provision of optimal service challenges and service for businesses and individual taxpayers and for enhanced governance and risk management. Each year Revenue needs to develop and implement a series of urgent and strategically

important ICT projects that support budgetary and legislative changes as introduced by the Government or the EU, very frequently within tight timeframes. The €24m can be summarised as follows:

-	Projects	Allocation
IT Systems Development	<p>Some €14m will be spent on IT Systems Development on the projects listed below. Completed in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAYE Modernisation Phase 1 [Q1 2019] Debt Management System [Q1 2019] Customs Performance Enhancements & Trade Facilitation [Q1 2019] LPT Re-evaluation Phase 1 [Q2 2019] Intelligence Management System [Q3 2019] LPT Re-evaluation Phase 1 [Q4 2019] PAYE Modernisation Phase 2 [Q4 2019] <p>Commenced in 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Customs Code Trust Register VAT eCommerce File Management System Unique Business Identifier Register 	€14m
Storage and Hardware	<p>Revenue need to invest on an ongoing basis to replace end of life equipment. This includes storage and infrastructure hardware which ensures, among other things, that Revenue systems are available to the public on a near 24/7 basis and that Revenue staff can access critical data in real-time in both Revenue offices and in external locations.</p>	€6m
Office Premises Expenses	<p>This expenditure relates to required building works and furniture provision in respect of premises in need of repair works and modernisation. These works are identified and costed and planned for in advance.</p>	€2m
Vehicles and Specialised Equipment.	<p>This expenditure is mainly related to Revenue's enforcement activities.</p>	€2m

Question No. 67 answered with Question No. 59.

Tax Data

68. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will report on the recent significant increase in non-domiciled registered tax units here; the estimated level of taxation foregone in this regard for 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6124/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by Revenue that the number of resident non-domiciled taxpayers in Ireland in the period 2014-2016 is set out in the following table. Figures for 2017 will be available later in 2019, when tax returns for that year are processed. As the returns for 2018 will not be filed until late 2019, the information requested in respect of that year will not be available until 2020.

Taxpayers who are resident but non-domiciled in Ireland are liable to tax on their worldwide income, to the extent that it is either earned in, or remitted, into the State. Employment in the State is taxed under the PAYE system and other taxable income is returned on the person's Form 11 or Form 12 as appropriate. As their relevant income is taxed in Ireland, the concept of tax foregone does not arise.

Tax Year	Number of Taxpayer Units
2014	5,597
2015	6,101
2016	7,262

Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme

69. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Finance if the criteria for the disabled drivers and passengers scheme will be amended in view of the concerns that have been outlined by the Ombudsman regarding the equity of the scheme (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6130/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As you may be aware, the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers (Tax Concessions) Scheme provides relief from VAT and VRT (up to a certain limit) on the purchase of an adapted car for transport of a person with specific severe and permanent physical disabilities, payment of a Fuel Grant, and an exemption from Motor Tax.

To qualify for the Scheme an applicant must be in possession of a Primary Medical Certificate. To qualify for a Primary Medical Certificate, an applicant must satisfy one of the following conditions:

- be wholly or almost wholly without the use of both legs;
- be wholly without the use of one leg and almost wholly without the use of the other leg such that the applicant is severely restricted as to movement of the lower limbs;
- be without both hands or without both arms;
- be without one or both legs;
- be wholly or almost wholly without the use of both hands or arms and wholly or almost wholly without the use of one leg;

- have the medical condition of dwarfism and have serious difficulties of movement of the lower limbs.

The Scheme represents a significant tax expenditure. Between the Vehicle Registration Tax and VAT foregone, and the fuel grant, the scheme cost €65m in each of 2016 and 2017, rising to €70m in 2018. This figure does not include the revenue foregone in respect of the relief from Motor Tax provided to members of the Scheme.

I understand and fully sympathise with any person who suffers from a serious physical disability and can't access the scheme under the current criteria. However, given the scope and scale of the scheme, any possible changes to it can only be made after careful consideration, taking into account the existing and prospective cost of the scheme as well as the availability of other schemes which seek to help with the mobility of disabled persons, and the interaction between each of these schemes.

Accordingly, I have no plans to amend the qualifying medical criteria for the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme at this time.

Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme

70. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Finance the number of applications received under the disabled drivers and passengers scheme in each of the past five years; the number of these which were successful and unsuccessful, respectively; the number of appeals submitted; the number of successful appeals; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6131/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by Revenue that the following table sets out the total number of applications received, approved and rejected under the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers scheme for the years 2014 to 2018 (inclusive).

The table also includes the number of appeals received and the number that were successful for the years requested.

Year	Total Applications	No. of Approved Applications	No. of Rejected Applications	No. of Appeals Received	No. of Successful Appeals
2014	5,060	4,997	63	5	4
2015	5,494	5,440	54	15	9
2016	6,511	6,490	21	15	4
2017	6,080	6,052	28	13	10
2018	6,444	6,424	20	11	8

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

71. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Finance the number of discussion papers in regard to potential topics of value for money examinations prepared and submitted for consideration by the reporting directorate of the Comptroller and Auditor General in each of the years 2010 to 2018; and the number of discussion papers in each case that went on to be included in the list of topics for examination by the Comptroller and Auditor General in the subsequent year. [6160/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Comptroller and Auditor General is independent in the exercise of his functions and therefore my Department does not have the details requested.

The Deputy may wish to raise the matters directly with the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Brexit Issues

72. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding insurance policies held with insurance companies prudentially regulated in the UK or Gibraltar but operating here under freedom of services in the event of a no-deal Brexit; if such policies will be still valid; if new policies will be possible; if the issue will be fully dealt with in the miscellaneous provisions (withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019) Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6175/19]

74. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the nature of temporary run-off regime in the event the UK leaving the EU on 29 March 2019; the way in which the regime interacts with EU law on insurance; if it will be possible for new business to be written by UK companies not prudentially regulated here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6177/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 72 and 74 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, upon withdrawal from the EU and in the absence of a political agreement between the EU and the UK, UK (including Gibraltar) insurance undertakings and insurance distributors will lose their right to conduct business by way of Freedom of Establishment (FOE) and Freedom of Services (FOS) under the EU regulatory framework.

According to the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority's (EIOPA) Opinion of 28 June 2018, insurance contracts concluded before the Withdrawal date by UK undertakings by way of FOE or FOS are in principle valid after that date. What has been in doubt however is the ability of insurance undertakings and insurance distributors (i.e. brokers) to continue performing certain obligations and activities and ensure service continuity with regard to such contracts, e.g. pay out claims.

It is understood that a significant majority of UK/Gibraltar insurance undertakings have prepared appropriate Brexit contingency plans which are expected to be implemented in advance of Brexit. However, there is a legitimate concern, that a small number of such undertakings as well as a number of insurance distributors will either not have completed such contingency plans by the end of March 2019, or have made a decision not to implement them in the first place. Such a scenario as you will appreciate gives rise to a risk in respect of their ability to continue servicing the insurance policies they have sold.

Consequently, the focus of my Department and the Central Bank has been to find a solution to address this issue. The proposed solution, which is reflected in the General Scheme of the Miscellaneous Provisions (Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019) Bill, provides for a temporary run-off regime which, subject to a number of conditions, will enable impacted UK/Gibraltar insurance undertakings or insurance distributors to continue to provide services to their Irish customers for a period of 3 years after the date of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. Both my Department and the Central Bank believe that this proposal is compatible and in line with the Solvency II Directive which sets out that the main

objective of supervision is to ensure ‘adequate protection of policyholders and beneficiaries’.

The Deputy should also be aware that such insurance undertakings and insurance distributors will no longer be able to write new business in Ireland unless and until they obtain the relevant authorisation under the EU insurance supervisory regime.

The General Scheme of the legislation was published by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade on 24 January 2019 and can be viewed on his Department’s website at:

<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/eu/brexit/brexitnegotations/General-Scheme-of-Miscellaneous-Provisions.pdf>.

My officials are currently working with the Central Bank of Ireland and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to develop Part 8 of that Scheme into the legislative provisions necessary to protect Irish policyholders from insurance contract continuity issues in the event of a hard Brexit.

Brexit Preparations

73. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the consultation or engagement that has taken place between him and the insurance industry; the number of times in the past six months he has met with organisations (details supplied) on Brexit; the details of the meetings; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6176/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Deputy will be aware that Brexit has implications across almost all sectors of the economy. Since the UK referendum, Brexit is an integral part of business planning in the Department of Finance and issues relating to Brexit are mainstreamed across all divisions of my Department. In this context, I meet and engage on an ongoing basis with my officials on issues linked to Brexit. The objective of my approach as Minister for Finance is to protect the economic and financial interests of the state and to support the work of the Revenue Commissioners so as to minimise disruption to trade to the greatest extent possible. These objectives are being advanced under four priority headings which are developing appropriate economic and budgetary policy advice; safeguarding financial stability through engagement with the CBI and the NTMA; assuring continued funding of the State by the NTMA and supporting the work of the Revenue Commissioners in the areas of customs, direct and indirect tax.

On the question as to what level of engagement I have had with the insurance industry in relation to Brexit, the Deputy should note that my colleague Minister of State D’Arcy has immediate responsibility, within my Department, for Financial Services and Insurance. As such while I have not had direct discussions with the industry, Minister D’Arcy has had a significant level of engagement, both with individual insurance companies, and with insurance industry bodies, during which Brexit has been discussed. This has included speaking at events held by insurance representative bodies, where Brexit related issues were on the agenda. In addition, I would note that the IFS2020 Strategy allows for structured dialogue with industry at the quarterly Joint Committee meetings, chaired by Minister of State D’Arcy, at which Brexit is a standing item on the agenda. My officials have also had close engagement with the insurance industry through various fora since the outcome of the 2016 UK referendum, where Brexit as an issue would have been raised.

It should be noted that the insurance industry has been clear from the outset of the potential difficulties that a hard Brexit may cause to policyholders and claimants from a contract continuity perspective. This has been conveyed through a range of forums including at EU level.

However, the EU Commission has stated repeatedly that industry is responsible for ensuring that it is appropriately Brexit prepared. Accordingly, the Central Bank has engaged with the insurance industry and the UK regulatory authorities to ensure that this is the case and in a general sense this exercise has been successful.

My Department and the Central Bank have however been cognisant that not all insurers or brokers would be fully Brexit prepared and therefore since September have been considering what could be done to ensure that all policyholders are appropriately protected from a hard Brexit. The Miscellaneous Provisions (Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019) Bill 2019, contains proposals which if enacted, will ensure that UK or Gibraltar authorised insurers will be deemed to have a limited authorisation for a period of three years after withdrawal. This will therefore allow policies written prior to Brexit in relation to risks in the State come under scope of the ICF subject to the terms and conditions of the Fund.

Question No. 74 answered with Question No. 72.

Insurance Industry

75. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the number of insurance companies operating here under freedom of services which are prudentially regulated in the UK or Gibraltar by the type of insurance sold and the number of applications with the Central Bank from insurance companies wishing to be prudentially regulated here, respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6178/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As Minister for Finance, I am responsible for the development of the legal framework governing financial regulation. The day to day supervision of insurance undertakings is a matter for the Central Bank of Ireland, and so I have consulted with it in respect of the information sought.

With regard to non-life insurance, I am informed by the Central Bank that as at 31 December 2017 (the most recent data they have), that there were 216 non-life insurance firms authorised to provide services in Ireland on a Freedom of Services (FOS) basis under the EU Solvency II framework from the United Kingdom and Gibraltar. I have been advised however that only 58 of these firms actually operate in Ireland. Of these, 48 were authorised in the United Kingdom and 10 were authorised in Gibraltar.

The types of non-life insurance written by UK firms included Motor, General Liability, Fire & Other property, Medical Expenses, Marine & Aviation, Credit & Suretyship, Miscellaneous Financial Loss, Income protection, Property, Assistance, Legal Expenses, Workers Compensation (Employer Liability), and Casualty. For Gibraltar firms, the types of business written are Motor, Miscellaneous Financial Loss, General Liability, Credit & Suretyship, Legal Expenses, Assistance, Fire & Other property, and Casualty insurance. In this regard, I understand that 87% of gross written premium written by UK firms was in respect of motor insurance, fire & other property insurance and general liability insurance, while 91% of the premium written by Gibraltar firms was in respect of motor insurance.

With regard to life insurance, I am informed by the Central Bank of Ireland that as at 31 December 2017, that there were 51 life insurance firms authorised or registered to provide services in Ireland on a Freedom of Services (FOS) basis under the EU Solvency II framework from the United Kingdom and Gibraltar. However, I understand that only 11 of them actually operate in Ireland, all of which are authorised in the United Kingdom.

Finally, the Central Bank has indicated that they are unable to comment on the number of applications from insurers wishing to be prudentially regulated here, however they have confirmed that they are continuing to review a number of such applications at this time.

Insurance Compensation Fund

76. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the compensation mechanisms in place if after the UK leaves the EU an insurance company operating here under freedom of services but prudentially regulated in the UK or Gibraltar goes into liquidation; the way in which the Insurance (Amendment) Act 2018 applies in this scenario; if claimants in this instance would be entitled to 100% compensation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6179/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Irish Insurance Compensation Fund (ICF) was established under the Insurance Act 1964, (as amended) and operates as a host-based insurance guarantee scheme. This means that it is designed to facilitate payments due under a policy in relation to risks in the State where an Irish authorised non-life insurer or a non-life insurer authorised in another EU Member State goes into liquidation.

Once the UK leaves the EU, an insurance company regulated in the UK or Gibraltar, will no longer be able to write new insurance contracts in Ireland under freedom of services. If such companies wish to write new business here, they will need to obtain a relevant authorisation in Ireland, or another EU member state under the EU insurance regulatory framework.

The Miscellaneous Provisions (Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019) Bill 2019, contains proposals which if enacted, will ensure that UK or Gibraltar authorised insurers will be deemed to have a limited authorisation for a period of three years after withdrawal. This will therefore allow policies written prior to Brexit in relation to risks in the State come under scope of the ICF subject to the terms and conditions of the Fund.

The Insurance Act 1964 (as amended) currently provides that claimants can be compensated by the ICF for 65% of the claim or €825,000, whichever is the lesser. However, in the case of third party motor insurance claims, the Insurance (Amendment) Act 2018 provides that the level of compensation from the ICF is increased to 100%, with the additional coverage financed by the motor insurance industry through the establishment of an ex-ante fund into which industry will make regular contributions.

Tax Deduction Systems

77. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the status of the review on tax treatment of flat rate expenses; if these changes will come into force in 2020; if there are changes from the original proposal announced in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6180/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by Revenue that their review of the flat rate expenses (FRE) regime is ongoing and that it is intended to have the review completed by the end of 2019. It is not intended to further review the flat rate expense categories already identified as not meeting the statutory requirement for tax deduction, as set out in section 114 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

The Deputy will be aware from my previous replies on this matter that Revenue confirmed an implementation date of 1 January 2020 in respect of any changes that may be made to the flat rate regime, to ensure they do not impact on any specific group earlier than the rest. Revenue confirmed this position is unchanged.

NAMA Staff Data

78. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance the estimated number of NAMA staff who will transfer into Home Building Finance Ireland; the anticipated date of their transfer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6188/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Similar to NAMA and the SBCI, all Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFI) officials will be seconded employees of the NTMA. In order to ensure that HBFI operates in the most efficient manner possible it is envisaged that the NTMA shall first draw upon any relevant resources, services and experience that are already available within the NTMA, including NAMA, when appointing staff to HBFI. NAMA has amassed considerable expertise in this area through the implementation of its existing residential funding programme and this will be a key asset for HBFI.

HBFI has an approved final headcount of 23 staff and is currently in the process of recruiting for 6 positions including the position of HBFI Chief Executive Officer. To date, 16 positions have been filled in HBFI (which will include 9 former NAMA officials). Of these 16 positions, 10 staff have already commenced working for HBFI with a further 6 staff commencing work in the coming weeks.

Revenue Documents

79. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance if a P21 will issue to a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6210/19]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I am advised by Revenue that further information is required from the person in question before their tax situation can be fully determined.

Revenue requested this information from the person on 4 February but has not yet received a reply. Revenue also attempted to contact the person by telephone but received no reply. As soon as the information requested is provided Revenue will review the person's tax situation and will issue the P21 statement.

Departmental Records

80. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the reason for the actions by staff in his Department that have mistakenly altered documentation (details supplied) on the grounds that the national minimum wage was changed in January 2019 in view of the fact that the relevant pay scale is covered by the employment regulation orders for contract cleaning; when the contractor will be paid in full; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5982/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) is a statutory office, established under the National Shared

Services Office Act 2017. On 1 January 2018 the NSSO became a separate Civil Service office, under the aegis of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

The NSSO has advised the Department that they scrutinise every invoice submitted to ensure that the goods or services invoiced for have been delivered to the quality standards agreed and in full compliance with the terms of the contract and all relevant laws – including laws on the Minimum Wage and any sectorial agreements. From time to time, disputes can arise in relation to payment of invoices. In that case, the NSSO engages directly with the relevant party in order to expedite the resolution of the dispute pursuant to the terms of the contract at issue, obtaining legal advice where necessary.

Departmental Budgets

81. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €84,000 capital allocation under A public expenditure and sectoral policy division in Vote 11 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6000/19]

82. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €4,331,000 capital allocation under B public service management and reform in Vote 11 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6001/19]

83. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €587,000 capital allocation in the Office of Government Procurement for 2019, that is, Vote 39 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6002/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 81 to 83, inclusive, together.

The purpose of the capital investment undertaken by my Department, including the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), is to deliver greater effectiveness and efficiency across the Civil and Public Service, in the context of initiatives set out in reform plans such as Our Public Service 2020 and the Public Service ICT Strategy.

In 2019, Vote 11 (DPER) was allocated a capital investment budget of €4,415,000 and the main subheads investing this capital are the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and Civil Service Learning and Development Programme (OneLearning).

The OGCIO takes the lead on driving forward the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy, working with Departments and agencies across the Public Service, and has been allocated a capital budget of €3,500,000 in 2019. Capital investment in 2019 has been allocated to the five strategic themes of the strategy which are Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance, and Increase Capability. For instance, under the Build to Share pillar of the Strategy, the OGCIO continues to enhance the Government Network that has been in existence for many years. As a result of this investment, the Network will operate at higher speeds, providing high capacity services to the wider Public Service. The enhanced network will support agencies in the roll-out of new applications, new ways of working and engaging with the citizen.

The 2019 OGCIO capital budget has been allocated to these areas:

- Build To Share Common Applications (€1,250,000)
- Build to Share Desk Top Services (€1,400,000)
- Government Networks Development (€700,000)
- Strategic IT Development and Capability (€150,000)

The Civil Service Learning and Development subhead has been allocated €600,000 to complete the development of the Learning Management IT System in the first half of 2019. This is a key element of the Civil Service Renew Plan, as the system will provide a common platform for staff to access all of their learning and development requirements.

The Department also has a 2019 admin capital budget of €315,000 for routine ongoing investment in its own technology and premises.

In 2019, Vote 39 (Office of Government Procurement) has been allocated a capital budget of €587,000. This allocation is for a mixture of project based and routine ongoing capital spend. The OGP will invest €312,000 in its IT systems to deliver on its mandate to drive procurement savings to the State. The two IT projects that the OGP is continuing to invest in are the eTenders platform to support national and EU procurement requirements and a CRM / Workflow Management System is also being implemented to support OGP's Customer Service function and sourcing activities of the OGP and its sector partners.

The OGP has a 2019 admin capital budget of €275,000 for routine ongoing investment in its own technology and premises.

Departmental Budgets

84. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €76,262,000 capital allocation in the flood risk management division of the Office of Public Works, that is, Vote 13 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6003/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The 2019 capital allocation for the Flood Risk Management area will allow (i) the continued implementation of the existing programme of flood relief projects and the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme; (ii) the further development and progression of the initial prioritised tranche of projects arising from the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) launched in May 2018 and (iii) the continued work on a range of other programmes which include Home Relocation/Remedial Works, Second Cycle of the Flood Directive and the table below sets out the breakdown of projected expenditure in these areas for 2019:

Table A

Programme	Projected expenditure*
Existing Capital Projects to be at Construction stage during 2019 (including some post construction costs on completed schemes)	€55m
Existing Capital Projects at Design Stage	€6m

Programme	Projected expenditure*
Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme	€3m
New Projects arising from Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) - mainly design costs and other pre-construction costs. Some smaller new projects may reach construction stage in 2019.	€4m
Other Programmes	€8m

* The figures included in this table are broadly indicative estimates only and are subject to change

There are currently ten major projects at construction with five of these to be completed or substantially completed and operational by the end of 2019. These include, Bandon and Skibbereen in Co Cork, Ennis Lower in Co Clare and Claregalway and Dunkellin in Co Galway. Construction works currently underway on projects in Athlone in Co Westmeath, River Dodder in Dublin City, Clonakilty in Co Cork, Ashbourne in Co Meath and Templemore in Co Tipperary will continue beyond 2019.

The following major projects are currently scheduled to commence construction before the end of 2019:

- Blackpool, Co. Cork
- Glashaboy, Co. Cork
- Douglas, Co. Cork
- Ennis South, Co. Clare
- Lower Morell, Co. Kildare
- Sandymount, Dublin City

In addition to these, a further 24 projects are currently in the existing Programme of Capital Flood Relief Projects which are being advanced through planning and design.

The design and planning of the initial tranche of projects arising from the Flood Risk Management Plans, launched in May of last year and which will form the bulk of the future Capital Programme, will progress during the course of this year as well. This comprises 26 medium to large projects with individual values between €1m and €40m along with 31 Small Projects whose individual value is under €1m.

Departmental Budgets

85. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €105,787,000 capital allocation in the estate management division of the Office of Public Works, that is, Vote 13 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6004/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The information is contained in the following table:

Questions - Written Answers

	2019 €m	Commencing 2019	Completed 2019
B.2 Admin Non-Pay	3,027	On going	
B.3 Grants for Refurb works	250	On-going	
B.4 Purchase of sites & buildings	3,480	On going	
B.10 Unitary Payment*	25,000	On going	
B.6 New Works Capital Budget	74,030		
Total	105,787		
B.6 New Works (Detail)			
Estate Planning	250	On going	
Architectural Services	1,800	On going	
Garda Programmes			
Athlone Garda Station	5,200	On site	
Portlaois Garda Station	1,200	Stage 4**	
Donegal Garda Station	2,200	Commencing	
Athlone Water Unit	1,000	Commencing	
Minor Works	1,000	On going	
Cell Programme	2,500	On going	
Fabric Upgrade	1,000	On going	
Cultural			
Leinster House	8,200	On site	For completion
Cultural Institutions	2,630	On going	
Heritage			
Historical Properties	3,000	On going	
Failte Ireland Programme	2,000	On going	
Universal Access Programme	1,700	On going	
Mechanical & Electrical Programme	12,000	On going	
Energy Conservation Prog	3,000	On going	
Minor New Works			
Private Security	750	On going	
Health & Safety	500	On going	
Fabric Upgrade	4,000	On going	

	2019 €m	Commencing 2019	Completed 2019
Office Accommodation			
Leeson Lane, D2	2,800	Commencing	
Tom Johnson House, D4	300	Stage 4	
Distillers Building, D7	100	Stage 4	
The Landings, D1	700	Stage 4	
OPW Headford, Galway	1,000	Commencing	
22-25 Clare Street, D2	200	Stage 4	
Merrion Sq/Fenian St, D2	200	Stage 4	
94 Merrion Square, D2	50	Stage 4	
Hawkins House, D1	2,500	Stage 4	
Gov Buildings South Block	550	On site	For completion
Probation Services, Limerick	1,500	Stage 4	
Infinity Building, D7	2,000	Commencing	
TRA – Dundalk VMA	1,400	On site	For completion
Chancery Building, D8	500	Commencing	For completion
Block 5 & 6 Earlsfort Tce	1,900	Commencing	
DEASP Programme	2,400	On going	
Miesian Plaza, D2	2,000		For completion
Total	74,030		

*Unitary Payment - A PPP Contract Award was made to Spencer Dock Convention Centre Dublin Ltd. (SDCCD)/PPP Co. in April 2007. OPW is the Contracting Authority and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is the Sponsoring Department. The Convention Centre Dublin (CCD) opened in September 2010. PPP Co. are responsible for operating the Centre for a 25-year concession period. The Building is owned by the State, and PPP Co. operate the facility under a Project Agreement (PA). The building is due to be handed back to the State in 2035. Under the PA, the State will pay for the CCD over 25 years by means of Unitary Charges (UC).

** Stage 4 – Planning/ design including procurement

Departmental Budgets

86. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €2,500,000 capital allocation in the Public Appointments Service, that is, Vote 17 of the budget 2019 expenditure report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6005/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Vote 17 - PAS 2019 Capital Allocation

2019 Provision	Purpose	Overview of capital investment works to be undertaken
€1,500,000	Funding for essential upgrade works on Chapter House	This funding will be utilised to carry out essential improvement works at Chapter House in 2019 with the dual purpose of improving the functional specification of the building, and to ensure that the building is a reflection of the professional, modern and progressive image we hope to portray in terms of careers in the civil and public service.
€1,000,000	Funding for investment in PAS's centralised online IT Recruitment Platform which is nearing end of life and needs to be replaced.	PAS's IT Recruitment Platform which has been operational for over 10 years is central to the delivery of PAS recruitment services to the public and to client Departments and Offices. The Platform is in urgent need of replacement. The replacement platform (Project Nova) is to be commenced in 2019 and delivered over the next three years, and will be future proofed to meet evolving business requirements and recruitment demands. The €1 million amount provided in 2019 is the first tranche of the investment in the replacement Nova Recruitment Platform.

Departmental Budgets

87. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €10,900,000 capital allocation in the National Shared Services Office function of his Department, that is, Vote 18 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6006/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The breakdown of the €10,900,000 capital allocation in the National Shared Services Office function for 2019 is as follows:

Project	Cost	Commenced in 2019	Completed in 2019
FMSS Project	€8,256,000	No	Ongoing with system to 'go-live' expected in 2019
Fixtures & Fittings	€35,000	Yes	Yes
IT Capital Expenditure	€2,609,000	Yes	Yes

Further supporting information is available as follows:

FMSS Project

The introduction of Financial Management Shared Services for the Civil Service is progressing. An analysis undertaken in 2013 indicated that there was a significant opportunity for improving the current fragmented delivery model of central government financial management across Government bodies.

A feasibility report and initial business case was approved by Government in 2013. In January 2016 the Government approved the revised and validated business case, and the Cabinet granted approval for the project to proceed. A Financial Management and reporting system is currently being developed with a total of 48 Government organisations expected to transfer to this new technology solution. Finance Shared Services is expected to commence providing services in 2019 and will be located at existing National Shared Services Office (NSSO) sites in Galway, Killarney and Tullamore.

IT Capital Expenditure

IT capital expenditure relates to IT support and development costs of all HR and Payroll solutions in operation in the NSSO including Core HR and PeopleSoft. These costs include delivering on operational objectives of organisation scalability, process efficiency, data convergence and integration, and improved end-user experience.

Fixture and Fittings costs are associated with the NSSO Corporate Business Unit moving to a new office.

Departmental Budgets

88. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the breakdown of the €100,000 capital allocation in the human resource shared services division of the National Shared Services Office for 2019, that is, Vote 18 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6007/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The breakdown of the €100,000 capital allocation for Human Resources Shared Services is as follows:

Project	Cost	Commenced in 2019	Completed in 2019
Pensions Room	€20,000	Yes	Yes
Communal Canteen	€80,000	Yes	Yes

Further supporting information is available as follows:

Pension Room

The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) is required to hold unique paper records of Officer's service: if this data is lost the information would be irretrievable. The current room used to hold these records is too small and due to the large amount of paper files, the facility must be upgraded to comply with fire regulations and it also poses a Health & Safety risk. The NSSO also has GDPR obligations to provide secure storage for pension files. Due to this, an upgrade will take place in 2019.

Communal Canteen

As part of other improvement works in an NSSO office, the NSSO will lose an existing canteen and this will put pressure on the remaining staff welfare services. Works to create a communal canteen are expected to take place in 2019.

Public Spending Code

89. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the role of his Department in invigilating the procurement process for the new National Children's Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6125/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): While I have responsibility for public procurement policy, my Department does not procure public works contracts and has no role in invigilating the procurement process of the national children's hospital project. It is the relevant sanctioning and contracting authority that has responsibility for the management of the tendering process for a public works contract and the administration of the contract once it is awarded.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform requires those charged with the delivery of public works projects to comply with the Public Spending Code and the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF).

The Department of Health, as the accountable Department for the Children's Hospital Project, established the reporting and governance arrangements for the project through which the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board (NPHDB) provides regular updates to it on the project.

The roles of the Chief Procurement Officer and the Government Contracts Committee for Construction (GCCC) in the project are set out below.

The Chief Procurement Officer was appointed in a personal capacity to the NPHDB in 2013 for a five year term by the then Minister for Health. He was re-appointed in 2018 by the current Minister for Health. The members of the NPHDB, in line with Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and the Board's own Code of Governance, have a fiduciary duty to the Board in the first instance, a responsibility to act collectively in decision making and communication, and an obligation to observe its confidentiality arrangements.

The responsibility for construction procurement policy and the associated Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) lies with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). Government policy requires the use of the CWMF on all projects delivered under the Exchequer-funded element of the public capital programme. The public works contract is a key component of the CWMF and is a lump-sum fixed-price contract which is to be used on all public works projects.

It is possible for public bodies to seek a derogation from the use of the standard forms of contract from the GCCC. The GCCC is a consultative forum for the discussion and development of policy in the tendering and contracting of all aspects of construction projects. Membership of the committee includes representatives of all the main capital spending bodies and it possesses considerable expertise across the different sectors of activity in the construction industry. The OGP provides the Chair and the Secretariat to the Committee.

The NPHDB commenced their formal engagement with the GCCC in May 2014 with a

view to securing such a derogation. The GCCC supported the principle of the proposed strategy.

It is important to note that a derogation does not sanction the approach or strategy of the Contracting Authority, but simply acknowledges that the circumstances are such as to warrant a different approach than the standard. It is a matter for the Contracting Authority and the Sanctioning Authority to satisfy themselves as to the adequacy of the approach with regards to compliance with procurement rules and project appraisal in accordance with the Public Spending Code.

National Children's Hospital Expenditure

90. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the date, format and person or body by which he was informed of the cost overruns in the National Children's Hospital in November 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6169/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The first full assessment of the cost overrun and the reasons for it was received by my Department in the form of a report from the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board submitted by the Department of Health on the 19 November. My Department reviewed the report and met with the Department of Health to discuss it on the 23 November and made a formal submission to me on 26 November.

Departmental Staff Data

91. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of staff allocated to the infrastructure projects office; the number at year end 2018; the allocated budget for 2018 and 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6193/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): The Investment Projects and Programmes Office was established in July 2018, bringing together existing functions relating to Central Exchequer Capital funding, PPP Policy and Coordination of State Assets with new functions relating to NDP reporting, the Construction Sector Group, and the revision of the capital spending elements of the Public Spending Code.

There are currently 8.3 whole time equivalents in the Investment Projects and Programmes Office. The headcount is unchanged since end 2018.

The non-pay allocation for 2018 was €3,100 of which €1,835 was spent.

The non-pay budget for 2019 is €267,800. The increase relates to projects in support of the work of the Construction Sector Group, initiatives to improve productivity and capacity in the construction sector, and anticipated spending on NDP reporting and information, including a revamped Investment Projects Tracker, Project Ireland Annual Report and portfolio management tool.

Public Expenditure Policy

92. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which levels of public expenditure continue to be monitored with a view to ensuring that a high level of competitiveness internationally is maintained; and if he will make a state-

ment on the matter. [6217/19]

93. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the degree to which action continues to impact positively on the economic future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6218/19]

95. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which he has identified particular expenditure issues likely to present a threat to ongoing economy recovery; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6220/19]

96. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which he can influence good practice measures to safeguard the economy in the event of over expenditure or external economic pressures; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6221/19]

99. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which he can control and or balance capital and current expenditure proposals in 2019 and thereafter with a view to protecting the future of the economy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6224/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 92, 93, 95, 96 and 99 together.

Since 2015, it has been possible to provide modest, sustainable increases in expenditure each year. The Government's approach in that time has been based on steady increases in public expenditure, underpinned by stable and predictable tax revenues. This approach is aimed at delivering steady and sustainable improvements in public services and infrastructure, while protecting our hard-won economic recovery. Under this approach, a key consideration when allocating funding is whether it is affordable both now and into the future. This requires continuing prudent management of the public finances.

A further element of this approach is to prioritise spending that mitigates risk, enhances the resilience of the economy and raises our growth capacity. This is the context for the National Development Plan. The capital expenditure ceilings set out in the Revised Estimates Volume reflect the multi-annual ceilings agreed by Government and published in the NDP.

As part of this prudent management, over the last number of years a number of reforms have been implemented to support increased transparency and accountability in the budgetary process. This includes the Performance and Equality Budgeting initiatives, the publication of reports such as the Mid-Year Expenditure Report and the Summer Economic Statement and the roll-out of the Spending Review process. These reforms aim to facilitate a more meaningful dialogue around expenditure decisions and a shift in focus away from simply how much is being spent, towards what is being achieved.

Efficient management of expenditure is a key part of protecting our ongoing economic recovery and this forms a key part of the role of each Government Minister. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is in regular contact with all other Departments and Offices to ensure that expenditure is being managed within the overall fiscal parameters.

The January Fiscal Monitor presents a year-on-year comparison. At end-January, total gross voted expenditure was €5,135 million. This is an increase of €328 million, or 6.8% in year-on-year terms. Gross voted current expenditure of €4,911 million was €322 million, or 7% ahead of the same period in 2018, while gross voted capital expenditure of €225 million was €6 million, or 2.6% up in year-on-year terms. Monthly expenditure profiles for each Government Department will be published this month. From February on, as is usual, the drawdown of funds from

the Exchequer will be reported on each month against expenditure profiles, in the Fiscal Monitor published by the Department of Finance.

Public Sector Staff Remuneration

94. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the degree to which he continues to strive towards a fair and equitable restoration of income throughout the public sector with a view to ensuring that the sacrifices made during the economic downturn by the various sectors are acknowledged and have their payment restored in accordance with the relevant criteria; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6219/19]

100. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the extent to which he expects the restoration of public sector pay to be completed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6225/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 94 and 100 together.

The process of dismantling the Financial Emergency legislation commenced under the Lansdowne Road Agreement 2016-2018 and will be completed under the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 (PSSA).

The PSSA, which was negotiated in 2017, and the provisions of which were statutorily provided for under the terms of the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017, allows for a continued, controlled unwinding of the financial emergency (FEMPI) legislation. The unwinding process is progressively weighted towards those at the lower levels of pay (who will see their salaries increase relative to 2008), and is implemented on a phased basis.

By end 2019 salary rates up to €50,000 will be fully restored. By end 2020 salary rates up to €70,000 (over 90% of the public service) will be fully restored.

For public servants who have not achieved full restoration of the FEMPI cuts by October 2020 (i.e. the date of the last PSSA increase), restoration of the amount must be completed by way of Ministerial order. This order must be made on the following dates:

For those with a post-PSSA salary of under €150,000:

- Covered public servants: a date after 1 October 2020 but before 1 July 2021.
- Non-covered public servants: on 1 July 2021.

For those with a post-PSSA salary in excess of €150,000:

- Covered public servants: a date after 1 October 2020 but before 1 July 2022.
- Non-covered public servants: a date after 1 July 2021 but before 1 July 2022.

Questions Nos. 95 and 96 answered with Question No. 92.

Brexit Supports

97. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the degree to which he has identified particular issues arising from Brexit and in respect of which he

will take action to protect the economy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6222/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Central to the Government's preparation for Brexit is the prudent management of the public finances so as to ensure the economy remains competitive in the face of future economic headwinds. Since the UK referendum in 2016, all of our national Budgets have been framed to prepare for the challenge of Brexit. Measures being taken include balancing the books, reducing our debt burden, building up the Rainy Day Fund and continuing to invest in infrastructure.

Budget 2019 sets out a number of specific measures aimed at making Ireland Brexit ready, including the introduction of a longer-term loan scheme, the Future Growth Loan Scheme for terms of 8-10 years, to provide a longer-term scheme facility of up to €300 million to support strategic capital investment for a post-Brexit environment by business at competitive rates.

It also provides increased resources of €25 million across a range of Departments and Offices based on a Brexit central case scenario; a €71 million package for the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine and its agencies, Teagasc and Bord Bia; an increase of €14 million to the current allocation for the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation; €5 million for the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade to enable it to continue to address the challenges posed by Brexit across a range of headings.

The economic and fiscal policies that we have pursued mean that the economy is now in a better position to weather the impacts of Brexit. The possibility of a no-deal Brexit has influenced policy decisions made in relation to the public finances in terms of our stated aim of balancing the books and investing in capital infrastructure.

Economic Policy

98. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the degree to which further reform is likely to be required arising from impending international economic pressures in the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6223/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): As the Deputy's question suggests, we are currently experiencing an environment of significant uncertainty presenting our country with many potential challenges, including those to which the Deputy refers. Central to the Government's preparation for such challenges is the prudent management of the public finances in order to ensure the economy remains competitive in the face of future economic headwinds. Measures being taken include balancing the books, reducing our debt burden, building up the Rainy Day Fund and continuing to invest in infrastructure.

In the particular context of reform, a series of initiatives taken by this Government since 2011 have made the work of the civil and public services more transparent, decision-making more accountable and service delivery more effective and efficient. *Our Public Service 2020* - the current phase of reform which I launched in 2017 - builds on these previous reforms while expanding the scope of reform to focus more on collaboration, innovation and evaluation. Progress in each of these areas, but especially innovation, will better position Ireland to meet the challenges arising in the global environment to which the Deputy refers.

Certain of the eighteen specific actions set out in *Our Public Service 2020*, such as accelerating digital delivery of services, driving efficiency and effectiveness and promoting a culture of innovation in the public service are particularly relevant in this regard. A Public Service Leadership Board comprising Secretary General and CEO level participants from across the civil and public service has been established to drive the new reform agenda and lead on its

implementation. This approach will support and enable public servants and their organisations to perform at their best and to work together to deliver high-quality, value-for-money outcomes that will benefit the economy.

Question No. 99 answered with Question No. 92.

Question No. 100 answered with Question No. 94.

Public Procurement Regulations

101. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the specific issues to which his attention has been drawn to which indicate a lack of compliance with the criteria set down by his Department in terms of procurement and reform which may negatively or otherwise impact on the economic future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6226/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Public Procurement is governed by EU legislation and National rules and guidelines. The aim of these rules is to promote an open, competitive and non-discriminatory public procurement regime which delivers best value for money.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has responsibility for developing and setting out the overarching policy framework for public procurement in Ireland. This framework enables a more consistent approach to public procurement across the public sector by setting out the procurement procedures to be followed by public bodies.

The OGP supports compliance by providing procurement solutions, advice, guidance and systems for public bodies, promoting good practice and proactive engagement with our sourcing partners in the Health, Education, Defence and Local Government Sectors through the Procurement Executive. Furthermore, the OGP's Key Account Managers are in regular contact with Procurement Officers in Government departments and public bodies to assist, support and remind them of their obligations in relation to public procurement.

However, it should be noted that while the policy framework and associated guidelines facilitate compliance with public procurement rules, it is the responsibility of each contracting authority to ensure they adhere to these rules.

Public procurement practices are also subject to audit and scrutiny under the Comptroller and Auditor General and Local Government Reform Acts.

Shared Services

102. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform when the national shared services office will be fully established; the original budgeted cost for the office; the cost incurred to date; the status of the contract with a company (details supplied) in relation to the office; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6234/19]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe): Following clarification received that the Deputy is referring to the Financial Management Shared Services (FMSS) Project and not the establishment of the National Shared Services Office (NSSO), I can confirm the following:

The expected date of completion for the FMSS Project, and therefore the date when the new Finance Shared Services Centre will be fully established, is not currently confirmed, due to the scale and complexity of this project.

The business case supporting the FMSS Project was approved by Government in 2016. This business case set out that the finance administration from 48 Departments and Offices would be transferred into one centralised Government finance team and system, reducing the number of systems from 31 to 1. The process of transferring Departments and Offices to the new system will take place over in a series of waves over a three to four year period.

The original budget for the FMSS Project, approved by the Government in 2016, is €47.34m (excluding VAT). The total costs incurred to date, including accrued costs, are €33.7m (including VAT). The contract with the company (details supplied) is currently active and engagement is ongoing with the project team.

Schools Building Projects Status

103. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when the design team will commence work on a school project (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5974/19]

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. Whilst the Department must adhere to the Public Procurement rules for the appointment of consultant Design Teams the Building Unit will expedite this process in so far as possible.

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.

Departmental Budgets

104. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the breakdown of the €764,055,000 capital allocation in first, second and early years education within his Department for 2019, by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6020/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The capital allocation available to my Department in 2019 under First, Second and Early Years Education amounts to €764,055 and it is envisaged that it will be expended as follows:

7 February 2019

Primary and Post-Primary Infrastructure - €622m

Public Private Partnership Costs - €84.055m

Miscellaneous Grants and Services - €54.9m

Special memorial for abuse victims - €0.5m

Administration - €2.6m

The Primary and Post-Primary Infrastructure allocation will be expended primarily on the delivery of large scale projects that commenced on site in 2018 or earlier and remain under construction in 2019 and for large scale projects that are positioned to commence construction in 2019. Almost €450m will be expended on the delivery of large scale projects and on the Additional Accommodation Scheme. Details of the large scale projects and the Additional Accommodation Scheme projects are available on my Department's website which is updated regularly.

The remaining balance available in 2019 will be expended on site acquisitions, the Summer Works Scheme, the Emergency Works Scheme, furniture and equipment provision and other smaller programmes.

The allocation available for Public Private Partnership Costs will be expended primarily on unitary charges associated with the School Bundles delivered to date, the VAT payment arising on the completion of Schools Bundle 5 and a significant extension project.

The Miscellaneous Grants and Services includes the roll out of the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, for which €210m has been committed in funding for schools ICT Infrastructure. In 2019 (for the 2018-2019 school year), €50m will issue in grant funding to all recognised eligible primary and post-primary schools.

The balance of €4.9m is available for Public Sector Reform which will be employed for the Education and Training Sectors Shared Services projects, These projects will bring Payroll and Finance Shared Services to the Education and Training Boards (ETB) sector, serving the sixteen ETB's providing education at primary and secondary school levels and providing further education and training through SOLAS training programmes and community based schemes.

Non-pay administration costs associated with the delivery of the capital programme amounts to €2.6m

A sum of €0.5m is available for the design and installation of a memorial for the victims of abuse.

Departmental Budgets

105. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the breakdown of the €13,204,000 capital allocation in skills development within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6021/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy John Halligan): The 2019 capital allocation for skills development amounting to €13.204m is spread across three expenditure subheads of my Department:

1. B1 Administration (Non Pay) - €0.204 m €3 million has been provided for the capital expenditure element of the Departmental Administration Costs in the 2019 REV allocations. This money is allocated for Departmental IT capital costs across the departments' three Programmes; First, Second and Early Years Education, Skills Development and Higher Education. €0.204 million is included under the Skills Development Programme.

2. B3 Grants to SOLAS in respect of Administration and General Expenses - €0.500 m The purpose of this provision is to meet the capital costs of the maintenance of SOLAS headquarters including the ICT infrastructure. An annual grant is paid to SOLAS. The distribution of the allocation is subsequently decided by the Board of SOLAS. The overall allocations for capital expenditure are determined as part of the Estimates process. Payments are made directly to SOLAS on a bi-monthly basis. Capital expenditure is focused on the maintenance / upgrading for health and safety or disability legislation requirements. The 2019 SOLAS Capital Allocation of €0.500m will be spent on necessary ICT equipment and any emergency building works that may arise during the year.

3. B5 Grants to SOLAS in respect of Further Education and Training Activities - €12.500 m An additional €7 million over the 2018 allocation was provided for 2019 under this sub-head to address issues with the condition of the existing capital stock, to roll out critical new apprenticeship syllabi and courses, and to consolidate the provision of further education and training in modern fit-for-purpose facilities that enable the delivery of high quality integrated programmes.

A detailed planning and bidding process is currently underway in SOLAS and will be finalised at the end of March 2019. The Education and Training Boards make their Capital bids through the SOLAS Funding Allocation Request system. These are reviewed through an internal due diligence process and allocations are put to the Board of SOLAS for approval.

It is anticipated that this allocation will fund the following in 2019:-

- Carry over from 2018 projects circa €2m
- Specific apprenticeship additional facilities circa €3m
- A strategic allocation (between €200k to €300k) to each ETB for replacement of equipment throughout 2019, totalling circa €4m.
- A bidding process for the balance of circa €3.5m.

Departmental Budgets

106. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the breakdown of the €163,741,000 capital allocation in higher education within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6022/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): Higher Education Capital Allocation 2019

The capital allocation available to the Higher Education Sector in 2019 is significantly higher than in recent years and will allow a number of priority infrastructure projects to progress, including, for example, a new Engineering, Energy and Environment Institute in TCD and the development of the LIT Coonagh Campus which will have a particular focus on engineering.

In the Higher Education Sector the allocation available for research has increased by €7m from last year and this will facilitate a greater number of research awards to be funded. The higher education allocation available under the PPP subhead will be expended primarily on unitary charges associated with the Cork School of Music and the National Maritime College of Ireland.

The Research Activities budget in 2019 is €47.6 million. This includes funding for the following which will be drawn down in 2019:

- Irish Research Council
- HEAnet
- Irish Centre for High-End Computing

The Third Level Infrastructure budget in 2019 is €90 million. This includes approved funding for the following projects which have commenced or will commence in 2019:

- EduCampus Financial Management and Student Record Systems – due to finish 2019
- Redevelopment of Royal Irish Academy of Music Westland Row
- Apprenticeship Equipment Grant
- HEAnet
- Trinity College Engineering, Environment and Emerging Technologies Institute (E3)
- National Children’s Hospital higher education facilities
- IT Dundalk Refurbishment
- GMIT Castlebar Campus building fabric upgrades – due to finish 2019
- DCU St Patrick’s Campus F Block
- IT Limerick Coonagh engineering campus – due to finish 2019

The specific amount to be spent by the Department on each project in 2019 will depend on progress during the year and availability of funds; some projects are co-funded by the Department. Further projects will also come on stream for funding in 2019 as part of initiatives announced in 2018 under the NDP. These will be announced at a later stage.

The Higher Education Public Private Partnership budget for 2019 is €25.9 million. This includes funding for the following

- 3rd Level Unitary Charge Payments
- Higher Education PPP Design Payments.

Departmental Budgets

107. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the capital allocation in capital services within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6023/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): My Department has a capital allocation of €941m in 2019 and it is planned to expend the allocation as follows:

Schools Sector - €672m

Higher Education Sector - €137.6m

Further Education Sector - €13m

Public Private Partnership Costs - €110m

Other - €8.4m

The School Sector allocation will be expended primarily on the delivery of large scale projects that commenced on site in 2018 or earlier and remain under construction in 2019 and for large scale projects that are positioned to commence construction in 2019. Almost €450m will be expended on the delivery of large scale projects and on the Additional Accommodation Scheme.

Under the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020, €210m has been committed in funding for schools ICT Infrastructure. In 2019 (for the 2018-2019 school year), €50m will issue in grant funding to all recognised eligible primary and post-primary schools.

The remaining balance available to the School Sector in 2019 will be expended on site acquisitions, the Summer Works Scheme, the Emergency Works Scheme, furniture and equipment provision and other smaller programmes.

The allocation available to the Higher Education Sector in 2019 is significantly higher than in recent years and will allow a number of priority infrastructure projects to progress, including for example, a new Engineering, Environment and Emerging Technologies (E3) Institute in TCD. The allocation includes a sum of €47.6m to support the development of research capabilities across the broad range of disciplines in third level institutions.

A capital allocation of €13m is available for the Further Education Sector and this signals the commencement of significant investment in the sector.

The allocation available for Public Private Partnership Costs will be expended primarily on unitary charges associated with the School Bundles delivered to date and on the Cork School of Music and the National Maritime College of Ireland.

The remaining €8.4m will be expended on Public Sector Reform; on the Department's capital requirements associated with capital services include the provision of necessary office equipment and IT services and on the provision of a special memorial for abuse victims.

Schools Building Projects Status

108. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the progress being made to provide a new school (details supplied) in County Dublin; if a site has been identified and secured for the school; the timeline for the project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6061/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): A project to construct a new building for the school to which the Deputy refers is on my Department's capital programme. The site identified for the school is in the proposed Clonburris SDZ which has not yet been

adopted. A decision on the adoption of the Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme is expected soon from an Bord Pleanála. Following this decision, the acquisition of the school site can proceed. The lands are in the ownership of South Dublin County Council.

In the interim, my Department is currently working on aspects of the agreement in principle, in order to progress the project planning in anticipation of the final decision regarding the SDZ planning scheme.

Teachers' Remuneration

109. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when the new PAYE modernisation scheme which came into effect on 1 January 2019 will be utilised by his Department (details supplied). [6077/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The Revenue Commissioners introduced real time PAYE (PAYE modernisation) which went live on the 1st January 2019. This was the biggest change to the PAYE system since the 1960s.

From 1 January 2019 employers are required to report their employees' pay and statutory deductions to Revenue for each payroll issue.

The salary issue relates to the taxation of the substitute staff who were paid in the first payroll of 2019 and in the case of post primary substitute teachers in the second payroll.

In these payrolls, in which the new system was applied for the first time the payroll files that transferred to Revenue inadvertently included an end date for substitute staff. This informed Revenue that these staff would not be paid under this employer number in the future.

This notification caused Revenue to immediately reduce the tax credits and cut off points to zero for this cohort of staff which meant that when they were next paid, there were no tax credits available to be applied to the salary.

This has meant that some substitute staff paid on the payrolls of the 3rd, 10th and 17th January and who have continued to be employed since have been assigned week 1 / cumulative zero credits or emergency tax.

The payroll software has been amended to prevent an end date transferring to Revenue for future payments which means substitute staff paid on payrolls after the 17th January do not have problems with tax credits.

However this software amendment did not correct the issues that arose for the staff who were paid already.

My Department is working closely with Revenue to implement a solution to this problem. A solution is currently being tested in consultation with Revenue. It is expected that this solution will be successful and all primary substitute teachers and substitute non teaching staff paid on the pay issue of the 21st February will have the correct tax deducted.

Work is ongoing in relation to the post primary payroll and it is anticipated that some adjustments will be processed for the payroll issue of the 14th February and further adjustments will be processed for the next pay issue of the 28th February.

There are staff paid on the payroll who are assigned zero credits apart from those impacted by the end date issue. For example in cases where a substitute staff member is retired and in re-

ceipt of pension their credits may be assigned to the pension payment and zero credits assigned to the substitute employment. In addition teachers are placed on emergency basis where their tax position has not been finalised with Revenue. Some substitute staff may have other employments and their credits may be assigned to that employment.

Three dedicated email addresses are being monitored for substitute staff with queries. They are Primtch_payroll@education.gov.ie for primary teacher substitutes, PPPayroll@education.gov.ie for post primary teacher substitute and ntspayroll@education.gov.ie for non-teaching staff substitutes.

We are responding to the taxation queries being received by email. Responses should be fully up to date by Tuesday.

Dedicated phone lines are also available for primary substitutes on 09064 84043; post-primary substitutes on 09064 84161; and non-teaching staff on 09064 84136.

My Department is acutely aware of the inconvenience that is being caused by this problem and is working intensively to resolve it.

Discussions are also ongoing with Revenue to establish the most efficient and effective way to refund deducted tax to employees.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

110. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if SNA hours can be increased for a child (details supplied). [6079/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for allocating a quantum of Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support for each school annually taking into account the assessed care needs of children qualifying for SNA support enrolled in the school.

The NCSE allocates SNA support to schools in accordance with the criteria set out in Department Circular 0030/2014, which is available on my Department's website at www.education.ie, in order that students who have care needs can access SNA support as and when it is needed.

In considering applications for SNA support for individual pupils, the NCSE take account of the pupils' needs and consider the resources available to the school to identify whether additionality is needed or whether the school might reasonably be expected to meet the needs of the pupils from its current level of resources.

SNAs are not allocated to individual children but to schools as a school based resource.

As this question relates to a particular child, I have referred the question to the NCSE for their direct reply. I do not have a role in making determinations in individual cases.

School Transport Provision

111. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if school transport can be provided for a person (details supplied) in view of the circumstances; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6080/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy John Halligan): School transport is a significant operation managed by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department.

There are currently over 117,500 children, including over 13,000 children with special educational needs, transported in over 5,000 vehicles on a daily basis to primary and post-primary schools throughout the country covering over 100 million kilometres annually.

Bus Éireann has confirmed that a school transport service will be available for the child in question when he is ready to return to school.

Summer Works Scheme Applications

112. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of an application by a school (details supplied) [6081/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): I wish to confirm to the Deputy that my Department received an application from the school in question under the Summer Works Scheme, Category 6, Roof Works.

The school did not provide some of the information required in accordance with the terms of the scheme and therefore, the application was deemed invalid. However, it is open to the school authority to appeal this decision which will be considered and the school authority will be informed of the outcome.

School Enrolments

113. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the case of a person (details supplied) will be examined. [6082/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The selection and enrolment of pupils is the responsibility of the management authorities in each individual school. My Department's main responsibility is to ensure that schools in an area can, between them, cater for all pupils seeking places in an area. However, this may result in some pupils not obtaining a place in the school of their first choice. As schools may not have a place for every applicant, 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.

Under section 15 (2) (d) of the Education Act 1998, each school is legally obliged to disclose its enrolment policy and to ensure that as regards that policy that principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice are respected.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 where a school board of management make a decision to refuse enrolment, a parent/guardian can appeal that decision to the Secretary General of my Department. Where the appeal involves an Education and Training Board (ETB) school, the appeal must be made to the local ETB in the first instance. Further information on the Section 29 Appeals process is available on my Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Appeal-against-Permanent-Exclusion-Suspension-or-Refusal-to-Enrol/>

or by contacting Section 29 Administration Unit at 0761-108588. In addition, the Educa-

tional Welfare Service (EWS) of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) is the statutory body which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school placement for their child. The EWS can be contacted at Educational Welfare Service, child and Family Agency, Floors 2-5, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8 or by phone at 01-7718815.

Third Level Institutions

114. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on the practices of hazing at Trinity College, Dublin in respect of student initiation into certain societies. [6105/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The practice of taking actions which deliberately cause embarrassment, harassment or ridicule, or which risk emotional or physical harm to members of a group or team or indeed, any individual has no place in our education system or indeed anywhere in the community.

As Minister I have no control over Higher Education institutions or the clubs and societies associated with them, although I am sure that the Higher Education institutions would agree with me that behaviours such as hazing are entirely inappropriate. Where such unacceptable behaviour occurs it is the societies themselves who must ultimately accept responsibility.

I would also note that there is a significant body of valuable work in relation to student welfare and well-being being carried out at present by my colleague the Minister of State for Higher Education, through her work on gender equality and consent at third level. Further to this, the Healthy Campus initiative is being developed and implemented as a strand of the Healthy Ireland framework in consultation between my Department, officials of the Department of Health, and key stakeholders in Higher Education. This initiative aims to ensure that the health of students, including their mental health and well-being, is supported in all our Higher Education institutions.

Teachers' Remuneration

115. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason incorrect tax was deducted in January 2019 from a teacher (details supplied); when the matter will be rectified; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6117/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The Revenue Commissioners introduced real time PAYE (PAYE modernisation) which went live on the 1st January 2019. This was the biggest change to the PAYE system since the 1960s.

From 1 January 2019 employers are required to report their employees' pay and statutory deductions to Revenue for each payroll issue.

The salary issue relates to the taxation of the substitute staff who were paid in the first payroll of 2019 and in the case of post primary substitute teachers in the second payroll.

In these payrolls, in which the new system was applied for the first time the payroll files that transferred to Revenue inadvertently included an end date for substitute staff. This informed Revenue that these staff would not be paid under this employer number in the future.

This notification caused Revenue to immediately reduce the tax credits and cut off points to zero for this cohort of staff which meant that when they were next paid, there were no tax

credits available to be applied to the salary.

This has meant that some substitute staff paid on the payrolls of the 3rd, 10th and 17th January and who have continued to be employed since have been assigned week 1 / cumulative zero credits or emergency tax.

The payroll software has been amended to prevent an end date transferring to Revenue for future payments which means substitute staff paid on payrolls after the 17th January do not have problems with tax credits.

However this software amendment did not correct the issues that arose for the staff who were paid already. The person whose details were supplied is one of the substitute staff affected.

My Department is working closely with Revenue to implement a solution to this problem. A solution is currently being tested in consultation with Revenue. It is expected that this solution will be successful and all primary substitute teachers and substitute non teaching staff paid on the pay issue of the 21st February will have the correct tax deducted.

Work is ongoing in relation to the post primary payroll and it is anticipated that some adjustments will be processed for the payroll issue of the 14th February and further adjustments will be processed for the next pay issue of the 28th February.

Three dedicated email addresses are being monitored for substitute staff with queries. They are Primtch_payroll@education.gov.ie for primary teacher substitutes, PPPayroll@education.gov.ie for post primary teacher substitute and ntspayroll@education.gov.ie for non-teaching staff substitutes.

We are responding to the taxation queries being received by email. Responses should be fully up to date by Tuesday.

Dedicated phone lines are also available for primary substitutes on 09064 84043; post-primary substitutes on 09064 84161; and non-teaching staff on 09064 84136.

My Department is acutely aware of the inconvenience that is being caused by this problem and is working intensively to resolve it.

Discussions are also ongoing with Revenue to establish the most efficient and effective way to refund deducted tax to employees.

School Accommodation Provision

116. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a general purpose room will be sanctioned for a school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6118/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): I wish to advise the Deputy that under the National Development Plan (NDP), increased funding has been provided for the school sector capital investment programme. This funding allows for a continued focus on the provision of new permanent school places to keep pace with demographic demand and also provides for an additional focus on the refurbishment of existing school buildings to include the building and modernisation of PE facilities in schools.

The immediate priority of my Department is providing 20,000 new and replacement school places each year, to ensure that every child has a school place. The focus in the medium will be

on the provision of PE halls in post-primary schools.

Teaching Qualifications

117. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the H5 minimum grade requirement in Irish will be retained for entry to the primary professional master of education from 2020 onwards; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6120/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): Having relatively high minimum entry requirements in core subject areas of Irish, English and Mathematics is one of the key policy levers that help ensure quality teaching and learning in primary schools.

In October 2017, changes were announced setting higher minimum entry standards to primary programmes of initial teacher education for Leaving Certificate Maths and English at Ordinary Level and Irish at Higher Level.

These minimum entry requirements apply in addition to the CAO points required (in the case of the Bachelor of Education) or the third level award requirement (in the case of the Professional Master of Education) for entry to programmes of primary Initial Teacher Education.

On 30th January, I announced the deferral of the introduction of the new minimum entry requirements for primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students starting a Professional Master of Education (PME) from 2019 to 2020.

This deferral applies to students who have commenced an undergraduate degree (as distinct from a Bachelor of Education degree) and are planning to apply for the (postgraduate) PME for entry in September 2019.

The new minimum entry requirements are the appropriate standard but the original timing of their introduction may have caused difficulties for some students planning on undertaking a PME as an entry route to primary teaching.

The higher minimum entry requirements, announced in October 2017, will continue to apply from September 2019 for students planning on entering the undergraduate Bachelor of Education (Primary) programme.

In summary, the minimum entry requirements required for students commencing Initial Teacher Education Programmes in 2019 and 2020 are as follows:

Entry 2019 (Professional Master of Education Route) - Irish: H5, English: H7/O5, Maths: H7/O6

Entry 2019 (Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Route) - Irish: H4, English: H7/O4, Maths: H7/O4

Entry 2020 and beyond (PME and B. Ed Routes) - Irish: H4, English: H7/O4, Maths: H7/O4

Schools Building Projects Status

118. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of a proposed new primary school (details supplied) in County Cork; when the project will progress to the construction stage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6121/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The Deputy may be aware that the project to which he refers has been devolved for delivery to the Office of Public Works (OPW). The pre-qualification process for the appointment of tenderers in respect of the project is in the final stages of completion. In the meantime, the OPW is in the process of preparing tender documents to issue to the short-listed contractors.

It is a little bit too early at this stage to give a definitive timeline for when construction will begin. However, we expect tender documents to issue in the first quarter of 2019.

Adult Education Provision

119. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a course (details supplied) will go ahead in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6122/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy John Halligan): I understand that Kerry ETB recommends a minimum of 13 learners starting on any new Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) course offering a QQI Major award to maximise utilisation of resources. Officials in my Department have consulted with Kerry ETB, who have advised that there were 5 applicants for the course in question, and unfortunately this was not a viable number to run the course.

In certain cases the local manager may decide to run the course with 10 learners if there is a strong rationale for doing so. However, these are exceptional cases, and would only apply to the running of a new pilot course to establish emerging trends and demands.

Kerry ETB have said that all courses are advertised in the local community and it is stated that the course starting is subject to sufficient numbers applying.

Special Educational Needs Service Provision

120. **Deputy Kathleen Funchion** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the failure to request an additional SNA by a school (details supplied) will be investigated in view of the gravity and escalation of the medical condition of a person. [6126/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for allocating a quantum of Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support for each school annually taking into account the assessed care needs of children qualifying for SNA support enrolled in the school.

The NCSE allocates SNA support to schools in accordance with the criteria set out in Department Circular 0030/2014, which is available on my Department's website at www.education.ie, in order that students who have care needs can access SNA support as and when it is needed.

In considering applications for SNA support for individual pupils, the NCSE take account of the pupils' needs and consider the resources available to the school to identify whether additional is needed or whether the school might reasonably be expected to meet the needs of the pupils from its current level of resources.

SNAs are not allocated to individual children but to schools as a school based resource.

As this question relates to a particular child, I have referred the question to the NCSE for their direct reply. I do not have a role in making determinations in individual cases.

School Management

121. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans for national school principals who are struggling to address the need for one administration day per week (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6140/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): In Budget 2019, school leadership is again supported with an additional release day for teaching principals in primary schools and a further four additional release days for teaching principals in schools with special classes. These additional release days - 18, 24, and 30 depending on the size of the school - will be effective from 1st September 2019.

This builds on measures in previous budgets, including €0.4 million made available in Budget 2018 to fund almost 4600 additional release days for teaching principals in primary schools. This funding provided an increase in the number of release days available to teaching principals in the 2018/19 school year to 17, 23 or 29 days depending on the size of the school.

Any additional increase in the number of release days will be considered as part of the next annual budgetary process alongside the many other demands from the education sector.

Schools Amalgamation

122. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if specific funding has been committed in respect of a proposed project (details supplied); when such a decision was reached; his role in such a decision; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6162/19]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Joe McHugh): As the Deputy is aware the decision making authority for any amalgamation is the Patron/Trustees of the schools, and this is subject to the approval of my Department.

Any proposed amalgamation involves extensive negotiations at local level and must be well planned and managed in a manner that accommodates the interests of students, parents, teachers, local communities and contributes to an inclusive education system.

My Department is aware of a proposal from the Patron body and has sought further information in relation to the proposed amalgamation. On receipt of this information further consideration will be given to the proposal.

Passports for Investment Scheme

123. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the historical facts, take-up and status of the passports for sale scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6055/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I understand the Deputy has since clarified that he is referring to the Immigrant Investor Programme of the Irish Natu-

ralisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department. However, I want to be absolutely clear that the State does not operate a ‘passports for sale scheme’ and that an investment under the Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP) does not confer any preferential entitlement to citizenship or an Irish passport.

The IIP was introduced in April 2012 to encourage inward investment to create business and employment opportunities in the State. The requirement for investment in an enterprise in Ireland is €1m per individual investor.

The IIP provides non-EEA nationals with a number of options to invest in Ireland, and successful applicants are granted a permission to reside in Ireland for a fixed period. An investment of €1 million in projects must be made for a minimum of three years, which may be renewable following a review.

If the investment is withdrawn or an investor fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions of the programme, the permission to reside in Ireland maybe withdrawn. An Evaluation Committee comprising representatives of a number of Departments and State Agencies considers the applications.

A breakdown of the number of approvals and the overall value of approved applications - information which has been provided in previous parliamentary questions - is reproduced below for ease of reference.

Application Year	Number of Approved Applications	Total Value of Approved Applications
2012	5	€2,500,000
2013	14	€10,650,000
2014	30	€14,950,000
2015	65	€35,250,000
2016	272	€154,100,000
2017	294	€269,500,000
2018	38*	€32,000,000
TOTAL	718	€518,950,000

*It should be noted that a total of 420 applications were received in 2018 of which 379 are currently being processed. Decisions on a significant number of these applications are expected in the coming weeks once processing has been completed.

A major external review of the IIP is underway and a tender process will be launched shortly to select a suitable candidate to undertake an independent evaluation. It is expected that the review will be concluded in the first half of 2019.

Passport Applications Administration

124. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the steps to be undertaken by a non-national with no qualifying ancestral entitlement to secure Irish citizenship; the potential timeframe of each step; the overall process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6056/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Deputy will be aware that the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation is governed by the provisions of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended. All applications for a certificate of

naturalisation are processed and assessed individually in accordance with the provisions of the Act. A determination on whether an applicant satisfies the statutory criteria attendant to naturalisation can only be made after an application is received.

In general, it takes 6 months for a fully completed standard application to be processed from the date it is received to the date a decision is made. The nature of the naturalisation process is such that, for a broad range of reasons, some cases can take longer than others to process.

Processing timescales can be impacted due to incomplete applications having to be returned, further documentation being required from the applicant, or where payment of the required certificate fee is awaited, or the applicant has not been engaging with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department. In certain instances delays can arise at the final stage of the naturalisation process, for example, where additional information comes to light which requires to be considered. In other instances the applicant themselves may request that a hold be put on their application.

The final stage requires the applicant to attend at a citizenship ceremony. Citizenship ceremony days take place periodically throughout the year, at which up to 3,000 candidates for citizenship make their declaration of fidelity to the Irish nation and loyalty to the State, give an undertaking to uphold the laws of the State and to respect its democratic values and receive their certificate of naturalisation.

INIS devotes a considerable resources to the processing of these cases. It also operates a dedicated phone helpline and email helpdesk available for all applicants interested in the progress of their application, details of which are available on the INIS website at www.inis.gov.ie.

The INIS Service Improvement Plan 2018-2020 commits INIS to significant investment in technological developments including the roll-out of online forms and payments for citizenship applications. Such developments are expected to deliver significant improvements to customer experiences.

Finally, as the Deputy will appreciate, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour which confers certain rights and entitlements, not only within the State but also at European Union as well as international level. It is therefore important that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that the integrity of the regime for granting Irish citizenship through the naturalisation process is held in high regard both at home and internationally.

Commencement of Legislation

125. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the sections of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 which remain to be commenced; and the status of the implementation of the Act [6076/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 provides a modern statutory framework to support decision-making by adults with capacity difficulties. The Act was signed into law on 30 December 2015 but has not yet been fully commenced. New administrative processes and support measures, including the setting up of the Decision Support Service within the Mental Health Commission (a body under the Department of Health), must be put in place before the substantive provisions of the Act can be commenced.

A number of provisions of the 2015 Act were commenced in October 2016 in order to prog-

ress the setting up of the Decision Support Service. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (Commencement of Certain Provisions) Order 2016 (S.I. No. 515 of 2016), brought Part 1 (Preliminary and General) and Part 9 (Director of the Decision Support Service) of the Act, other than sections 3, 4 and 7 in Part 1 and sections 96 and 102 and Chapter 3 in Part 9, into operation on 17 October 2016. These provisions were brought into operation in order to enable the recruitment of the Director of the Decision Support Service.

The commencement of Part 8 of the Act, which provides a legislative framework for advance healthcare directives, is a matter for the Minister for Health. The Minister for Health, under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (Commencement of Certain Provisions) (No. 2) Order 2016 (S.I. No. 517 of 2016), brought some provisions of Part 8 of the Act into operation on 17 October 2016. The provisions commenced in Part 8 were the definition of “Minister” in section 82; the definitions of “code of practice” and “working group” in section 91(1); and section 91(2). The commenced provisions provide for the establishment by the Minister for Health of a multi-disciplinary group to make recommendations to the Director of the Decision Support Service in relation to codes of practice on advance healthcare directives.

The Minister for Health commenced the remainder of section 91 on 17 December 2018 (S.I. No. 527 of 2018) to enable the Director of the Decision Support Service to progress the preparation of the codes of practice as soon as the multi-disciplinary group submits its recommendations to the Director.

The remainder of the 2015 Act has not yet been commenced. A high-level Steering Group comprised of senior officials from the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Health, the Mental Health Commission and the Courts Service, together with the Director of the Decision Support Service, is overseeing the establishment and commissioning of the Decision Support Service and this work is ongoing. The key preparations are being put in place under the oversight of the Steering Group to allow for further commencement orders for the provisions of the 2015 Act to be made when the Decision Support Service is ready to roll out the new decision-making support options. Every effort is underway to ensure that the Decision Support Service has all necessary capacity to open for business as soon as possible. While the Decision Support Service has been working towards being operational and ready for the commencement of the main provisions of the Act in 2020, the situation is being kept under review as the preparatory work on implementation moves forward.

The 2019 Revised Estimates Volume provides for an allocation of €3.5 million in the Justice and Equality Vote for the establishment of the Decision Support Service.

Personal Insolvency Arrangements

126. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 92 of 31 January 2019, the options open to a company or person (details supplied) in such circumstances; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6119/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Personal Insolvency Acts provide for three debt solutions, depending on the nature and scale of the person’s means and debts.

As you are aware, a Debt Relief Notice (DRN) is an insolvency arrangement for those with very low income and assets which allows for the write off qualifying debt up to €35,000. Under the Acts, this solution is provided by Approved Intermediaries, who are trained and regulated under the supervision of the Insolvency Service of Ireland.

The other solutions under the Acts are a Debt Settlement Arrangement (DSA) which allows for agreed resolution of unsecured debt without upper limit, and a Personal Insolvency Arrangement, (PIA), which allows for agreed resolution (or, under s.115A of the Acts, court imposition at the debtor's request) of secured debt such as a home mortgage, as well as any unsecured debts. Under the Acts, these solutions are provided by Personal Insolvency Practitioners ('PIPs'), who are likewise trained and regulated under the supervision of the Insolvency Service of Ireland.

I understand from the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI) that the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 (Authorisation of Approved Intermediaries) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 216 of 2013) sets out the qualification criteria and authorisation requirements, which must be met for a person, a class of person or body corporate to be authorised by the ISI to carry on the practice of an approved intermediary. The qualification criteria includes, *inter alia*, the requirement that an applicant must have completed a course of study and passed an examination in relation to the law and practice in the State relating to the insolvency of individuals and in relation to the Personal Insolvency Act.

A similar provision is contained in the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 (Authorisation and Supervision of Personal Insolvency Practitioners) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 209 of 2013), which sets out the qualification criteria, authorisation requirements and regulatory standards, which must be met for an individual to be authorised by the ISI to carry on practice as a Personal Insolvency Practitioner.

Given its regulatory role with respect to both Approved Intermediaries and Personal Insolvency Practitioners, the ISI ensures that any individual authorised to practise in either role meets the required criteria for authorisation including the necessity to have completed such a course of study and passed the relevant examination. It is open to any individual who is considering making an application for authorisation to contact the ISI's Regulation Division by email (regulation@isi.gov.ie) or phone (076-1064234) to request information on the courses available which would meet the qualification requirement. The ISI has specific guidance available on its website (www.isi.gov.ie) on "*How to become an AI*" and "*How to become a PIP*", setting out information on the qualification criteria in addition to further details on the respective application processes.

My officials have been advised by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection that, in preparation for the role of Approved Intermediary for the processing of Debt Relief Notices under the Personal Insolvency Act (2012), 134 Money Advisers and Money Advice Coordinators across the country undertook an accredited course with the Ulster University entitled "RoI Insolvency Module" in 2013. This module complies with the regulation requirements of the ISI under S.I. No. 2016 of 2013. In 2018, all eight of the (new) MABS Regional companies registered as Approved Intermediaries and have registered responsible persons who meet the regulation criteria. Companies other than MABS, such as the Irish Mortgage Holders Organisation and IRS - Ireland, are also registered. It is important to note that an Approved Intermediary cannot charge any fee for this service.

MABS has not registered as Personal Insolvency Practitioners, other than in a pilot scheme in Waterford, and therefore does not deal with the other two resolutions under the Act: Personal Insolvency Arrangement and Debt Settlement Arrangement. MABS regularly refers these clients to the Personal Insolvency Practitioner (PIP) experts: under Abhaile, MABS can issue vouchers for an insolvent borrower at risk of losing their home due to mortgage arrears, to receive free advice, financial analysis and help to get a solution to their mortgage arrears into place via a Personal Insolvency Arrangement.

While the law in this area is being kept under review, I am satisfied that the above arrangements represent a proportionate and reasonable protection for indebted persons in this complex area of activity.

Northern Ireland

127. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the status of the four-person international oversight of paramilitaries established under the Fresh Start agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6185/19]

137. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the status of his interaction with the four-person international oversight of paramilitaries established under the Fresh Start agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6186/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 127 and 137 together.

The Fresh Start Agreement provided for the establishment by the two Governments of the Independent Reporting Commission to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of measures aimed at ending paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

An international agreement between Ireland and the UK, establishing the Independent Reporting Commission, was signed in September 2016 and the Agreement was given effect to by legislation in both jurisdictions.

The Commission's functions are to:

- report annually on progress towards ending continuing paramilitary activity connected with Northern Ireland (or on such further occasions as required);

- report on the implementation of the relevant measures of the three administrations – critical here will be the NI Executive's Strategy to tackle paramilitary activity and associated criminality; and

- consult the UK Government and relevant law enforcement agencies, the Irish Government and relevant law enforcement agencies and, in Northern Ireland, the Executive, PSNI, statutory agencies, local councils, communities and civic society organisations.

As the Deputy will be aware, on 23 October last year, the two Governments published the Commission's first report. I commend the Commission for its work so far and the efforts it has put into this first report. I welcome the report as an opportune reminder to all of us of the continuing adverse impact on society in Northern Ireland of the culture of paramilitarism that persists in some communities there. The Commission's report is available at its website (www.ircommission.org).

In the report, the Commission expresses strong confidence in the whole-of-society approach to ending paramilitarism that underlies the measures set out in the Fresh Start Agreement. A striking feature of the report is the clear correlation displayed between the locations of paramilitary activity and areas of social and economic disadvantage in Northern Ireland.

The Commission has reported good progress across a range of the measures that are set out in the Executive's Action Plan for tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime, and it reported also that there remains a significant amount of work to be done. I am sure the Deputy will join me in urging people on all sides in Northern Ireland, especially those in posi-

tions of political influence, to engage fully in this process of positive change for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Commission's report makes clear that there are a range of areas where the full and effective implementation of the Executive's action plan is hampered by the absence of an Executive in Northern Ireland. It is another reminder of the importance of re-establishing the power-sharing arrangements in order that they can work to address the issues of most importance for people in communities across Northern Ireland.

The Commission will continue its valuable work over the next number of years as per the Agreement between the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom. I look forward to the future annual reports of the Commission.

Closed-Circuit Television Systems

128. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of applications to the community CCTV scheme in Fingal, Dublin; the number of applicants that have been approved and came on stream; the number of applications that are under consideration; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5975/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Deputy will be aware that CCTV systems installed for the purposes of crime prevention and as aids to policing in areas to which the general public routinely have access, such as town centres, fall into two distinct but complementary categories, namely Garda CCTV systems and community-based CCTV systems.

Community CCTV is governed by section 38(3)(c) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 and the Garda Síochána (CCTV) Order 2006 (SI No 289 of 2006). This legal framework requires that any proposed community CCTV scheme must:

- be approved by the local Joint Policing Committee,
- have the authorisation of the Garda Commissioner, and
- have the prior support of the relevant local authority, which must also act as data controller.

This is the legal basis for all community CCTV schemes, regardless of how they are funded.

The Programme for a Partnership Government commits to supporting investment in CCTV systems. In furtherance of this commitment, a grant-aid scheme to assist groups in the establishment of community-based CCTV systems in their local areas is being administered by my Department. Eligible groups, including community groups and local authorities, can apply for grant-aid of up to 60% of the total capital cost of a proposed CCTV system, up to a maximum total of €40,000.

There have to date been 28 applications to the scheme. 20 applications have been approved, involving grant aid totalling more than €500,000. A further 5 applications to the scheme are currently being assessed and considered. The remaining 3 applications have been returned to the applicants concerned to enable them to supply the information necessary to qualify for grant aid.

I can confirm that no applications have been received to date relating to Fingal, Dublin.

I am keen to ensure that all interested groups, in both rural and urban areas, have the op-

portunity to take advantage of the availability of the grant aid scheme. If the Deputy is aware of groups wishing to avail of the scheme, further details are available to download from my Department's website - www.justice.ie and support and guidance is available to help interested groups through a dedicated email address communitycctv@justice.ie

Departmental Budgets

129. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the breakdown of the €28,920,000 capital allocation in the justice division within his Department for 2019, that is, Vote 24 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6008/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Justice and Equality Vote Group includes the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Policing Authority. Vote 24 relates to the Department of Justice and Equality.

Within Vote 24, an amount of €28,570,000 of the total capital allocation of €28,920,000 has been allocated to the construction of the new Forensic Science Laboratory. Certain site enabling works have commenced to date, and the main construction of the new laboratory is due to start in 2019 with an expected completion date in 2021. The balance of the capital allocation of €350,000 relates to ICT hardware and other capital costs which will be incurred in 2019.

Departmental Budgets

130. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the breakdown of the €51,517,000 capital allocation in the Courts Service within his Department for 2019, that is, Vote 22 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6009/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As the Deputy is aware, following the publication by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform of the Estimates for Public Services on 9 October 2018, the capital allocation for 2019 for the Courts Service was confirmed at €51.517 million. Furthermore, there was a carryover of €2.5 million in capital expenditure from 2018 to 2019, which is allocated to Information Communication Technology (ICT) Capital, bringing the total capital allocation in 2019 to €54.017 million.

It comprises €11.42 million for maintenance and development of new and existing ICT systems, €4.88 million for courthouse capital works and €37.717 million for unitary charge payments in relation to the Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin and a number of regional courthouses provided under Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements.

As the Deputy will also be aware, under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998, management of the courts is the responsibility of the Courts Service, which is independent in exercising its functions.

However, in order to be of assistance to the Deputy, I have had enquiries made and the Courts Service has informed me that €6.19 million of the €11.42 million ICT allocation for 2019 is contractually committed and this includes managed services, software licences, hard-

ware/software support, database/network administration as well as Lotus Notes support. The carry over of €2.5 million from 2018 allows for extra expenditure on hardware and software upgrades, e-filing and other ICT projects.

A breakdown of the ICT allocation for 2019 is as follows:

ICT	Amount
Hardware and Software Upgrades	€2,160,000
New e-Filing Systems	€2,427,285
New Websites	€350,000
Justice Hub Projects	€292,581
Contractual Committed	€6,190,134

The Courts Service has also provided a list of ICT projects due to be completed in 2019 as follows:

- Firewall Replacement;
- Legal Cost Adjudicators;
- e-Filing Supreme Court;
- Courts Service Website;
- Supreme Court Website;
- Agresso Upgrade;
- New Judicial Workplace;
- Various Justice Hub Projects.

The Courts Service has advised that the allocation of €4.88 million for courthouse capital works is as follows:

- €1.38 million for repayment of Cork Loan (principal only element) - 2019 repayments to Cork City Council in respect of the refurbishment it carried out to Washington Street Courthouse in 2003;

- €0.98 million for capital lease payments;

The balance of €2.52 million will be used to progress a variety of projects, which are in various stages of development and could include, depending on the availability of resources and other variables, the following during 2019:

- Ongoing preparatory work on a dedicated Dublin Family Court complex on Hammond Lane;

- A condition survey of approximately 70 court buildings nationwide (intended to be completed in 2019) to ascertain the physical condition of each courthouse building, to identify works required to bring each building up to an acceptable standard and to determine ongoing maintenance requirements;

- Minor capital works required to enhance buildings and physical infrastructure in Dublin and nationwide;

- Site acquisitions as a prerequisite step to enable the future development/extension and refurbishment of courthouse facilities at a number of County town venues;

- Preparations for courthouse developments at Dungloe and Tuam.

The Courts Service has also advised that the contractual commitment relating to the PPP contracts for the Criminal Courts of Justice Complex in Dublin is €22.973 million and the seven Regional Courthouses is €14.744 million, amounting to €37.717m of the overall capital allocation for 2019.

Departmental Budgets

131. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the details of the €92,340,000 capital allocation in An Garda Síochána within his Department for 2019, that is, Vote 20 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project in tabular form; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6010/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Justice and Equality Vote Group includes the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Policing Authority. Vote 20 relates to the An Garda Síochána.

The Deputy will be aware that the resources provided by Government to An Garda Síochána have reached unprecedented levels. As the Deputy has indicated, the overall capital allocation for 2019 is over €92 million, in addition to a further almost €3.6 million in unspent capital carried over from 2018. This total is divided across the Garda estate, the Garda fleet and Garda ICT as in the revised estimates.

It is a matter for the Commissioner to efficiently manage the resources provided to An Garda Síochána, based upon operational requirements. I am informed by the Garda authorities that Garda management keeps the distribution of resources under continual review so as to ensure their optimum use.

In that context, I am not in a position to provide a list of all projects for 2019 at this stage. Nonetheless, the following general information may be of interest to the Deputy.

A capital allocation of €10 million will be available to An Garda Síochána for the Garda fleet in 2019. The allocation across Divisions is a matter to be determined by the Commissioner, in accordance with operational needs.

A total of €61 million has been allocated to Garda ICT infrastructure and Communications for 2019. I understand that a full list of ICT projects for 2019, together with a breakdown of the roll-out of additional ICT infrastructure across the Divisions, is still being finalised within An Garda Síochána.

In terms of the Garda estate, I would recall that the Office of Public Works (OPW) has the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Garda accommodation and accordingly the programme of replacement and refurbishment of Garda accommodation is progressed by the Garda authorities working in close cooperation with the OPW.

Funding for the ongoing investment in the Garda estate is spread across the Garda and OPW votes. Insofar as concerns the Garda vote, a total of approximately €21.5 million supports

relevant building programmes for 2019, together with a further almost €3.6 million in unspent capital carried over from 2018.

The Garda Building and Refurbishment programme 2016-2021 will continue to be delivered during 2019. The programme includes planned works at over 30 locations, including:

- major refurbishment of selected stations and facilities, including facilities for meeting victims of crime;
- essential remedial works to selected existing stations; and
- development of large scale Property and Exhibit Management Stores (PEMS).

The programme also includes a Cell Refurbishment Programme and provision of improved Custody Management Facilities.

Other major building projects which will continue to be progressed in relation to the Garda estate during 2019 include the ongoing refurbishment of Fitzgibbon Street station; development of a facility at Military Road, Dublin; and the Garda Station Pilot Re-opening Project.

The clear goal of this significant investment is to address deficiencies in the Garda estate and provide fit-for-purpose facilities for Garda members and staff as well as the public interacting with them.

As the Deputy will be aware, the current investment in An Garda Síochána has also reached unprecedented levels, with an allocation for 2019 of €1.76 billion, representing an increase of over 6% over the initial allocation for 2018.

This significant current and capital investment in An Garda Síochána is in support of the Government's commitment to ensuring a strong and visible police presence throughout the country, to maintain and strengthen community engagement, provide reassurance to citizens and deter crime.

Departmental Budgets

132. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the details of the €100,000 capital allocation in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission within his Department for 2019, that is, Vote 25 of the budget 2019 expenditure report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6011/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy David Stanton): The Justice and Equality Vote Group includes the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Policing Authority. Vote 25 relates to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC).

As the Deputy is aware, IHREC is an independent statutory body, established under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. The Act provides that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, be independent in the performance of its functions. Furthermore, the Director of the IHREC is the Accounting Officer for Vote 25 and not the Secretary General of my Department.

In accordance with my responsibility to the Oireachtas to report on the use of funds which

IHREC receives, my officials contacted IHREC in relation to the Deputy's question. IHREC has indicated that an estimated €50,000 is budgeted for office refurbishment works to accommodate new staff and to improve their library facility and an additional €50,000 is earmarked for office equipment costs. These works are to be commenced and completed in 2019.

Departmental Budgets

133. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the details of the €32,330 capital allocation in the prisons division within his Department for 2019, that is, Vote 21 of the Budget 2019 Expenditure Report by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, In tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6012/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I have been advised by my officials in the Irish Prison Service that the allocation of Capital Funding is subject to change as projects progress through various phases of their lifecycle. Below is the latest estimate for 2019.

Project	Estimated Expenditure	Commencement	Completion
Limerick New Build Prison	19,100,000	2019	2022
D Block Demolition & Military Compound Refurbishment	600,000	2017	2019
Cloverhill Windows Replacement	500,000	2019	2019
Midlands Windows Replacement	530,000	2018	2018Final Payment 2019
Retentions due on 2018 Projects	1,000,000	n/a	2018Final Payment 2019
IPS College	700,000	2018	2018Final Payment 2019
Mountjoy - Training Unit Refurbishment	4,000,000	2019	2020
*ICT	1,500,000	2019	2019
Fleet Replacement	1,350,000	2019	2019
Estate Wide Works	3,050,000	2019	2019
Total Capital Funding Envelope	32,330,000		

* This relates to capital expenditure allocated to use on IT Projects. There are a range of projects which will be completed during 2019 including prisoner phone system, core routers upgrade, email encryption and network hardware.

Garda Deployment

134. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his views on the practice of having a large number of gardai present at court proceedings outside the Dublin

area; the reason a similar arrangement to contract out court security in the Four Courts does not apply nationally in view of the necessity to get the best possible use of Garda resources; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6108/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As the Deputy is aware, under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998, management of the courts is the responsibility of the Courts Service which is independent in exercising its functions.

However, in order to be of assistance to the Deputy, I have had enquiries made and the Courts Service has informed me that the reason a large number of gardaí are present at court venues both within Dublin and in provincial venues is that they are generally in court to give evidence in the prosecution of criminal cases. As the Deputy will appreciate, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the distribution and allocation of Garda resources and, as Minister, I have no direct role in the matter. However, I understand that in relation to court security, there is a Garda presence in each courthouse location/complex. The level of Garda presence is determined by various criteria, including the size of the courthouse location/complex, the number of court sittings and the nature of the court cases, and this is done in liaison with the Courts Service.

As the Deputy will be aware the Commission on the Future of Policing published its report on 18 September 2018. The Government endorsed the Commission's report on 18 December and accepted all 157 key recommendations, including in relation to court security arrangements, which stated 'there should be scope to relieve Gardaí of duties which do not require police powers' which was accepted in principle. I also published a high level plan, 'A Policing Service for the Future', which sets out the approach to implementation over the next four years of the Commission's recommendations, which will be overseen by a dedicated programme office in the Department of the Taoiseach, as recommended in the Commission's Report. As set out in the implementation plan, work will commence on a review of court security arrangements in Q3 2019.

Prisoner Data

135. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of prisoners sleeping on mattresses on the floor each night in all prisons during November and December 2018 and January 2019. [6138/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I wish to inform the Deputy that the information in relation to the number of prisoners sleeping on mattresses on the floor each night in all prisons during November and December 2018 and January 2019 is available in the tables attached in the link below as provided by the Irish Prison Service.

I am advised that the attached tables reflect the number of instances of prisoners sleeping on mattresses on cell floors in Cloverhill, Wheatfield, Midlands, Castlereagh, Cork and Limerick prisons each night during the period in question. I am further advised that in the remaining 6 prisons, no prisoner slept on the floor.

The Deputy will appreciate that prison Governors are required by law to accept all prisoners into their custody who have been committed to prison by the Courts. The Irish Prison Service therefore has no control over the numbers committed to custody at any given time.

My officials in the Irish Prison Service work closely with the Governors of affected prisons to alleviate capacity issues, by identifying prisoners who may be suitable for transfer to other prisons or prisoners who may be suitable for structured early release.

Decisions in relation to temporary release are considered on a case by case basis and the safety of the public is paramount when decisions are made.

[Numbers of Prisoners]

Garda Investigations

136. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 1046 of 24 July 2018, if there has been further progress concerning the need for a full and comprehensive investigation both here and in Northern Ireland into the bombing in Belturbet in December 1972 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6165/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The murder of two innocent young people in Belturbet in December 1972 was a appalling act of brutality. The perpetrators of this bombing demonstrated a callous disregard for human life which, as the Deputy has stated, claimed two lives and injured many other people.

The Deputy will be aware that this crime was methodically investigated by An Garda Síochána at the time with technical assistance from the Defence Forces and the close cooperation of the authorities in Northern Ireland. It is a source of great regret that in spite of a comprehensive investigation, it was not possible for those responsible to be prosecuted for their crimes. In the absence of justice, the bombing of Belturbet continues to inflict an intolerable suffering on the families of those who died and those who were injured.

As I previously informed the Deputy in my response to his question of 24 July 2018, the passage of 45 years and the absence of new evidence being produced has diminished the prospect of a successful prosecution in this case. Nonetheless, the Garda investigation remains open and any new information or evidence will be thoroughly investigated both in Ireland and in Northern Ireland with the assistance of the PSNI. I would call on anyone with information about this crime to bring it to the attention of the Garda authorities.

Question No. 137 answered with Question No. 127.

Garda Equipment

138. **Deputy Jim O’Callaghan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the estimated cost of the roll-out of body cameras for all gardaí; if he has received such a request from the Garda Commissioner; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6189/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As the Deputy will appreciate, in accordance with the Garda Síochána Act 2005, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for carrying on and managing and controlling generally the administration and business of An Garda Síochána. Further, the allocation of Garda resources is a matter for the Commissioner, in light of his identified operational demands. In keeping with these arrangements, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the provision of equipment for An Garda Síochána.

I have been informed by the Garda authorities that a working group within An Garda Síochána is considering the operational, legal and financial issues connected with body cameras and is overseeing the development of a business case on the matter. I understand that upon ap-

proval by the Garda Commissioner, any final business case will be submitted to my Department for consideration. As such, I have not, as of now, received a request from the Garda authorities for funding for body cameras for issue to operational members of An Garda Síochána.

I am informed that given the working group is still considering the various issues involved, it is not currently possible to provide an estimated cost of the roll-out of body worn cameras to all members of An Garda Síochána.

Proposed Legislation

139. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the status of the progress on the independent commission on information retrieval Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6191/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): My Department, with close cooperation from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is finalising a General Scheme for a Bill to establish the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval (ICIR). The ICIR will be a cross-border institution which will be established to receive information on troubles-related deaths and to prepare a report on the circumstances of the death for the families of the victims. The ICIR will require legislation to be enacted both in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The Deputy will be aware that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland held a public consultation between May and October last year on the draft UK legislation to establish the legacy bodies provided for in the Stormont House Agreement. I understand that over 17,000 responses to the consultation were received and these are currently being considered by the British government. There may be issues raised in the course of the consultation which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the British Government will wish to reflect on further.

Dealing with the legacy of the troubles on this island is a difficult and complex task. The Government remains fully committed to giving effect to the measures agreed in the Stormont House Agreement. While the political impasse in Northern Ireland has delayed the roll-out of these measures, the Government will continue to work with the British Government and the parties in Northern Ireland to seek the re-establishment of the Executive.

Residency Permits

140. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in respect of the correspondence submitted to the INIS on 4 April 2017 in respect of regularisation of residency in the case of persons (details supplied); if consideration of the case is being progressed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6201/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that, in response to a notification pursuant to the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), written representations have been submitted on behalf of the persons concerned.

These representations, together with all other information and documentation on file, will be fully considered, under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and all other applicable legislation, in advance of a final decision being made. I can advise you that this case is currently under active consideration and a decision on the above named will be made shortly.

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

Leave to Remain

141. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when an application for leave to remain will be processed in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6203/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): In accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 24 January 2019, to submit representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why a Deportation Order should not be made against him. He was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days.

The applicant's judicial review proceedings were dismissed by the High Court, meaning that the earlier decisions of the Ministerial Decisions Unit and the then Minister stand. The applicant may now proceed to respond to the options set out in his intention to deport letter which was issued to him on 08 October 2012. Any such response should be communicated within the 15 working day period referred to in the Department's letter of 24 January 2019 which expires on 14 February 2019. It is open to the person concerned to make representations to the Minister within that period. The person concerned has not yet submitted written representations. In any event, the case of the person concerned will not be further processed until the 15 working day period referred to has elapsed.

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

Naturalisation Applications

142. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current and or expected position in regard to the determination of naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6204/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the processing of the application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to by the Deputy is ongoing. On completion of the necessary processing the application will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible. Should further documentation be required it will be requested from the applicant in due course.

As the Deputy will appreciate, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour which confers certain rights and entitlements, not only within the State

but also at European Union level, and it is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process.

It is recognised that all applicants for citizenship would wish to have a decision on their application without delay. The nature of the naturalisation process is such that, for a broad range of reasons, some cases will take longer than others to process. In some instances, completing the necessary checks can take a considerable period of time.

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

Family Reunification Applications

143. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress to date in the determination of a spousal application to join in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6205/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the application referred to will be examined shortly, and a decision will issue directly.

For applications of this type, the Deputy will know that the Policy Document on Family Reunification published in December, 2013 contains a stated business target that visa applications to join Irish citizens should be dealt with within six months of receipt of application. However, it should be noted that this is a business target and does not constitute a legal obligation. The business target reflects the detailed and often complex assessment that is required to be carried out in relation to applications for family reunification.

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

In addition, applicants may themselves e-mail queries directly to INIS (*visamail@justice.ie*).

Leave to Remain

144. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if the necessary documentation required has been received by the relevant section in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6206/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the person concerned has applied for the renewal of their permission to remain which expires on 19 February 2019.

The application is under consideration at present. Such applications are examined having regard to, among other things, the relevant applicant's compliance with the conditions attaching to their earlier permission to remain which include; that they have obeyed the laws of the State; that they have not become involved in criminal activity; that they have made every effort to gain employment and not be a burden on the State and that they have resided continuously in the State, allowing for reasonable periods of absence from the State for holidays, exceptional family circumstances or commitments outside the State arising from business or employment carried on within the State. Such factors will also be considered in the context of the case of the person concerned.

Once a decision has been made on this application – to renew or to refuse to renew their permission to remain – this decision will be conveyed in writing.

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

Naturalisation Applications

145. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current and expected position in regard to an application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied); if the required documentation has been received by the relevant section; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6209/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that an application for a certificate of naturalisation has been received from the person referred to by the Deputy. This application has entered the final stage of processing. A letter has issued to the person concerned requesting them to submit the prescribed certificate fee and other documents, a reply to which has been received. Subject to no adverse information arising in the meantime, an invitation will be issued to attend a citizenship ceremony at which the person concerned will make a declaration of fidelity to the Irish Nation and loyalty to the State and receive his certificate of naturalisation.

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

Naturalisation Applications

146. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if updated stamp 4 evidence has issued to the relevant section in the case of a person (details supplied); when the application for naturalisation is likely to be processed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6212/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the processing of the application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to by the Deputy, who currently has permission to reside in the State until 26 November 2019 is ongoing. On completion of the necessary processing the application will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible. Should further documentation be required it will be requested from the applicant in due course.

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

It is recognised that all applicants for citizenship would wish to have a decision on their application without delay. The nature of the naturalisation process is such that, for a broad range of reasons, some cases will take longer than others to process. In some instances, completing the necessary checks can take a considerable period of time.

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

Immigration Status

147. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if an extension of time will be provided in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6215/19]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): I wish to advise the Deputy that it is unclear from the details supplied as to exact nature of the delay in the submission of the required documentation by the person concerned. If the Deputy is in a position to provide additional details, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service will be happy to consider same.

I am sure that the Deputy would agree that in the interests of fairness and transparency in application processes, all applicants must be treated in a similar manner and accordingly, save in the most exceptional of circumstances, extensions of time to submit required documentation are not permitted.

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

Departmental Budgets

148. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the breakdown of the €251,946,000 capital allocation in jobs and enterprise development within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6042/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The following table sets out the breakdown of the capital allocation of €251,946,000 across my Department's Jobs & Enterprise Development programme.

REV 2019	€,000
	Capital
A - JOBS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	251,946
A.4 - INTERTRADE IRELAND	6,695
A.5 - IDA IRELAND	142,000
2. IDA Ireland - Grants to Industry	95,000
3. IDA Ireland - Grant for Buildings	47,000
A.6 - NSAI - G-I-A FOR ADMIN & GEN EXPS	500
A.7 - ENTERPRISE IRELAND	65,750
2. Enterprise Ireland - Grant to Industry	63,250
3. Enterprise Ireland - Grant for Capital Expenditure	2,500
A.8 - LOCAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	27,500
A.9 - TEMPORARY PARTIAL CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME	500
A.10 - MATCHING FUNDING FOR INTERREG	3,000
A.14 - FUTURE GROWTH LOAN SCHEME	6,000
A.15 - HUMANITARIAN RELIEF SCHEME	1

As the Deputy will be aware, much of the Department's Capital expenditure is by way of multi-annual programmes and commitments. The Deputy will appreciate that capital supports provided through the Department's Jobs and Enterprise Development Programme are focused on developing and promoting enterprise. These supports are mainly by way of grants to our Enterprise Agencies such as the IDA to enable them to attract Foreign Direct Investment and to EI, the Local Enterprise Offices and Intertrade Ireland to enable them to support local indigenous and cross border businesses to start, scale and export. My Department's Jobs and Enterprise Development Programme also supports a number of specific initiatives in the area of access to finance for SMEs and other indigenous businesses.

The 2019 capital allocation to the Department's Enterprise Development Programme represents an increase of 10.9% on the 2018 allocation of €227.195m for this Programme. The additional €24.75m in capital monies secured for the Department's Programme in 2019 will ensure for;

- the provision of a further €6m in capital funding to support the continued roll out of the new Future Growth Loan scheme which addresses a specific lack of availability of finance to businesses, particularly SMEs, of loan terms longer than 5-7 years

- €1m in additional funding for Intertrade Ireland which will enable it to meet the growing demand from businesses in border regions in its existing programmes, and develop initiatives and support firms affected by Brexit;

- €5m in additional funding to the Local Enterprise Offices to enable them to expand the range of supports to indigenous enterprises across the various sectors, including through the provision of a new customs training programme for all businesses, exporters and importers, to be rolled out in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland;

- €10m in additional funding for the IDA's Regional Property Programme;

- €2.75m in funding to support a Regional Innovation and Technology Clusters Programme targeted at SMEs thereby building enterprise capability across the regions

The provision of this additional capital funding demonstrates the Government's determination to continue to ensure that the Department's Enterprise Agencies has the necessary capital resources to enable them to support businesses in their responses to Brexit including support them in delivering jobs and enterprise development in all regions of the country in these challenging times.

Departmental Budgets

149. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the breakdown of the €368,054,000 capital allocation in innovation within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6043/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): The table below sets out the breakdown of the capital allocation of €368,054,000 across my Department's Innovation programme.

REV 2019	€ ,000
	Capital
B - INNOVATION	368,054
B.4 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	300,250
Enterprise Ireland	122,000
Science Foundation Ireland	172,750
Tyndall Institute	5,500
B.5 - PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH IN THIRD LEVEL INSTITUTIONS	24,300
PRTL I Cycle 5	1,878
SFI PhD Programme	15,500
E-Journals	5,700
ICHEC (Inc. PRACE 2.0)	1,222
B.6 - SUBSCRIPTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, ETC.	23,504
European Molecular Biology Conf	202
European Molecular Biology Laboratory	1,248
EUREKA - Involved in S&T Research	33
COST	11
European Space Agency	18,313
CECAM	30
LOFAR	91
ELIXIR	76
ESO (European Southern Observatory)	3,500
B.9 - DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES INNOVATION FUND	20,000

The Deputy will appreciate that much of the capital supports provided through the De-

partment's Innovation Programme are by way of grants to develop and promote Innovation including supporting research focused bodies such as SFI, Enterprise Ireland, Tyndall Institute, supporting Ireland's membership of International Research Organisations such as the European Space Agency, the European Southern Observatory and other Research focused Agencies.

The 2019 capital allocation to the Department's Innovation Programme represents an increase of 12.28% on the 2018 allocation of €327.8m. The additional €40 m in capital monies secured for the Innovation Programme in 2019 will support a number of new initiatives, including

- The provision of €20million to roll out First Phase of the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund; The provision of an additional €2.75million in capital monies to meet the full year cost of European Southern Observatory membership;

- The provision of an additional €10million in capital funding to meet the full year cost of the new PhD/Research Masters Programme;

- The provision of an additional €500k in capital funding to further support our membership of the European Space Agency

- The provision of additional €5million in capital to support the renewal of six SFI world-class research centres,

- The provision of an additional €1million in capital for SFI's Strategic Partnership Programme;

- The provision of an additional €1million in funding to support the development of the Tyndall Institute

The provision of this additional capital funding demonstrates the Government's commitment to supporting business to enable them to innovate and compete in a global marketplace as envisaged in Innovation 2020 the Government's national strategy for Research & Development.

Apprenticeship Programmes

150. **Deputy Sean Sherlock** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the entitlements of a third year apprentice in respect of travel expenses in cases in which the apprentice is using their own vehicle in circumstances (details supplied). [6085/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Pat Breen): Statutory responsibility for the management of the National Apprenticeship System in Ireland falls under the remit of SOLAS, an agency under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills.

I understand that craft apprentices get paid during their training. The rates of pay can vary, depending on the apprenticeship and on the employer. Furthermore, a craft apprentice allowance is paid during off-the-job training.

In the context of my own Department, the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 provides the legal basis for Sectoral Employment Orders (SEOs) which set out the terms and conditions for workers in the economic sector to which they apply. Currently, there are SEOs in place in the construction and mechanical engineering sectors. Both of these SEOs set out the terms and conditions of employment for the relevant sector and specifically set out the rates of pay applicable to apprentices in the sector.

The SEOs currently in place are based on recommendations made by the Labour Court following a statutorily prescribed process which includes a public consultation.

While I understand that consideration was given to the inclusion of provisions relating to travel in the construction SEO, as there was no consensus among the parties on the matter, the Labour Court did not recommend its inclusion in the Order. However, the Court did note that some workers in the construction sector may have had contracts of employment that provide for the payment of travel time and that these contractual arrangements should not be affected by the terms of the Court's recommendation and should remain in place and continue to apply as before.

In the broader context of apprenticeships, the payment of travel expenses remains a contractual matter between employer and employee.

IDA Ireland Portfolio

151. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation if a facility will become available to persons (details supplied) in County Kerry and nationally; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6235/19]

Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys): I have asked IDA Ireland to bring the availability of this property to the attention of any of its clients who may be interested in investing in County Kerry.

Services for People with Disabilities

152. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons on the waiting list for residential care for adults with an intellectual disability in County Wexford in each of the years 2012 to 2018, by county in tabular form. [5970/19]

153. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the criteria for determining priority and highest need when allocating residential care places for adults with a disability. [5971/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath): I propose to take Questions Nos. 152 and 153 together.

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

Respite Care Services

154. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the age at which children with

intellectual disabilities are assessed for adult respite services in order to access adult respite waiting lists; and if adult respite hours are allocated on a priority and highest needs basis or based on the length of time a person is on the waiting list. [5972/19]

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.

The Programme for Partnership Government states that the Government wishes to provide more accessible respite care to facilitate full support for people with a disability.

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.

Health Services Provision

155. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when a bed will be available for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5973/19]

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.

Services for People with Disabilities

156. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the funding allocated to a club (details supplied); if a decision has been made on allocating further funding to same; and if a reduction in funding has been allocated to it in 2019. [5976/19]

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 a service issue, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

Home Care Packages Provision

157. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Health if a home care package will be expedited for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5981/19]

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.

Dental Services Provision

158. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health if the HSE will provide funding for a person (details supplied) in County Donegal for an implant; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5984/19]

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.

Primary Care Centres Staff

159. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health if a clinic (details supplied) is in a position to provide postnatal care with qualified registered midwives on its staff. [5990/19]

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.

Respite Care Services Data

160. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of respite hours provided for adults with an intellectual disability in County Wexford in each of the years 2010 to 2018, in tabular form. [5992/19]

161. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of respite hours provided for children and adolescents with an intellectual disability in County Wexford in each of the years 2010 to 2018, in tabular form. [5993/19]

162. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health if there is a limit to or a maximum amount of respite hours for adults with an intellectual disability available by year for each person that is eligible; and the criteria for eligibility for these respite hours. [5994/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath): I propose to take Questions Nos. 160 to 162, inclusive, together.

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.

The Programme for Partnership Government states that the Government wishes to provide more accessible respite care to facilitate full support for people with a disability.

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

Cross-Border Health Initiatives

163. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Health if he has held discussions regarding the future of the cross-Border directive, in particular regarding patients accessing services in Northern Ireland post-Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6064/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The HSE operates the EU Cross Border Directive (CBD) in Ireland. Patients in Ireland can seek to be referred to another EU/EEA member state for medical treatment that is available in the public health service in Ireland. The patient may access the overseas service in either the public or private health sector of the EU/EEA member state they choose to receive the service in. The patient pays for the treatment and claims reimbursement from the HSE at the cost of that treatment in Ireland or the cost of it abroad, whichever is the lesser.

As part of a whole of Government response to Brexit, the Department of Health is working to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated set of preparations to ensure continuity of health services post-Brexit. This work involves the Department and the HSE and other agencies in engaging in intensive Brexit preparedness and contingency planning.

Work is ongoing to ensure that insofar as possible there is minimum disruption to health services and that essential services are maintained on a Cross-Border, all-island and Ireland-UK basis.

It should also be noted that post-Brexit, patients in Ireland can continue to seek to be referred to the remaining EU/EEA member states for treatment under the CBD.

Hospital Appointments Status

164. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when an appointment will be arranged for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6068/19]

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.

Home Help Service Provision

165. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if additional home help will be provided for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6089/19]

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 questions relate to service matters, I have arranged for the questions to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services Data

166. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of referrals for counselling in primary care that were made in each CHO area in each of the years 2010 to 2018, in tabular form. [6092/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

Health Services Data

167. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of referrals for the self-harm intervention programme that were made in each CHO area in each of the years 2010 to 2018, in tabular form. [6093/19]

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.

Health Services Data

168. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the number of referrals for children and adolescents for counselling and psychotherapy that were recorded by the HSE in each CHO area in each of the years 2010 to 2018, in tabular form. [6094/19]

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

169. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) will receive a hospital appointment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6100/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, 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.

Hospital Appointments Status

170. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health when a procedure will take place for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6102/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, 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.

Hospital Waiting Lists

171. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health his plans to reduce the cardiac rehabilitation waiting list at Ennis General Hospital. [6103/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): In relation to plans to reduce the cardiac rehabilitation waiting list at Ennis General Hospital, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

Mental Health Services Provision

172. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health the position on access to cognitive behavioural therapy through the County Clare mental health service; his plans to enhance the service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6104/19]

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

173. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the status of a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6107/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, 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.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme Payments

174. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Health if payment under the fair deal scheme would be subject to review in the event that a widow that was living alone and is now in a nursing home were to let their principal private residence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6116/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly): The Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS), commonly referred to as *Fair Deal*, is a system of financial support for people who require long-term residential care. Participants contribute to the cost of their care according to their means 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.

Participants in the Scheme contribute up to 80% of their assessable income, such as their pension and a maximum of 7.5% per annum of the value of assets held, such as their principal private residence or cash assets. The first €36,000 of an individual's assets is not counted at all in the financial assessment. The capital value of an individual's principal private residence is only included in the financial assessment for the first three years of their time in care. This is known as the three year cap. No participant will pay more than the actual cost of care.

Under the NHSS rental income is considered income for the purpose of the financial assessment of means and is assessed at 80% less any allowable deductions.

Action 17 of the Strategy for the Rental Sector commits the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government (DHPLG) to examine the treatment under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme's financial assessment of income from the rental of a person's principal private residence where they move into long term residential care. The Department of Health is currently engaging with the DHPLG in this regard to examine the policy and legal implications on this issue. Any changes to the treatment of rental income under the Scheme require careful

policy analysis and consideration and if changes were to be proposed primary legislation would be required to give effect to them. Work will continue on this issue throughout 2019.

Health Services Provision

175. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Health the status a prescription for a person (details supplied); the date for the provision of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6123/19]

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.

Assisted Human Reproduction Legislation

176. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health if the recommendations put forward by a group (details supplied) will be considered on the assisted human reproduction Bill; if he will re-engage with stakeholders to ensure that all persons can be legally recognised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6128/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): In October 2017 the Government approved the drafting of a Bill on assisted human reproduction (AHR) and associated areas of research, based on the published General Scheme. The process of drafting this Bill will be completed in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General. As part of this process officials in my Department will ensure that there is coherent interaction between the AHR Bill and Parts 2 & 3 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015.

My officials and I have engaged with LGBT Ireland in relation to issues they had raised regarding the provisions within the General Scheme of the Assisted Human Reproduction Bill 2017 and within Parts 2 & 3 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015. As part of this process of engagement, LGBT Ireland also made a formal submission to the Department in relation to these matters.

Related to the process of drafting the AHR Bill, the Joint Committee on Health's is currently reviewing the General Scheme of the Assisted Human Reproduction Bill as part of the pre-legislative scrutiny process. The Committee intends to publish its report early in 2019. Given the comprehensive scope of the legislation and the ethical, legal and social issues that arise with AHR practices, it is anticipated that certain areas of the General Scheme will require further consideration and refinement during the drafting process. An analysis of the Committee's report on the General Scheme, once completed, and the response of stakeholders, including LGBT Ireland, to the proposals will feed into this process.

The aim of the proposed AHR legislation is to promote and ensure the rights, health and safety of all those involved, and, most importantly, the children who will be born as a result of these procedures. Consideration of the welfare and best interests of children born through AHR is a key principle underpinning the draft legislation.

Departmental Meetings

177. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health the dates, times, minutes and personnel present for all meetings between his officials and the chief executive or acting chief execu-

tive of the HSE in each of the years 2017, 2018 and to date in 2019. [6132/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The information requested by the Deputy is not immediately available. I have surveyed the Department and the collated replies will be prepared into a full response to the Deputy as soon as possible.

In the meantime, if there is a particular issue or meeting for which the Deputy requires details please provide the specifics to my private office who will liaise with the relevant unit to expedite the required information.

Ministerial Meetings

178. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health the dates, times, minutes and personnel present for all meetings between him and the Chief Medical Officer in each of the years 2016 to 2018 and to date in 2019. [6133/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The Chief Medical Officer is a member of the Department of Health's Management Board. The Management Board provides strategic leadership, direction and oversight in achieving the Department's corporate goals. It adheres to the principles of shared participation and personal and corporate responsibility for the operational success of the Department in supporting the Ministers and Secretary General in the fulfilment of their statutory roles. Formal meetings of the Management Board members and the Minister and Ministers of State are scheduled on a monthly basis.

Most engagements between the Chief Medical Officer and the Minister are not formal minuted meetings. The Chief Medical Officer meets with the Minister on an ongoing and frequent basis as a matter of course in relation to the working business of the Department of Health to discuss specific issues and to support the Minister's parliamentary work and related legislative programme.

Should the Deputy require details of any particular meeting, please contact my private office who will be happy to liaise with the relevant officials to obtain the information required.

Departmental Meetings

179. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health the dates, times, minutes and personnel present for all meetings between a person (details supplied) and the Chief Medical Officer in each of the years 2016 to 2018 and to date in 2019. [6134/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The Chief Medical Officer and the Secretary General are members of the Department of Health's Management Board. They interact on a daily basis.

While formal meetings involving other parties are recorded, it would not be practical to record daily interactions between the Chief Medical Officer and the Secretary General.

Should the Deputy require details of any particular meeting, please contact my private office who will be happy to liaise with the relevant officials to obtain the information required.

Mental Health Services Staff

180. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Health if psychology graduates are being hired without pay to provide mental health services to patients including children with disabilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6135/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy on this.

Medicinal Products

181. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health the suite of treatments available for persons who suffer from cystinosis; and the research carried out into the side effects of cysteamine as a treatment for the condition. [6158/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): Cystinosis is a rare inherited condition characterised by accumulation of the amino acid cystine within cells. Excess cystine damages cells and often forms crystals that can build up and cause problems in many organs and tissues. The kidneys and eyes are especially vulnerable to damage; the muscles, thyroid, pancreas, and testes may also be affected. There are a number of medicines authorised for the treatment of cystinosis. These medicines are subject to routine pharmacovigilance follow-up. 1. Cystagon 50 and 150 mg capsules contain the active substance mercaptamine (also known as cysteamine). The medication is authorised for use in patients who have nephropathic (kidney) cystinosis. This medication should be initiated under the supervision of a physician experienced in the treatment of cystinosis.

Cystagon is contra-indicated during breast-feeding and should not be used during pregnancy, particularly during the first trimester, unless clearly necessary. It is contraindicated in patients who have developed hypersensitivity to penicillamine, and in patients who are hypersensitive to mercaptamine or to any of the excipients. Monitoring of blood cell count is recommended on a regular basis. Cases of Ehlers-Danlos like syndrome and vascular disorders on elbows have been reported in children treated with high doses of different cysteamine preparations. It is therefore recommended to monitor regularly skin and to consider X-ray examinations of the bone as necessary². Procysbi (mercaptamine) 25 and 75 mg capsules are also indicated for the treatment of nephropathic cystinosis. This medication should be initiated under the supervision of a physician experienced in the treatment of cystinosis.³ Cystadrops (mercaptamine) is an eye medicine used in patients from 2 years of age who have cystinosis. This medication should be initiated under the supervision of a physician experienced in the treatment of cystinosis. Cystagon is contra-indicated in patients who are hypersensitive to mercaptamine or to any of the excipients.

All medications carry the potential risk of side effects. There is a legal framework for the provision of detailed side-effect information, including specific warnings if required, for medicines across the European Union which provides for the format and content of this information as part of a medicine's authorisation process. Such information is then published as a Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) document as well as a Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). The SmPC contains information for the healthcare professionals and the package leaflet for patients, both of which are reviewed and approved as an intrinsic part of the licensing of a medicine, and continuously updated to reflect the current state of knowledge of the medicine and the risks associated with its use. As such, it is considered important for healthcare professionals and patients, as well as their carers, to regularly read and review these documents in full to support safe and appropriate use of medicines.

Regarding other treatments available, it would not be appropriate for me as Minister for

Health to comment in this manner on the range or details of possible treatment options available for any individual patient or condition as this remains a purely clinical matter.

It is important to note that any decision to consider or undertake any course of treatment is solely the decision of a treating doctor, in conjunction with their patient.

Services for People with Disabilities

182. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the reason requests by a person (details supplied) for a service have been denied; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6166/19]

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.

Mental Health Services Provision

183. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 451 of 27 November 2018, the progress made on the recommendation that eight staff be made available for training over a two year programme with a commitment for a further two years; when the service will be available; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6167/19]

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.

HSE Waiting Lists

184. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age on the speech and language therapy assessment waiting list in each LHO area; and the number waiting 0 to 12, 12 to 26, 26 to 52 and more than 52 weeks, respectively in tabular form. [6170/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

HSE Waiting Lists

185. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age on the speech and language therapy initial treatment waiting list in each LHO

area; and the number waiting 0 to 12, 12 to 26, 26 to 52 and more than 52 weeks, respectively in tabular form. [6171/19]

186. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age on the speech and language therapy further treatment waiting list in each LHO area; and the number waiting 0 to 12, 12 to 26, 26 to 52 and more than 52 weeks, respectively in tabular form. [6172/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath): I propose to take Questions Nos. 185 and 186 together.

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 questions relate to service matters, I have arranged for the questions to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

HSE Waiting Lists

187. **Deputy Anne Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Health the number of children under 18 years of age on the occupational therapy first time assessment waiting list in each LHO area; and the number waiting 0 to 12, 12 to 26, 26 to 52 and more than 52 weeks, respectively in tabular form. [6173/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

Cancer Screening Programmes

188. **Deputy Marc MacSharry** asked the Minister for Health the number of private laboratories here capable of carrying out cervical cancer testing for smears; the details of same; the price per test; the turnaround time for the provision of results for each test from these laboratories; if none of these private laboratories are being used for cervical cancer smear testing; if so, the reason therefore; if he will engage some or all of these laboratories to deal with the backlog and improve turnaround time to be funded if necessary through the National Treatment Purchase Fund in view of the delays of six months plus in turnaround time for testing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6174/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The unprecedented demand for cervical screening in 2018 has undoubtedly put pressure on laboratory capacity and led to the long delays that are being experienced in smear test turnaround times.

This increased level of engagement with the programme is welcome. However, the increased demand has undoubtedly put pressure on lab capacity and the HSE has been working actively with the labs to manage this and to improve turnaround times for smear tests. The HSE reports that laboratories have agreed to undertake additional recruitment, provide for overtime and manage annual leave in an effort to minimise the backlog.

In addition the HSE is aiming to source additional screening capacity, which would improve the turnaround time of results. The HSE advises that sourcing capacity and resources is a serious global challenge as countries start to move to primary HPV screening, which vastly reduces the requirement for cytology screening staff and is resulting in staff understandably seeking opportunities in other fields. This has limited the HSE's ability to source additional laboratory capacity and so improve turnaround times.

The provision of these out of cycle smears ceased on the 31st of December 2018. Stabilisation of the programme, and addressing the backlog, are key priorities, and particularly so in the context of the introduction of the HPV test as the primary screening test. However, we should be clear that this backlog will take some time to resolve.

The HSE is currently developing a capacity plan to take account of available capacity and expected demand, with the aim of bringing the programme into stabilisation this year. This is a priority concern for my Department and the HSE.

In relation to the detail requested by the Deputy, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to him.

Proposed Legislation

189. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health the status of the human tissue Bill. [6194/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The General Scheme of a Human Tissue (Transplantation, Post-Mortem, Anatomical Examination and Public Display) Bill is being finalised at present and will be submitted to Government shortly.

Medical Card Applications

190. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6199/19]

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.

Medical Card Applications

191. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health when a medical card will issue in the case of persons (details supplied); if the card will issue on an emergency basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6200/19]

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.

Medical Card Applications

192. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health when a medical card will

issue in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6208/19]

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.

Medical Card Applications

193. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6213/19]

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.

Health Services Reports

194. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the reason for the delay in publishing the Sláintecare implementation plan; if he received the plan before the end of 2018 as promised; and the timeframe he is working to. [6227/19]

Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris): The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy was published on 8 September 2018 and provides the framework within which a system-wide reform programme will be advanced. It sets out four over-arching goals and ten high-level strategic actions which will be the key focus for the first three years of the reform programme. At its core, the strategy focuses on establishing the building blocks for a significant shift in the way in which health services are delivered in Ireland.

In September, the Executive Director of the Sláintecare Programme Office commenced refining the Implementation Strategy into a detailed Action Plan for 2019. I can confirm that the Action Plan 2019 has been developed and, following the finalisation of the HSE's National Service Plan, Project Teams will also be established to drive delivery. The Action Plan will be presented to Sláintecare's High Level Delivery Board and will be published thereafter. This Plan will be overseen by the Implementation Advisory Council, chaired, as you know, by Dr Tom Keane.

The Sláintecare Programme Office is committed to transparency at all stages of the implementation of Sláintecare. The Programme Office will publish rolling plans annually and progress reports will be published on a biannual basis.

Services for People with Disabilities

195. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health if a person (details supplied) received notice of discharge from the HSE and or a service provider; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6228/19]

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 an individual case, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

Departmental Budgets

196. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the breakdown of the €4,756,000 capital allocation in food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6033/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The main components of the capital allocation for the Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health and Animal Welfare (DAFM Programme A) is shown in the following table.

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Information Management Technology & DAFM Laboratories	4,036,000
Sheep EID	720,000

This funding provides for ensuring that my Department continues to maintain a robust and responsive IT infrastructure to support Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health and Animal Welfare, and to assist my department in maintaining its certified ISO 27001 Information Security Standard and for the on-going maintenance and improvements works at the Departments laboratories.

I have also provided funding to support livestock marts and slaughter plants with the installation of facilities in connection with the Electronic Identification system for sheep in 2019.

Departmental Budgets

197. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the breakdown of the €159,845,000 capital allocation in farm sector supports and controls within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6034/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The main components of the €159,845,000 capital allocations for the Farm Sector Supports and Controls (DAFM Programme B) for 2019 are set out in the following table.

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Forestry*	78,179,000 *
Targeted Agricultural Measures (TAMs)	69,493,280

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Commercial Horticulture	6,000,000
Traditional Farm Buildings Capital	1,250,000
Information Management Technology (Admin Budget)	1,236,000
Dev Organic Sect 2014-20	1,200,000
BEEP	1,150,000

* A further €22 million will be allocated from funds carried over from 2018 (subject to approval)

It can be seen that the vast majority of the funding is allocated to Forestry Programme schemes, including establishing new afforestation and the cost of annual premiums for existing forestry, and the Targeted Agricultural Measures (TAMS) which is co funded by the EU under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. These schemes provide grant aid which part-fund many thousands of projects undertaken by individual operators. As they are demand led the precise number of individual projects, start dates etc. cannot be provided.

Furthermore, this allocation will provide assistance in the development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector by grant aiding capital investments in specialised buildings and equipment, as well as the provision of funding in the Organic Sector to support the development of the sector to respond to market demand for organically produced food. It also includes support for weighing equipment for the new Beef Environmental Efficiency Pilot (BEEP) scheme.

The Administrative budget capital allocation for Programme B in 2019 provides for ensuring that my Department continues to maintain a robust and responsive IT infrastructure to support of the delivery of farmer payments and controls and to assist my department in maintaining its certified ISO 27001 Information Security Standard.

Departmental Budgets

198. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the breakdown of the €34,685,000 capital allocation in policy and strategy within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6035/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The main components of the €34,685,000 capital allocations for the Policy and Strategy (DAFM Programme C) for 2019 are shown in the following table.

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Horse & Greyhound Fund - Horse Racing Ireland-Capital	11,100,000
Food Sector Brexit Capital	8,630,000
National Food Innovation Hub Teagasc	6,000,000
Prepared Consumer Food Centre – Teagasc	5,000,000
Teagasc Capital Grant	3,150,000
Restoration of Johnstown Castle	520,000

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Information Management Technology (Admin Budget)	241,000
H&G Fund Bord na gCon-Capital	44,000

The 2019 allocation for the Policy and Strategy includes the Brexit capital supports for the food sector, which were announced in Budget 2019. The grant schemes for food companies and artisan food producers are demand-led schemes, so the numbers of projects or their completion dates are not yet known.

Innovation and product development is crucial to enhancing the resilience of the sector and to support this I have provided funding for the construction of the National Food Innovation Hub at Teagasc, Moorepark and the further enhancement of the Prepared Consumer Food Centre at Teagasc, Ashtown a project which commenced in 2018. I have also provided for the maintenance of Teagasc's facilities and laboratories and the completion of the Johnstown Castle Restoration project. I have also provided for Horse Racing Ireland support for development projects at race courses, via the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund.

The Administrative budget capital allocation for Programme C in 2019 provides for ensuring that my Department continues to maintain a robust and responsive IT infrastructure to support of the delivery of Policy and Strategy activities and to assist my department in maintaining its certified ISO 27001 Information Security Standard.

Departmental Budgets

199. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the breakdown of the €56,714,000 capital allocation in the seafood sector within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6036/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The main components of the €55,714,000 capital allocation for the seafood sector (DAFM Programme D) for 2019 are shown in the following table.

Description	Allocation 2019 €
Development and Upgrading of Harbours for Fisheries	26,890,000
Marine Inst. Grant Capital	12,000,000
BIM Grant Capital	12,100,000
Remediation of Haulbowline Island	2,500,000
Seafood Development Programme Capital	1,300,000
SFPA Capital	400,000
Information Management Technology (Admin Budget)	287,000

The major Fisheries Harbour Centre development projects I have provided for are the Dinish Island pier project at Castletownbere which will be substantially completed this year and Smooth Point project at Killybegs which is planned for commencement in the second half of the year. I have also provided part-funding for a range of smaller projects at local authority

owned piers.

The Haulbowline Island East-Tip remediation project was substantially completed in 2018 but funding is provided for residual costs.

Most for the funding I have allocated to BIM is to support a range of measures (co funded by the EU under the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund) to be undertaken by operators in various parts of the sector. In common with other demand led schemes it is not possible at this point to indicate the number of projects and completion dates. I have also provided for research programmes operated by the Marine Institute and for the design phase of a replacement for one of its fisheries research vessels. I have also provided for the maintenance of the facilities of Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the Marine Institute.

The Administrative budget capital allocation for Programme D in 2019 provides for ensuring that my Department continues to maintain a robust and responsive IT infrastructure to support of the delivery of its Seafood sector activities and to assist my department in maintaining its certified ISO 27001 Information Security Standard.

Meat Processing Plant Inspections

200. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 224 of 30 January 2019, if the factories will be named that had to revert to manual grading when their mechanical classification systems were found to be working outside the legally defined tolerances in 2017 and 2018; the dates on which these instances occurred; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6065/19]

201. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 224 of 30 January 2019, the number of beef carcasses rechecked by Departmental staff on days on which the mechanical classification system of a processing plant was found to be working outside the legally defined tolerances in 2017 and 2018; the length of time factories were instructed to revert to manual grading when the mechanical systems were discovered to be out of sync; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6066/19]

202. **Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of inspections of beef carcasses carried out by Departmental staff in processing factories in 2017 in relation to carcass presentation and carcass classification; if there were discrepancies in relation to the inspections; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6067/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): I propose to take Questions Nos. 200 to 202, inclusive, together.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1184 of 20 April 2017 governs the monitoring of carcass classification, carcass presentation and weighing.

In 2017, my Department conducted 628 unannounced, on-the-spot inspections in 32 factories on classification and carcass presentation. This is an average of 20 inspections per factory per year, which significantly exceeds the legal minimum requirement of 8 inspections per year. At each inspection an average of 85 carcasses were inspected for correct classification and carcass presentation. The legal requirement is 40 carcasses per inspection.

In 2017 there were 13 incidences where factories were instructed to revert to manual grad-

ing.

The unannounced check verifies the on-going accuracy of the automated beef grading methods by using a system of points and limits defined in EU legislation. At each inspection 100 carcasses are checked. If the machine is found to be working outside EU defined tolerances the factory is instructed to revert to manual grading straight away. The factory must then arrange for the machine to be serviced and a subsequent classification check will be conducted by Department officers to confirm it is within the legal tolerances before it is returned to mechanical classification mode. All manual classifiers are licensed by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine.

In all cases where a machine is found to be working outside of tolerance, manual grading is instigated immediately and this is advised to farmers through their remittance docketts.

As with any mechanical system, grading machines can from time to time fall out of tolerance. Machines operating outside of tolerance are required to be serviced, and the calibration is checked by staff from my Department before mechanical grading recommences.

Brexit Preparations

203. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if action plans dealing with mitigating measures and contingency planning for a no-deal Brexit scenario have reached implementation stage; his plans to deal with problems faced by hauliers of agrifoods and fish products in the event of customs checks causing delays; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6074/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): My Department has been actively participating in the Whole-of-Government approach to preparedness and contingency planning, and we have been working very closely with colleagues in other Departments and agencies to address in particular the requirements that will arise in relation to the implementation at ports and airports of import controls on agrifood and fishery products coming from the UK. This process has moved into the implementation phase, and practical arrangements are being put in place to ensure that our legal obligations are fulfilled as efficiently as possible while also ensuring the minimum possible disruption to trading arrangements.

Work in this regard has been focused on three key areas, namely, infrastructure, staffing and information technology, and in three key locations, that is Dublin Port, Rosslare Port and Dublin Airport.

On infrastructure, we have been engaging very closely with the Office of Public Works, the Department of Transport, the Department of Health and the Revenue Commissioners in relation to the physical facilities that will be required to carry out import controls at the three locations. Areas being addressed here include inspection facilities, staff accommodation, parking, and logistics and traffic management.

On staffing, the Department is again working very effectively with Customs and others to provide the resources needed to apply the necessary controls and I am confident that the state will be in a position to apply controls at the appropriate time.

On information technology, my Department has established a project to coordinate the identification and delivery of ICT Infrastructure and systems to support the additional requirements of staff engaged in control processes in Dublin Port, Rosslare and Dublin Airport. The delivery timelines in the event of a disorderly Brexit are extremely challenging, but officials are working

with the greatest urgency to ensure that the required ICT services are in place by 29th March.

Throughout all of this work, the focus of my Department continues to be on the need to discharge our legal responsibilities in relation to the control of imports from a sanitary and phytosanitary perspective and the certification of exports, while minimising the potential problems that hauliers and others are likely to face.

Brexit Preparations

204. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the recent discussions he has had with the European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries on the need to protect the Irish fisheries sector post Brexit; the issues discussed; the outcome of such discussions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6183/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): Over the past two years, I have had regular, positive meetings with Commissioner Vella on the potential implications for the fisheries sector arising from Brexit, most recently on the margins of the December Fisheries Council. I am due to meet with the Commissioner again on the 18th of this month specifically on preparedness issues in the worst case scenario of a no deal Brexit.

My priority is to maintain existing levels of access to waters and resources. If the withdrawal deal goes through there will be no changes to the status quo for at least two years. Within this timeframe and within the context of the overall economic partnership, the EU and UK will work to establish a new fisheries agreement to be in place for the first year after the transition period.

In the event of a disorderly departure by the UK on the 29th of March existing reciprocal arrangements could be endangered.

The Commission is, in cooperation with the Member States, proposing measures that would allow ongoing reciprocal access, but the outcome will depend on the position of the UK which is, as yet, unclear.

If such reciprocal access does not materialise, the impact on Ireland's fishing fleet will be significant.

My Department is working closely with other Member States and the Commission on these matters, and I will be meeting Commissioner Vella very shortly to discuss the need for supports for the Irish fishing sector in the event of a disorderly Brexit.

Trade Sanctions

205. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the funding provided by the European Union to support farmers and the agricultural sector in member states affected by the Russian embargo in each of the years 2011 to 2018, in tabular form; the countries that received such aid; the sectors in this regard, respectively in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6229/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): A general ban on the importation of agrifood products was imposed by the Russian Federation in August 2014 on countries (including the EU) which had adopted sanctions against Russia in the context of the situation in Ukraine. Although partially lifted (since 1 June 2016) in respect of imports of beef, poultry and vegetables intended for use in baby food manufacturing, the overall ban re-

mains in place until 31 December 2019.

The European Commission, with the help of EU member states, has closely monitored the different markets affected by the ban and has taken a range of emergency measures, notably for the dairy sector and for fruit & vegetables that are designed to help producers address market pressure, stabilise prices and find alternative sales opportunities.

According to Commission data, in the case of fruits and vegetables, the last emergency measures were phased out on 30 June 2018. From the time the ban was introduced, the EU granted €500 million of aid, corresponding to withdrawals of 1.7 million tonnes, to EU producers of fruit and vegetables. In the period up to July 2017, the total aid requested amounted to **€452 million**, in respect of 1.6 million tonnes of fruit & vegetables.

Fruit & Veg - Main Member states concerned are

MS	Tons	€
Poland	53894	22 342 826
Spain	44367	12 016 402
Belgium	27786	3 270 188
Greece	18499	9 527 301
Italy	14967	7 467 822
Netherlands	8415	2 057 455

In the case of the dairy sector, specific aid was granted to the Baltic States, which were particularly exposed to the impacts of the Russian ban, as follows (again, according to data available from the European Commission):

ms	mios €
Estonia	6.9
Latvia	7.8
Lithuania	14.07

More generally, October 2015 saw the European Commission and Member States agree a support package to help farmers most affected by on-going market difficulties, which had been caused by a number of factors including the effects of the Russian ban. Allocations totalling €420 million were made to Member States to support the **dairy and livestock sectors** in particular, with flexibility for Member States to decide how to target this support. Figures from the Commission on the breakdown by Member State are as follows:

Member State	Allocation (mio €)	Member State	Allocation (mio €)
Belgium	13,050	Latvia	8,452
Bulgaria	6,009	Lithuania	12,632
Czech Republic	11,156	Luxembourg	669
Denmark	11,103	Hungary	9,505
Germany	69,234	Malta	120
Estonia	7,562	Netherlands	29,937
Ireland	13,734	Austria	7,005
Greece	2,258	Poland	28,947

Member State	Allocation (mio €)	Member State	Allocation (mio €)
Spain	25,257	Portugal	4,764
France	62,900	Romania	11,146
Croatia	1,182	Slovenia	1,368
Italy	25,018	Slovakia	2,464
Cyprus	355	Finland	8,986
Sweden	8,221	United Kingdom	36,072

Additionally, in July 2016, the European Commission agreed a further solidarity package worth €500 million, which included provision for a milk production reduction scheme, conditional adjustment aid, and extension of public intervention and aids for private storage schemes.

Further to that, in order to help boost exports to alternative markets outside the EU, the European Commission has increased promotion funds from €142.5 million in 2017 to €188.5 million in 2018 and €200 million in 2020. Promotion policy rules set out how EU funding can be used for information and promotion initiatives both inside and outside of the EU.

Member State	Allocation	Member State	Allocation
Belgium	10 979 636	Latvia	9 760 362
Bulgaria	5 809 941	Lithuania	13 298 661
Czech Republic	10 346 106	Luxembourg	560 115
Denmark	9 294 305	Hungary	9 543 566
Germany	57 955 101	Malta	100 092
Estonia	8 081 123	Netherlands	22 952 419
Ireland	11 086 327	Austria	5 863 491
Greece	1 683 910	Poland	22 670 129
Spain	14 665 678	Portugal	3 988 059
France	49 900 853	Romania	10 896 083
Croatia	1 517 133	Slovenia	1 145 506
Italy	20 942 300	Slovakia	2 062 803
Cyprus	297 165	Finland	7 521 715
Sweden	6 881 425	United Kingdom	30 195 996

I have consistently urged the European Commission to intensify its contacts with the Russian authorities with a view to lifting its embargo. While efforts to secure real engagement from the Russian authorities will continue, the broader task of securing alternative market outlets for EU food products will also continue to be progressed.

Food Safety Standards Regulation

206. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the measures being taken following confirmation that unsafe meat has been exported to 12 EU countries (details supplied). [6231/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), managed by the EU Commission, is the key EU tool used to ensure a swift reaction when risks to public health are detected in the food chain.

RASFF enables information to be shared efficiently and swiftly between its members - EU Commission, European Food Safety Authority, national food safety authorities for the EU-28 and EFTA countries - with the objective of ensuring the highest possible level of consumer protection. In Ireland's case, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is the responsible authority.

RASFF members must immediately notify the Commission via when they have information regarding a serious health risk deriving from food or feed. Once a notification of the existence of a serious, direct or indirect, risk to public health linked to food or feed is made by a member, this information reaches the Commission, which in turn verifies the notification and immediately transmits it to the other members of the network. This rapid exchange of information allows all members to check in real time whether they are also affected and if urgent action is needed.

Poland submitted a notification on the RASFF system on 29 January, in relation to veterinary controls not properly carried out on bovine meat at slaughter premises in Poland, potentially creating a food safety risk. The RASSF notification listed 11 member states which were affected, and advised that implicated product should be withdrawn from the market. Ireland was not one of the affected member states.

Trade Agreements

207. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the status of Mercosur talks. [6232/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The EU Mercosur negotiations have not progressed sufficiently recently to the point where any agreement is likely to be concluded. Apart from the well-known sensitivities in relation to Mercosur beef access to the EU market, other outstanding issues include cars, rules of origin, geographical indications, maritime services and EU dairy access to the Mercosur market.

From an Irish perspective, we have been very consistent in urging caution in the approach to these negotiations. Our position has been reiterated many times, for example by myself and by my colleague, Minister of State Andrew Doyle, at Council of Agriculture Ministers meetings, and by other Ministers in the relevant EU Trade policy fora. It has also been done through direct contacts with Commissioners Hogan and Malmstroem, and by the Taoiseach at European Council and through his own direct contacts, including with Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and French President Emmanuel Macron. I have also been working closely with Member State colleagues in this regard, and have remained in close contact with Commissioner Hogan on the matter.

At the moment there are no new rounds scheduled, with the most recent having taken place in Montevideo from 10-13 December 2018. However, I will continue to remain in close contact with the European Commission and with Member State colleagues, in order to reinforce Ireland's concerns.

In an overall sense there is undoubtedly a need for continued vigilance in relation to the conduct of these trade negotiations, and I will continue to insist that they are handled appropriately, and in a manner that safeguards the interests of the Irish and European beef sector. I also continue to stress that full account must be taken of the findings of the Commission's own assessment of the cumulative impact of trade deals on the agri food sector, and the potentially very damaging impact of Brexit on an already delicately balanced EU beef market.

Brexit Issues

208. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the WTO tariff that would apply for exports to the UK for sectors (details supplied) in the event of a no-deal Brexit; and the estimated value that such tariffs would have over the course of a calendar year. [6233/19]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed): The decision as to how and when the UK might impose tariffs on imports from the EU in the event of a no-deal Brexit is a sovereign matter for the UK Government.

As part of my Department's Brexit planning, my Department has carried out a detailed analysis of the implications for Irish agri-food exports in a scenario whereby the UK applied the EU's existing tariff schedule on imports.

The detailed analysis was carried out by my Department using agri-food trade data, broken down into twenty four categories, identified and agreed by my Department and the CSO. The EU's MFN (Most Favoured Nation) Tariff Schedule was then applied to this export data. This tariff schedule includes both ad valorem tariffs and tariffs per weight/unit of product, as set out in the EU's TARIC database. The imposition of tariffs is not a linear exercise, and the possible tariffs that could be imposed vary both within individual categories and the sector as a whole. A calculation of tariff rate equivalents based on actual value and volume of trade in 2016 was completed, and is summarised in the table attached.

This analysis found that the estimated cost of potential tariffs for the sector as a whole is €1.7 billion, based on Irish agri-food exports to the United Kingdom of €4.8 billion in 2016.

There are a number of important caveats which must be considered when examining these results, including:

- Tariff data used, is based on a TARIC database extract at 31 December 2016, with the exception of those commodities where tariff rates had changed during the years 2014, 2015, 2016;

- This analysis represented over 90% of agri-food exports to the United Kingdom between 2014 and 2016.

- This analysis does not take account of any possible tariff rate quotas (TRQs), nor does it account for non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade, including transport delays and additional administrative costs.

- The analysis does not include the impact of any changes to the Euro-Sterling exchange rate.

- In respect of live animal exports, the average tariff rate equivalent is 8%, however in 2016, 67% of total value of live animal exports were not subject to tariff. The estimated tariff on total live exports which are subject to tariffs is 24%, and for exports of live bovines the tariff rate equivalent is approximately 40%.

Additionally, for some sectors further analysis is ongoing due to the complexity of the tariff calculations, namely:

- While raw forestry products do not usually attract third country duties, processed wood based products such as MDF, and OSB are subject to ad valorem charges based on declared value.

- For Cereals and Cereal Preparations products, almost half of the top 20 commodities are subject to duties which are calculated based on complex compositional data of the ingredients used.

Third country duties for individual product lines can be found on the TARIC website using the eight digit combined nomenclature (CN) code:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/taric/taric_consultation.jsp?Lang=en

Tariff rate equivalents of agri-food sector commodities, 2016

	Total Exports to the UK 2016	Est Duty as a % of the declared value	Total Est cost of tariff equiv.
Dairy	€857,279,000	49%	€422,547,000
Beef	€1,113,448,000	70%	€780,521,000
Sheepmeat	€52,027,000	75%	€38,996,000
Pigmeat	€408,182,000	22%	€90,595,000
Poultry	€217,308,000	55%	€118,817,000
Live Animals[1]	€259,200,000	8%	€21,123,000
Eggs	€10,877,000	19%	€2,035,000
Other Meat & Meat Preps	€46,949,000	18%	€8,543,000
Fruit and Vegetables	€239,155,000	14%	€33,439,000
Fish	€64,262,000	14%	€8,900,000
Beverages	€301,642,000	5%	€14,250,000
Cereals & Cereal Preparations	€339,582,000	14%	€47,813,000
Animal Feedstuffs	€211,769,000	8%	€17,272,000
Misc. Edible Prods & Preps	€118,234,000	10%	€11,839,000
Vegetable Oils & Fats	€7,557,000	9%	€666,000
Sugar, Sugar Prep & Honey	€44,467,000	30%	€13,216,000
Coffee, Tea, Cocoa & Spices	€242,241,000	17%	€41,021,000
Crude Animal & Vegetable Material	€31,695,000	1%	€382,000
Animal Oils & Fats	€10,293,000	1%	€85,000
Oilseeds & Oleaginous Fruit	€11,164,000	0%	€15,000
Forestry[2]	€176,544,000	0%	
Animal Skins & Furs	€35,477,000	0%	
Flax, Wool & Animal Hair	€5,142,000	0%	
Cotton	€34,000	0%	
Totals	€4,804,528,000		€1,672,074,000

[1] MFN tariffs on Live Bovine exports (excl. breeding), which are charged at 10.2% + 93.100 DTN are considerably higher than estimated duty for the sector. The estimated tariff rate equivalent of these commodities is approximately 40% tariff rate equivalent.

[2] While Raw forestry products do not attract duties, processed wood products such as MDF do, these are usually charged at 7% ad valorem.

Food Wise 2025 Strategy

209. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment his views on the confirmation he gave that a carbon target for agriculture will be set (details supplied); the discussions he had in this regard; and the impact on Food Wise 2025 targets. [6230/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): Under the EU Effort Sharing Regulation, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions targets for 2021 to 2030 in the non-ETS sector can be represented in the form of a 'carbon budget' for emissions from relevant sectors of the economy, including transport, agriculture, buildings and waste. Potential approaches to the future setting of sectorial targets to enable the achievement of Ireland's EU Effort Sharing Regulation targets are being considered as part of the All-of-Government Climate Action Plan which I am currently preparing.

Departmental Budgets

210. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the capital allocations for the National Broadband Plan in each of the years 2013 to 2027 by allocation under the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan 2012-2016, the National Broadband Plan, Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021 and the National Development Plan 2018-2027, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6028/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): Government allocated €275 million in Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021 published in September 2015, for the initial years of the network build-out for the National Broadband Plan State intervention. The €275m represented an initial stimulus, in the knowledge that significant further funding will be required over the lifetime of the proposed 25 year contract. The level of State subsidy for the National Broadband Plan State intervention is to be determined through an ongoing procurement. As such, the proposed investment in the NBP under the National Development Plan 2018—2027 was indicated to be confidential due to an ongoing procurement.

National Broadband Plan Funding

211. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if funding allocated for the national broadband plan but not spent remains in his Department until it is spent; if not, if it is returned to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6029/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): The National Broadband Plan is one of the projects funded through the Capital allocation for my Department. Funding for the National Broadband Plan is allocated from the Communications subhead A.3. Section 91 of the Finance Act 2004 provides that a maximum of up to 10% of the total capital allocation of each Vote may be carried over to the following financial year, subject to the approval of the Oireachtas and an Order from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Any capital underspend on individual subheads that together exceed the total permissible

capital carryover of 10% is surrendered back to the Exchequer at the end of the financial year.

Departmental Budgets

212. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the breakdown of the €69,414,000 capital allocation under A communications in Vote 29 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department by specific project; the projects that will be commence in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6030/19]

213. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the breakdown of the €142,603,000 capital allocation under C energy in Vote 29 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department by specific project; the projects that will be commence in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6031/19]

214. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the breakdown of the €46,525,000 capital allocation under F environment and waste management in Vote 29 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department by specific project; the projects that will be commence in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6032/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 212 to 214, inclusive, together.

Detailed capital allocations for my Department, broken down by programme area and sub-head, were published in the Revised Estimates Volume on 19th December 2018. The 2019 capital allocations (including €15m capital carryover) for the Communications, Energy and Environment & Waste Management Programme areas of my Department are €84.4m, €142.6m and €46.5m respectively.

During 2019, my Department will continue to progress capital projects in areas of strategic national importance across its 6 Programme areas. Key investment measures within the 3 Programme areas specified in the Question are set out below.

In the Communications Programme area, I have allocated €75m for the National Broadband Plan and a further €6.3m to provide continued support for digital entrepreneurship and digital adoption among businesses and citizens.

In the Energy Programme area, focus will be maintained on advancing the critical climate action agenda. My Department has allocated €85m for investment in residential energy efficiency upgrades under the Better Energy Grant Schemes and a further €23m for energy efficiency upgrades in the commercial and public sectors. Other key energy measures include an investment of €5m in the roll-out of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat to promote the replacement of fossil fuel heating systems with renewable energy technologies. Funding of €18m is available to incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles through a range of supports and measures. In addition, €8.7m will be invested in energy research to accelerate diversification away from fossil fuels to green energy. These measures will deliver significant energy savings and reductions in CO₂ emissions in the transition to a low carbon economy and society.

In the Environment and Waste Management Programme area, I have allocated €11.8m in capital funding to the EPA to deliver on its legislative mandate and research commitments in areas including air quality, climate mitigation and adaptation. My Department will provide €9m

in grant funding to Local Authorities for the continued remediation of landfill sites. Funding of some €25m is allocated to progress the climate change agenda, including an amount of €15m for the Climate Action Fund to leverage additional investment by public or private bodies in initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets in a cost effective manner.

Telecommunications Infrastructure

215. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if directives have been issued to ComReg with regard to the roll-out of 5G technology; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6110/19]

216. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the status of on the roll-out of 5G technology; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6111/19]

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Richard Bruton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 215 and 216 together.

5G, as the fifth generation wireless technology, is still under development and is expected to be commercialised over the next few years. Roll-out of infrastructure to facilitate 5G services in Ireland is primarily a matter for private mobile network operators, operating on a commercial basis. I do not have statutory authority to require commercial companies to roll-out services or infrastructure. Mobile network operators function in a liberalised market in Ireland, regulated by the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), who is statutorily independent in the exercise of its functions.

The provision of mobile telecommunications services generally (including 5G services) is subject to a requirement to secure a wireless telegraphy licence to access the required radio spectrum. The management of the radio spectrum is a statutory function of ComReg under the Communications Regulation Act 2002, as amended. This role includes the allocation of radio spectrum, the award of spectrum licences and the associated application of terms, conditions and obligations to those licences.

Whilst ComReg is independent in the exercise of its statutory functions, I do have the power to issue policy directions to the Regulator under the 2002 Act, reflecting my responsibility for policy for the sector. I have not issued and currently do not propose to issue such a policy direction in relation to the issue raised by the Deputy.

Brexit Issues

217. **Deputy Declan Breathnach** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if assurances will be provided to representatives from the haulage industry that measures for hauliers would largely remain the same for a period of nine months after a no-deal Brexit includes trips across the Border; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6086/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I and my Department have kept in close contact with road haulage industry throughout the Brexit negotiations and will continue to do so. I met the Freight Transport Association of Ireland (FTAI) on Tuesday 29 January last.

The Government's priority remains the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement, which

would maintain current arrangements in road haulage, including cross border arrangements, during a transition period up to the end of 2020.

As part of its no deal Brexit Contingency Action Plan the EU Commission has proposed a temporary arrangement that would apply for a nine month period in a no deal scenario. If the Withdrawal Agreement comes into force the proposal will not be required. The proposal is conditional on the UK offering equivalent reciprocal rights to all EU licensed road hauliers in the UK post Brexit, including Irish hauliers, which the UK has confirmed it is willing to do.

These arrangements would apply between Ireland and Northern Ireland in exactly the same way as they apply between Ireland and Britain, or indeed anywhere else in the EU 27 and the UK.

While discussions of this proposal are at an advanced stage in the Council with a view to having the new Regulation in place for 29 March 2019, this is a matter that will only be finalised when the proposed Regulation has completed its passage through the Council and European Parliament and when the UK has enacted its reciprocal rights.

Ministerial Meetings

218. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of occasions on which he or his officials met with the four Dublin local authority CEOs to discuss traffic in Dublin; the number of times he has met with the four directors of transport for the Dublin local authorities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5987/19]

221. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of times he has convened his officials and appropriate invitees to meet to specifically discuss traffic congestion in Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5991/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I propose to take Questions Nos. 218 and 221 together.

As the Deputy is aware, congestion is a challenging issue and the responses required are multifaceted and will comprise short, medium and longer term actions.

At a central Government level, I know we need to provide a sound policy framework and ensure the availability of appropriate funding to allow for an expansion of public transport services and networks, and that includes those services and networks within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

So that is why I have provided funding to the National Transport Authority (NTA) to introduce measures such as –

- Expanded PSO bus fleet, which has grown by approximately 17% in recent years;
 - Increased and improved PSO bus services across the GDA;
 - 10 minute DART services;
 - Increased usage of the Phoenix Park Tunnel for Kildare Line commuters;
 - Expanded off-peak services generally across the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) rail network;
- and
- Introduced longer trams on the newly extended Luas Green Line.

In the medium term I am providing funding to the NTA to –

- Continue to expand the GDA PSO bus fleet which will increase again this year;
- Deliver new and improved cycling and walking infrastructure, with a number of important projects starting construction this year;
- Complete the City Centre Re-signalling Project which will benefit GDA rail services
- Explore, and secure, medium term solutions to capacity constraints on the rail network; and
- Extend all trams on the Luas Green Line and purchase 8 additional trams and I expect these extended trams will begin to arrive by Q4 this year.

The Deputy may also be aware that my Department is undertaking a review of public transport policy in line with the commitment given in the Programme for a Partnership Government. This review is a significant and substantial resource commitment and my Department has commenced, and substantially completed, the research and analysis required to inform the proposed period of public consultation which I expect to launch in the near future. The issue of congestion will of course be among the issues to be raised during that consultation and I look forward to hearing the Deputy's views on potential solutions as part of that process

In the longer term, I am of course working with my Government colleagues in delivering upon the ambition of *Project Ireland 2040* and its National Strategic Objectives of Compact Growth and Sustainable Mobility, both of which can alleviate congestion issues. Delivery of major, transformative projects such as BusConnects, DART Expansion and MetroLink will have a major role to play in making Dublin a more sustainable place to live in, work in, or even just to visit.

In relation to specific traffic management issues within the GDA, the Deputy is presumably aware that the NTA has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area and the effective management of traffic and transport demand in the region. It is the NTA that interacts with the local authorities on such matters, in line with that statutory remit.

I have therefore referred the Deputy's questions to the NTA for further information in relation to traffic management and relevant meetings. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

Ministerial Meetings

219. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of times he has met representatives of cycling bodies in Dublin since his appointment. [5988/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): Since my appointment as Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport I have had one official meeting, on 26 June 2017, with cycling groups (Cyclist.ie, Cycling Ireland, and, Mr Neil Fox Cycling Safety Advocate). However, I regularly meet representatives of cycling groups and campaigners in a more informal capacity to discuss current issues which affect cyclists nationally.

Ministerial Meetings

220. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of times he has met with a person (details supplied) to discuss plans for College Green Plaza and the potential impact same will have on traffic flow and public transport flow in Dublin city. [5989/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area.

My officials hold regular meetings with the NTA to discuss various issues relating to public transport infrastructure, services and traffic management in Dublin and the regional cities.

I have not met with Dublin City CEO Owen Keegan to discuss plans for College Green Plaza.

Noting the NTA's responsibility for implementation of public transport in the Greater Dublin Area, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

Question No. 221 answered with Question No. 218.

Ministerial Meetings

222. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the meetings he has had with TII to discuss demand management measures on the M50. [5995/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I attended a meeting with Departmental officials and TII on 14 May 2018 where the issue of M50 management measures was discussed. Prior to that date and since then, there has been regular and frequent contact between my officials and TII to progress this plan.

As a result, legislative arrangements are under way within my Department to provide TII with the powers to manage and regulate variable speed limits on the M50. This new system will improve operational efficiency of the motorway by

- smoothing traffic flow,
- improving journey time reliability and
- Reducing the number of secondary traffic collisions.
- Implementation of an integrated and coordinated response to traffic conditions by TII and emergency responders.
- Improved dissemination of information to road users.

To progress this important measure, TII is extending the motorway traffic control centre at Dublin Tunnel to cater for the additional workload from the introduction of VSL and is currently procuring the management systems and hardware which will be erected on existing gantries.

Ministerial Meetings

223. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of meetings he has had with Dublin Bus since his appointment. [5996/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): Since May 2016 I have met with Dublin Bus on four occasions, as follows:-

30 August 2016

16 September 2016

26 April 2018

9 August 2018

In addition to these meetings, I am of course briefed by officials on any relevant issues which arise during the course of normal administrative and corporate governance related contact between my Department and the company.

Departmental Budgets

224. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown of the €10,579,000 capital allocation in civil aviation within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6037/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As the Deputy has stated, my Department has been allocated €10.579m in capital funding for civil aviation in 2019. Of this amount, €10.4 million is available to fund capital grant schemes under the Regional Airports Programme (RAP). The remainder of the allocation covers IT and accommodation services for associated functions within the Department.

Towards the end of last year, my Department invited the regional airports to submit applications for capital funding in respect of 2019. These applications, which were received in January, are currently being examined by an assessment panel comprising representatives from my Department, the IAA and NewERA. The panel examines the eligibility of project proposals in line with the safety and security related criteria for the associated CAPEX and PPR-C schemes under the Regional Airports Programme.

The assessment process is due to conclude in the coming weeks, and I intend to make an announcement on the allocations for each airport shortly thereafter.

Departmental Budgets

225. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown of the €1,493,523,000 capital allocation in land transport within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6038/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The information requested is available on the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website. The Department publishes a “capital tracker”, which sets out specific projects and programmes, project timelines, summary descriptions, and the capital allocation for each project and programme.

The capital tracker can specifically be located at the web address set out below.

<https://www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/>

Departmental Budgets

226. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown of the €7,953,000 capital allocation in maritime transport and safety within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6039/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The bulk of capital expenditure under the Maritime Transport and Safety area relates to programme spend by the Irish Coast Guard, including provision for a building programme, IT upgrades, vehicle and boat fleet renewal, pollution equipment and maintenance of telecommunications infrastructure. There is also provision for capital investment by the Commissioners of Irish Lights. A small capital provision covers IT and furniture for the administration of the area.

I have set out in tabular form any available information regarding projects that are ongoing. In most cases, the specific project costs are only determined once a tendering process has been completed and as such, it would not be appropriate to release estimated project costs in advance of the tendering process.

Programme		Capital Allocation€m	Project details	Expected timeframe
C3.1	Irish Coast Guard Capital	6.480	IRCG Building programme including new builds in Greystones and Westport IRCG IT Programme, including development costs for new Volunteer Information System (VIMS)	Ongoing (2021/22 for new builds) On-going (2020 for VIMS)
C2.4	Maritime Transport Admin – Office Equipment	0.730	IT and other office equipment	Ongoing
C2.5	Maritime Transport Admin – Office Premises Expenses	0.043	Office furniture	Ongoing
C3.2	Commissioner for Irish Lights	0.700	The €700k Capital allocation is to support CIL'S overall expected expenditure of over €2m in 2019 on the following projects Granuaile-Special Survey Dry Dock; Granuaile - Waterpipes replacement; Coastal Stations – Fastnet re-equip; Lantern Room and first year of Blackrock Sligo re-equip; Coastal Monitoring Solution of Coastal AtoN	Due for completion 2019
	Total	7.953		

Departmental Budgets

227. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown of the €61,488,000 capital allocation in sports and recreation services within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6040/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Brendan Griffin): The capital funding available for sports in my Department is broken down in to several sub-heads.

D3: An amount of €42,580,000 has been provided in 2019 for the Sports Capital Programme (SCP). This programme is the primary vehicle for Government support for the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment throughout the country. As it can take grantees a number of years to complete projects, there are a large number of individual grants on hand at any one time. All allocations under the SCP are published on my Department's website. Due to the number of projects and the nature of the programme it is not possible to identify and list all of the projects which will be completed this year.

In relation to the large projects that are funded under this sub-head, the overall amount also includes a retention amount of €1.5m which remains outstanding in relation to the redevelopment of Páirc Uí Chaoimh and an amount of €1,022,588 for the Kerry Sports Academy at IT Tralee. Páirc Uí Chaoimh was officially opened in October 2017 and it is expected that the Kerry Sports Academy will open later this year.

D4: An amount of €4.2m has been provided in 2019 for the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme (LASPP) which provides grant aid to a maximum of €3.8m to local authorities towards the capital costs of new swimming pools or the refurbishment of existing pools. There are four swimming pool projects remaining in the LASPP, namely Castlebar, Lucan, Buncrana and Edenderry. Castlebar is expected to open shortly and Lucan is expected to commence this year.

D5: A capital allocation of €4.9m is provided to Sport Ireland for the development of the National Sports Campus at Abbotstown. This allocation includes €2m for the completion of Phase 2 of the National Indoor Arena. Phase 2 comprises full-sized and half-sized covered synthetic pitches, primarily for soccer and rugby but capable of accommodating all field-sports, together with ancillary facilities. A further €2.9m is provided for general capital maintenance and minor projects at the National Sports Campus.

D6: A capital allocation of €1m is provided to Sport Ireland under Subhead D6 for the disbursement, on behalf of my Department, of Dormant Account Funding to sports measures which are aimed at providing support and interventions to persons from disadvantaged backgrounds and to persons with a disability. In previous years this funding has supported capital projects in such areas as outdoor adventure hubs, sports inclusion disability equipment and artificial turf pitches. It is understood that the Minister for Rural and Community Development will bring forward a new Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan in early 2019 and the specific sports measures to be funded this year will be proposed and decided in that context.

D7: The National Sports Policy, published on 25th July 2018, provided for a Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) with at least €100 million available over the coming years. An amount of €8.8m has been provided in 2019. The fund was launched in November 2018 and is open to applications until 17th April 2019. The fund will initially focus on the requirements and development plans of National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities. The spe-

cific projects that will receive funding will be dependent on the applications received.

Departmental Budgets

228. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown of the €39,482,000 capital allocation in tourism services within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6041/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): Details (at subhead level) of the annual funding allocations to my Department for Tourism Services are available in the annual Revised Estimates Volume published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. As the Deputy notes, a total of €39,482,000 in capital funding has been allocated to the Tourism Services programme in 2019 under six different subheads.

Most (€26,110,000) of this Exchequer capital funding voted to my Department will be granted to the tourism agencies under the relevant subheads – E3 and E6 for Fáilte Ireland and E4 and E5 for Tourism Ireland. As decisions regarding expenditure under these subheads are operational matters for the agencies, I have referred the Deputy's question to both Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to provide further detail directly to the Deputy with regard to planned expenditure in 2019 under their respective subheads.

The bulk of the balance (€13,300,000) has been allocated under subhead E7 for direct allocations by my Department to Greenways projects. A funding call for Greenways under the recently published Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways closed on November 30th 2018 and my officials are currently examining the applications. I expect to be in a position to allocate funding to the selected projects under this call in Quarter 2 however as they have not been chosen yet, I have no further details as to their likely commencement and completion dates.

At present funding is in place for a number of previously funded Greenways and it is expected that the Maynooth to Athlone section of the Galway to Dublin Greenway will be completed in 2019.

The remaining €72,000 has been allocated to my Department under Subhead E2 for Departmental administration-related capital expenditure relating to the operations of the Tourism Divisions (e.g. repair and maintenance of office buildings; purchase of furniture, computer equipment or other office machinery/equipment; and routine office supplies).

Subhead	Recipient	Sum
E2 Administration	DTTAS	€72,000
E3	Fáilte Ireland	€1.05m
E4	Tourism Ireland	€0.1m
E5	Tourism Ireland	€2m
E6	Fáilte Ireland	€23.06m
E7 Greenways	Greenways Project Promoters	€13.3m
Total		€39.482m

Bus Services

229. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the community impact assessment made for the Cabra and Stoneybatter, Dublin 7 area when drafting BusConnects routes in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6057/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for the planning and development of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area, including the BusConnects programme.

Noting the NTA’s responsibility in the matter, I have referred the Deputy’s question to the NTA for a direct reply. Please contact my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 days.

Road Signage

230. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to introduce share-the-road signs or other initiatives to improve respect between motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in the Dublin region, particularly in areas in which there has been a high volume of friction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6058/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I share the Deputy’s concern that all road users respect each other.

Requirements in relation to Road Traffic Signs are set out in the Traffic Signs Manual, as published by my Department and which constitutes a Direction under Section 95(16) of the Road Traffic Act 1961. Regulatory Signs are also set out in relevant Statutory Instruments. As part of that and the introduction of the 2015 Guidelines for Managing Speed Limits there is provision for a ‘Slow Zone’ sign which, amongst other things, indicates the presence of other types of road users. This is being rolled out across the country in conjunction with lower speed limits. Since 2015 special speed limits of 30 km/h have been applied in over 6,400 housing estates.

In addition my Department has issued other documents such as the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Traffic Management Guidelines (TMG) which provide for improved design to support traffic calming and safer interaction between different types of road users. Further development and trials are underway to enhance these guidelines.

My Department also continues to be very active in promoting behavioural change to encourage more people to use sustainable modes of transport. As well as funding and supporting national initiatives such as Bike Week, my Department also provides funding to the National Transport Authority (NTA) on an annual basis for the delivery of behavioural change programmes such as Workplace and Campus travel programmes and the Green Schools Travel Programme.

Taxi Licences

231. **Deputy Jackie Cahill** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if an anomaly in the case of a person (details supplied) will be investigated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6059/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including the licensing of vehicles within this

sector, is a matter for the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013.

As the Deputy may be aware, in the case of the death of a licence holder, section 15 of the Act applies special provisions. In such circumstances, a SPSV licence may continue to be operated by a person who was nominated by the licence holder in advance of his or her death. However, under current legislation, requirements including insurance still apply to an application made under this section.

Given the role of the NTA as regulator, I have referred your question to the Authority for direct reply to you. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.

Road Improvement Schemes

232. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if all roads funding for Cavan County Council has been appropriately spent over the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6063/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads (RLR) is the statutory responsibility of each County Council, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from the Council's own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection and prioritisation of works to be funded is a matter for the Council.

Where my Department does provide grant funding, the Department's Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads applies. The most recent revision of the Memorandum was issued in November 2018 (RW 14/2018) and came into effect on 1st December 2018.

The Memorandum on Grants provides information on, and defines the conditions governing the allocation and payment of monies to Local Authorities in respect of all grant programmes for Regional and Local Roads. It also includes conditions on the chargeability against State grants of expenditure incurred and general guidance on the carrying out of grant aided works. In this context local authorities are required as part of the grant claim submission process to verify that a claim is in accordance with the requirements for chargeability of expenditure and that all amounts have been checked in full and are in order for payment. The Department emphasises to local authorities that it considers that this verification is a key part of the financial control system and expects this role to be executed with due diligence and care.

The onus is, therefore, on each local authority to ensure that it complies fully with the requirements associated with regional and local grants. As regards oversight arrangements in relation to the grants, staffing levels within the Department were impacted by cutbacks during the recession but have been strengthened over the last year and there is now a team of 3 engineers (each dealing with specific Local Authorities) overseeing the regional and local road investment programme. In addition my Department monitors expenditure through desk checks on expenditure claimed and also on-site spot checks in local authority offices.

More generally, as the deputy is aware, the Oireachtas has given the responsibility of oversight of local authority expenditure to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), and it would be wholly inappropriate for a Minister to impinge on the statutory independence of NOAC in relation to the appropriateness of expenditure by a local authority.

As regards national roads, as Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport I have responsibility

for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. My Department allocates the national capital roads programme budget to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to manage and deliver (in accordance with the Roads Acts 1993-2015) the construction and maintenance of all national roads, in conjunction with the local authorities concerned. I have, therefore, referred the question to TII for a direct reply to you in relation to national roads. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Airport Security

233. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the European Civil Aviation Council definition of a full background check for persons other than passengers working airside which is due to be determined in Europe by June 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6083/19]

234. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he has sought information from the Department of Justice and Equality outlining the reason for not providing access to obtain a full background check to 104 airport police and fire service officers in Dublin, 88 in Cork, 64 in Shannon and the customs officers in the three State airports. [6084/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): I propose to take Questions Nos. 233 and 234 together.

Aviation security remains a priority area at national and EU level. It is under constant review and scrutiny in response to new intelligence on threats and risks. Ireland is obliged play its part in the international effort to make flying as secure and safe as possible. If we aspire to be a highly connected nation, we need to make sure our international airports are up to international best standards in security terms. On the matter of how and why specific decisions have been taken in respect of certain categories of people working at our airports, such details are security related and confidential, but I can advise the Deputy that they are informed by international best practices and risk assessment.

Background checks are a key element of aviation security requirements that are applied with very limited exceptions to all persons other than passengers requiring access to the security restricted areas of airports and on-board aircraft in the State. A background check comprises three elements: a verification of identification, a pre-employment check and a criminal record check. The employer conducts the verification of identification and pre-employment check. An Garda Síochána provides the criminal records check.

My Department has recently introduced a programme of security enhancements which have been subject to a detailed risk assessment by the Irish Aviation Authority, which is responsible for regulating aviation security. A number of reviews/audits of security practices and procedures at the State airports have pointed to the need to introduce improvements in staff screening arrangements. The new enhancements were adopted by the National Civil Aviation Security Committee (NCASC) - which includes the Department of Justice and Equality and An Garda Síochána - on the basis of a risk assessment by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA), which has responsibility for overseeing compliance with aviation security requirements in Ireland.

With regards to further developments at European level, new provisions are on the way which will introduce additional aspects to the background checks carried out in civil aviation, including the use of security intelligence. When these new EU measures come into effect, they will become part of the overall suite of security measures now applied at Irish airports - includ-

ing the recently introduced enhanced screening measures - with the objective of improving security practices and security culture at our airports.

There has been a high level of engagement around the implementation of these new measures, and while there is always an element of adjustment and inconvenience to individuals, the new measures are in the broader public and national interest.

Sports Capital Programme Applications Data

235. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the status of the recent round of sports capital fund applications; if clubs may expect feedback on technical errors arising; if so, if clubs will have the opportunity to correct same; when the successful applicants will be announced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6101/19]

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.

186 of these applications were for projects that were deemed invalid under the 2017 round of the programme that subsequently submitted corrected documents. These applications were assessed first and €7m in allocations to 170 projects were announced on the 17th January.

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 applications assessed. Accordingly, I expect that it will be at least the second quarter of this year before the full set of allocations under this current round of the programme are announced.

Driver Test

236. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if a driver test will be expedited for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6139/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): The driving test service is run by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and my Department has no input into the scheduling of appointments. I have referred the question to the Authority for direct reply. I would ask the Deputy to contact my office if a response is not received within 10 days.

National Transport Authority Funding

237. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the breakdown by local authority of funding provided in 2018 by the National Transport Authority under the sustainable transport programme of funding for cycling and walking projects; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6195/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As the Deputy may

be aware I have secured 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.

Included among the allocations referred to above, is funding which is provided by my Department to the National Transport Authority as part of the sustainable urban transport programme. The allocation of funding in respect of individual projects is managed by the National Transport Authority in conjunction with the relevant local authorities, accordingly I have referred your question to the NTA for a more detailed reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Rail Network Maintenance

238. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the status of the Dublin city centre resignalling project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6196/19]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross): As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility for ensuring the development and delivery of public transport infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area including, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, the City Centre Resignalling Project.

Noting the role of the NTA in the matter, I have therefore forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for further response.

Departmental Budgets

239. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the breakdown of the €19,194,000 capital allocation under A children and family support programme, that is, Vote 40 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6050/19]

240. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the breakdown of the €12,806,000 capital allocation under B sectorial programmes for children and young people, that is, Vote 40 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for

2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6051/19]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone): I propose to take Questions Nos. 239 and 240 together.

The Revised Estimates for Public Services includes a total allocation of €32 million in capital funding for my Department and its Agencies in 2019. The funding provision is apportioned across two Programme areas of the Department's Vote as set out in the following table:

Programme Area	Funding Allocation	Programme Subhead	Subhead Allocation
A - Child and Family Support Programme	€19.194m	A.3: Child and Family Agency	€17.194m
		A.4: Oberstown Children Detention Campus	€2.000m
B - Sectorial Programmes for Children and Young People	€12.086 m	B.5: Childcare Programmes	€9.606m
		B.6: Youth Organisations and Services	€3.200m

Details of the individual measures to be supported under the various Subhead allocations are set out hereunder.

Child and Family Agency

Tusla's capital expenditure in 2019 will be split primarily between its Estates and ICT requirements. In excess of €12 million is to be spent on estates to include significant projects in Portlaoise and Limerick as well as various minor capital and equipping costs on various premises throughout the country. The ICT capital expenditure will involve €3 million on ICT infrastructure and €2 million on applications development and procurement.

Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Oberstown Children Detention Campus will commence projects on the demolition of the old campus building and on the resurfacing of an emergency fire track in 2019. A case management system that has been in development will also be completed this year.

Childcare Programmes

The capital funding will support a number of programmes in 2019 to assist providers and beneficiaries in developing capacity, quality and sustainability in the early learning and care sector.

The Early Learning and Care and School Age Capital programmes account €6.106m and will support the following -

- Strand A (Early Learning and Care) (€4.2m) to create new places for 0-3 year olds. This strand will offer individual grants of up to €50,000 in value to early learning and care providers where demand is clearly evidenced.

- Strand B (Early Learning and Care) (€0.8m) to provide fire safety for community services. This strand will offer individual grants of up to €15,000 to aid community/not-for-profit child-

care services in addressing fire safety issues that have been highlighted in inspection reports by Tusla, the HSE or Local Authorities.

- Strand C (School Age Childcare) (€1m) to create new school age places. This strand will offer individual grants of up to €20,000 to school age childcare providers for the creation of newplaces where demand for these is clearly evidenced.

In addition to the above, €3 million will be made available under the Affordable Childcare Scheme Capital programme for a one-off capital grant to providers to assist in meeting the governance requirements of the scheme.

€0.25m is to be provided for parent and toddler groups organised on a not for profit basis and which involve the participation of parents in the community. Grants will range from €100 to €1000. Existing Parent and Toddler Groups can apply for a maximum of €800. New start up groups may apply for maximum grant of up to €1000.

A further €0.25m is being allocated to the Childminding Development Grant. A childminder can apply for a grant of up to €1,000 through their local Childcare Community Centre to purchase equipment for childminding practice in their home.

Youth Organisations and Services

Youth Organisation and Services will receive:

- €0.450m is being allocated for Play and Recreation to support the development and refurbishment of new and existing playgrounds. This funding is to be awarded to individual Local Authorities under an application based funding scheme.

- €0.350m is being set aside to fund the start-up capital and equipment costs of the twenty three Revised Youth Funding Scheme youth services, which have commenced around the country since 2016 as part of the process of reform of our youth services.

- €2.4 million will be used to support small capital projects in youth services and organisations. The application criteria for these capital funding grants are currently being finalised and the application criteria will be advertised to the relevant youth groups and organisations in due course.

Child and Family Agency Funding

241. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the amount of funding provided by Tusla to organisations providing counselling and psychotherapy supports to children and families in County Wexford in each of the years 2014 to 2018 and to date in 2019, by each organisation. [6129/19]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone): Under the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency is required to support and promote the development, welfare and protection of children. Tusla provides funding to a range of organisations which provide counselling, psychotherapy and support services to vulnerable children and families.

As the Deputy's question refers to an operational matter for Tusla, I have requested Tusla to respond directly to the Deputy.

Departmental Budgets

242. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the breakdown of the €125,882,000 capital allocation under A rural development and regional affairs, that is, Vote 42 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6052/19]

243. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the breakdown of the €15,118,000 capital allocation under B community development, that is, Vote 42 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6053/19]

Minister for Rural and Community Development (Deputy Michael Ring): I propose to take Questions Nos. 242 and 243 together.

My Department provides funding at programme level to support local authorities and others in the delivery of individual capital projects. The Department operates a wide range of capital funding programmes such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, CLÁR, Community Enhancement Programme, Libraries Capital Investment Programme, the LEADER Programme and the Local Improvement Scheme.

Each of these programmes support a very large number of individual projects. For example, 224 areas benefitted from funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2018, and the most recent round of funding under the Community Enhancement programme supported over 3,000 individual projects or capital purchases. The details of individual projects supported by my Department under each programme are available on my Department's website.

Of particular importance in 2019 is the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Under Project Ireland 2040, the Government has committed €1 billion to this Fund over a 10 year period to support rural economic development and help build strong communities. The Fund has been allocated €315 million over the period 2019 to 2022, with €55 million set aside in my Department's budget in 2019. The respective allocations for the years 2020 to 2022 will be confirmed as part of the annual budgetary process. 18 successful Category 1 projects were announced on the 23rd November 2018, and details of these projects are also available on the Department website. A further announcement detailing successful Category 1 and Category 2 projects will take place shortly, with a second call for the Fund taking place later in the year.

In respect of allocations for 2019, the breakdown of my Department's capital spend at programme level is set out in the following table;

-	€ 000
DRCO TOTAL (GROSS)	141,000
A - RURAL DEVELOPMENT & REGIONAL AFFAIRS	125,882
A.2 - ADMINISTRATION - NON PAY	182
A.4 - NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES	15,000
A.5 - LEADER- RURAL ECONOMY SUB PROGRAMME	30,000
A7- TOWN & VILLAGE REGENERATION	15,000
A.8 - REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	700

-	€ 000
A.9 - LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES	10,000
A.10 - RURAL REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND	55,000
B - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	15,118
B.2 - ADMINISTRATION - NON PAY	151
B.3 - SUPPORTS FOR COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR	1
B.6 - SUPPORTS FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES	1,767
B.7 - DORMANT ACCOUNTS	2,500
B.8 - PROGRAMME FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION	650
B.10 - LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHIVE SERVICE	6,049
B.11 - COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME	4,000

Social Welfare Benefits Reviews

244. **Deputy Jackie Cahill** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if the case of a person (details supplied) will be investigated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [5980/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The Department has never been furnished with a copy of the Court Order agreement referred to in the PQ. The customer in this case should attend his Intreo Centre and supply them with a copy of the Court Order. On receipt of this, the Department will decide whether a review of his case can be undertaken.

I trust that this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Departmental Budgets

245. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the breakdown of the €14 million capital allocation, that is, Vote 37 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019, by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6049/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The following table outlines my Department's plans for the 2019 capital allocation of €14m.

Subhead	Projects	Capital Allocation 2019
A.2.v Office Equipment and External IT Services	Ongoing purchase of computer hardware, photocopiers, other non-IT office machinery, software licenses including storage technology, investment in server infrastructure and in virtualisation technology etc.	€8.8m

Subhead	Projects	Capital Allocation 2019
A.2.vi Office Premises Expenses	Refurbishments on the Department's buildings. All accommodation works are contracted by the Office of Public Works (OPW). The Department is currently engaging with the OPW to finalise a list of projects for 2019.	€5m
A.2.ix eGovernment Related Projects	Provision in the event of eGovernment related project requirements arising during 2019.	€0.2m
Total		€14m

Rent Supplement Scheme Payments

246. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection her plans to ensure that a person (details supplied) continues to receive their rent allowance in view of the circumstances; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6054/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The person concerned contacted their local Intreo Centre on the 19/11/18 to advise they had received notice to quit their privately rented accommodation. Rent Supplement was subsequently closed on foot of this information. The person concerned received an Exceptional Needs Payment (ENP) on 7/12/18 to pay rent for November. There has been no further contact from the person concerned. As per section 23 (1)(b) of S.I. 412 of 2007, clients shall inform the Executive of any change in circumstances which may affect their right to receive supplementary welfare allowance. The Department is unable to issue further payments to the above customer until their current circumstances are established. The person concerned should attend her local Intreo Centre to discuss her circumstances in greater detail.

I trust this clarifies matters for the Deputy.

Domiciliary Care Allowance Eligibility

247. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the rules on the awarding of a domiciliary care allowance in cases in which the child is in hospital; if the payment of the allowance in cases in which it is already awarded is altered or not paid in circumstances in which the child is admitted to hospital; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6060/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath): Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is an allowance payable in respect of children with a severe disability, who require care and attention substantially in excess of that required by other children their age without their disability. It is payable on the basis that the child is receiving the additional care in their own home. As a result DCA is not payable while the child is resident for an extended period in a hospital.

Parents who are already in receipt of the allowance in respect of a child who becomes hospitalised can continue to receive DCA for a further 13 weeks. If the child is still in hospital at that time, payment is suspended until they return home.

Children who have not been in payment, but who meet the qualifying conditions for the scheme, in regard to having a disability and requiring substantial extra care, can have their ap-

plication approved, with payment commencing when they leave hospital and return home.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals

248. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of a jobseeker's allowance appeal by a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6069/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal by the person concerned was referred to an Appeals Officer on 31 January 2019. The Appeals Officer will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for 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.

Working Family Payment Payments

249. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of the working family payment for a person (details supplied); when a decision will be made on same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6073/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): Working Family Payment (WFP) is an in-work payment which provides additional income support to employees on low earnings with children.

An application for WFP was received from the person concerned on 14 December 2018.

The person concerned has been awarded WFP with effect from 15 November 2018 to 13 November 2019. The first weekly payment and all arrears owing will issue to their nominated bank account on 07 February 2019.

The person concerned was notified on 05 February 2019 of this decision and of their right of review and appeal.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Carer's Allowance Applications

250. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of an application for a full rate of carer's allowance by a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6075/19]

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 CA at half-rate since 21 June 2018 as she was also in receipt of an Illness Benefit (IB) payment from this Department.

She has requested a re-assessment of her CA entitlement from half rate to full rate as she has ceased to claim IB. However, she was employed before she went on sick leave and information regarding her current employment status is now being sought.

A person can be considered to be providing full-time care and attention where they are engaged in employment, self-employment or on training or education courses outside the home for a maximum of 15 hours per week, provided that they can show to the satisfaction of a deciding officer that adequate care has been provided for the care recipient in their absence.

Additional information was requested from the person concerned on 5 February 2019. Once the information is received the application will be processed without delay and she will be notified directly of the outcome.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Community Employment Schemes Supervisors

251. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if her attention has been drawn to the fact that a person (details supplied) did not receive notice or was consulted on the closure of a project; if her attention has been further drawn to the fact that this person did not receive pay or redundancy in lieu of notice; if the issue will be rectified; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6090/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): The person to whom the Deputy is referring was employed by a Community Employment (CE) scheme as a CE supervisor.

CE schemes are typically sponsored by voluntary and community organisations wishing to benefit the local community. As the employers, these sponsoring organisations contract with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, on an annual basis, to provide job seekers and other vulnerable groups with good quality work experience and training qualifications to support their progression into employment.

CE supervisors are employees of these organisations, which are private companies. They are not employees of my Department or public servants. The issues outlined by the Deputy are a matter between the person concerned and their employer.

It is the responsibility of the employer to pay statutory redundancy payments to all its eligible employees. In the event that the employer cannot pay the statutory entitlements due to financial difficulties, my Department can step in to pay the amounts from the Social Insurance Fund.

As the employer in this case was unable to pay the redundancy entitlement, the redundancy claim was submitted to my Department and payment was made from the Social Insurance Fund.

The purpose of the Insolvency Payments Scheme, which operates under the Protection of Employees (Employers’ Insolvency) Act, as amended, is to protect certain outstanding pay-related entitlements due to employees in the event of the insolvency of their employer.

These entitlements include wages, holiday pay, sick pay, payment in lieu of minimum notice due under the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973-2001, and certain pension contributions. Various other statutory awards made by the Work Place Relations Commission, etc., are also covered by the scheme.

Where a person's former employer was a limited company, the company must be in liquidation or receivership in order for the person to be eligible to claim under the Insolvency Payments Scheme.

The employer does not satisfy the requirements to enable payment to be made under the Insolvency Payment Scheme.

Departmental Budgets

252. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of an invalidity pension review for a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6127/19]

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 for the lady concerned on 29 January 2018. Her application was disallowed on the grounds that the medical conditions for the scheme were not satisfied. She was notified on 06 March 2018 of this decision, the reasons for it and of her right of review or appeal.

The lady concerned requested an appeal of the decision and submitted further medical evidence in support of her appeal. Following a review by a deciding officer of this medical evidence in conjunction with all information available to date, it has been decided that there is no change to the original decision. A submission is being prepared by the Department and will be forwarded to the Social Welfare Appeals Office for determination as soon as possible.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Jobseeker's Benefit

253. **Deputy Marc MacSharry** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if arrangements will be put in place to allow persons over 65 years of age who are claiming jobseeker's benefit who wish to go on holiday abroad for more than two weeks to claim the payment for the full period they are abroad when they return in view of the fact that this cohort are no longer required to engage with the compulsory activation process; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6136/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): There is no legally mandated retirement age in the State, and the age at which employees retire is a matter for the contract of employment between them and their employers. While such a contract may have been entered into with a retirement date of 65, in the context of the previous State pension arrangements, an employer and employee may agree to increase the duration of employment if both parties wish to do so.

Where this is not possible, there are specific measures which apply to someone claiming jobseeker's benefit from a date after their 65th birthday. Where qualified, these recipients may continue to be eligible for that payment until reaching pension age.

Ordinarily, those in receipt of a jobseeker's payment must engage with the Department's activation process and can face penalty rates if they refuse to engage with offers of training or education. These criteria were eased for people aged 62 and over. However, they can still avail voluntarily of an array of supports, which are available from my Department if they wish to return to work, training or education.

Generally a person is disqualified from receiving social protection payments while absent from the State unless there are specific exemptions provided for in the legislation. There is an exemption from the absent from the State provisions for jobseeker's benefit recipients which allows jobseekers continue to receive payment for a period up to two weeks for the purpose of taking a holiday abroad.

While customers aged 62 years and over are not obliged to engage with activation in the same way as other recipients, they must continue to satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions of the scheme in order to retain entitlement to an unemployment payment including residency in the State. It is essential to the sustainability and integrity of the jobseeker schemes that these criteria remain a core feature of the State's supports for the unemployed. Any change in this regard for a particular cohort would be inequitable vis-à-vis the treatment of other unemployed people.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Carer's Allowance Payments

254. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if a carer's allowance payment for the 12-week period after the death of the carer will issue to a person (details supplied); if the matter will be expedited; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6181/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): Firstly may I take this opportunity to extend my condolences to the spouse and the family of the person concerned on their recent bereavement.

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.

Where a care recipient dies, there is a continued payment of carer's allowance for 12 weeks after the death. However, where the carer dies there is no continuing entitlement to payment and the claim is closed. Therefore, there is no provision for an after death payment to the spouse of the person concerned in this instance.

However, he may have an entitlement to a Widower's Contributory Pension and I have arranged for an application form to issue to him.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Disability Allowance Payments

255. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if the full rate of disability allowance is being paid in the case of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6198/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath): When a person is in receipt of disability allowance (DA) and their child is in full-time education, an increase for qualified child (IQC) will be paid up to 22 years of age or up to the end of the academic year in which he or she reaches 22.

The person concerned was requested to submit confirmation of participation in full-time education in respect of both of her children on 25 May 2018 and 3 October 2018. To date, this has not been received in the Department. On receipt of this information a decision will be made in respect of their entitlement to IQC.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Disability Allowance Payments

256. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection when a disability allowance will issue in the case of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6202/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath): The person concerned was refused disability allowance (DA) on 31 August 2018 on the grounds that they were not found to be habitually resident in the state. He was notified of this decision and advised of his right to seek a review of this decision or to appeal it to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office. No such request was subsequently received.

It is open to this gentleman to make a new application for DA and his eligibility will be examined taking all available evidence into account.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Fuel Allowance Applications

257. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if the fuel allowance is payable in the case of persons (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6207/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath): Fuel allowance is a means-tested payment which aims to help householders on long-term social welfare payments with their heating costs during the winter season. It is not intended to meet those costs in full. Only one allowance is paid per household.

The applicant must satisfy a number of eligibility conditions which include being in receipt of a qualifying payment, satisfying a means test and living alone or only with other qualifying person(s).

No application for fuel allowance has been received from the person concerned. An application form has been issued to the person for completion. On receipt, their eligibility for fuel allowance will be assessed and they will be notified of the outcome in writing.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Social Welfare Benefits Payments

258. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the extent to which outstanding payments for a disability allowance or jobseeker's allowance remains in the case of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6211/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): From the information available to the Department, the person concerned did not have a claim for either Disability Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance in the past year.

The person concerned applied for Illness Benefit in January 2018. A form issued to her to clarify the dates for which she received holiday pay, as Illness Benefit is not payable while a person is receiving holiday pay. As this form has not been received to date the claim can not be processed.

When the requested information is received the person's claim will be processed and any payment due to her will be issued.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Working Family Payment Eligibility

259. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if a person (details supplied) qualifies for a working family payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6214/19]

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty): Working Family Payment (WFP) is an in-work payment which provides additional income support to employees on low earnings with children. To qualify for WFP, a person must be engaged in full-time employment as an employee for no less than 38 hours per fortnight (or 19 hours per week). In addition, the family income must be below a prescribed amount which varies according to family size.

To date, no application for WFP has been received from the person concerned. I have arranged for an application form to be issued to the person concerned which they should complete and submit to the Department. Their entitlement will then be examined.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

Irish Water Funding

260. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 523 of 26 September 2017, the amount of subvention to Irish Water in 2017 and 2018; the estimated subvention for 2019, 2020 and 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [5983/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): Funding for domestic water services subvention provided to Irish Water was €752.73 million in

2017; €720 million in 2018; and the estimated provision in 2019 is €855 million. This funding of Irish Water in respect of domestic water services is based on the purchase of water covering the entirety of domestic water consumption, other than excessive use, and a contribution to replace the financing of the domestic component of capital investment previously funded by debt.

Under Irish Water's Strategic Funding Plan 2019-2024, which I approved in November 2018, Irish Water's estimated subvention in respect of domestic water services will be €835m in 2020 and €910m in 2021. The actual amounts will be determined as part of the regulatory process and the annual budgetary and estimates process.

Departmental Budgets

261. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the details of the €1,335,680,000 capital allocation in the housing division, that is, Vote 34 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within the vote for his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6013/19]

262. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the details of the €684,780,000 capital allocation in the water services division, that is, Vote 34 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within the vote of his Department for 2019 by specific project ; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6014/19]

263. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the details of the €12,395,000 capital allocation in the local government division, that is, Vote 34 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within the vote of his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6015/19]

264. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the details of the €95,735,000 capital allocation in the planning division, that is, Vote 34 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within the vote of his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6016/19]

265. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the details of the €8,000,000 capital allocation in the Met Éireann division, that is, Vote 34 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within the vote of his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6017/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): I propose to take Questions Nos. 261 to 265, inclusive, together.

Detailed information in relation to the Estimate provisions for my Department for 2019, and associated outputs, are set out in the Revised Estimates for Public Services 2019 published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and available at www.per.gov.ie/en/rev/. The total capital funding provision for my Department of over €2.136 billion for 2019 will be used to advance capital investment projects across the range of programme areas within my Department's remit, including local authority housing, voluntary housing, estate regeneration, the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund, serviced sites, water and wastewater services, urban regeneration and development, fire and emergency services, and Met Éireann.

In relation to housing projects, my Department publishes comprehensive status reports on a quarterly basis of all social housing construction schemes for all local authority areas, showing details such as their locations and a range of information relating to their advancement. The most recent of these reports covers the period up to the end of Quarter 3 of 2018. The report can be accessed at the following link:

<http://rebuildingireland.ie/news/minister-murphy-publishes-quarter-3-social-housing-construction-report/> .

A further update to end Q4 2018 is being compiled and will be published shortly. The bulk of the housing construction projects to be progressed in 2019 will be drawn from those reports.

With respect to water services projects, Irish Water has established a team to deal with queries from Oireachtas members on issues arising in relation to Irish Water's activities. The team may be contacted via email to oireachtasmembers@water.ie or by telephone on 1890 578 578. Alternatively, Irish Water provides full details of their projects and plans to improve water and wastewater services on their website. The details can be accessed at the following link:

www.water.ie/projects-plans/.

Details in relation to specific projects under my Department's range of capital programmes will be announced as appropriate as part of ongoing programme management over the course of 2019. However, given the number and range of projects to be planned and delivered through the programmes for which my Department is responsible, the fact that spend on individual projects will depend on project progress, and the delegated authority available to local authorities in relation to certain projects, it is not possible to provide a funding breakdown by specific individual projects along the lines envisaged in the Questions.

Property Registration Authority Expenditure

266. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the breakdown of the €560,000 capital allocation in the Property Registrations Authority within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6018/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): The Property Registration Authority operates as an independent office under the aegis of my Department and is funded by its own Vote (Vote 23). The Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer for all expenditure and income under Vote 23.

A service for Oireachtas members has been put in place through which information can be obtained from the PRA directly, in a speedy and efficient manner. The contact email for this service is reps@prai.ie.

Valuation Office

267. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the breakdown of the €250,000 capital allocation in the Valuation Office within his Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced and completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6019/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):

The Valuation Office operates as an independent office under the aegis of my Department and is funded by its own Vote (Vote 16). The Commissioner of Valuation is the Accounting Officer for all expenditure and income under Vote 16.

A service for Oireachtas members has been put in place through which information can be obtained from the Valuation Office directly, in a speedy and efficient manner. The contact email for this service is oireachtas.enquiries@VALOFF.ie.

Protected Disclosures

268. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the actions he has taken regarding the protected disclosure received on the way in which roads funding has been spent in Cavan County Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6062/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): Two separate but related submissions under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 which concerned allegations of wrongdoing in Cavan County Council have been received in my Department. Following an initial screening of the first received submission, my Department asked the Chief Executive of the Council to conduct an appropriate investigation into the allegations made therein. This investigation was completed last year and my Department received a copy of the report of that investigation from Cavan County Council in August 2018, which I understand is being followed up appropriately by the Council.

My Department subsequently asked the Council to examine allegations of wrongdoing involving financial irregularities contained in the second received submission. A number of these allegations had already been considered as part of the investigation referred to above.

I am constrained from putting information about these cases into the public domain by my obligations under section 16 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 to protect the identity of persons by whom a protected disclosure is made and under section 13 of the Act regarding protections for persons from detriment because of the making of a protected disclosure. However, my Department continues to engage with Cavan County Council in relation to the matters involved and will be considering what further actions may be appropriate, beyond those being taken by the Council itself.

Mortgage to Rent Scheme Data

269. **Deputy Brendan Ryan** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of applications made since the introduction of the mortgage to rent scheme; the number of applications successfully granted since the introduction of the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6070/19]

270. **Deputy Brendan Ryan** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the primary reason for applicants being refused the mortgage to rent scheme since its inception; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6071/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): I propose to take Questions Nos. 269 and 270 together.

Since the introduction of the Mortgage to Rent (MTR) scheme in 2012, a total of 4,475 cases have been submitted under the scheme to the end of 2018. Of the 4,475 cases submitted,

3,043 were ineligible or terminated during the process. Of the remaining cases submitted, 445 have been completed, and the remaining 987 applications are being actively progressed.

The reasons why a case may not have progressed are varied and can depend on the household, the property, the ability of the Approved Housing Body (AHB) sector to increase its involvement in the scheme, the sale of the property not being agreed between the lender and AHB or an MTR application being withdrawn by either the lender or the borrower. The Housing Agency publishes, on a quarterly basis, detailed statistical information on the operation of the MTR scheme including the reasons for cases not progressing and the number of such cases. This information is available on the Agency's website at the following link:

<https://www.housingagency.ie/our-services/housing-supply-services/mortgage-to-rent.aspx>

The primary reason for cases not progressing is the withdrawal of MTR applications. To the end of 2018, the number of MTR applications withdrawn was 1,173. All withdrawals are notified by the lender and the underlying reasons for withdrawal are not indicated. However, it is known that the 1,173 cases included some 500 applications that were incorrectly submitted by lenders in the early stages of the scheme when lenders were not familiar with the scheme's purpose and operation.

Not all MTR applications will develop into fully completed transactions given the understandable reluctance of those in mortgage arrears to lose ownership of their homes. Such a decision cannot be taken lightly and so the MTR process allows the borrower enough time to consider the option fully. If other options rather than losing home ownership are put forward by the lender, a borrower is more likely to avail of these. This is particularly the case in the context of a now improving economy.

A Review of the MTR scheme, published on 8 February 2017, introduced a range of amendments to the eligibility criteria and administration of the scheme in order to improve its operation. The Review, which is available at the following link explored the avenues and impediments to participation in the scheme and recommended a number of actions to make the scheme work better for borrowers. My Department and the Housing Agency are working with all stakeholders to ensure that the actions set out in the Review are being effectively implemented to benefit a greater number of households. The eligibility requirements of the scheme were widened to include a greater number of borrowers and a larger number of property types. Increasing awareness and understanding of the scheme has been a priority and a new website - www.mortgagetorent.ie - dedicated to guiding and advising borrowers has been developed. In addition, new structures and arrangements have been put in place to encourage a greater number of entities to take part in the scheme.

While it will continue to be the case that not all MTR applications will develop into completed transactions, the implementation of the resulting actions from the Review means that MTR is available to provide a long-term solution for more households in mortgage distress, where appropriate.

Private Rented Accommodation Standards

271. **Deputy Seán Haughey** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if he will review the regulations in place concerning standards in privately rented accommodation in order that it is compulsory for double glazed windows to be provided in such accommodation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6072/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):

The minimum standards for rental accommodation are prescribed in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017. They specify requirements in relation to a range of matters, such as structural repair, sanitary facilities, heating, ventilation, natural light, safety of gas, oil and electrical supply and fire. All landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that their rented properties comply with these Regulations. Responsibility for enforcement of the Regulations rests with the relevant local authority.

Following enactment of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, local authorities have a strengthened legislative framework available to them which provides for the issuing of Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices where landlords are in breach of their obligations. Under Section 34 of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992, any person who by act or omission contravenes the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017, fails to comply with an improvement notice, or re-lets a house in breach of a prohibition notice, will be guilty of an offence and will be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding €5,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or both. If the contravention, failure to comply or re-letting is continued after conviction, the person will be guilty of a further offence on every day on which the contravention, failure to comply or re-letting continues and for each such offence will be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding €400 per day.

If an inspection identifies that a property has been found to be non-compliant with the regulations, it is a matter for the Local Authority to determine what action is necessary and appropriate, including the issuing of an Improvement Letter, Improvement Notice, Prohibition Notice or further legal recourse.

Part L of the Building Regulations governs the replacement of windows in existing dwellings. Part L does not apply to works to an existing building which is a “protected structure” or a “proposed protected structure” within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Technical Guidance Document TGD L 2017 gives guidance on acceptable levels of provision to ensure that heat loss through fabric elements (including windows) provided by way of material alteration or replacement to an existing dwelling is limited insofar as reasonably practicable. TGD L 2017 is available on my Department’s website at:

www.housing.gov.ie/housing/building-standards/tgd-part-l-conservation-fuel-and-energy/technical-guidance-document-l-6.

The maximum U-value, which measures the maximum heat loss permitted for Material Alterations or Material Change of Use of windows, is given in Table 5 of TGD L 2017 as 1.6 W/m² K (e.g. a double glazed window with 12 mm argon spacing and low-E glass).

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) offers several types of grants for the energy efficient retrofitting of dwellings including the replacement of windows. SEAI provide more information, in their Grants section, on their website www.seai.ie.

Building Regulations do not apply retrospectively and do not provide specific requirements for privately rented accommodation. I have no plans, at present, to amend the regulations to make it compulsory that double glazed windows be provided in such accommodation.

Social and Affordable Housing Funding

272. **Deputy Bríd Smith** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the amount of funding to approved housing bodies, that is, not local authorities, for the provi-

sion of social housing in each of the years 2011 to 2018; and the number of units for social housing provided by approved housing bodies in each of the years 2011 to 2018, in tabular form. [6098/19]

273. **Deputy Bríd Smith** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the funding made available to local authorities for the provision of social housing in each of the years 2011 to 2018. [6099/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): I propose to take Questions Nos. 272 and 273 together.

Details of the funding provided to local authorities for the provision of social housing through build, acquisition and leasing programmes, for each year over the period 2011 to 2018, are set out in the following table.

	2011 €m	2012 €m	2013 €m	2014 €m	2015 €m	2016 €m	2017 €m	2018 €m
Build, Acqui- sition, Lease	313.73	305.65	222.09	227.33	351.82	462.09	802.0	1,262.84
HAP & RAS	115.92	125.43	130.95	133.9	137.43	188.69	295.53	419.94
Total	429.65	431.08	353.04	361.23	489.25	650.78	1,097.53	1,682.78

The table above includes the funding provided to local authorities to deliver social housing in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) through the following schemes:

- Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)
- Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)
- AHB Mortgage to Rent Scheme (MTR)
- Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP).

The funding for these AHB delivery schemes is provided by my Department directly to the local authorities which, in turn, advance the funding to AHBs as appropriate. The funding provided for these specific schemes for each year over the period 2011 to 2018 is set out in the table below.

AHB Pro- grammes	2011 €m	2012 €m	2013 €m	2014 €m	2015 €m	2016 €m	2017 €m	2018 €m
CAS, CALF, AHB MTR, SHCEP	39.94	68.44	48.44	49.31	68.06	99.44	161.92	269.64

In addition, over the same period, funding of €529m was provided to local authorities in respect of the now closed AHB Capital Loan & Subsidy Scheme for the repayment of loan charges to the Housing Finance Agency, and for the AHB Communal Facilities Scheme which provides funding toward the capital costs of providing communal facilities in voluntary housing schemes.

In relation to the number of social housing units provided by AHBs, the table below shows a breakdown of additional AHB delivery across all delivery streams over the period 2011 to Q3

2018. Final outputs for 2018 will be published shortly.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (to Q3)
Total additional AHB units delivered-all delivery streams	860	886	385	896	1,316	1,169	2,330	1,151

Homeless Persons Data

274. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the reason there were 2,002 PEA beds and 2,162 STA beds occupied in November 2018, while in December 2018, the PEA beds had decreased by 877 to 1,125 and the STA beds increased by 876 to 3,038 [6106/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): My Department publishes a monthly report on homelessness. The monthly report is based on data provided by housing authorities and produced through the Pathway Accommodation & Support System (PASS). The report captures details of individuals utilising State-funded emergency accommodation arrangements that are overseen by housing authorities and can be accessed at the following link:

www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data.

The figures referred to by the Deputy relating to the accommodation categories in the December 2018 report were incorrect and were due to an error in the compilation of that report, which was published on 30 January 2019. This error, which did not impact on the overall numbers reported in emergency accommodation, has now been amended and a corrected version of the report is available on my Department's website.

Foreshore Licence Applications

275. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the position on a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6157/19]

Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Damien English): My Department has not received any application under the Foreshore Act on this matter. On the basis of the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) Historic 25" Map, the lands do not appear to be foreshore. This matter may be more appropriate to Inland Fisheries Ireland which has responsibility for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources, including its 128,000 hectares of lakes. Inland Fisheries Ireland falls under the remit of my colleague, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Local Authority Housing Provision

276. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Gov-

ernment the new guidelines being issued in regard to local housing assessments needs in each local authority as outlined under the national planning framework; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6187/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):

One of the important components at local authority level in determining both supply and demand for housing will be the preparation, in the context of National Policy Objective 37 of the National Planning Framework (NPF), of a “Housing Need Demand Assessment” (HNDA) for each local authority area in order to correlate and accurately align overall future housing requirements, as an evolution of their existing Housing Strategy requirements under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. This will assist local authorities in ensuring long-term strategic housing needs are met across all types, tenures and locations across their functional areas, both urban and rural.

My Department intends to provide further guidance to local authorities in this regard later this year, to support their HDNA work as part of the review of their Development Plans, which will fall to be completed once Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategies have been adopted.

My Department is also considering how the aggregate view of HNDAs will feed into national reporting, including in particular in monitoring and assessing delivery and performance in line with NPF objectives.

Departmental Staff Data

277. **Deputy Darragh O’Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of staff engaged in the housing delivery office per annum since its establishment; the average length of service in the office; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6192/19]

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy): In line with the commitment under Action 2.9 of Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, a dedicated Housing Delivery Office (HDO) was established within my Department, in August 2016, to support the accelerated delivery of housing across the social and private sectors, and tenure spectrum, in an integrated and timely manner. Working with the broader Housing and Planning Divisions in my Department, other key agencies, local authorities and the construction sector, the HDO supports the roll-out of complex projects, including identifying and resolving barriers to delivery, and monitors progress across key sites as they progress.

At the time of its establishment, the HDO comprised a team of 4 people with extensive expertise in project management, finance, planning and local government, including staff seconded from the local government sector and the National Development Finance Agency.

Having carried out a range of initial initiatives, and taking account of the fact that some assignments to the office were time-limited, the HDO was refocused in September 2017 to work more closely on supporting local housing delivery and land management. In that context, the current team of 3 comprises 1 civil servant and 2 officers with experience of housing delivery and the local government sector. These officers have service ranging from 8 to 27 months in the HDO. In addition to this complement of staff the HDO draws on supports from other relevant Business Units in my Department and other relevant public bodies and this can give rise to movements of staff resources between these connected areas from time to time.

As with all critical areas of activity in my Department, the resources available to the HDO are kept under regular review in the context of the ongoing evolution of the Office’s role.

Oireachtas Joint Committee Recommendations

278. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the reason the forum on the film industry has not taken place as recommended by the report issued by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (details supplied); her views on the recommendations of the report; and the steps she will take to ensure the forum takes place as soon as possible. [5985/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on the *Development and Working Conditions in the Irish Film Industry* recommended in July that Screen Ireland (formerly the Irish Film Board) 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.

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

Departmental Budgets

279. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the breakdown of the €15,604,000 capital allocation under B heritage, that is, Vote 33 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6044/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The broad capital allocations for my Department's projects and programmes under Project Ireland 2040 are set out in our 10 Year Capital Plan, "Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027", published at

www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf.

The break-out of the 2019 capital allocation for Programme B: Heritage (€15,604,000), and all programme areas across my Department's Vote, is available at

www.chg.gov.ie/about/finance-evaluation/exchequer-funding/.

My Department operates a wide range of funding schemes in the areas of arts, culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht and details of these schemes, including funding awarded, are available on the Department's website by programme area. Additionally, my Department publishes details of capital projects and programmes as part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Investment Projects and Programmes Tracker, available at

www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/.

Departmental Budgets

280. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the breakdown of the €13,967,000 capital allocation under C the Irish language, Gaeltacht and Islands, that is, Vote 33 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6045/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The broad capital allocations for my Department's projects and programmes under Project Ireland 2040 are set out in our 10 Year Capital Plan, "Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027", published at

www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf.

The break-out of the 2019 capital allocation for Programme C: Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Islands (€13,967,000), and all programme areas across my Department's Vote, is available at

www.chg.gov.ie/about/finance-evaluation/exchequer-funding/.

My Department operates a wide range of funding schemes in the areas of arts, culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht and details of these schemes, including funding awarded, are available on the Department's website by programme area. Additionally, my Department publishes details of capital projects and programmes as part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Investment Projects and Programmes Tracker, available at

www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/.

Departmental Budgets

281. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the breakdown of the €4,499,000 capital allocation under D north-south co-operation, that is, Vote 33 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6046/19]

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

broad capital allocations for my Department's projects and programmes under Project Ireland 2040 are set out in our 10 Year Capital Plan, "Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027", published at

www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf.

The break-out of the 2019 capital allocation for Programme D: North South Co-operation (€4,499,000), and all programme areas across my Department's Vote, is available at

www.chg.gov.ie/about/finance-evaluation/exchequer-funding/ .

My Department operates a wide range of funding schemes in the areas of arts, culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht and details of these schemes, including funding awarded, are available on the Department's website by programme area. Additionally, my Department publishes details of capital projects and programmes as part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Investment Projects and Programmes Tracker, available at

www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/.

Departmental Budgets

282. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the breakdown of the €41,730,000 capital allocation under A heritage, that is, Vote 33 of the budget 2019 expenditure report within her Department for 2019 by specific project; the projects that will be commenced in 2019; the projects that will be completed in 2019, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [6047/19]

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan): The broad capital allocations for my Department's projects and programmes under Project Ireland 2040 are set out in our 10 Year Capital Plan, "Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027", published at

www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf.

The break-out of the 2019 capital allocation for Programme A: Culture (€41,730,000), and all programme areas across my Department's Vote, is available at

www.chg.gov.ie/about/finance-evaluation/exchequer-funding/ .

My Department operates a wide range of funding schemes in the areas of arts, culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht and details of these schemes, including funding awarded, are available on the Department's website by programme area. Additionally, my Department publishes details of capital projects and programmes as part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Investment Projects and Programmes Tracker, available at

www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/.