

## Written Answers.

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

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*Questions Nos. 1 to 9, inclusive, answered orally.*

### **Children in Care**

10. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children who have been detained in residential care under High Court orders to secure their safety and welfare needs on the basis that they pose a serious risk to themselves and others during each of the past five years. [40369/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Special Care involves the detention on an exceptional basis of a non-offending child for his or her own welfare and protection in a Special Care unit with on site educational and therapeutic supports. The child's behaviour, and the risk of harm it poses to his or her life, health, safety, development or welfare is addressed in the care setting. Future care requirements are also explored.

There are three designated Special Care units in the country which are operated by the HSE under a single national governance arrangement. They are Ballydowd Young Peoples Centre (Dublin), Glean Alainn (Cork) and Coovagh House (Limerick).

The placing of a child in a Special Care unit is considered as a last resort, for as short a time as possible, and when other forms of residential or community care are considered to be unsuitable.

My Department is advised that, as of yesterday, there were a total of 14 children resident in the existing units. In relation to the number of children who have been detained in residential care during each of the past five years, I have asked the Health Service Executive for the information in question which I will forward to the Deputy.

The HSE has a four year plan to develop the National Special Care Service. In January 2011 the service came under the National Director. From January 2012 there will be 20 places available nationally, with an additional 14 places to be added within the next period, bringing the total number to 34 places. The new places will be on the same campus as the two high support units- Monaghan and North Dublin. This plan will allow children detained in special care to move from a special care unit to an open high support unit on the same campus with the advantage of staying in the same school and working with the same staff groups.

11. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent to which she has available to her a full register of all children in residential, custodial or foster care; the extent to which she has oversight in all such situations with a view to ensuring that full protection and compliance procedures are in place and observed in all circumstances; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40292/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Under the Child Care Regulations 1995 the HSE is required to keep one or more registers in relation to children placed in care. The register holds personal information in respect of the child and his or her parents contact details, as well as details of the child's care placement. Currently, these registers are kept at local level. The registers are inspected by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) as part of their function. Up to now there has been no single national register of children in care.

A register of all young people in custody in the Children Detention Schools (CDS), Obers-town, Lusk, Co. Dublin is maintained and updated on a daily basis.

The National Child Care Information System (NCCIS) will be the central system supporting Social Work services. As a social work case management system, it will be used to record and store the case history of every child and other clients of the service. Management information will be derived automatically from the case management system. The aim of the NCCIS project is to identify and procure an easy to use technology solution to support this type of case recording and to automatically provide management information. The HSE estimates that the NCCIS will be at contract stage by mid 2012. This will be followed by a four month development stage, to be followed by a four month pilot roll out. On this basis, it expects that management data from the system will begin to be available from approximately mid 2013.

The implementation of the National Child Care Information System is an important element in ensuring nationally consistent approaches to the recording and management of information in order to support case management and national oversight. In addition, I believe the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency in 2013 and associated reforms will represent a decisive shift towards achieving nationally consistent standards across all child protection services.

*Question No. 12 answered with Question No. 7.*

### **Child Care Services**

13. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the progress made to date on implementing the recommendations in the report on the Roscommon child care case; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40091/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I provided the Deputy with a detailed response on this issue on the 3rd of November last. The HSE was asked for an update on the position and has provided the following additional information:

The issue of training spans several of the report's recommendations. A detailed training programme continues to be rolled out in a number of areas including neglect, courtroom skills and report writing. Training on Attachment Theory will be rolled out in 2012. In relation to management development, training was rolled out for first time managers and senior managers during the summer and autumn of this year. Supervision training has been rolled out for Supervisors at the levels of Child Care Manager, Principal Social Worker, Team Leader and Social Care Leader.

I published revised Children First National Guidance earlier this year. Briefing sessions in relation to the Guidance continue throughout the HSE. The HSE's associated Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook has also been distributed amongst all relevant staff.

On the issue of targeted family support, a dedicated Family Support Service is in place in North Roscommon and it is planned to expand the service through a redistribution of funding from other sources. This will be achieved by employing another youth worker and increasing the capacity of youth workers currently providing a service.

The report recommended that the nature of public health nursing records in respect of children where there are child protection concerns should be reviewed to ensure their adequacy. In this context the public health nursing service has developed a Child Health Record, and it is currently in the process of developing a Child Protection Record.

The report recommended that there should be full involvement of the HSE Speech and Language Department in the development of support and treatment services for children and families where this is an issue for the child's well-being. A Communications Working Group has been established, comprising representatives from social work and allied disciplines such as public health nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. The objective of this is to ensure a more seamless flow of information between the various disciplines.

The report recommended that a nationally appropriate quality assurance system be established, that considers the practice issues as well as the technical aspects of each case. A Principal Social Worker has commenced auditing of files with support provided at regional level.

In conclusion, the HSE continues to address the recommendations of the Report into the Roscommon childcare case as a priority. I hope that the information provides the Deputy with a helpful update on the progress being made.

### **Statutory Inquiries**

14. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her plans to establish a statutory inquiry to investigate sex abuse complaints and concerns about former archbishop of Dublin (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40379/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I have seen the recent media reports in which the individual referred to by the Deputy was named. The media coverage linked the individual concerned to a supplementary report prepared by the Dublin Archdiocese Commission. I note that the identity of the individual was not disclosed in the Commission's Supplementary Report or any subsequent communications by the Commission of which I am aware.

Following the publication of the Dublin Archdiocese Commission's Report, the report was referred by the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to an Assistant Garda Commissioner specifically appointed to examine the report. The Supplementary Report was subsequently referred to the Assistant Garda Commissioner, who is examining how complaints were handled and investigated by the Church and State authorities. Such matters are still under consideration by An Garda Síochána.

I have indicated that I am awaiting receipt of the HSE's national audit report on all Catholic dioceses before responding to calls for the establishment of further statutory or other inquiries. The HSE, which has statutory responsibility for child welfare and protection, has been conducting a national audit of all Catholic dioceses and Religious Orders. It expects to be in a

[Deputy Frances Fitzgerald.]

position in the Spring of 2012 to furnish a report to me on the diocesan element of this audit. It is my intention to publish the HSE's report. At that point it is expected that the findings of the Ferns, Dublin and Cloyne reports; the reports of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and the HSE audit of Catholic dioceses will inform the fullest consideration of the matter.

In the meantime the Government is to ensure that all child protection concerns are responded to and acted upon. I am committed to strengthening the arrangements for the reporting of concerns of abuse by putting key elements of the Children First National Guidance on a statutory footing. This legislation will require all sectors and organisations working with children, including the faith sector, to put in place robust safeguarding arrangements.

### Health Service Staff

15. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of maternity leaves this year among social workers working in the child protection area; the number of these maternity leaves for which a temporary social worker was hired to cover the position; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40313/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The employment control framework for the HSE provides that the grade of social worker is exempted from the public sector moratorium on recruitment and filling of vacancies. In effect this means that the HSE is free to replace staff on maternity leave subject to remaining within its overall approved ceiling and resources.

The Ryan Report Implementation Plan committed to the recruitment of an additional 270 social workers. The first 200 of these new posts were in place by the end of 2010. The HSE National Service Plan includes financial provision for the recruitment of a further 60 social workers this year.

The additional social workers will be targeted at priority areas of the service having regard to an overall assessment of workload undertaken by the National Director and his team. The recruitment of the additional social workers is one element of a wider change agenda within the HSE, through which I believe we can deliver better outcomes for children and families. This reform agenda will lead to the establishment of the new Child and Family Support Agency which will provide a dedicated focus on child protection and support families in need.

In relation to the specific manpower related matters raised, I understand that due to the financial pressures experienced by the HSE during the course of this year a decision on the temporary replacement of social workers while on maternity leave is made on a case by case basis. Consideration is given to overall staffing levels and service pressures within the wider social work team. I have asked the Health Service Executive for the specific information requested and I will forward this to the Deputy as soon as it is available.

### Juvenile Offenders

16. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she has taken over responsibility of the operation of St. Patrick's Institution in Dublin; if not when this is due to take place; her future plans for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40356/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the Deputy may be aware, it is intended that responsibility for Children Detention Schools (Part 10 of the Children Act, 2001) and for remand places (under section 88 of that Act) will transfer from

the Minister for Justice and Equality to me as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It is intended to transfer these responsibilities by a Transfer of Functions Order with effect from 1 January 2012. However responsibility for St. Patrick's Institution will remain with Minister Shatter and St. Patrick's will continue to be managed by the Irish Prison Service.

### Asylum Applications

17. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of separated children seeking asylum who are accommodated in hostel accommodation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40370/11]

37. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the progress made to date on addressing concerns relating to the care of unaccompanied minors claiming asylum; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40092/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 17 and 37 together.

Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum are deemed to be in need of care and protection under the Child Care Act, 1991 and are entitled to the same treatment and rights as indigenous young people. The immediate and ongoing needs of separated children seeking asylum (SCSA) as well as their application for refugee status are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE) in accordance with the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) and the Child Care Act, 1991. Where children are identified by An Garda Síochána, at the point of entry, the circumstances are investigated and if there are any concerns about the welfare of the child, they are placed into the care of the HSE.

The Implementation Plan on the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, 2009, contained a commitment that the HSE would end the use of separately run hostels for separated children seeking asylum and accommodate children in mainstream care, on a par with other children in the care system. In accordance with this commitment, the HSE phased out hostel type care for separated children seeking asylum and since January 2011, hostels have not been used to accommodate unaccompanied minors. Instead each child is cared for in a registered care placement or equivalent.

The HSE has developed a national policy on the standards and services to be provided to separated children seeking asylum. The policy seeks to achieve equity and equality of services to separated children seeking asylum vis a vis indigenous or resident children and to ensure that there is no differentiation of care provision, care practices, care priorities, standards or protocols.

### Foster Care

18. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of persons currently acting as foster carers here; the number of relative foster carers here; the number of foster carers who have not been Garda vetted; and the number of foster carers who are still waiting for Garda vetting. [40367/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The HSE compiles monthly performance reports which include statistics in relation to children in foster care. Information in relation to the number of foster carers is collected on a quarterly basis. In September 2011, the HSE reported that there were 4,060 foster carers nationwide.

I have asked the HSE to provide the additional information requested by the Deputy and I will forward same on receipt.

### Juvenile Offenders

19. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs further to Parliamentary Question No. 74 of 27 September 2011, the further progress that has been made regarding the transfer of the Irish Youth Justice Service to her Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40355/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I informed the Deputy in September 2011, it is intended that responsibility for Children Detention Schools (Part 10 of the Children Act 2001) and for remand places (under section 88 of that Act) will transfer from the Minister for Justice and Equality to me as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It is intended to transfer these responsibilities by a Transfer of Functions Order. Protocols for consultation between the Minister for Justice and Equality and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs will be put in place subject to our agreement. It is proposed that the transfer of responsibility will take effect on 1 January 2012, subject to the approval of Government and making of the necessary Order in the coming days. The Irish Youth Justice Service staff have already moved to my Department in recent weeks.

### Children in Care

20. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if her attention has been drawn to the recent Health Information Quality Authority report into the Gleann Alainn residential unit in Cork; and the actions she will take to ensure that practices of locking children in their bedrooms from 7.30pm and unnecessary use of restraints are ended. [40368/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Under the Child Care Act, 1991, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has a duty to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care or protection. The policy of the HSE is to place children in care settings, preferably in foster care, as close as possible to their home and community. The vast majority of children in care are in foster care and residential care.

However, some children have highly specialised needs arising from severe behaviour difficulties. The HSE has in place a network of special care and high support facilities for children with specialised care needs. This includes three designated special care units at Ballydowd in Dublin, Coovagh House in Limerick and Glenn Álainn in Cork. The units were established to provide an individualised programme of support through the provision of a time-limited, therapeutic intervention in a secure environment. The unit at Gleann Alainn is designed to provide secure residential care for up to seven girls aged between 11 and 17 years on admission. The children are detained under a High Court detention order on the basis that they pose a serious risk to themselves or others.

Special care units are inspected by the Health Information and Quality Authority's (HIQA) Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) in accordance with the Child Care Act, 1991. The units are inspected annually against the Child Care (Special Care) regulations 2004 and the National Standards for Special Care (2001). The most recent inspection of Gleann Alainn was undertaken by HIQA in October 2011. At the time of inspection there were six children detained.

The inspection found that some practices were of a poor standard, such as locking the children in their individual bedroom sections by 7.30pm. The HSE has produced a management plan to implement HIQA recommendations and implementation of this plan is subject to follow up by HIQA. I understand that HIQA has signalled its intention to conduct an early follow up inspection of Gleann Alainn in order to ensure action has been taken on the issues in its October inspection. I have written to Gordon Jeyes, National Director of Children and Family

Services, HSE underlining my concern in relation to the HIQA findings and asking him for details of the actions being taken to ensure the standard of care in Gleann Alainn is improved to a safe and acceptable level in line with HIQA's recommendations.

### **Constitutional Amendment on Children**

21. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she expects the referendum on the rights of children to be held in spring 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40322/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Programme for Government 2011 states that the Referendum on Children's Rights is a priority, and that the wording of the proposed referendum will be along the lines of that proposed by the All Party Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children.

Since taking office, both myself and officials from my Department have had a number of meetings with the Attorney General and her officials to progress this commitment. Work on the wording of the referendum is ongoing, focusing on ensuring that the proposed Referendum reflects the deliberations and conclusions of the Joint Committee and the commitment in the Programme for Government. It is my intention to seek approval from Government for the proposed wording once finalised, with a view to holding the referendum next year. I anticipate that a wording will be developed shortly. I am anxious to ensure that any wording which emerges will have the support it needs across parties and with the public. The timing of the referendum will have regard to the need to allow an appropriate period of time for the proposal to be fully communicated to the public. Notwithstanding that I am committed to advancing the referendum at as early a date in 2012 as possible.

### **Children in Care**

22. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children who entered the care system during each of the past 24 months; and the number of children who had their placement reviewed during the first two months of their placement under the Child Care Regulations 1995. [40363/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The HSE compiles monthly performance reports which include statistics and other information in relation to children in the care of the State. However, it is not possible to readily extract the specific information requested by the Deputy from this dataset.

However, I have asked the HSE to collate the information requested by the Deputy and I am informed that this work is currently underway. I will forward the information the Deputy on receipt of same.

### **Eating Disorders**

23. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the input she has had to date to the special action group on obesity established by the Department of Health; the actions taken by her in 2011 to tackle the issue of childhood obesity; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40304/11]

44. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her plans to address childhood obesity. [40381/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 23 and 44 together.

My Department is represented on the Special Action Group on Obesity established by the Minister for Health. Evidence from the Growing Up in Ireland Study and other research shows that obesity among children is a major issue of policy. Finding solutions will require an integrated approach across Government and my Department will contribute to that effort.

The direct actions I have taken in 2011 to tackle the issue of childhood obesity involved refocusing areas under my direct responsibility such as national play and recreation polices, to assist and encourage local authorities in playing their part in getting children, young people and adults alike to lead more active lives. I am in the process of setting up the first formal network of play and recreation officers from local authorities. This will help to ensure that we have a more coordinated approach to both the provision of services at local level and the improved promotion of the concept of physical exercise and non sedentary activities for children and young people, at national level. I believe that the local authority network can contribute significantly to the already well established national play day and national recreation week initiatives increasing participation even further and ensuring that the enormous potential for such events is maximised. I am greatly encouraged by the growth in popularity of such events in recent years as evidence that local communities themselves are becoming more aware of the importance of play and recreation and physical activity generally in the lives of children and young people.

*Growing Up in Ireland, the National Longitudinal Study*, which is funded by my Department has also been enormously helpful in identifying the rates of childhood obesity and data emerging from Growing Up in Ireland, particularly the recently published report ‘*Overweight and Obesity among 9-Year-Old Children in Ireland*’ signals where we need to continue focussing our efforts.

### Health Service Staff

24. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of whole time equivalent social workers employed in child protection by the State at the start of 2011; and the number in the employ of the State today. [40316/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The HSE compiles a monthly census of employment in the public health and social care sector. The latest data available is in respect of October 2011. This shows that the total number of social workers employed in the HSE and in directly funded agencies at that time was 2,416 whole time equivalents (WTEs). The equivalent figure at the end of 2010 was 2,432 WTEs.

The employment census also provides a breakdown of staffing levels by care group. In the case of social workers employed in the Children and Families area. The figures indicate that there were 1,183 WTEs employed at the end of 2010 and 1,207 WTEs at the end of October 2011. This shows an increase of 24 WTEs since the end of 2010. It should be noted that the classification by care group is viewed by the HSE and the Department as provisional and is subject to ongoing revision/refinement as part of the process of disaggregating the children and families resource base from the HSE prior to the establishment of the new Children and Family Support Agency.

The number of social workers employed at any one time will vary due to a variety of factors. The policy goal, in line with the Implementation Plan, published in 2009 in response to the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Ryan Report), is to achieve an overall increase of 270 social workers. In this context, it should be noted that the HSE has made provision for the recruitment of an additional 62 social workers this year, to build on the

recruitment of over 200 additional social workers in 2010. The recruitment process is being managed by the HSE National Recruitment Service (NRS). The latest available information from the HSE indicates that 53 of these posts have been either filled or accepted, while a further 5 posts are being offered to candidates this week. The remaining 4 posts are due to be filled by individuals returning from career break. The HSE is attaching a high priority to the completion of the recruitment process by the end of the year. My Department will continue to closely monitor the position with regard to the recruitment of the additional personnel.

The additional social workers will be targeted at priority areas of the service having regard to an overall assessment of workload undertaken by the National Director and his team. The recruitment of the additional social workers is one element of a wider change agenda within the HSE, through which I believe we can deliver better outcomes for children and families. This reform agenda will lead to the establishment of a new Child and Family Support Agency which will provide a dedicated focus on child protection and support families in need.

It should also be emphasised that the grade of social worker continues to be exempt from the moratorium on recruitment and filling of vacancies. The HSE is therefore free to fill social worker vacancies as they arise and within available resources.

### **Foster Care**

25. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the training and supports provided to foster parents who are caring for children who were victims of severe neglect or abuse. [40361/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Children in Care**

26. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide the number of children placed in care, including a breakdown of the categories of reasons for children being placed in care during each of the past five years; and the number of these children placed in care because of the financial difficulties facing their families. [40377/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Departmental Funding**

27. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in view of her recent correspondence to an organisation (details supplied) in County Dublin, if she will reconsider this application and consider it an essential service based in the community and provide the necessary funding to keep this service functioning; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40093/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I very much welcome the work of community groups and voluntary organisations around the country who are engaged in the provision of supports and services to children and young people, including the organisation referred to by the Deputy.

[Deputy Frances Fitzgerald.]

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has an allocation in 2011 of €500,000 in National Lottery funding, which is available to provide grant funding to individuals, groups and organisations involved in the provision of services to children and young people. Seventy-nine applications for National Lottery funding, to a value of over €2.4 million, have been received by my Department since its establishment on 2nd June 2011. I hope the Deputy will appreciate that it is not possible, therefore, to approve every application received.

The closing date in 2011 for the submission of applications for National Lottery funding was 20 October last. There was no formal application for funding assistance made by this organisation to my Department this year. It will be open to projects, including the organisation in question, to apply for funding in 2012. I understand that a similar level of National Lottery funding will be available to my Department in 2012.

### Foster Care

28. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the reason foster carers receive greater payment per week than a child's natural parents often working against the principle of family reunification. [40362/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Under the Child Care Act 1991, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. When a child cannot live with his or her family either on a short or long-term basis be it due to illness in the family, the death of a parent, neglect, abuse or violence in the home the HSE where possible, will place a child in foster care.

Fostering involves caring for someone else's child in one's own home and providing a family life for a child. The Foster Care Allowance is paid to foster carers for the benefit of the foster child. It is not an income or an income support. The allowance is paid in recognition of the obligations placed on foster carers to meet the needs set out in the child's statutory care plan and to meet the standards set out in the National Foster Care Standards. Foster Carers work closely with Social Workers and make themselves available to attend case conferences, meetings and training.

### Social Welfare Payments

29. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the input she had into the decisions to cut child benefit in budget 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40351/11]

39. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the input she had into the decisions to cut the income disregard for lone parents in budget 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40354/11]

51. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the input she had into the cuts to the back to school allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40352/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 29, 39 and 51 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform initiated a Comprehensive Review of Expenditure last May which was designed to provide the Government with a complete set of decision options which would essentially achieve the following -

- Re-align spending with the priorities set out in the Government Programme;
- Meet the overall fiscal consolidation objectives, both in terms of total expenditure and staffing numbers reduction targets; and
- Explore new and innovative ways of delivering Government policy in a reformed public service.

In accordance with the terms of the Review, Ministers and their Departments had primary responsibility for evaluating budgetary programmes for which they were responsible. Ministers also had collective responsibility for the consideration of the overall package of measures which were considered and decided on, including measures relating to programmes administered by the Department of Social Protection, such as the One Parent Family Payment, the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance and Child Benefit. Having regard to the doctrines of collective responsibility and Cabinet confidentiality, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to make further comment on these matters.

### Child Care Services

30. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she is considering giving any statutory powers to the National Board for Safeguarding Children; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40307/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Health Service Executive is the body charged with statutory authority for child protection and welfare matters. It carries out this remit through its Children and Family Services directorate, under Mr. Gordon Jeyes, National Director. It should be emphasised that the remit of the HSE covers all organisations and individuals.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children is a Church body which offers advice on best practice in safeguarding children, assists in the development of safeguarding policy, procedures and practice, and monitors such practice within the Catholic Church. I have no specific function in relation to the constitution and functions of the National Board. However, at my request the HSE over recent months has developed a closer working relationship with the National Board, and this is a very welcome development. The focus of this engagement is on ensuring that the Catholic Church is reporting all allegations of abuse to the statutory authorities in line with the Children First National Guidance, and that it has in place the necessary safeguarding structures nationally.

The roll out of Children First will require all sectors and organisations working with children, including the faith sector, to put in place robust safeguarding arrangements, including internal audit of practice. I very much welcome the work undertaken to date by the National Board to strengthen child protection practices in the Catholic Church in line with this objective.

31. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the additional resources made available to her to establish the child and family support agency; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40329/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I established the Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency in September 2011 under the chairmanship of

[Deputy Frances Fitzgerald.]

Ms Maureen Lynott. The Task Force will advise my Department in regard to the necessary transition programme to establish a Child and Family Support Agency, and will base its work on best practice in child welfare, family support and public administration; consistent with the Government's public sector reform agenda. In relation to the Agency it has been asked to: —

- Propose a vision and the principles to guide operations;
- Advise on the appropriate service responsibilities, and the delivery of same;
- Review existing financial, staffing and corporate resources; and propose a methodology for resource allocation;
- Propose an organisational design and operating child welfare and protection service model;
- Prepare a detailed implementation plan;
- Identify the main priorities and core relationships required;
- Oversee the implementation and monitor progress, pending establishment of the Agency.

The Task Force met for the eighth time earlier this week. I look forward to receiving the report of its work, which will inform preparations for the new Agency, including the drafting of legislation.

Last week, I announced that a dedicated new budget sub-head had been established for the first time in the HSE Vote, in preparation for the planned establishment of the Agency in 2013. A provision of €568m has been made for 2012. The equivalent provision in 2011 was €587m. The reduction of 3% is based on targets for procurement, employment control framework, pay and other efficiency savings applying more generally within the health service Estimate. A process is currently underway in conjunction with the HSE to further review and refine the detailed components of this sub-head. Additional provision in the order of €2.2 million has been made for 2012, within my Department's Vote, for some initial requirements associated with the establishment of the new Child and Family Support Agency and related transitional arrangements. I am firmly committed to the transformation of Ireland's child protection and welfare services. Central to this is delivering transparent and accountable management and budgeting. The establishment for the first time of a dedicated budget sub-head within the HSE Vote for children and families is an important part of the ongoing 'change agenda', which is aimed at strengthening organisation capacity, business processes and systems, and will pave the way for the transition to the new Child and Family Support Agency in 2013. Management of these services will be led by the National Director (Mr Gordon Jeyes) who already has a very close working relationship with me and my Department. These developments are an integral part of preparations for the new stand alone Agency. I am anxious to advance the full establishment of the Agency at as early a date as possible, subject to the work of the Task Force and necessary legislature provision. I would envisage tabling legislation before the House next year to provide for the Agency's setting up in 2013.

The expenditure being committed to child and family services in 2012, through my Department and the new dedicated sub-head in the HSE Vote, demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to children and to improving their lives and opportunities. While savings must be made in some areas, the approach to expenditure priorities for 2012 is underpinned by a commitment to improving outcomes for children, in particular through transforming child

and family services and the reform of funding streams and delivery mechanisms across all programmes in order to make the best possible use of resources. My Department will continue to work to deliver on its mandate to promote better outcomes for children and young people.

32. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the impact she believes the 2% efficiency target for child care announced in budget 2012 will have on child care services; in view of this cut the way she envisages putting the Children First guidelines on a statutory footing; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40353/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Last week, I announced that a dedicated new budget sub-head had been established for the first time in the HSE Vote, in preparation for the planned establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency in 2013. A provision of €568m has been made for 2012. A process is currently underway in conjunction with the HSE to further review and refine the detailed components of this sub-head. The provision for the first time of a dedicated budget for children and families within the HSE Vote will pave the way for the establishment of the new Agency in 2013. This dedicated budget will be managed by the National Director of Children and Family Services and his staff in support of the process of operational improvement in child protection and welfare services which he is leading. Central to this reform is the delivery of transparent and accountable management and budgeting.

The provision of €568 million includes a 2% efficiency adjustment. In the context of public service reform and the difficulties in the national finances, all areas in receipt of public funds are required to pursue greater efficiencies and to find new ways of achieving policy objectives. The HSE is currently developing its Service Plan and this will set out the detailed level of service provision for next year, including in respect of children and families. My Department is working closely with the Department of Health in relation to the Service Plan. I expect the continued commitment by the HSE to the full implementation of Children First to be a key feature of the HSE Service Plan for next year.

I launched the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children on the 15th July, 2011. The Guidance deals with the recognition, reporting and management of child safety concerns. It sets out a number of key messages relating to the duty to protect children. Among these are that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, that children will have safer lives where everyone is attentive to their well-being and that people who work with children across a range of areas understand their responsibility for safe practice and the reporting of concerns. The Guidance sets out specific protocols for HSE social workers, Gardaí and other front line staff in dealing with suspected abuse. The scope of Children First extends beyond the reporting of suspected abuse. It emphasises the importance of multi disciplinary, inter-agency working in the management of such concerns. Key to this is the sharing of information between agencies and disciplines in the best interests of children and the need for full co-operation to ensure better outcomes.

My Department is finalising legislative proposals to make compliance with the Children First Guidance a statutory obligation. The legislation will reflect a broad based approach to compliance with obligations extending beyond reporting to one of safeguarding children at risk and the objective will be to ensure the greater protection of children by strengthening the existing system for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse.

Putting Children First on a statutory footing was a key recommendation of the Ryan Report and went hand-in-hand with other recommendations including the commitment to recruit an additional 270 social workers. These posts were exempted from the public service recruitment

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moratorium and will significantly strengthen the capacity of the state's child protection and family support services.

It is also important to recognize that the original Children First Guidelines were in place for over a decade and as such are not new in terms of the responsibilities placed on organisations working with children. In this regard, it should be emphasised that there are already very significant resources in place to support the implementation of Children First. In the case of the HSE and An Garda Síochána, the two statutory agencies with particular responsibilities for the assessment and investigation of child welfare and protection concerns, Children First forms an integral part of their existing operations and practices. For example, the HSE has in place a network of personnel to provide training, information and advice on the implementation of Children First. It is currently delivering a programme of information and training on the new Guidance across the country. It recently published a Child Welfare and Protection Practice Handbook for all its staff in order to achieve consistency and Children First compliance across all its authorities.

The consistent implementation of the Children First Guidance across all sectors working with children is a high priority for Government. The new revised Guidance, together with the introduction of legislation, is designed to heighten societal awareness of the importance of safeguarding children. The difference is that compliance with the Guidance will become mandatory. While this may give rise to an increase in the number of child protection referrals to the statutory authorities it will be equally important for the HSE, as part of its ongoing reform programme, to ensure that its services are re-balanced with an emphasis on primary prevention and family support for child welfare cases and interventions, including assessment of current risk, where child protection concerns are evident. My Department is chairing an Inter Departmental Committee to oversee progress in implementing the Guidance across Government.

### Children in Care

33. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care who have not seen their social worker for 12 months or more. [40359/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### Departmental Expenditure

34. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she conducted a child impact analysis on the cuts contained in the comprehensive review of public expenditure; if she discussed the impact of budget 2012 on children with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40376/11]

40. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the details of any child proofing carried out by her of recent measure introduced in budget 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40324/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 34 and 40 together.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established on 2 June 2011. In 2011, the full year allocation for the programmes implemented by the Department, amounted to just

over €417 million, of which €406.3 million was current funding. In 2012, the full gross year allocation for the Department under Budget 2012 will be just over €408 million, of which €400.1 million relates to current funding. This represents a 2% reduction in funding which is significantly less than reductions in some other areas of Government expenditure demonstrating the priority attached to programmes and services for children and young people.

As the Deputy will be aware, the review process conducted by individual Government Departments as part of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure was a central part of the overall pre-Budget deliberations of the Government. Officials of my Department have been engaged in the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure since June of this year and have scrutinised every area of area of expenditure as part of this process. While there was no formal child impact analysis or child proofing study conducted as part of the Review within my Department it is important to point out that it provided the opportunity to critically examine all spending programmes under the operational remit of my Vote and inform the Department's new structures and priorities, based on streamlined and effective use of limited resources.

I had detailed discussions on a number of occasions with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure and its impact on my Department and savings of some €16.5 million in current funding have been agreed for next year. However, this figure reduces to €4.5 million when account is taken of the fact that additional funding has also been provided to meet demographic pressures arising under the free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and to protect the universality of that programme. The reform process will continue over 2012-2014 and the projected current funding allocations for my Department will be sustained at levels of €382 million in 2013 and €373 million in 2014. While the need to reduce expenditure will be challenging, I am satisfied that the reform of programmes and schemes identified under the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure will be implemented in a way which generates efficiencies and improvements in outcomes, within the resources available.

### **Children in Care**

35. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children who have gone missing from care for two days or more during each of the past five years; and the number of these children who have not been found. [40371/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Child Care Services**

36. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the implications from budget 2012 measures for the early child care education sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40331/11]

45. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the degree to which she expects to have sufficient resources available to her in the coming year to meet ongoing or new requirements under various headings; if she will outline her priorities arising therefrom notwithstanding the ongoing economic situation but recognising the need to respond to the requirements of children and youth affairs in general; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40293/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 36 and 45 together.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established on 3 June 2011. In 2011, the full year allocation for the programmes implemented by the Department, amounted to just over €417 million, of which €406.3 million was current funding. In 2012, the full gross year allocation for the Department stands at just over €408 million, of which €400.1 million will be current funding. This represents a 2% reduction in funding which is significantly less than reductions in some other areas of Government expenditure demonstrating the priority attached to programmes and services for children and young people.

Since May of this year, my officials have been engaged in the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure process and have scrutinised every area of expenditure as part of this process. The Review was used as an opportunity to critically examine and inform the Department's new structures and priorities, based on streamlined and effective use of limited resources. The challenge for all of those who work in the public service today or are funded from the public purse is to maximise policy outcomes and service delivery.

Under the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure savings of some €16.5 million in current funding have been agreed for next year. However, this figure reduces to €4.5 million when account is taken of the fact that additional funding has also been provided to meet demographic pressures arising under the free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and to protect the universality of that programme. The reform process will continue over 2012-2014 and the projected current funding allocations for my Department will be sustained at levels of €382 million in 2013 and €373 million in 2014. While the need to reduce expenditure will be challenging, I am satisfied that the reform of programmes and schemes identified under the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure will be implemented in a way which generates efficiencies and improvements in outcomes, within the resources available.

As I have said, the Government has made a very significant commitment to maintaining the universality of the free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The Programme for Government commits to maintaining the ECCE programme and indeed developing early childhood care and education as resources allow. Given the budgetary constraints we are facing, I am very pleased to be able to say that the programme is being maintained as a universal and free pre-school year. The universal nature of this programme is critical for childhood development and providing every child with early learning and preparation for school. I am delighted to say that the programme has been maintained on a universal and free basis. I believe this is an investment in our country's future prosperity. We will recover from our economic difficulties. In time, too, the generation of children benefiting from this programme will repay our investment by proving the long term value of investment in early education.

Due to demographic pressures, which mean that the number of children eligible for the programme will increase by some 3,000, the cost of the programme is expected to rise to almost €176 million in 2012, an increase of almost €10 million, and this funding has been provided for.

In terms of the main areas of savings, the key areas where savings will be made in Vote 40, are as follows:

- In addition to the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme the other two main programmes of support for childcare operated by my Department are the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme and the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme. All three programmes are being retained but some

revisions are being made to certain payment rates and subvention levels under each programme.

- Under the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme the staff to child ratios will be increased in September 2012, from a ratio of 1: 10 to a ratio of 1: 11. As the pre-school year is targeted at children in the year before they commence primary school, the increase is not expected to impact on quality. The Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No.2) Regulations 2006 will be amended to accommodate the change which will apply to services for the duration of the ECCE provision only. The increase will give the majority of pre-school services some flexibility to manage a modest reduction in the capitation rates which I am introducing from September next. A reduction of €2 per week, approximately 3%, will be made to the capitation rates paid to providers. The reduction in capitation rates will achieve savings of €2.2m in 2012 and €5m from 2013 onwards. Notwithstanding these reductions the funds available under this programme in 2012 will increase by €9.8 million or 6 per cent.
- The Childcare Education and Training Support programme provides qualifying FAS and VEC students with free childcare places for the duration of their course. The Department pays childcare services €170 per week for each full-time place contracted under the programme, in some 1,600 community and commercial facilities. This is the only category of parents who currently pay no contribution to the cost of their childcare requirements. From September 2012, the Department will reduce the weekly price paid to services to €145 per full-time place. The services will be allowed to charge a weekly fee of not more than €25 per full-time childcare place. In practice it is expected that the charge passed on to parents will be less than the €25 reduction due to cost efficiencies and competition on fees.
- Under the Community Childcare Subvention Programme, parents who have a social welfare entitlement or are in receipt of Family Income Supplement, qualify for subvention rates of up to €100 per week for full daycare. The parents must be using a community service to avail of the programme. Payment is made to the service and allows community providers to charge reduced fees to eligible parents. From September 2012, the higher subvention rate of €100 will be reduced by €5 to €95. To qualify for the higher rate it will be necessary to have an entitlement to a medical card as well as a social welfare entitlement.
- A 5% reduction will be made in 2012 to the operational costs of the Family Support Agency and to the Family Resource Centres programme. This will yield savings of almost €0.9 million in 2012. In addition, savings of over €1.2 million will be made in 2012 under the Counselling Grants Scheme which is administered by the Agency.
- While no reduction is being made to the Education Welfare Service operated by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), my Department, together with the Board, will complete a major review of the School Completion Programme by mid 2012 to identify operational efficiencies and achieve greater integration with the other NEWB programmes. A new and more rationalised programme will be introduced in September 2012 which will allow savings of €2 million to be achieved in 2012.
- A review of all of the Department's Youth Programmes will also be undertaken in 2012. This will be informed by the new Youth Policy Framework and will result in a restructuring of the programmes and their delivery models into a more cohesive and effective set of programmes from 2013. This approach will allow for savings to be

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achieved while still maintaining effective youth programmes and maximising outcomes. Pending the outcome of the review, in 2012 a reduction in funding ranging between 5% and 10% will be applied to a number of the programmes. This will result in savings of some €4.6 million.

- A number of pilot projects and programmes which were limited in time, are due to come to an end over the period 2012-2014. While the outcomes from these projects and programmes will, where possible, be mainstreamed into programmes implemented by my Department as well as by agencies involved in the provision of services for children and families, significant additional savings will arise. It is also my intention to use the annual capital allocation of €8 million to continue and enhance the youth café programme, which was implemented during 2010-2011, to maintain the funding support for Parent and Toddler groups, and to establish a new, capital maintenance programme for community childcare facilities. As alcohol free venues for young people, Youth Cafés will form an important part of the Government's Strategy to combat alcohol misuse. The Parent and Toddler small grant scheme is a valuable resource for parents in disadvantaged areas and the maintenance programme for community childcare facilities is intended to assist services with the funding of essential repairs.

In terms of my priorities over the period 2012-2015, in addition to reviewing the current delivery of programmes to improve outcomes, it is my intention to progress a number of issues as a matter of urgent priority. In 2012, the Constitutional Referendum on Children's Rights will be held. I am pleased to note that an allocation of €3 million has been provided in Vote 40 in 2012 to meet the costs which will arise.

Work is also underway to establish the new Child and Family Services Agency which will operate from 2013 under the remit of my Department. I hope to see this process completed during 2012 as I believe it will provide a new and coherent structure to meet the needs of children and their families. While the resources for the new agency are currently located within the Vote of the Health Service Executive, an additional provision to assist the establishment of the agency has been made within Vote 40. This amounts to €16.2 million in 2012 and will increase to €5 million from 2013.

*Question No. 37 answered with Question No. 17.*

### **Children in Care**

38. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of siblings taken into care during each of the past five years; and the number of these children split up and sent to separate foster carers during each of the past five years. [40366/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

*Question No. 39 answered with Question No. 29.*

*Question No. 40 answered with Question No. 34.*

### **Child Care Services**

41. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will

guarantee that she will put in place the necessary resources and supports to social services in advance of the introduction of mandatory reporting legislation. [40382/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I launched the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children on the 15th July, 2011. The Guidance deals with the recognition, reporting and management of child safety concerns. It sets out a number of key messages relating to the duty to protect children. Among these are that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, that children will have safer lives where everyone is attentive to their well-being and that people who work with children across a range of areas understand their responsibility for safe practice and the reporting of concerns. The Guidance sets out specific protocols for HSE social workers, Gardaí and other front line staff in dealing with suspected abuse. The scope of Children First extends beyond the reporting of suspected abuse. It emphasises the importance of multi disciplinary, inter-agency working in the management of such concerns. Key to this is the sharing of information between agencies and disciplines in the best interests of children and the need for full co-operation to ensure better outcomes.

My Department is finalising legislative proposals to make compliance with the Children First Guidance a statutory obligation. The legislation will reflect a broad based approach to compliance with obligations extending beyond reporting to one of safeguarding children at risk and the objective will be to ensure the greater protection of children by strengthening the existing system for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse.

Putting Children First on a statutory footing was a key recommendation of the Ryan Report and went hand-in-hand with other recommendations including the commitment to recruit an additional 270 social workers. These posts were exempted from the public service recruitment moratorium and will significantly strengthen the capacity of the state's child protection and family support services.

It is also important to recognize that the original Children First Guidelines were in place for over a decade and as such are not new in terms of the responsibilities placed on organisations working with children. In this regard, it should be emphasised that there are already very significant resources in place to support the implementation of Children First. In the case of the HSE and An Garda Síochána, the two statutory agencies with particular responsibilities for the assessment and investigation of child welfare and protection concerns, Children First forms an integral part of their existing operations and practices. For example, the HSE has in place a network of personnel to provide training, information and advice on the implementation of Children First. It is currently delivering a programme of information and training on the new Guidance across the country. It recently published a Child Welfare and Protection Practice Handbook for all its staff in order to achieve consistency and Children First compliance across all its authorities.

The consistent implementation of the Children First Guidance across all sectors working with children is a high priority for Government. In this context my Department is chairing an Inter Departmental Committee to oversee progress in implementing the Guidance across Government. The new revised Guidance, together with the introduction of legislation, is designed to heighten societal awareness of the importance of safeguarding children. The difference is that compliance with the Guidance will become mandatory. While this may give rise to an increase in the number of child protection referrals to the statutory authorities it will be equally important for the HSE, as part of its ongoing reform programme, to ensure that its services are re-balanced with an emphasis on primary prevention and family support for child welfare cases and interventions, including assessment of current risk, where child protection concerns are evident.

### Departmental Funding

42. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the amount of funding allocated to the Guardian Ad Litem system each year since its inception; and the amount of funding allocated to it for the forthcoming year. [40374/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### Child Care Services

43. **Deputy Ciara Conway** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if a decision has been made on whether to facilitate children that miss out on the early childhood care and education scheme payment due to their birth date falling in July or August and they commence school having reached four years; if she will extend the date of the scheme to the end of August; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40358/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme was introduced in January 2010 with the objective of providing a free pre-school year to all eligible children.

The age range for eligibility under the programme spans 17 months with children qualifying for the free pre-school year where they are aged more than 3 years 2 months and less than 4 years 7 months on 1 September in the relevant year. This means, for example, that children born between 2 February 2007 and 30 June 2008 were eligible for the free pre-school year in September 2011 and children born in July and August 2008 will be eligible in September 2012 .

The objective of the ECCE programme is to make early learning in a formal setting available to eligible children in the year before they commence primary school. To achieve this, services participating in the pre-school year are expected to provide age-appropriate activities and programmes to children within a particular age cohort. For this reason, it is appropriate to set minimum and maximum limits to the age range within which children will qualify.

A number of parents have asked for the lower age range to be reduced on the grounds that they wish to send their children to school when they are 4 years and 2 months of age or less. The issue was referred by some of these parents to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. That Office found no reason to remove or amend the lower age range, accepting it as reasonable having regard to the various factors which apply.

*Question No. 44 answered with Question No. 23.*

*Question No. 45 answered with Question No. 36.*

### Children in Care

46. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care; the number who have been in long-stay foster care for five years and for ten years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40360/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

47. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of children in care who have not had at least one annual review of their care placement in each of the past five years. [40364/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### Missing Persons

48. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the date on which the 116000 missing children hotline will be operational here. [40372/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Under EU telecoms rules agreed in 2009, the 116000 number is reserved in all EU member states for a missing children hotline. In a recent debate on this issue in Seanad Éireann, on 12th October last, I gave a commitment to work with relevant Departments and agencies to establish this Hotline in Ireland in 2012. I also announced my intention to establish a cross-sectoral Project Team to include representatives of my own Department, the Department of Justice and Equality, Com-Reg and an Garda Síochána. The final nominee to the project team has been received and the team is now in a position to commence its work and a date has been established for its first meeting. While I do not envisage a lengthy process is required I am not in a position to give an exact date at this time. I have asked the project team to work as quickly as possible in advancing this matter.

In June 2011, Comreg, who have responsibility for allocation of this number in Ireland, sought expressions of interest to run the Hotline and no substantive responses were received. However; I am aware of and have met with Irish NGOs who may be interested, but their estimated costings vary significantly. The Project Team will examine how best to operate the Hotline, in the context of the demand for the service, and to establish the extent to which services, including Garda and victim support services, which are already in existence and receiving Government funding, can be mobilised to meet Ireland's commitments in relation to the Hotline.

I want to emphasise that the investigation of a child's disappearance is the responsibility of the Gardaí. Their structures in this regard include not only the local Gardaí, who will have primary responsibility for the investigation, but also the Missing Persons Bureau. It is of paramount importance that any arrangements which are put in place to establish the 116000 Hotline in Ireland do not compromise the requirement that the first and most important contact to be made, is to notify the Gardaí of the fact that a child is missing, so the investigation can commence without delay. However the implementation of a dedicated missing children hotline is intended to provide a further level of support in such situations.

### Proposed Legislation

49. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she will provide details of the continuous review she has had of the issue of corporal punishment within the home; the number of reports she has received on this issue; and the date on which she intends to introduce legislation to ban this practice. [40375/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** A proposal for an outright ban in the home setting has not been brought forward to date. The matter has been under continuous review by my own Department and previously by the then Department of

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Health and Children over recent years. As part of the review the situation pertaining in other jurisdictions has been examined.

In terms of reports received, I am aware of the views expressed by the Ombudsman for Children who has indicated her strong support for the introduction of an outright ban and similar views expressed by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in his various considerations of human rights in the Irish context. No other specific reports on this matter have been received although the Law Reform Commission did examine this matter in 1994 as part its report 'Non Fatal Offences Against the Person'.

A number of options are now under consideration. These include examining whether the current so called 'defence of reasonable chastisement' needs to be further defined in law as well as consideration of the option for the introduction of an outright prohibition in the home setting.

I am currently examining these options and will make a decision in the matter in due course. At the present time it is not intended to bring forward any immediate specific proposals in relation to this matter as the possible constitutional implications for any such proposals will need to be carefully considered given the special protection afforded to the family under the constitution. I am encouraged that recent research in this area indicates that the practice of corporal punishment itself is declining in Ireland with 88 per cent of parents opting for other non violent means of correction and in due course the timing may be right to bring forward new proposals.

### **Juvenile Offenders**

50. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she has met with the Department of Justice and Equality on the issue of extending the remit of the Children's Ombudsman to take complaints from children resident in St. Patrick's Institution, Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40373/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the Deputy may be aware, it is intended that responsibility for Children Detention Schools (Part 10 of the Children Act 2001) and for remand places (under section 88 of that Act) will transfer from the Minister for Justice and Equality to me as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It is intended to transfer these responsibilities by a Transfer of Functions Order with effect from 1 January 2012. While I have had many meetings with my colleague in Government, Minister Shatter, and with his officials in the context of the intended transfer of functions, I have not met with the Department of Justice and Equality specifically on the issue raised by the Deputy. Responsibility for St. Patrick's Institution will remain with Minister Shatter. I have recently visited St. Patrick's Institution and I am aware that it is suggested that the remit of the Ombudsman for Children should be extended to take complaints from children resident in St Patrick's Institution. I will be considering this issue in consultation with Minister Shatter in 2012.

*Question No. 51 answered with Question No. 29.*

### **Young Carers**

52. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her plans to address the needs of young carers and increase the profile of potential caring responsibilities of young persons among professionals in statutory and non-statutory bodies. [40378/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Study of Young Carers in the Irish Population, published by my Department in 2010, highlights the importance of creating a better understanding of children as carers in Ireland. It found that it is very difficult to identify young carers in the population.

In order to learn more about children that undertake caring roles, my Department requested the Central Statistics Office to include a question in the Census of Population 2011. People of all ages were asked whether they provide any unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long term-term illness, health problem or disability. These census results are due for publication in November 2012.

It is further planned, under the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives published by my Department last month, that a detailed analysis of those children who report in the 2011 Census that they undertake caring roles, will be carried out by the end of 2013. It is anticipated that the analysis will inform future policy as to how best to address the support needs of children and young people who undertake caring roles.

The Government is committed to developing a National Carer's Strategy to support carers and to address issues of concern. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will work closely with the Department Health in the development of the new strategy to ensure that the needs of young carers are comprehensively addressed as part of an integrated approach to policy and supports for carers.

### Departmental Expenditure

53. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40403/11]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** My Department is responsible for two Votes — Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) and Vote 29 (International Cooperation). The total amount of money allocated in 2011 to these Votes, net of Appropriations in Aid, is €695,383,000. Details of the allocation to each subhead are published as part of the Revised Estimates Volume and information on the outturn will be available early in 2012.

### Consultancy Contracts

54. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40507/11]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** My Department engages the services of consultancy and public relations companies in the course of its work. They are used to provide specialist skills where they do not exist in my Department or to provide an external perspective where this is appropriate. I am very conscious of the need to achieve value for money on such expenditure. The commissioning of these contracts is in full compliance with national and EU procurement regulations concerning tendering requirements. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for two Votes — Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) and Vote 29 (International Cooperation). The information requested by the Deputy (to date in 2011), is set out in the following tables:

[Deputy Eamon Gilmore.]

## Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) — Consultancy 2010/11

Name of Consultant/Consultancy Company	2010	2011
	€	€
RITS	65,545	18,630
B Connected Ltd		2,886
ISAS		4,898
Tony Taaffe	1,100	1,650

## Vote 29 (International Cooperation) — Consultancy 2010/11

Name of Consultant/Consultancy Company	2010	2011
	€	€
80:20 Consultancy	13,000	8,450
Actra Advisers Limited		17,787
Agulhas Dev Consultants Ltd	34,461	
Aisling Swaine Consultancy Ltd	30,328	
Aodh O'Connor	1,380	3,638
Bernard McLoughlin	9,450	3,500
Bernard Wood & Associates Ltd	6,596	8,268
Bernie Crawford		3,500
Caroline Burke		3,000
Catherine Sarah Jones	15,426	24,713
Cathy Doran	3,500	2,902
Cathy Gaynor	60,996	25,699
Cathy Roche		3,000
Channel Research		21,344
Charles Lathrop	5,625	9,342
Clare Herbert		690
Cooney and Associates	10,890	
Core Financial Systems		656
CR2 Social Development Ltd	7,188	1,891
Deirdre Farrell		4,600
Department for International Development	140,000	
DHR Communications Ltd	4,232	
Eamon O'Boyle and Associates	7,163	
Eamonn O'Reilly		7,500
ERSI	46,071	17,385
Eilis Murray	4,750	7,750
Emma Waewick	4,840	
Fitzpatrick Associates	26,136	55,872
Fred Tottenham	5,844	4,084
Geraghty Consulting		1,750
Gerald Cawley	7,301	
Geraldine McDonald	782	
Gernot Prepper	5,138	
Groupe URD	9,075	

Name of Consultant/Consultancy Company	2010	2011
	€	€
Helen Labanya	2,541	
Helen O'Neill	4,950	3,850
Hunter McGill	10,890	3,630
Inez McCormack		6,050
International Organisation Development		278,313
Intrac Consultants	15,795	9,831
ISOS Partnership (UK)		37,522
ITAD Ltd		4,282
James Saunderson	1,914	3,000
Jim Cannon	2,212	9,075
Jim Kiely		7,500
Jim Kinsella	4,800	4,800
John Coughlin	11,722	
John O Regan	69,181	28,486
John Sheils	20,449	
Kate Dyer	23,892	
Kevin Farrell	49,250	15,000
Kevin Moore	13,310	10,285
Laurin Bari		3,625
Lizzie Downes		3,000
Lorraine Whitty	4,180	
Luis Enrique Bran Reyes	27,711	4,133
Malaquais Lopez Cervantes		24,200
Marcel Grogan	14,278	35,695
Margaret Fitzgerald	6,463	5,088
Marie Smith	5,700	3,150
Marie Therese Fanning	13,500	1,500
Martin Greene		28,163
Mary Brady		18,725
Mary Buckley	2,312	3,020
Mary Corbett		23,125
Mary Jennings	29,751	2,748
Mary McCann Sanchez	12,130	
Mary McKeown		5,900
Matthias Fiedler	18,450	4,700
Mazars		14,974
Mokoro Ltd	85,004	181,276
Morina O'Neill	4,437	1,720
Mott Mac Donald Ltd t/a HLSP	8,178	
National University Ireland Maynooth	25,168	
Niall Roche	7,789	2,250
Nogugu Mafu		8,800
Nuala O'Loan	20,506	5,718
NUI Maynooth		14,472
Partners	750	
Patricia Hunt		4,750
Patrick D. Murphy & Eileen Murphy		7,800

[Deputy Eamon Gilmore.]

Name of Consultant/Consultancy Company	2010	2011
	€	€
Paul Isenman	34,939	
Paul Shane		4,840
Peter McEvoy	11,350	2,600
Philip Regan	14,950	2,115
Pieterella Pieterse	2,000	3,050
Rodney Rice		7,500
Ronan Tierney	11,798	20,719
Ruth O' Doherty	2,898	8,280
Samia Saad		8,621
Sherry McLean	29,115	
SPN Consulting	33,880	
Stefanie Meredith		8,621
SUAS Education Development		50,980
The Policy practice Ltd		28,367
The Tribal Helm CorporationLtd	11,798	
Tony Taaffe	750	

## Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) — Public Relations 2010/11

Name of Company	2010	2011
Brindley Advertising	13,256	40,296
<i>Iris Oifigiúil</i>	160	1,112
Truvo		7,079

## Vote 29 (International Cooperation) — Public Relations 2010-2011

Name of Company	2010	2011
DHR Communications	87,386	56,108

**Ministerial Appointments**

55. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40551/11]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** I can confirm that no new committees, advisory groups or new positions have been put in place at my Department since the formation of the current Government.

**International Agreements**

56. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the status of proposals to ratify the optional protocol to the International Covenant on Social and Economic Rights. [40751/11]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore):** The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights opened for signature in New York in September 2009. To date thirty nine (39) States have signed. Nine of the twenty seven European Union member states have signed. Five States have ratified the Optional Protocol: Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mongolia and Spain. The Optional Protocol will come into force three months after the deposit with the United Nations Secretary General of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession. As only five States have ratified the Optional Protocol so far it has not yet come into force. My Department has led consultations between Departments on possible signature of the Optional Protocol. A formal proposal asking Departments for their views as to possible signature of the Optional Protocol was circulated earlier this month. Once this consultation process is completed the question of the possible signature of the Optional Protocol will then be examined. Ratification of the Optional Protocol would be a separate step and would be considered in due course.

### **Tax Reliefs**

57. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Finance the tax relief associated with revenue job assist; if this has changed since budget 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40486/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Sections 472A and 88A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 provide tax incentives for both employers and employees, to help the long-term unemployed to return to employment. The relief under Section 472A, known as the Revenue Job Assist scheme, allows qualifying employees, in addition to their normal tax credits, to claim certain income deductions, including additional deductions for qualifying children, for the three year period after taking up employment.

For the first year, the additional deduction equates to €3,810 plus €1,270 for each qualifying child. For the second and third years, the deduction is €2,540 and €1,270 respectively with qualifying child additions of €850 and €425 respectively. The relief for an employee, at the option of the employee, will be allowed in the three year period commencing with either the tax year in which the employment commences or the following tax year. Furthermore, an employee may change jobs once within that three year period and retain the relief. Section 88A provides an associated tax incentive for employers. Employers may claim a double deduction in computing the profits of the trade or profession in respect of the first 3 years’ wages paid to qualifying employees. This double deduction may also be claimed in respect of the employers’ PRSI contribution on such wages.

Both incentives apply in respect of individuals who have been unemployed for at least 12 months and are in receipt of a specified social protection payment or, who are in a category approved for the purposes of the scheme by the Minister for Social Protection with the consent of the Minister for Finance. Although the relief available under the scheme was unchanged in Budget 2012, I intend to bring forward an amendment in Finance Bill 2012 so that individuals signing on solely for credits with the Department of Social Protection can also qualify for the relief. This change is being operated on an administrative basis by the Revenue Commissioners currently.

58. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Finance the maximum relief for the business expansion scheme; if this has changed since budget 2012; if the conditions have changed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40487/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The maximum amount that can be raised by a company in a 12 month period under the Business Expansion Scheme (BES) is €1.5m. The lifetime amount that can be raised by a company under BES is €2m. Relief at the individual's marginal rate of tax can be claimed by a qualifying individual who invests in eligible shares. These amounts were not changed in Budget 2012. However, no relief will be granted under the BES where eligible shares are issued after 31 December 2011. Section 33 of Finance Act 2011 replaced the BES with a new scheme entitled the Employment and Investment Incentive (EII). However, the measures provided for in Finance Act 2011 could not be given effect until the European Commission gave approval under the Community Guidelines on State Aid to Promote Risk Capital Investments in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. In November 2011 that approval was granted, subject to minor changes to the qualifying conditions. This scheme was commenced as and from 25 November 2011 and I provided for this on Budget night by way of a Financial Resolution.

Under both the BES and EII an individual can invest up to a maximum of €150,000 per annum. However, these investments are subject to the high earners' restriction which permits a maximum of €80,000 in specified reliefs that can be fully relieved in any one tax year. Any amount that cannot be relieved as a result of the restriction can be rolled-over and relieved in subsequent years. The maximum amount that can be raised by a company in a 12 month period under the EII is €2.5m and the lifetime amount that can be raised by a company is €10 million. Both these amounts represent significant increases on the limits that applied under the BES.

Relief under the EII can be claimed by a qualifying individual, who invests in eligible shares, at an initial rate of 30%. This represents a decrease from 41% under BES. However, the period for which the individual is required to hold the eligible shares has been reduced to 3 years as opposed to 5 years under the BES. A further 11% of tax relief will be available to the individual under the EII, where it can be demonstrated that employment levels in the company have increased at the end of the 3 year holding period or where evidence is provided that the company used the capital raised for expenditure on research and development. This additional 11% will not be subject to the high earners' restriction.

Some of the conditions necessary to qualify for the BES have been altered in order to make the EII available to a wider range of companies. The BES was available only to companies carrying on certain trades, principally manufacturing. The EII is available to the majority of trading companies with only a limited number of exceptions. In view of the extended time frame involved in securing the approval of the European Commission, I decided to allow both the BES and EII schemes to run concurrently between 25 November 2011 and 31 December 2011.

### **Tax Code**

59. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Finance if he will exempt from VAT, service companies that export more than 90% of their output; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40496/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Legal advice has indicated that proposals to exempt from VAT service companies that export more than 90% of their output may not be in accordance with EU VAT law.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

60. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Finance the total allocated budget for his

Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40402/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I refer the Deputy to the Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-2014 (Part IV Estimate of Supply Services, page 151), which was published recently by my colleague the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and which contains the details requested.

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

61. **Deputy Gerald Nash** asked the Minister for Finance if he directly requested the board and management of the EBS to withhold payment of the annual staff Christmas bonus; if he will set out the reasons behind this decision; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40410/11]

67. **Deputy Seán Kenny** asked the Minister for Finance the steps he will take with EBS to ensure that the administrative staff of EBS will retain their previous annual salary payments and pay arrangement when they become part of AIB group. [40538/11]

72. **Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin** asked the Minister for Finance if he will give an update in respect of any bonuses paid to staff or management at EBS; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40633/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 61, 67 and 72 together.

As I indicated in my reply to questions nos. 82 and 83 of 14 December 2011 (refs 40290/11 and 40334/11) — on the same subject, I am advised by the institutions involved that the payments in question are considered bonus payments as per their description in the relevant contracts. On this basis, as the conditions governing the provision of State assistance to Allied Irish Banks (AIB) prohibit the payment or awarding of bonuses whatsoever, the bank took the view that it is not in a position to make such payments to employees of EBS (which since 1 July 2011 is a wholly owned subsidiary of AIB). The Government's prohibition on the payment of bonuses is a consequence of the level of State capital that has been provided to the banking sector. This capital investment by the State has protected jobs throughout the financial sector.

Much has been made of the fact that these payments have been paid for a number of years previously including especially from 2008 onwards. When the State invested moneys in EBS in May 2010 by means of a subscription for a Special Investment Share remuneration restrictions only applied to senior management. As conditions deteriorated and further capital was injected into AIB in December 2010 these restrictions were broadened to prohibit the payment of bonuses to all staff and became the template that would apply to all of the institutions as further investment was made. Had EBS been maintained as a separate institution following the PCAR exercise of March 2011 any further injection of capital would have been covered by the expanded restrictions. The Government decided, as part of the restructuring of the banking sector, that EBS would merge into AIB and as a result the wider restrictions on the payment of bonuses came into effect. I am informed by AIB that no such payments have been made to EBS management since 1992 and no bonuses of any kind have been paid to this cadre of employee since 2008 in line with the conditions outlined above.

### **Mineral Oil Licences**

62. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Finance if a new mineral licence must be

[Deputy Denis Naughten.]

obtained for a lease when the owner of the filling station has a valid mineral oil licence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40453/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that it is the person who sells, delivers or deals in mineral oil on a premises for use as a propellant, that must be licensed in respect of that premises. Sections 101(1) and 102(1)(d) Finance Act 1999 refer:

*Section 101(1)*, There shall be charged, levied and paid on a licence granted by the Commissioners to be taken out annually by every person who produces, sells, delivers or deals in on any premises any mineral oil, other than additives, for use as a propellant which is chargeable with mineral oil tax, a duty of excise, in this Chapter referred to as the licence duty, in respect of each such premises.

*Section 102(1)(d)*, It shall be an offence under this subsection for a person to produce or sell on, or to deliver from, any premises, or otherwise deal in, any mineral oil, other than additives, for use as a propellant which is chargeable with mineral oil tax unless such person holds a licence granted under section 101 in respect of such mineral oil and in respect of such premises.

Therefore, if a person is licensed to sell mineral oil at a premises, then leases the premises to a tenant, the tenant must obtain a new licence before he/she can sell mineral oil. A licence is a permission to the holder of the same to sell mineral oil, it is not a permission for any other person to sell the oil.

### **Tax Reliefs**

63. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Finance if he intends to sign a commencement order in respect of provisions of the Finance Act 2011 which provided for tax relief on expenditure on works to improve the energy efficiency of private homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40460/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Section 13 of Finance Act 2011 provided for income tax relief at the standard rate for expenditure incurred by individuals on a range of works carried out to improve the energy efficiency of residential premises situated in the State. The underpinning legislation for the scheme was subject to Commencement Order. However, that legislation, on review, was found to have flaws and would have required amendment before it could be implemented.

As part of the announcement in the Jobs Initiative, the Government undertook to provide further funding for the grants available under the Better Energy Homes scheme operated by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Because of these circumstances, I decided to review the requirement for a coexisting tax incentive for similar works and, following this review, I decided not to proceed with the introduction of the tax relief scheme. It is worth pointing out that it was never envisaged that individuals could qualify for both the grants and the proposed tax relief. Refocusing the funding such that it is provided via the grants scheme clarifies Government support measures for energy efficiency works.

### **Fiscal Policy**

64. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the changes to table 2.1 from the mid term fiscal review November 2011 as a result of the downgrading by him of our growth rates as stated on budget day 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40475/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Table 2.1 of the Medium-Term Fiscal Statement (MTFS) set out the overall levels of consolidation that it is estimated are required to adhere to the General Government deficit targets for each of the years 2012-2015 as set by the ECOFIN Council in December 2010. While the real GDP growth forecast for 2012 was marginally revised downwards in Budget 2012 relative to the MTFS, to 1.3 per cent from 1.6 per cent, the GDP deflator was revised up (on foot of the increase in VAT and a minor improvement in the terms-of-trade). As a result, the nominal level of GDP in 2012 is broadly unchanged. The real GDP growth forecasts for each of the years 2013-2015 in Budget 2012 are unchanged from the MTFS.

The levels of consolidation for each of the years 2012-2015 as outlined in the MTFS are still viewed as being sufficient to adhere to the General Government deficit targets for those years as set by the ECOFIN Council in December 2010. Given the difficulties in forecasting in the current uncertain environment, these estimates will continue to be assessed over the coming months and years in light of more up-to-date information that becomes available.

### **Tax Reliefs**

65. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding mortgage interest relief in respect of persons (details supplied) in Dublin 13; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40476/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As I stated in my Budget speech, the Government has now fulfilled its commitment contained in the Programme for Government to increase the rate of mortgage interest relief to 30 per cent for first-time buyers who took out their first mortgage in that period. I will be looking at the technical detail of the legislation in preparation for the Finance Bill and I will take the highlighted case into consideration in that regard.

### **Consultancy Contracts**

66. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Finance the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40506/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As clarified with the Deputy's office, my Department had no expenditure on public relations consultants during the years 2010-2011.

*Question No. 67 answered with Question No. 61.*

### **Tax Code**

68. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide a list of companies which availed of the provisions under the Finance (No. 2) Act 2008 amendments to sections 766 and 766A Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 which provide for companies to claim a tax refund on research and development costs even though they had not paid sufficient corporation tax that year; and the amount paid to each by the Exchequer. [40541/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that their obligation to observe confidentiality in relation to the tax affairs of taxpayers and small groups of taxpayers precludes them from providing the information requested by the Deputy on a company by company basis.

### Ministerial Appointments

69. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Finance the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40550/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In response to the Deputy's question 6 new Committees or advisory bodies have been established under the remit of my Department since March 2011. Details of these bodies are contained in the following table:

Committees and Advisory Groups

Title	Function
Inter-Departmental Mortgage Arrears Working Group	This group was established in July 2011 to consider further actions to alleviate the increasing problem of mortgage arrears and it reported its findings to the Governments Economic Management Council at the end of September. This group has now terminated
Mortgage Arrears Steering Group	This group was established in December 2011 to, inter alia, progress the recommendations set out in the report of the Mortgage Arrears Steering Group as approved by Government.
Fiscal Advisory Council:	As Minister for Finance I announced the establishment of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council on 7 July 2011. The Council is part of a wider agenda of reform of Ireland's budgetary architecture which is envisaged in the Programme for Government. When I announced the establishment of the Council, it was stated that the Council would be an independent body whose existence and independence would be underpinned by legislation to be brought forward by Government in the Fiscal Responsibility Bill by the end of March 2012. The role of the Council is to provide an assessment of, and comment publicly on, whether the Government is meeting its own stated budgetary targets and objectives. It will also be charged with assessing the appropriateness and soundness of the Government's fiscal stance and macroeconomic projections as well as an assessment of the extent of compliance with the Government's fiscal rules. The latter are also to be brought forward in the proposed Fiscal Responsibility Bill.
NewERA	The establishment of NewERA and the Strategic Investment Fund under the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) was announced on Thursday, 29 September 2011. NewERA has been established on a non-statutory basis as a Shareholder Executive within the NTMA. NewERA will bring forward proposals by mid-2012 for consideration by Government on options for moving towards a full holding company status which could own the shares in commercial semi-states. The policy objective behind NewERA is to modernise the manner in which Government manages its shareholding in the semi-state companies and will oversee the corporate governance of commercial semi-states from a shareholder perspective. The Strategic Investment Fund, which will be the forerunner of the Strategic Investment Bank, will, following appropriate legislative changes to the investment policy of the National Pensions Reserve Fund (NPRF), channel commercial investment from the NPRF towards productive investment in the Irish economy.
The Commission on Credit Unions	The Commission on Credit Unions was established by the Government on 31 May 2011. Its purpose is to review the future of the credit union movement and make recommendations in relation to the most effective regulatory structure for credit unions, taking into account their not-for-profit mandate, their volunteer ethos and community focus, while paying due regard to the need to fully protect depositors savings and financial stability.
The Financial Inclusion Strategy Implementation Working Group	The Financial Inclusion Strategy Implementation Working Group was set up on 8 December 2011 on foot of a Ministerial decision. It is chaired by this department and is comprised of representatives from An Post, AIB, BOI, IL&P, Department of Social Protection, St Vincent de Paul, the Central Bank, the Money Advisory Bureau Service and the National Consumer Agency.

### Tax Reliefs

70. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Finance if he intends to issue a commencement order regarding tax relief on expenditure on works to improve the energy efficiency

of private homes as provided for in budget 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40580/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Section 13 of Finance Act 2011 provided for income tax relief at the standard rate for expenditure incurred by individuals on a range of works carried out to improve the energy efficiency of residential premises situated in the State. The underpinning legislation for the scheme was subject to Commencement Order. However, that legislation, on review, was found to have flaws and would have required amendment before it could be implemented.

As part of the announcement in the Jobs Initiative, the Government undertook to provide further funding for the grants available under the Better Energy Homes scheme operated by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Because of these circumstances, I decided to review the requirement for a co-existing tax incentive for similar works and, following this review, I decided not to proceed with the introduction of the tax relief scheme.

It is worth pointing out that it was never envisaged that individuals could qualify for both the grants and the proposed tax relief. Refocusing the funding such that it is provided via the grants scheme clarifies Government support measures for energy efficiency works.

### **Tax Code**

71. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will advise on a case (details supplied). [40584/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The details supplied appear to relate to the restriction on the deductibility of interest in computing taxable rental income from residential property: in the case of interest accruing on or after 7 April 2009 (insofar as it would otherwise be allowable) the deduction available to the landlord is limited to 75% of such interest. The thrust of the matter raised in the question is that this restriction can result in a charge to tax and the income levy of rental profits in excess of the actual profits from the letting of such property. This position appears to be based on an assumption that in the case of income from investment assets (expected to produce income and capital gains) the taxable amount should inherently be computed after allowing a full deduction for the funding costs of the asset acquisition. However, there is no such general principle in the tax code and there are many examples of situations where interest deductibility is not allowed in the context of investment assets, for example, the funding costs of quoted shares are not generally deductible against dividend income from those shares.

The interest restriction on residential landlords was introduced in the April 2009 supplementary budget as part of an urgent revenue-raising package aimed at stabilising the public finances. The reduction in the level at which interest could be claimed for residential rental properties significantly reduced the cost of this relief to the Exchequer. Increasing the relief to 100% could result in a cost to the Exchequer of the order of €100 million per annum. In a context where tax expenditures are being significantly cut back in many areas to broaden the tax base, a 25% restriction on allowable interest available to residential landlords does not seem an unreasonable measure.

*Question No. 72 answered with Question No. 61.*

### **National Asset Management Agency**

73. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Finance the number of persons who will be appointed to the new advisory group being set up to advise on the National Asset

[Deputy Michael McCarthy.]

Management Agency strategy; the procedures involved in appointing these persons; if they will be remunerated; when the terms of reference for this group will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40635/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy will be aware that I have asked Mr Michael Geoghegan to chair the small group of advisors which I am appointing to advise me on NAMA. Mr Geoghegan has agreed to carry out his role on a pro bono basis. I will soon appoint the other members of the group, at which stage I will publish the terms of appointment for the members, as well as the terms of reference for the group itself.

### **Bond Markets**

74. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance when he expects Ireland will be back borrowing on the international sovereign debt markets in a meaningful way; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40658/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** It is the stated intention of the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) to return to sovereign debt markets as soon as market conditions permit. My hope is that a full return to the bond markets will become possible by mid-2013. The steps necessary to position the NTMA for such a return include continued progress in the reduction of the budget deficit in line with the targets agreed in the EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support, together with the implementation of policies that will see us return to sustainable economic growth. Of course, resolution of the wider euro area sovereign debt and banking crisis is also a critical factor. The NTMA is in ongoing contact with market participants and will advise me when it feels that the time is right to re-enter the markets.

I should say that, based on conservative projections of our funding needs, there is no urgency about a return to the markets. Indeed, the purpose of a programme such as the EU/IMF Programme for Ireland is to provide the space necessary for economic and fiscal adjustment to take place. Based on current projections and assuming no market access, the State has access to sufficient funds for its needs well into the second half of 2013.

### **National Asset Management Agency**

75. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the role he envisages for the new advisory board on the National Asset Management Agency; the person to whom the advisory board will report; and if he will specify its relationship with the board of the agency itself. [40659/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I have asked Mr Michael Geoghegan to chair the small group of advisors which I am appointing to advise me on the future strategic direction and organisation of NAMA. The Advisory Group will report to me, although I expect that the NAMA Board will support and facilitate the work of the group. I also welcome the recent statement by the Chairman of the NAMA Board of its intention to draft an implementation plan to address the strategic challenges that Mr Geoghegan's review has set for the Agency.

### **Banks Recapitalisation**

76. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance, with regard to the bailout of Irish banks by the Government, where has the initial bailout money gone; where is the money that is now being given to banks coming from; the amount of money that has been or will be given to each of the Irish banks from the Government; on whose recommendation did the

Government decide to bailout the banks and are there conditions placed on banks for the use of bailout money; and if so, who is monitoring the banks to make sure they comply with the conditions. [40661/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware the provision of State funds to the financial institutions is to ensure that those institutions have sufficient capital to meet regulatory requirements. The capital injections were, for the greater part, required to cover losses, or loss provisions, on the loan books of those institutions. The capital has been provided by the Exchequer or the National Pension Reserve Fund (NPRF) by way of Promissory Notes or cash in respect of preference shares, ordinary or contingent capital instruments. The bank recapitalisation commitments made by the State to date are set out in the table. Please note that these figures only represent the capital committed to recapitalising these institutions and they do not take account of revenues received directly or indirectly from the banks. It should also be noted that the total cost of the recapitalisations would have been significantly higher were it not for the burden sharing achieved with holders of subordinated debt in each of the institutions.

No State capital was provided to any financial institution without a detailed examination of the capital requirement. External consultants were engaged to assess loan losses and capital requirements on an institution by institution basis. The Department, the Central Bank/Financial Regulator and/or the NTMA then advised the Minister in this regard.

There are extensive terms and conditions applying to banks in receipt of State Aid. These conditions arise in the first instance from the requirements of the CIFS Act. Under this Act and the Credit Institutions (Eligible Liabilities Guarantee) Scheme the State provided a guarantee of deposits and debt of the covered institutions. Further terms and conditions apply, on a case by case basis, in relation to the provision of capital by the State. The conditions, in this regard are set out in Subscription and Placement Agreements and the relationship between the State and IBRC is prescribed in legislation and in a Relationship Framework. This latter document, drawn up by the Minister, sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties. Relationship Frameworks are currently being reviewed in the case of IBRC and developed for the other covered institutions. Furthermore, the provision of State Aid, is in every instance, subject to EU Commission approval under State Aid and Competition Authority Rules. In this context the institutions that need State Aid are required to submit a restructuring plan to the Commission indicating in specific terms how the institution proposes to address its problems and the timeframe within which this is to be achieved. As part of the approval process the Commission will detail terms and conditions in relation to the proposed restructuring including restrictions to ensure compliance with Competition Rules. Finally, the overall national strategy to stabilise and restructure the financial services sector is an integral part of the Programme of Financial Support with our international partners. There are specific time based targets associated with this strategy. Progress on these targets is reported on a regular basis.

A number of bodies including the Department of Finance, the Central Bank and Financial Regulator and the EU Commission are directly involved in monitoring the performance and compliance of the various institutions on an on-going basis.

€bn	AIB/EBS	BOI	IL&P	IBRC	Total
Government preference Shares (2009) — NPRF	3.5	3.5*	—	—	7.0

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€bn	AIB/EBS	BOI	IL&P	IBRC	Total
Capital contributions (with Promissory Notes as consideration) /Special Investment Shares (2010) — Exchequer **	0.9	—	—	30.7	31.6
Ordinary Share Capital (2009) — Exchequer	—	—	—	4.0	4.0
Ordinary Share Capital (2010) — NPRF	3.7	—	—	—	3.7
Total pre-PCAR 2011 (A)	8.1	3.5	0	34.7	46.3
PCAR 2011:	AIB/EBS	BoI	IL&P	Anglo/INBS	Total
Capital from Exchequer***	3.9	—	2.7	—	6.5
NPRF Capital	8.8	1.2	—	—	10.0
Total PCAR (B)	12.7	1.2	2.7	—	16.5
Total Cost of Recap for State (A) + (B)	20.7	4.7	2.7	34.7	62.8

\* €1.7bn of BoI's government preference shares were converted to equity in May/June 2010 (€1.8bn still left in existence). The government also received €0.5bn from the warrants relating to BoI's preference shares (excluded from table above).

\*\* The IBRC amount is made up of a total capital contribution for Anglo / INBS of €30.6bn and a special investment share of €0.1bn (INBS). The Anglo / INBS capital contribution impacted in full on the GGB in 2010. The consideration for the Anglo / INBS capital contribution was €30.6bn of promissory notes. These Promissory Notes are an amount due from the State to IBRC. Each year, on 31 March, €3.06bn is paid by the Exchequer to Anglo / INBS as part of the scheduled repayments of the promissory notes. The first such repayment was made on 31 March 2010.

\*\*\* The Exchequer cost of the 2011 BoI recap is shown net of share sale to private investors (Completed in October, 2011)

### Bank Guarantee Scheme

77. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance the rationale for the Government guarantees of the Irish banks in September 2009; the nature, extent and limitations; and if there is an expiration date for the guarantees. [40662/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I assume the Deputy is referring to the Guarantee introduced in September, 2008, and not September, 2009. The Deputy will be aware that the previous Government announced the Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Scheme (“CIFS”) on 30 September, 2008, in order to maintain financial stability for the benefit of depositors and businesses in general, and for the Irish economy as a whole. This action was taken following advice from the Governor of the Central Bank and the Financial Regulator about the impact of the international market turmoil on the Irish banking system.

The CIFS expired on 29 September, 2010, and was effectively superseded by the Credit Institutions (Eligible Liabilities) Guarantee Scheme (“ELG Scheme”) which came into effect on 9 December, 2009. The main differences between the CIFS and the ELG Scheme are:

- the duration of the guarantee for fixed-term deposits extended from the 2 year limitation under the CIFS to 5 years under ELG Scheme;
- the exclusion of dated subordinated debt and asset covered securities from the ELG Scheme.

Following the recent approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas the terms of the ELG Scheme have been extended in law to 31 December, 2012, subject to EU Commission approval every 6 months. On Thursday last, EU state aid approval was given to the prolongation of the issuance period for eligible liabilities to 30 June, 2012. The prolongation of the ELG Scheme is

seen by the State authorities as necessary for financial stability reasons given the continuing market dislocation for Sovereigns and banks.

Further information on both Schemes, including the liabilities covered, can be obtained on the Department of Finance website (<http://www.finance.gov.ie>)

### **Banks Recapitalisation**

78. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance the reason the Government bailed out mismanaged banks rather than other financially challenged private companies, businesses or individuals; and what makes a private commercial bank different in nature from other private companies in its ability to secure a Government bailout. [40663/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The previous Government announced the Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Scheme (“CIFS”) on 30 September, 2008, in order to maintain financial stability for the benefit of depositors and businesses in general, and for the Irish economy as a whole. This action was taken following advice from the Governor of the Central Bank and the Financial Regulator about the impact of the international market turmoil on the Irish banking system. Similar State interventions across Europe and the world were introduced around that time. The Deputy will be aware that the CIFS expired on 29 September, 2010, and was effectively superseded by the Credit Institutions (Eligible Liabilities) Guarantee Scheme (“ELG Scheme”) which came into effect on 9 December, 2009. The reason the Government continues to provide financial support in the form of the ELG Scheme to those banks of systemic importance to the Irish financial system is that, having consulted with the Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, it considers that circumstances set out in section 2(1) of the Credit Institutions (Financial Support) Act, 2008, exist and are likely to exist until 30 June, 2011, the financial support end date recently approved by EU state aid.

A fundamental element of Government Strategy has been to restore a functioning banking system. However, it is important to point out that the Government has made other important interventions in the wider economy. For example, as part of Bank of Ireland and AIB’s capital raising requirements, the pillar banks have both agreed to meet an SME lending target of €3 billion each in the 12 month period for 2011, €3.5 billion each for 2012, and €4 billion each for 2013. The banks produce an annual SME lending plan for each of these 12 month periods to demonstrate the manner in which they intend to meet the targets.

In addition, the Programme for Government contains a commitment to help homeowners who are facing difficulty with their mortgage repayments and the Government will examine a number of proposals in relation to this commitment. In this context, the Economic Management Council asked that further work be carried out to address the situation of over-indebted mortgage holders with a view to identifying a range of responses appropriate to individual circumstances. To facilitate this commitment, a Mortgage Group has carried out this work and reported to Government.

These interventions and the radical restructuring of the banking system are designed to put our banking system and economy on a firm footing which is essential to Ireland’s economic recovery.

### **Banking Sector Regulation**

79. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance who owns the Central Bank of Ireland; is it State owned, privately owned, or some combination; who are the directors and principal shareholders and who appoints the shareholders and directors and to whom are they accountable. [40664/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Central Bank of Ireland is a statutory body; it was established in 1942 in accordance with the Central Bank Act 1942 and is now a constituent part of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) established by European treaty. It is managed and controlled by the Central Bank Commission. The Minister for Finance is the sole subscriber to and holder of the Central Bank's capital. The Central Bank's surplus income is payable to the Exchequer in accordance with regulations made in accordance with section 32H of the Central Bank Act 1942.

The members of the Central Bank Commission are the Governor, appointed by the Government, the Secretary General of the Department of Finance, appointed by the Government, the Deputy Governors, appointed by the Central Bank Commission and between 6 and 8 ordinary members appointed by the Minister for Finance. These are currently: Prof. Patrick Honohan, Mr. Kevin Cardiff, Mr. Matthew Elderfield, Mr. Stefan Gerlach, Mr. Max Watson, Mr. Michael Soden, Mr. Alan Ahearne, Ms. Blanaid Clarke, Prof. John Fitzgerald and Mr. Des Geraghty.

The Central Bank is independent in the exercise of its functions but the Governor and the Deputy Governors may be required to appear before committees of the Houses of the Oireachtas to address certain matters, including the Bank's annual regulatory performance statement.

80. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance the names and details of the directors of the private commercial banks who have been given money by the Government operating here; if he will name the public interest directors on the bank boards in Ireland; if they issue publicly available reports on their job performance or copies of the written conditions of employment and contractual obligations applicable to public interest directors. [40665/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy will be aware that directors at the covered institutions, including public interest directors who were nominated by my predecessor, are appointed and remunerated by the respective boards. Accordingly, disclosure of details concerning their remuneration and performance are covered by various rules and procedures. To the extent that such information sought by the Deputy has already been publicly released, it is available in the published annual reports and/or at the web sites of the respective covered institutions.

81. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance the persons or groups responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory and code of practice regulation of banks and other financial institutions; if he will confirm whether the Governor of the Central Bank and the Financial Regulator have written contracts of employment with clear performance related conditions; within that contract, is there a code of practice or some other integral element of their contracts and conditions; did the most recent Financial Regulators and Governors of the Bank of Ireland have written contracts of employment; if he will further confirm if the performances of the two most recent holders of those offices raise questions about whether the persons involved failed to honour those contracts; are directors of financial institutions, including banks, subject to compliance with the same legal obligations as directors of non-banking companies such as legal structures relating to reckless trading and personal liability; and the reason that the Central Bank of Ireland is now being advertised as a supervisory body as opposed to the Financial Regulator, which was until recently. [40666/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Central Bank of Ireland is responsible for financial regulation in Ireland. The Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (the Financial Regulator) ceased to exist on 1 October 2010 with the commencement the relevant provisions of the Central Bank Reform Act 2010, which created a single structure within the

Central Bank controlled and managed by the Central Bank Commission. The powers and functions of the Financial Regulator were subsumed into the Central Bank of Ireland. Under sections 19 and 23 of the Central Bank Act 1942, the terms and conditions of employment of the Central Bank Governor and the Deputy Governor (fulfilling the role largely filled by the former office of Financial Regulator) are matters for the Central Bank Commission. Therefore, I am not privy to the contractual arrangements that apply. However, I am informed by the Central Bank that both positions are subject to the Ethics in Public Office Act and the Central Bank's Code of Ethics and Behaviour. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the contractual position of individuals who have held these posts previously.

Finally, regarding reckless trading and personal liability, the obligations of managers of regulated financial service providers imposed by Irish financial service legislation are in addition to any obligations imposed on them by other law, including. As regards the Companies Acts, financial institutions are in the same position as all other companies.

82. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide the legal definition of a bank in Ireland; and the legal definition of a banker. [40667/11]

84. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance if there are copies of the licences necessary for banks to operate here readily available; are the licence conditions governing foreign banks operating in Ireland different from those of the Irish banks; if it is possible to trade as a bank in Ireland without a licence; the persons responsible for monitoring banks compliance with the conditions of their banking licences and is this compliance transparent; the legal consequences for the banks and their customers if the banks have breached one or more of the conditions of their banking licence; if a bank is found to have been operating in breach of one or more of the conditions of their licence, are the agreements they have entered into while doing so legally binding; is a bank selling loans and mortgages while insolvent in breach of the condition of its licence to operate; and when was the last governmental review of the licence conditions governing financial institutions. [40669/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 82 and 84 together.

The Central Bank Acts — and in particular the Central Bank Act 1971 — set out the principal legal definitions related to banking in Ireland, including provisions relating to 'banking business' and persons deemed to hold themselves out as bankers.

The Central Bank is the statutory body with responsibility for licensing banks and attaching conditions to those licences. Copies of banking licences are not available to the public. However, section 12 of the Central Bank Act 1971 provides that the Central Bank must publish a list a persons holding banking licences at least once a year; that information is published on the Central Bank's website.

With regard to foreign banks the supervisory responsibilities of financial regulators in relation to credit institutions operating in more than one EU member state have been set out by the EU in a number of Directives and cover both home and host state regulators. A credit institution authorised in Ireland must notify the Central Bank if it wishes to operate under a passporting arrangement in another EU Member State. Credit institutions authorised in another EU Member State must notify their home state regulator if they wish to operate under a passporting arrangement in Ireland.

The Central Bank is responsible for monitoring compliance with the terms of banking licences and therefore matters arising from any breach of a banking licence fall under its responsibility. On the question of transparency, the Central Bank is subject to a duty of banking

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secrecy in accordance with the Supervisory Directives and section 33AK of the Central Bank Act 1942 when carrying out its regulatory functions.

83. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance the assets that underpin the creation of Irish bank notes; are there any legal requirements that loans advanced by banks should be supported by assets or deposits held by those banks; the body that decides the regularity and the quantities of the Irish euro that are printed; the location at which the euro is printed and the way its printing process is monitored; and the conditions under which money is generated. [40668/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The amount of Euro banknotes on the balance sheet of the Central Bank of Ireland represents Ireland's share of total Euro banknotes in circulation. Ireland is currently allocated 1.46 per cent of the total euro banknotes in circulation based on its fully paid up share of the capital of the European Central Bank (ECB). These banknotes are backed by assets which relate to Eurosystem monetary policy operations, and primarily comprise loans provided to credit institutions and securities (Government bonds) purchased in connection with monetary policy operations. The income earned on assets backing the Euro banknotes in circulation is pooled by all Eurosystem National Central Banks and distributed back to these Banks in accordance with their respective share of the ECB's capital. With regard to legal requirements in place that loans advanced by banks should be supported by assets or deposits held by those banks, I refer the Deputy to my reply to Question No. 85 on today's Order Paper.

Euro banknotes have legal tender status within the Member States whose currency is the euro. The issue of euro banknotes is not subject to quantitative or other limits. Banknotes are printed in accordance with a pooled production system within the European System of Central Banks. Under this system, the ECB coordinates the annual banknote requirements of the eurosystem with the National Central Banks and allocates banknote production.

The Central Bank of Ireland is typically allocated one denomination per year. Under this pooled production arrangement, the Central Bank of Ireland printed 127.5 million €10 banknotes in 2010.

There are 13 printing works fully accredited by the ECB to print euro banknotes. In Ireland our production allocation of euro banknotes is printed by the Central Bank of Ireland. All accredited printing works must report progress on the production plan to the ECB on a regular basis.

*Question No. 84 answered with Question No. 82.*

85. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Finance if the fractional reserve banking applies to the banks in the context of their lending policies; if banks are obliged to retain a certain minima of retained deposits relative to their lending volumes and if so the ratios of same; the minima of liquid cash reserves or liquidity ratios financial institutions are obliged to retain in their reserves at all times; the person who decides the ratios relating to solvency and liquidity should be and the person who monitors compliance with any such strictures; the way these ratios are determined; if there have been any changes in these regulations over the years; and the mechanism by which an insolvent bank can give out loans or offer mortgages if it has no money. [40670/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As Minister for Finance, I have no function in relation to Euro area monetary policy operations. The Governor of the Central Bank carries

out his European Central Bank-related functions under the Treaty of Rome and the Statute of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and his independence in doing so is guaranteed. Section 19A(2) of the Central Bank Act 1942 provides that the Governor has sole responsibility for the performance of the functions imposed, and the exercise of powers conferred, on the Bank by or under the Rome Treaty or the ESCB Statute. I am advised by the Central Bank that, as part of its approach to monetary policy implementation, the ECB requires credit institutions in the euro area to hold compulsory deposits on accounts with the national Central Banks: these are called “minimum” or “required” reserves. For Irish banks, the reserves must be held at the Central Bank of Ireland. The amount of required reserves to be held by each institution is determined by its reserve base. The reserve base of an institution is defined in relation to prescribed elements of its balance sheet.

In order to determine an institution’s reserve requirement, the reserve base is multiplied by a reserve ratio. The ECB applies a uniform positive reserve ratio to most of the items included in the reserve base. This reserve ratio was set at 2% at the start of the monetary union.

The compliance with reserve requirements is determined on the basis of the average of the daily balances on the institutions’ reserve accounts over the maintenance period of around one month.

The ECB announced on 8 December that it will reduce the reserve ratio for Euro area banks to 1% as of the reserve maintenance period starting on 18 January 2012. This is part of the ECB’s measures to support bank lending.

Bank solvency is a regulatory as distinct from a monetary policy matter and solvency requirements are set out in the Capital Requirements Directive (CRD) which implements the Basel II capital framework in the European Union. By requiring banks to hold minimum levels of capital to absorb unexpected losses that a bank may face, capital requirements provide for continuing bank solvency so that they can continue to provide credit and other functions into the economy. The CRD was adopted in 2006, superseding previous directives in this area, and came fully into effect from 1 January 2008.

The Central Bank of Ireland is responsible, in accordance with the legislation transposing the CRD into Irish law, for the regulation and supervision of the capital, or solvency, requirements of banks in Ireland. Irish banks are required to calculate capital requirements and maintain a minimum level of own funds in accordance with the CRD as a cushion against credit and other risks and to absorb unexpected losses that a bank may face. In addition to capital requirements imposed under the CRD, I am advised that the Central Bank, as part of its prudential oversight of banks in Ireland, imposes qualitative and quantitative requirements on banks in relation to the management of liquidity risk. These requirements are imposed by the Central Bank pursuant to its powers under the Central Bank Act 1971 and the European Communities (Licensing and Supervision of Credit Institutions) Regulations, 1992, (S.I. 395 of 1992). The latest iteration of these requirements is set out in Requirements for the management of liquidity risk, published by the Central Bank in June 2009 and available to download from its website.

Arising from the recent financial crisis, the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision adopted amendments to the Basel capital framework in December 2010 to significantly increase the quality and quantity of capital held within the banking system relative to banks’ risk-weighted assets and to impose standard liquidity requirements. These changes, known as Basel III, will require amendments to the Capital Requirements Directive which will be implemented in due course in the EU.

### Financial Services Regulation

86. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the proposed introduction of a financial transactions tax in the EU; if he has undertaken an assessment of the way such a tax would impact on employment in the International Financial Services Centre in Dublin; if he believes a UK opt out from such a tax would put the IFSC at a significant competitive disadvantage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40672/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In October the European Commission published its proposal for a Financial Transactions Tax, or FTT, and its assessment of the impact of the measure. We are analysing the proposals in the draft Directive. The proposal will now be subject to detailed discussions at Council Working Party level and, as always, we will participate constructively in those discussions.

There is no consensus as yet among European Member States on this issue, either about whether an FTT should be introduced, or what precise form it should take.

It is important that any proposal does not have the effect of encouraging relocation of activity or damaging the EU's competitiveness in financial services. It is for this reason that there is an emerging view that the EU and other international groupings, such as the IMF and G20, should move in tandem in a global manner to avoid the danger of financial sector business gravitating to jurisdictions where taxes are not levied on financial transactions. Indeed the Commission has indicated that they see their proposal as part of a wider development in this area.

I have said previously that any FTT would be best applied on a wide international basis to include the major financial centres. I also think it important that the proposed Directive would apply on an EU wide basis to prevent any distortion of activity within the European Union. As I stated in response to the Deputy on 5 October last, if the UK decides not to impose an FTT, there would be a great risk of displacement of business from our financial services sector.

The matter will be discussed again next year at an ECOFIN meeting once the Council Working Party has discussed the proposal.

87. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax paid by companies operating in the International Financial Services Centre, Dublin in 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40673/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated corporation tax paid in 2010 by the Irish Financial Services Centre is of the order of €630 million. With the change in the corporation tax rate from 10% to the standard rate now applying to IFSC activities it is generally speaking no longer possible to distinguish between corporation tax paid solely on IFSC activities and on other income. An exception is made in the case of the main associated banks where an estimate of the tax paid by them on their IFSC activities is derived from indicative data available. This estimate is incorporated in the €630 million figure provided above.

Other tax remitted by the IFSC, such as PAYE, DIRT on deposit interest, and stamp duties on credit cards, ATM cards and cheques, are not included in the figures given, since the tax liability is not on the institutions themselves.

### Tax Collection

88. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details of the amount of income earned by the top 100 earners; the amount of tax that was paid on their income; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40690/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that for the tax year 2009, the latest year for which the necessary detailed data is available, the top 100 incomes earners declared €585 million in income and paid €169 million in income tax. The Deputy will be aware that from the tax year 2010 onwards, the high earner's restriction for individuals on high incomes, who make significant use of certain specified tax reliefs, has been further tightened such that an effective tax rate of approximately 30% now applies.

These reliefs do not include health expenses and standard tax credits, which are available to all taxpayers.

### **Disabled Drivers**

89. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance if and or when an application for a primary medical certificate is likely to be considered in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40716/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The initial application for a Primary Medical Certificate under the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers (Tax Concessions) Regulations 1994, is made to the Senior Medical Officer of the relevant local Health Service Executive administrative area. If the Primary Medical Certificate is refused, the person may appeal the refusal to the Disabled Drivers Medical Board of Appeal, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

I understand the person appealed the decision of the Senior Medical Officer not to grant a Primary Medical Certificate and the appeal was subsequently refused by the Medical Board of Appeal. If the person wishes to apply again for a Primary Medical Certificate, the application to the Senior Medical Officer must be accompanied by a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner indicating that the practitioner has formed the opinion that the medical condition of the person concerned has materially disimproved since the previous application.

I would point out that the Medical Board of Appeal is independent in the exercise of its functions.

### **Budget Submissions**

90. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance in view of budget 2012 being informed by the principle of fairness, if a poverty impact assessment of budgetary measures, weighing up different budgetary options and their impact, was carried out in advance of decisions being made; and if so, when this assessment will be published. [40753/11]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** As the Deputy is aware it has been a standard practice of my Department to carry out an examination of the Budget Income Tax Measures using the Guidelines for Poverty Impact Assessment, prepared by the Social Inclusion Division in the Department of Social Protection under the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 and before that, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy 1997-2007. This examination is normally included in one of the Appendices of the Budget Book. However, as no significant changes were made to Income Tax in Budget 2010 or in Budget 2012, consequently no such examinations were undertaken in those years.

I am aware that the Department of Social Protection undertook an analysis of the distributive and poverty impact of the welfare measures on individuals and families in advance of Budget 2012. It is my understanding that this analysis will be published shortly.

### European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

91. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide details of the new European Commission fund to retrain construction workers here; the way they can access same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40483/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon):** On 14 November 2011, the European Council approved co-financing of €35.7m under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in respect of three applications for assistance for almost 9,000 former workers made redundant in the construction NACE 41, 43 and 71 sub-sectors between 1 July 2009 and 31 March 2010. Redundant workers were identified based on evidence of statutory redundancy payments and on data from the apprenticeship database held by FÁS.

The final EU funding decision releasing a maximum 65% EGF contribution of €35.7m in total is expected shortly. Including the national 35% co-funding element, the measures included in the EGF applications amount to circa €55m in total. A number of active labour market activation measures, for which EGF co-financing has been sought, are already being provided by the relevant service providers and funded from national sources. These measures include career guidance, full, part-time and evening further education and training courses, apprenticeship on- and off-the-job training, full and part-time third level education programmes and related training and education allowances where appropriate.

The main service providers delivering these supports are FÁS, Vocational Education Committees and publicly funded higher education institutes. Training is also being provided through contracted private providers and the technical employment support grant mechanism administered by FÁS.

My Department has not notified any of the identified redundant workers to date. It is intended that letters notifying all persons who are eligible for EGF co-financed assistance of a number of new supports which will be made available to them will issue very shortly.

### FÁS Training Programmes

92. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if the necessary funding for a scheme (details supplied) in County Kerry will be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40539/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I understand from FÁS that the budget allocation for the scheme in question, the Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme for 2011, has been fully committed and consequently FÁS is not in a position to issue any further contracts at present.

FÁS has made an application for approval for a Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme for 2012 to assist redundant apprentices to complete the minimum duration for on-the-job training at Phase 3, Phase 5 and Phase 7 of the Standard Based Apprenticeship Programme.

I am informed however that FÁS is continuing to take applications for the scheme pending the allocation and approval of the 2012 budget which will issue to FÁS from my Department in the near future.

### Languages Programme

93. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will re-consider the abolition of the modern language programme in primary schools in view of the fact that this provides an essential improvement in the education process for primary school children; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40384/11]

108. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will reverse the decision to cut the modern languages in primary schools initiative. [40443/11]

109. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will review the decision to abolish the modern languages in primary schools initiative which has won support and in view of the fact that various studies by recognised agencies including the Royal Irish Academy, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the Council of Europe policy profile have all outlined the importance of this initiative and that as recently as last month all EU countries including Ireland pledged to step up their efforts to implement the Barcelona Agreement, an agreement which calls for assistance to be put in place to facilitate early language learning of at least two foreign languages by 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40445/11]

110. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to introduce European languages to children at primary school level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40459/11]

111. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will review his decision to withdraw support for the modern language programme in our primary schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40463/11]

119. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills in view of the cuts which were hidden in budget 2012 up to 53 schools will be affected in that children who were receiving a third language will possibly no longer be able to do so, if he will review this situation for the sake of the young persons who want to start out life with a third language; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40559/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 93, 108 to 111, inclusive, and 119 together.

As part of the Budget 2012 decisions that have been announced, the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative will be cease at the end of the 2011/2012 school year. The savings from this measure will go towards the cost of implementing the new National Literacy & Numeracy Strategy, which is a key commitment in the Programme for Government.

Since becoming Minister for Education and Skills, I have spoken repeatedly about the need to raise educational standards. In terms of curriculum reform, the priorities in the period ahead are to strengthen achievement in literacy and numeracy, to implement reforms in maths, Irish and science, and to progress junior cycle reforms. The Modern Languages Initiative was a pilot scheme involving approximately 500 schools and had been operating since 1998. It has not been possible for other schools to join the pilot project for a number of years and the way in which it operated was not capable of being rolled out to all 3,200 primary schools. The decision to end the scheme was based in part on policy advice from a 2008 Report by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), which has identified serious issues with curricular overload at primary level. The NCCA's advice recommended that Modern languages should not be part of the Primary School Curriculum as an additional and separate subject at present. The primary curriculum is currently being reviewed by the NCCA in the context of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The focus of the review will be on how best to enhance children's learning in these areas, provide a clearer delineation of the learning outcomes required, and integrate into the infant cycle the learning experiences from Aistear, the curriculum framework for early childhood education.

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

At post primary level, targeted support is provided to schools to enable them to diversify language provision with a particular focus on Spanish, Japanese, Russian and Italian. Other languages taught at second level include French, German and Arabic. Participation in foreign languages, relative to other subjects, remains high. The vast majority of students are studying two languages and are therefore developing core skills which will serve them well in future language learning over the lifespan, and there are many opportunities outside the second level system for people to resume language learning.

It was not an easy decision to end this scheme, but I gave careful consideration to the concerns about the teaching of languages before taking it.

### School Accommodation

94. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when an application for additional accommodation in respect of a school (details supplied) in County Laois will be approved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40385/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department is currently considering the application referred to by the Deputy and a decision will be conveyed to the school authority as soon as this process has been completed.

### Departmental Expenditure

95. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40400/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The table provides details of the Subhead Allocations for Vote 26: Education and Skills as contained in the 2011 Revised Estimates Volume.

A provisional outturn for 2011 will not be available until early January 2012. At the end of November, however, gross expenditure of €7.917 billion was equivalent to approximately 89% of the allocation.

2011 allocated budget for Department of Education and Skills

#### VOTE 26: EDUCATION & SKILLS

#### 2011 REVISED ESTIMATES ALLOCATIONS

	Current	Capital	Total
	€000s	€000s	€000s
<i>ADMINISTRATION</i>			
A.1 — SALARIES, WAGES AND ALLOWANCES	62,743		62,743
A.2 — TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	1,577		1,577
A.3 — INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	1,355		1,355
A.4 — POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	3,250		3,250
A.5 — OFFICE MACHINERY AND OTHER OFFICE SUPPLIES	3,462	2,000	5,462
A.6 — OFFICE PREMISES EXPENSES	2,350		2,350
A.7 — CONSULTANCY SERVICES	100		100
A.8 — REGIONAL OFFICE SERVICE	260		260

	Current	Capital	Total
	€000s	€000s	€000s
A.9 — NEPS	18,629		18,629
<i>OTHER SERVICES</i>			
B.1 — G-I-A FOR GEN EXP OF ADULT EDUCATION (NAT LOTTERY)	854		854
B.2 — TRANSPORT SERVICES	179,974		179,974
B.3 — INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES	1,038		1,038
B.4 — UNESCO CONTRIB & INTERNATIONAL EDUC EXCHANGES	2,464		2,464
B.5 — RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	2,475		2,475
B.6 — IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT	25,205		25,205
B.7 — EXPS FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT	3,812		3,812
B.8 — LOCAL DRUGS TASKFORCE	543		543
B.9 — G-I-A FOR GEN EXPS OF YOUTH ORGS (NAT LOTTERY)	9,015		9,015
B.10 — EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGED	1,500	500	2,000
B.11 — OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR 1st & 2nd LEVEL STUDENTS	1,750		1,750
B.12 — RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS REDRESS	45,000		45,000
B.13 — ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC GEN EXPS (G-I-A)	3,544		3,544
B.14 — G-I-A FOR GEN EXP OF SCIENTIFIC & EDUC ORGS (NAT LOTTERY)	196		196
B.15 — NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION	3,350		3,350
B.16 — GEN EXP OF ORGS PROMOTING IRE AS INTERNAT EDU CENTRE	100		100
B.17 — MISCELLANEOUS	5,005		5,005
B.18 — SCHOOLS INFO & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ACTIVITIES	13,578	1,500	15,078
B.19 — COMMISSION ON CHILD ABUSE	12,994		12,994
B.20 — NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK	8,823	500	9,323
<i>FIRST-LEVEL EDUCATION</i>			
C.1 — SALARIES, ETC. OF TEACHERS	2,052,229		2,052,229
C.2 — MODEL SCHOOL — MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	511		511
C.3 — CAPITATION GRANT TOWARDS OPERATING COSTS OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS	187,102		187,102
C.4 — SALARIES ETC. OF NON-TEACHING STAFF IN NAT SCHOOLS	310,451		310,451
C.5 — OTHER GRANTS AND SERVICES	55,337		55,337
C.6 — SUPERANNUATION, ETC. OF TEACHERS	473,474		473,474
C.7 — SPECIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES	6,065		6,065
<i>SECOND-LEVEL &amp; FURTHER EDUCATION</i>			
D.1 — SALARIES ETC. OF TEACHERS IN SEC., COMP & COMM. SCHOOLS	1,180,733		1,180,733
D.2 — GRANTS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL AUTHORITIES	107,191		107,191
D.3 — SALARIES ETC. OF NON-TEACHING STAFF IN SEC, COMP & COMM SCHOOLS	52,151		52,151

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

	Current	Capital	Total
	€000s	€000s	€000s
D.4 — SUPERANNUATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS	344,125		344,125
D.5 — COMPREHENSIVE AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS — RUNNING COSTS	46,342		46,342
D.6 — ANNUAL GRANT TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEES	906,809		906,809
D.7 — PAYMENTS TO LAs RE SUPERANN CHARGES	234,278		234,278
D.8 — MISCELLANEOUS POST-PRIMARY SERVICES	18,574		18,574
D.9 — SPECIAL INITIATIVES ADULT EDUCATION	44,465		44,465
D.10 — EXAMINATIONS	54,310		54,310
<i>THIRD-LEVEL &amp; FURTHER EDUCATION</i>			
E.1 — STUDENT SUPPORT	386,057		386,057
E.2 — UNIV SCHOLARSHIPS, RESEARCH GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS	1,800		1,800
E.3 — AN tÚDARÁS UM ARD-OIDEACHAS G-I-A FOR GEN EXPS	5,587		5,587
E.4 — AN tUDRAS UM ARD-OIDEACHAS — GEN GRANTS TO UNIVS ETC (G-I-A)	1,177,032		1,177,032
E.5 — TRAINING COLLEGES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS EXCL HEA FUNDED	12,549		12,549
E.6 — STRATEGIC INNOVATION FUND	14,000		14,000
E.7 — DUBLIN DENTAL HOSTIPAL — DENTAL EDUCATION (G-I-A)	11,986		11,986
E.8 — DUBLIN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (G-I-A)	7,020		7,020
E.9 — GRANT FOR TUITION FEES TO NON-HEA 3RD LEVEL INSTS	5,475		5,475
E.10 — MISCELLANEOUS	220		220
E.11 — GRANTS TO CERTAIN THIRD LEVEL INSTITUTIONS	17,019		17,019
E.12 — ALLEVIATION OF DISADVANTAGE	16,000		16,000
E.13 — RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	41,085		41,085
E.14 — GRANGEGORMAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	2,080		2,080
<i>CAPITAL SERVICES</i>			
F.1 — 1st & 2ND LEVEL CAPITAL		418,000	418,000
F.2 — PPPs — CAPITAL	41,651	15,500	57,151
F.3 + F04 THIRD LEVEL		57,500	57,500
<i>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</i>			
G.1- FÁS ADMIN & GENERAL EXPENSES	85,491		85,491
G.2 -TRAINING IN & INTEGRATION SUPPORTS	40,267		40,267
G.3 — LEONARDO	140		140
G.4 — FÁS CAPITAL		5,500	5,500
G.5 — PENSION PAYMENTS	30,500		30,500
G.6 — GLOBALISATION FUND	1,000		1,000
G.7 — OPER PROGRAMME FOR HR DEVELOPMENT	1,300		1,300
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8,387,352</b>	<b>501,000</b>	<b>8,888,352</b>

	Current	Capital	Total
	€000s	€000s	€000s
<i>APPROPRIATIONS IN AID</i>			
H.1 — ADMIN & OTHER SERVICE RECEIPTS	30,335	2,501	32,836
H.2 — FIRST LEVEL RECEIPTS	122,437		122,437
H.3 — SECOND LEVEL & FURTHER EDUCATION RECEIPTS	84,198	2,000	86,198
H.4 — FÁS PENSION RECEIPTS	8,500		8,500
H.5 — PENSION LEVY RECEIPTS	358,962		358,962
APPROPRIATIONS IN AID	604,432	4,501	608,933
NET EXPENDITURE	7,782,920	496,499	8,279,419

### School Staffing

96. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the implications in second level schools of the removal of the ex quota guidance counsellors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40417/11]

97. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views, if any, in the way school principals, in second level schools will deal with allocating hours to guidance counselling out of normal school teaching allocations; the impact this will have on them; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40418/11]

98. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views at the removal of the guidance counsellor teacher allocation into the overall teacher allocation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40419/11]

99. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will consider reversing the decision which requires second-level schools to manage guidance provision from within their existing pupil teacher ratio allocations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40420/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos 96 to 99, inclusive, together.

While difficult choices had to be made to identify savings across my Department's budget, the Government has tried to protect front line services in 2012.

The Government has protected the pupil-teacher ratio at primary level, prioritised targeted support for the most disadvantaged schools and maintained the overall number of resource teachers and SNAs to support children with special needs. Until now, a specific resource was provided for guidance in addition to the standard teacher allocation to post primary schools. In future, schools must meet their guidance requirements from within the overall resource provided by that normal staffing schedule. Individually schools can continue to make provision for guidance and counselling. Decisions on how this will be done will be taken at school level in the best interests of students and to ensure the best use of resources available. I am confident school management and teachers will continue to work together to meet the needs of the students in their care.

In this way, the main teacher allocation can be maintained at 19:1 for schools generally, while schools will have discretion to balance what they allocate for guidance against the competing demands of providing subject choice. The change that has been announced gives schools greater autonomy in how they allocate staff resources to best meet the needs of their students.

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

The change to guidance allocations must be seen in the context of the major challenges we have as a Government in trying to shelter public services to the greatest extent that we can in these exceptional times.

My Department will be notifying schools of the impact of the budget changes in January, 2012.

100. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason he chose to base the new general allocation model on the number of class teachers in a school and not on the number of pupils in a school; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a two teacher school with 15 pupils will end up with ten hours support as opposed to a four teacher school with 106 pupils only getting 20 hours support even though that school has almost seven times the amount of pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40423/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The new single allocation for the General Allocation Model (GAM) and language support will be based on the number of classroom teaching posts in each school in the previous school year. This simplified approach to (GAM) will make it easier to automatically update it annually in line with the changes in the number of classroom teachers in each school.

The staffing schedule is the long established method used for the allocation of classroom teachers to schools. It operates on the basis of enrolment bands using a general average of 1 classroom teacher for every 28 pupils or 1 classroom teacher for every 22 pupils in the case of DEIS Band 1 schools. The number of classroom teachers in each school is based on the relevant pupil threshold point under the published staffing schedule. In total there are over 20,000 classes in schools throughout the country.

While I acknowledge that there can be some variances between schools in relation to the number of pupils in their classes the simplified approach to (GAM) will make it easier to automatically update it annually particularly given that for many schools it has not been updated since it was first introduced in 2005.

### **Special Educational Needs**

101. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason a special needs assessment carried out in one county is not acceptable in a school in another county; and the reason for change was moving residence. [40424/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I wish to advise the Deputy that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), for allocating resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to primary and post primary schools to support children with special educational needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such support.

The NCSE has responsibility for deciding on the quantum of resource teaching and/or care supports to be allocated to individual schools to enable them to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Assessment reports carried out by relevant professionals are provided by schools to the SENOs as part of the application process for support.

There is no automatic system of transfer of resources from one school to another. In considering applications for supports for individual pupils, the SENO takes professional reports into account along with other relevant factors such as 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.

The NCSE has outlined the processes involved in the consideration of applications for special needs supports in its Circular 01/05 which is available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

### **Disadvantaged Status**

102. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will not cut staff at a disadvantaged school (details supplied) in Dublin 1. [40433/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Government has prioritised targeted supports for schools with the most concentrated levels of educational disadvantage. These supports will continue to be targeted through the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme, which is focussed on 670 primary schools and 195 post-primary schools with particularly high levels of disadvantage. This scheme is designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports.

The creation of a dedicated DEIS Band 1 pupil teacher ratio of 22:1 in the Budget will secure a more favourable staffing allocation for these primary schools in comparison to the mainstream pupil teacher ratio of 28:1. While the new staffing schedule gives greater autonomy to DEIS Band 1 schools, the schools should continue to prioritise their staffing allocation to implement more favourable pupil teacher ratios in junior classes, in line with DEIS policy.

The Government is also providing €13 million in enhanced funding for DEIS schools, €2 million in school book funding for DEIS schools, as well as a €26 million investment in the Home School Community Liaison scheme. All of these areas have been protected from reductions in expenditure for 2012. In addition €28 million will be provided next year for the School Completion Programme, a major component of DEIS, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Furthermore DEIS post-primary schools will be targeted for additional support through an improved staffing schedule of 18.25:1, which is a 0.75 point improvement compared to the existing standard 19:1 that applies in post-primary schools that do not charge fees (or compared to the 21:1 ratio that will apply in fee-charging schools).

In order to ensure fairness in the distribution of resources available under the DEIS plan, it is no longer possible to allow some schools to retain legacy posts on a concessionary basis that pre-date the introduction of the DEIS scheme. As a result, a decision has been taken to withdraw posts (428 posts) from earlier disadvantage programmes/schemes in 270 primary schools and 163 post primary schools that exceed what equivalent schools are entitled to under DEIS or to which non-DEIS schools are not entitled.

As part of the alleviation measures, DEIS band 1 junior schools will be placed on a staffing schedule based on an average of 1 teacher for 20 pupils. 32 schools that have legacy posts that provided for 1 teacher for every 15 pupils in junior classes only will now have a staffing schedule that operates on the basis of an average of 1 teacher for 18 junior pupils.

The special position of DEIS schools will also be recognised in adjustments to the General Allocation Model which is used to allocate learning and language support teaching posts to schools.

All schools will be notified in January 2012, three months earlier than normal, of their staffing entitlements under the new arrangement including any alleviation measures that may apply. This will allow schools to plan for the school year beginning in September.

### School Staffing

103. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to cut second level teaching posts in County Donegal over the next twelve months; if he will provide details of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40434/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** While difficult choices had to be made to identify savings across my Department's remit, the Government has gone as far as it could to protect front line services in 2012. The recent changes announced in the Budget were made within the context of bringing our overall public expenditure back into line with what we can afford as a country. The challenge is to ensure that the resources that are provided to schools are used by them to maximum effect in terms of providing an appropriate range of subjects to meet the needs of our knowledge economy and in delivering the best possible outcomes for all our pupils.

My Department will be notifying schools of the impact of the budget changes in January, 2012.

### Pupil-Teacher Ratio

104. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify and provide details of the primary level schools in Donegal north east which will be affected in the next school year 2012-2013 by the increase in pupil thresholds for small primary schools as outlined in budget 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40437/11]

120. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will review budget 2012 cuts in view of the impact that they will have on rural primary schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40571/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 104 and 120 together.

As part of the Budget decisions announced last week, the number of pupils required to gain and retain a teaching post in small primary schools will be gradually increased between September 2012 and September 2014. The schools concerned are those with four or less classroom teachers. It is important to emphasise that no small schools will be closed due to the changes that have been announced.

The pupil thresholds for DEIS Band 1 schools (disadvantage schools) are not as high as they reflect the newly introduced 22:1 staffing schedule. Reduced pupil thresholds will continue to apply in respect of schools that are the only primary school on an island. The phased adjustment is estimated to yield a saving of 250 teaching posts over the next three years, with 100 of these posts being removed in 2012/13 school year. The resulting surplus teachers will be redeployed to vacancies in other neighbouring schools in accordance with the redeployment arrangements.

The phasing of these measures provides the schools concerned with time to consider the potential for amalgamation with other schools where this is feasible. We have a very significant number of small schools across the country. Due to the way the staffing schedule works at present, small primary schools benefit from significantly lower pupil teacher ratios than larger primary schools. For example, the minimum pupil threshold for the appointment of the second teacher in a 2-teacher school is currently 12 pupils. This means that this school has an average of 6 pupils in each of its 2 classes. The changes that we are introducing will mean that in September 2012 a minimum of 14 pupils will be required for the appointment of the second teacher in the 2 teacher school. The subsequent increases in September 2013 and September

2014 will increase this minimum pupil threshold to 20 pupils. Even when all of these phased increases are implemented the threshold will still be significantly lower than the minimum of 28 pupils that were required for the appointment of the second teacher in schools prior to the mid 1990's.

The existing staffing schedule also acts as a disincentive for small schools to consider amalgamation. We have to ensure that the very valuable but limited resources we have available in the system are used in the best and fairest way across the whole system. All areas of public spending have had to experience some adjustment given the scale of our economic crisis. Despite this challenge, the Government has sought to do this in as fair a way as possible.

### **Disadvantaged Status**

105. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the implications of budget 2012 on primary level DEIS band 2 schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40439/11]

122. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the effects, if any, arising from budget 2012 on a primary level school (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40578/11]

125. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if his attention has been drawn to the disproportionate impact budget 2012 will have on the ability of DEIS schools to meet the needs of their pupils; and the supports he proposes to implement to mitigate this serious loss of resources for children attending these schools.. [40590/11]

126. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify the time period over which legacy posts will be phased out as a result of budget 2012 changes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40623/11]

131. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will list the names and addresses of schools that will be affected by the proposal to phase the withdrawal of 428 teaching posts allocated to schools under the legacy programmes prior to the roll out of the DEIS initiatives; when this process of reducing teaching posts will commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40693/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 105, 122, 125, 126 and 131 together.

The Government has prioritised targeted supports for schools with the most concentrated levels of educational disadvantage. These supports will continue to be targeted through the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme, which is focussed on 670 primary schools and 195 post-primary schools with particularly high levels of disadvantage. This scheme is designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports.

The creation of a dedicated DEIS Band 1 pupil teacher ratio of 22:1 in the Budget will secure a more favourable staffing allocation for these primary schools in comparison to the mainstream pupil teacher ratio of 28:1. While the new staffing schedule gives greater autonomy to DEIS Band 1 schools, the schools should continue to prioritise their staffing allocation to implement more favourable pupil teacher ratios in junior classes, in line with DEIS policy.

The Government is also providing €13 million in enhanced funding for DEIS schools, €2 million in school book funding for DEIS schools, as well as a €26 million investment in the

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Home School Community Liaison scheme. All of these areas have been protected from reductions in expenditure for 2012. In addition €28 million will be provided next year for the School Completion Programme, a major component of DEIS, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Furthermore DEIS post-primary schools will be targeted for additional support through an improved staffing schedule of 18.25:1, which is a 0.75 point improvement compared to the existing standard 19:1 that applies in post-primary schools that do not charge fees (or compared to the 21:1 ratio that will apply in fee-charging schools).

All Band 2 urban DEIS Schools will be subject to the mainstream staffing schedules from 2012/13 onwards.

DEIS Urban primary schools are currently entitled to the allocation of administrative principals on lower enrolment and staffing figures than apply in primary schools generally. From 2012/13 school year, the allocation of administrative principals will be enrolment based only. In DEIS Urban Band 1 schools, an enrolment of 116 pupils will facilitate the principal becoming an administrative principal, while an enrolment of 145 will apply in Band 2 urban primary schools, compared to 178 in other schools. Schools affected by the change to allocating principals on enrolment basis only, will retain their administrative principal status until there is a change of principal in the school. When an administrative principal post needs to be filled in future, the allocation will be made on an enrolment basis only.

In order to ensure fairness in the distribution of resources available under the DEIS plan, it is no longer possible to allow some schools to retain legacy posts on a concessionary basis that pre-date the introduction of the DEIS scheme. As a result, a decision has been taken to withdraw posts (428 posts) from earlier disadvantage programmes/schemes in 270 primary schools and 163 post primary schools that exceed what equivalent schools are entitled to under DEIS or to which non-DEIS schools are not entitled. As part of the alleviation measures, DEIS band 1 junior schools will be placed on a staffing schedule based on an average of 1 teacher for 20 pupils. 32 schools that have legacy posts that provided for 1 teacher for every 15 pupils in junior classes only will now have a staffing schedule that operates on the basis of an average of 1 teacher for 18 junior pupils.

The special position of DEIS schools will also be recognised in adjustments to the General Allocation Model which is used to allocate learning and language support teaching posts to schools.

All schools will be notified in January 2012, three months earlier than normal, of their staffing entitlements under the new arrangement including any alleviation measures that may apply. This will allow schools to plan for the school year beginning in September.

### **Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

106. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will support a school (details supplied) in 2012. [40441/11]

107. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will not cut teachers and supports at a school (details supplied) in Dublin 5. [40442/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions 106 and 107 together.

As you will be aware from the budget announcements, there is no increase in the general average of 28:1 for the allocation of classroom teachers at primary level. However, the staffing

arrangements in schools for the 2012/13 school year can also be affected by changes in their enrolment, the impact of other budget measures and the reforms to the teacher allocation process. The reform of the allocation process is designed to bring a more equitable distribution of existing posts between schools so there will inevitably be some schools that will lose posts and some schools that will gain posts. My Department will be notifying schools in January of the new staffing arrangements for 2012/13 school year.

*Questions Nos. 108 to 111, inclusive, answered with Question No. 93.*

### **Departmental Expenditure**

112. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the effects, if any, arising from budget 2012 on a school (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40466/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** As the Deputy will be aware from the recent budget announcements, there is no increase in the general average of 28:1 for the allocation of classroom teachers at primary level. However, the staffing arrangements in schools for the 2012/13 school year can also be affected by changes in their enrolment, the impact of other budget measures and the reforms to the teacher allocation process. The reform of the allocation process is designed to bring a more equitable distribution of existing posts between schools so there will inevitably be some schools that will lose posts and some schools that will gain posts. My Department will be notifying schools in January of the new staffing arrangements for 2012/13 school year.

### **Departmental Statistics**

113. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of one, two, three and four teacher primary schools in County Clare; the names and locations of these schools; the number of pupils in each; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40467/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Statistics section of my Department's website contains data at individual primary school level in county order for the 2010/2011 school year. The information includes the number of teachers and pupils in each primary school. See file called Class Size information at individual school level 2010/2011 at <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=17216&ecategory=47122&language=EN>. The details for the current school year (2011/2012) are currently being compiled by my Department.

### **Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

114. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason the staffing schedule for primary schools was changed in particular the increase in the retention figures for Gaeltacht P+3 schools which proposed a rise of seven pupils where non Gaeltacht schools had an increase of two pupils for retention purposes in P+3 schools; if he will consider amending the schedule and to reflect the same increase in retention figures, that is two, for both Gaeltacht and ordinary schools. [40471/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** While difficult choices had to be made to identify savings across my Department's remit, the Government has gone as far as it could to protect front line services in 2012. As part of the Budget decisions announced last week, the number of pupils required to gain and retain a teaching post in small primary schools will be gradually increased between September 2012 and September 2014. The schools concerned are those with four or less classroom teachers. It is important to emphasise that no

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small schools will be closed due to the changes that have been announced. The pupil thresholds for DEIS Band 1 schools (disadvantage schools) are not as high as they reflect the newly introduced 22:1 staffing schedule. Reduced pupil thresholds will continue to apply in respect of schools that are the only primary school on an island. The phased adjustment is estimated to yield a saving of 250 teaching posts over the next three years, with 100 of these posts being removed in 2012/13 school year. The resulting surplus teachers will be redeployed to vacancies in other neighbouring schools in accordance with the redeployment arrangements.

The phasing of these measures provides the schools concerned with time to consider the potential for amalgamation with other schools where this is feasible. We have a very significant number of small schools across the country. Due to the way the staffing schedule works at present, small primary schools benefit from significantly lower pupil teacher ratios than larger primary schools. While the staffing schedule operates on the basis of a general average of 1 classroom teacher for every 28 pupils the ratios for small schools are significantly better. This is particularly evident for schools that are at or just above the minimum pupil thresholds for the appointment of classroom teachers. For example, the minimum pupil threshold for the appointment of the second teacher in a 2-teacher school is currently 12 pupils. This means that this school has an average of 6 pupils in each of its 2 classes.

The changes that we are introducing will mean that in September 2012 a minimum of 14 pupils will be required for the appointment of the second teacher in the 2 teacher school. The subsequent increases in September 2013 and September 2014 will increase this minimum pupil threshold to 20 pupils. Even when all of these phased increases are implemented the threshold will still be significantly lower than the minimum of 28 pupils that were required for the appointment of the second teacher in schools prior to the mid 1990's. The existing staffing schedule also acts as a disincentive for small schools to consider amalgamation. We have to ensure that the very valuable but limited resources we have available in the system are used in the best and fairest way across the whole system. My Department will be notifying schools of the impact of the budget changes in January, 2012.

### **Departmental Statistics**

115. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will list all the primary schools in County Donegal and the most recent pupil enrolment figures for each and the number of mainstream classroom teachers in each that are in addition to a principal. [40472/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Statistics section of my Department's website contains information at individual primary school level in county order for the 2010/2011 school year. The source of this data is the National School Annual Census. Statistical information in respect of the current school year is currently being compiled in my Department and is due for publication in September 2012.

### **Higher Education Grants**

116. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a person (details supplied) in County Cork will be eligible for a maintenance grant in the coming year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40473/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The decision on eligibility for a student grant is a matter for the relevant grant awarding authority. The Deputy will appreciate that in the absence of all of the relevant details that would be contained in an individual's

application form it would not be possible for me to say whether or not a student would qualify for a student grant. Ultimately, a student must apply to his/her grant awarding authority at the appropriate time to have their eligibility for a grant assessed.

### Consultancy Contracts

117. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40504/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The information requested is not currently available. My Department's officials will collate the relevant material and I will forward a final response to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### Departmental Staff

118. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40548/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** For the Deputy's information, the following advisory groups etc have been established since my appointment as Minister for Education and Skills:

(1) Advisory Group to convene the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. This Forum was officially launched on 19th April, 2011. Its terms of reference are to advise the Minister on: — how it can best be ensured that the education system can provide a sufficiently diverse number and range of primary schools catering for all religions and none;- the practicalities of how transfer/divesting of patronage should operate for individual primary schools in communities where it is appropriate and necessary; and- how such transfer/divesting can be advanced to ensure that demands for diversity of patronage (including from an Irish language perspective) can be identified and met on a widespread basis nationally. The Advisory Group was appointed to convene the Forum, to receive and distil the various views and perspectives of participants and to then provide the Minister with policy advice having regard to the Terms of Reference. The Advisory Group has held a number of meetings in public (22-24 June and 17th November) and has sought and received submissions from the public as part of its work. The Advisory Group will prepare its report for the Minister before the end of December 2011.

The Advisory Group is chaired by Dr. John Coolahan, Professor Emeritus at NUI Maynooth. The other members are Dr. Caroline Hussey, former Registrar and Deputy President, UCD and Fionnuala Kilfeather, former Chief Executive of the National Parents Council — Primary.

(2) Student Grants Appeals Board This Appeals Board was established under Student Support Act 2011 (Student Grants Appeals Board) (Establishment Day) Order 2011, S.I. 451 of 2011, with the 8th September 2011 appointed to be the establishment day for the purposes of subsection (2) of section 25 of the Student Support Act 2011. The Board will be independent in the performance of its functions. Its establishment will allow students that have applied for a grant under the 2011/12 student grant scheme and subsequent schemes to have any appeals determined by the Board. The Board, which comprises of a Chairperson and six ordinary members all appointed in their individual capacity based on their knowledge and

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expertise. Ms. Maureen Waldron, a former Director of the Department of Social Protection, has accepted the position of Chairperson to the Board. She is joined by Mr. Pádraig McNamara (vice-Chair) former Chief Executive Officer of the State Examinations Commission; Dr. Marie Clarke, Head of Education at UCD; Ms. Rebecca Murphy, former Student Union Welfare Officer, University College Cork; Ms. Eithne Frost, Consultant in the Voluntary Sector; Ms. Brenna Clarke, retired Professor of English at St. Patrick's College of Education; and Professor Kevin Ryan, former Registrar of the University of Limerick.

(3) SOLAS Implementation Group This Implementation Group is chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon T.D. Membership of the Implementation Group includes representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, FÁS, the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) and the Department of Social Protection. It will also consult with other key stakeholders. The Implementation Group will develop an Action Plan to implement the changes necessary to put SOLAS in place following the passing of the relevant legislation in 2012. The Group reported to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs on progress in November in keeping with the Government decision on the creation of SOLAS.

(4) The Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Advisory Group The role of the group is to monitor progress on implementation of “Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. The Group which met for the first time earlier this week is chaired by the Secretary General of my Department. In addition there are 12 other members on the group including the Chief Inspector of my Department, the Director General of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the CEOs of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the State examinations Commission and the Teaching Council.

(5) Advisory Group on Suitability of Qualifications for Higher Capitation Rates This group was established in October to advise the Department of Children and Youth Affairs on the equivalence of qualifications in other disciplines to a Level 7 Qualification in early Childhood Care and Education. The composition of the group includes representatives from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Irish Universities Association, Ireland's Institutes of Technology and from both my Department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

(6) Junior cycle Implementation Advisory Group The general remit of the Group is to advise on and progress the implementation of the proposals on Junior cycle reform. The composition of the group includes representatives from my Department, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the State Examinations Commission, School Management, Principals and Teacher unions and Parents. The inaugural meeting will be held in early January.

(7) New Schools Establishment Group In June 2011 I announced that twenty new primary schools and twenty new post-primary schools are to be established in the next six years. I also announced the establishment of new arrangements for the recognition of new primary and post-primary schools. These new arrangements included the establishment of a New Schools Establishment Group which will advise me on patronage of the new schools following its consideration of a report on the applications received to be prepared by the Department. This group is chaired by Dr. Seamus McGuinness (retired senior lecturer in the Education Department at Trinity College, Dublin) and also includes Ms Sylda Langford (retired Direc-

tor of the Office of the Minister for Children) and Professor Seán Ó Riain (Sociology Department, NUI Maynooth).

*Question No. 119 answered with Question No. 93.*

*Question No. 120 answered with Question No. 104.*

### Higher Education Grants

121. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify the funding options, including reference to fees and grant support, open to a person from a low-income household currently in third level education who wishes to pursue postgraduate study commencing in the 2012-13 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40576/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Deputy will be aware that due to the need to close the gap between revenue and spending, unpalatable savings measures are necessary and savings in the student grant scheme were inevitable as part of that.

In this regard, I have adopted a fees only contribution at postgraduate level but this will continue to provide support for a relatively wide number of post-graduate students. While there would be no maintenance payments, all 'special rate' students will have their fees paid while another 4,000 students will receive a fee contribution of €2,000. In access terms, the requirement to pay a fee would be likely to be a greater obstacle to entry than lack of maintenance support.

This approach has enabled me to ensure that substantial allocations continue to be made to students from lower income backgrounds to achieve an undergraduate qualification to improve their job opportunities.

*Question No. 122 answered with Question No. 105.*

### Education Schemes

123. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the current positions and background to the higher education access route, HEAR, and any recent changes or proposals to make changes to this scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40582/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a third-level admissions scheme for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The scheme is operated by a number of higher education institutions and not by my Department. Admissions to the institutions under this programme are regulated by the institutions themselves. Further details are available at [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie).

### Teachers' Remuneration

124. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will review a case on teachers' increments (details supplied). [40587/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The Scheme for the award of incremental credit to recognised teachers in Second Level Schools is set out in Circular 29/2007 and was agreed under the auspices of the Teachers' Conciliation Council, a body established in accordance with the terms of the Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme for Teachers which is made up of representatives of the teacher representative bodies, school management and the

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Department of Education and Skills and Department of Finance under an independent chairperson.

As outlined in previous correspondence the teaching service of the person to whom the Deputy refers failed to meet the criteria for approved teaching service and the application was refused under the above circular. There is no provision for appeal of non-approved teaching service under the agreed scheme.

An application was also submitted for relevant non-teaching service for the period Oct 1999 to Oct 2001, this was also refused as the service was deemed not to be directly relevant to the teaching post to which the teacher was appointed. It is open to a teacher, who is unhappy with the decision of my Department to refuse a claim for relevant non-teaching service, to submit an appeal to an independent appeals committee. This appeal should be submitted to the Incremental Credit Appeals Committee, c/o Department of Education and Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. As these are agreed procedures it would be inappropriate for me, as Minister, to intervene in any individual case.

*Questions Nos. 125 and 126 answered with Question No. 105.*

### **Third Level Expenditure**

127. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills further to Parliamentary Question No. 152 of 29 November 2011, in view of the delays involved in issuing a response to date if he will expedite the matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40624/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I would like to apologise to the Deputy for the delay in supplying this information, but as outlined in my response of the 29th November, in most cases the information sought was not readily available. The HEA has been liaising with the seven universities over the last number of weeks with a view to obtaining as much information as is possible. This information is now attached.

Please note that the majority of institutions were not able to extract composite details from their information systems in relation to the location of rooms hired, and the purpose of such hire. The names of visiting lecturers, and the location of where they stayed and associated costs was also not readily available in most instances. These services are generally managed at a Department or Faculty level within institutions and the information is not readily available at an aggregate level.

There is one outstanding piece of information and I would hope to be in a position to supply this very soon.

	Room Hire Costs	Taxi Hire	Legal Fees	Agency Staff Costs	Number of Visiting lecturers	Accommodation Costs	Visiting Lecturer Expenses/costs	University Presidents Pay	University Presidents Expenses
Trinity College Dublin	2010 — €579,914	2010 — €33,076	2009 — €846,771	2009 — €126,411.81 of which academic = €0	Not available	Not available	Not available	2009 — €237,885	Will be forwarded separately
	2011 — €550,347	2011 — €38,388	2010 — €605,353	2010 — €60,589 of which academic = €0	Not available	Not available	Not available	2010 — €202,118	Will be forwarded separately
University College Dublin	2010 — €50,561	2010 — €41,725	2009/10 — €697,083	2009 — €1,789,496. €473,644 for academic & €1,315,853 for support units.	Not available	Not available	No details supplied	2009 — €237,005	2009 — €381.03
	2011 — €49,142	2011 — €39,767	2010/11 — €426,199	2010 — €854,302. €241,014 for academic & €613,288 for support units.	Not available	Not available	No details supplied	2010 — €202,116	2010 — €865.09
Dublin City University	2010 — €59,000	2010 — €41,000	2009 — €803,476	2009 — €103,000. €0 for academic.	2009 — 97	2009 — €43,000	2009 — €26,000	2008/9 — €247,000	2009 — €10,000
	2011 — €96,000	2011 — €54,000	2010 — €131,398	2010 — €174,000. €0 for academic	2010 — 73	2010 — €33,000	2010 — €24,000	2009/10 — €193,843	2010 — €7,000
University of Limerick	2010 — €0	2010 — €36,010	2009 — €152,401	2009 — €83,036. €0 for academic.	2009 — 568	Not applicable	lecturers paid hourly rate only	2009 — €228,050	2009 — €6,550.85

	Room Hire Costs	Taxi Hire	Legal Fees	Agency Staff Costs	Number of Visiting lecturers	Accommodation Costs	Visiting Lecturer Expenses/costs	University Presidents Pay	University Presidents Expenses
NUI, Maynooth	2011 — €0	2011 — €28,616	2010 — €165,609	2010 — €150,082. €0 for academic.	2010 — 461	Not applicable	lecturers paid hourly rate only	2010 — €193,843	2010 — €7,533.56
	Not available	2010 — €75,462	2009 — €304,120	2009 — €13,597. €0 for academic staff	Not available	Not available	Not available	2008/09 — €239,489	2008/9 — €5,945
	Not available	2011 — €52,576	2010 — €147,442	2010 — €18,408. €0 for academic staff	Not available	Not available	Not available	2009/10 — €202,395	2009/10 — €3,674
NUI, Galway	2010 — €255,518	2010 — €24,151	2009 — €894,651	2009 — €742,589. €0 for academic	2009 — 160	2009 — €31,243	2009 — €9,370	2009 — €237,785	2009 — €12,068
University College Cork	2011 — €200,621	2011 — €25,696	2010 — €840,000	2010 — €681,815. €0 for academic	2010 — 147	2010 — €27,017	2010 — €7,838	2010 — €202,117	2010 — €9,162
	2010 — €173,637	2010 — €124,971	2009/10 — €1,030,037	2009 — €343,842. Breakdown n/a	Not available	Not available	2009 — €279,636	2009 — €273,119	2009 — €811.89
	2011 — €109,996	2011 — €138,008	2010/11 — €243,363	2010 — €149,397. Breakdown n/a	Not available	Not available	2010 — €253,468	2010 — €232,151	2010 — €388.58

## Footnotes

The information on room locations and purpose of room hire was not available from most institutions.

The information on names of visiting lecturers, location where they stayed and associated costs was also not available from most institutions

The Agency arrangements related mainly to support staff in the institutions.

The Department is following up on some outstanding information (TCD provost expenses), this will be forwarded to the Deputy shortly

DCU and NUIM figures are on a calander year basis. DCU 2008/09 includes Review Body arrears.

## NUI, Galway 2010 Details

Room Hired	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
ARDILAUN HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
CHARLEVILLE PARK HOTEL	Cork	Teaching
CONNEMARA COAST HOTEL	Galway	Teaching
CREGGAN COURT HOTEL	Athlone	Promotional Activities
CREGGAN COURT HOTEL	Dublin	Seminar Courses
GALWAY BAY HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
GALWAY HARBOUR HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
GLENLO ABBEY HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
MEYRICK HOTEL (MT MONO TRADING LTD)	Galway	Seminar Courses
O'CALLAGHAN HOTELS	Dublin	Seminar Courses
PARK HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
SLIGO PARK HOTEL	Sligo	Promotional Activities
THE G HOTEL	Galway	Community Engagement
THE G HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
WESTWOOD HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
WESTWOOD HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Training Courses
SWIMWORLD LTD T/A KINGFISHER	Galway	Examinations
SWIMWORLD LTD T/A KINGFISHER	Galway	Sports
GALWAY LAWN TENNIS CLUB	Galway	Sports
CARRICK ON SHANNON EDUCATION CENTRE	Leitrim	Teaching
CLONMEL PARK HOTEL	Tipperary	Teaching
MARINO INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION	Dublin	Teaching
CLARE EDUCATION CENTRE	Clare	Teaching
ST MARYS YOUTH CENTRE	Offaly	Access Courses
CHARLIE LENNON PARTNERSHIP	Galway	Teaching
CO. CLARE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE	Clare	Access Courses
TEAGASC (Offaly)	Offaly	Teaching
CARLOW INSTITUTE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	Carlow	Teaching
POBALSCOIL CHORCA DHUIBHNE	Kerry	Teaching
ST MARYS COLLEGE	Galway	Sports
DOLMEN HOTEL	Carlow	Teaching
MCWILLIAM PARK HOTEL	Mayo	Teaching
ANNEBROOK HOUSE HOTEL	Westmeath	Teaching
NEWLANDS CROSS HOTEL	Dublin	Student Orientation
OAK WOOD ARMS HOTEL	Clare	Seminar Courses
STIUIDEO CUAN	Galway	Media Production
COMHARCHUMANN FORBARTHA CHORCA DHUIBHNE TEO	Galway	Teaching
PESS DEPT	Limerick	Teaching
DALTON MANAGEMENT GROUP	Galway	Teaching
BRANAR DRAMAIOCHTA TEO	Galway	Temporary Storage
BALLINASLOE COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Galway	Access Courses
ST BRENDANS COLLEGE	Kerry	Teaching
THE ACHILL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD	Mayo	Teaching

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Room Hired	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
COLAISTE NA RINNE	Galway	Teaching
LADY GREGORY	Clare	NUIG/UL Collaboration
SCCUL ENTERPRISES LTD	Galway	Community Engagement
RADISSON	Galway	Teaching
TEAGASC	Galway	Teaching
CO GALWAY CRICKET CLUB	Galway	Sports
MEANSKOIL SAN NIOCLAS	Galway	Teaching
MONSIGNOR MCCARTHY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE	Athlone	Teaching
OFFALY INTERGRATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CO	Offaly	Teaching
RADISSON BLU	Galway	Student Orientation
DAINGEAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LTD	Galway	Teaching
ST MARY'S COLLEGE	Galway	Sports
SWIMWORLD LTD T/A KINGFISHER KNU117 90325143 D0609FROMD0608	Galway	Sports
THE BURREN ART COLLEGE OF ART	Clare	Teaching
TEMPLE GATE HOTEL	Clare	Promotional Activities
THE TF ROYAL HOTEL	Mayo	Seminar Courses

## NUI, Galway 2011 Details

Room Hired	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
ARDILAUN HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
CLAYTON HOTEL	Galway	Teaching
FORSTER COURT HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
GALWAY BAY HOTEL	Galway	Examinations
GALWAY HARBOUR HOTEL	Galway	Training Courses
GLENLO ABBEY HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
O'CALLAGHAN HOTELS	Dublin	Seminar Courses
QUAYLANE MANAGEMENT LTD. T/A THE HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Community Engagement
QUAYLANE MANAGEMENT LTD. T/A THE HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
RADISSON BLU HOTEL (Galway)	Galway	Seminar Courses
SILVER SPRINGS MORAN HOTEL	Cork	Seminar Courses
THE SALTHILL HOTEL	Galway	Seminar Courses
WESTWOOD HOUSE HOTEL	Galway	Training Courses
SWIMWORLD LTD T/A KINGFISHER	Galway	Examinations
SWIMWORLD LTD T/A KINGFISHER	Galway	Sports
GALWAY LAWN TENNIS CLUB	Galway	Examinations
GALWAY LAWN TENNIS CLUB	Galway	Sports
GALWAY/SALTHILL FÁILTE LTD (LEISURELAND)	Galway	Examinations
CARRICK ON SHANNON EDUCATION CENTRE	Leitrim	Examinations
CARRICK ON SHANNON EDUCATION CENTRE	Leitrim	Teaching
MARINO INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION	Dublin	Teaching
CHARLIE LENNON PARTNERSHIP	Galway	Teaching

Room Hired	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
CASTLEBAR REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE	Mayo	Teaching
ST MARYS COLLEGE	Galway	Sports
ASSETTS OF MICHAEL McLOUGHLIN IN RECEIVERSHIP	Mayo	Teaching
VODAFONE IRELAND plc	Dublin	Sports
McWILLIAM PARK HOTEL	Mayo	Teaching
ANNEBROOK HOUSE HOTEL	Westmeath	Teaching
CLONMEL PARK HOTELS	Tipperary	Teaching
BROOMFIELD HOUSE HOTEL	Mullingar	Teaching
OAKWOOD ARMS HOTEL	Clare	Teaching
OAKWOOD ARMS HOTEL	Clare	Teaching
SCCUL ENTERPRISES LTD	Galway	Community Engagement
S.C.C.U.L. ENTERPRISES LTD	Galway	Community Engagement
KILMURRY LODGE	Limerick	Teaching
FIVE STAR LETTING AGENCY	Galway	Exhibitions
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE	Galway	Sports
CUMANN CRUCEAD CHO NA GAILLIMHE	Galway	Sports
WESTMEATH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Westmeath	Teaching
ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL	Roscommon	Teaching
TO IFRS	Galway	Teaching
TEMPLE GATE HOTEL	Clare	Promotional Activities

## NUI Galway 2009 Details

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Achill Schurmann	Brooklodge Guesthouse, Galway	1
Akos Seress	Abbey House B&B, Galway	12
Alexandra Rahm	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
Andrew Jonas	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Ann Heyman	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Arjeh Cohen	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	5
Barrett, Damon	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Begg, Moazzam	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Ben Barnes	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Benjamin Klopsch	The Ivies B&B, Galway	8
Bernard Hanzon	Abbey House B&B, Galway	2
Bernaz, Nadia	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Bernd Souvignier	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	5
Bill Roche	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Bob Morse	Abbey House B&B, Galway	5
Breda Gray	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	1
Brian Leyden	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Brian Winston	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Bridgette Slevin	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Cahal McLaughlin	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Campbell, Colm	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Carol Rasnic	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2

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Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Carpenter, Megan	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Cassell, Douglas	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Cassell, Douglas	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Celia Fitzgibbon	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Chandana Mathur	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Charles Barr	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Charles Leedham-Green	Abbey House B&B, Galway	11
Chris Rojek	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Claire Squires	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Colin Sage	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Cryer, Robert	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Dan Hunter	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	2
Daniel Perkins	The House Hotel, Galway	1
David Keating	The House Hotel, Galway	1
David Nally	The House Hotel, Galway	1
de Brun workshop participants	Corrib Village, Galway	12
Decaux, Emmanuel	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Des O'Rawe	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Dr Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail	Park House Hotel, Galway	1
Dr William Mahon	Park House Hotel, Galway	2
Durkin, Tom	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Eamon O'Brien	Abbey House B&B, Galway	11
Ed Soja	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
Efim Zelmanov	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Elizabeth Paulson	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Eva Riccomagno	The Ivies B&B, Galway	14
Ferencz, Don	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Fergal Tobin	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Fernando Blasco	Abbey House B&B, Galway	2
Frank Lubeck	Abbey House B&B, Galway	10
Frank Vallentin	Brooklodge Guesthouse, Galway	1
Fritz Grunewald	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	5
Gabor Ivanyos	Abbey House B&B, Galway	11
Gabrielle Nebe	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	7
Gatto Marte	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Gehao Wang	Amber Hill B&B, Galway	12
Gerry Maher	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Gilbert, Jeremie	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Greg Baxter	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Gunar Carlsson	The Ivies B&B, Galway	4
Hannah Coutts	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
Hasatings Donnan	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	1
Henry Wynn	The Ivies B&B, Galway	12
I Welsh	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ian Shuttleworth	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Igor Pak	Amber Hill B&B, Galway	4
J Deane	The House Hotel, Galway	1

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
J Ferguson	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Jackson, John	The House Hotel, Galway	1
James Harpur	The House Hotel, Galway	1
James Mitchell	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
James Nave	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Jemma Donnelly Cox	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Jim Carroll	Abbey House B&B, Galway	1
John Baker	Atlantic View Guest House, Galway	2
John Eastlake	The House Hotel, Galway	3
John Mc Kenna	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Jorgensen Bent	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	3
Jose Burillo	Griffin Lodge B&B, Galway	5
Kathy Horadam	Baybery House, Galway	7
Kattan, Victor	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Keane, David	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Kingston, James	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Lajos Ronyai	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
Leonard Soicher	Abbey House B&B, Galway	3
Linda William	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Lori Heise	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Marian Mrozek	The Ivies B&B, Galway	5
Mark O'Halloran	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Mary Corcoran	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Michael Banton	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Michel Planat	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	5
Mike Collins	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Mike Raco	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Mike Stein	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Molly McCloskey	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Nalia Kabeer	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Naomi Goldenberg	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Natalie Iyud	Abbey House B&B, Galway	2
Natalie Vivas	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ni Chriochnain, Majella	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Nigel Boston	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	3
Nihikari Blanco	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
Nira Yuval Davis	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	1
Norris, David	The House Hotel, Galway	1
O'Brien, Eadaoin	The House Hotel, Galway	3
O'Brien, Sean	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
O'Connell, Mary Ellen	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
O'Donnell, Tom	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Oddny Arnardottir	The House Hotel, Galway	1
P O Ceallaigh	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Pat O'Mahoney	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Patricia Eaton	Abbey House B&B, Galway	1
Patrick McGilligan	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Paul Barr	Jury's Inn, Galway	1

## [Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Paul Cooke	Forster Court, Galway	1
Peter Brooksbank	Abbey House B&B, Galway	11
Prof Alan Titley	Park House Hotel, Galway	1
Prof. Richard Gray	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Prof. Richard Gray	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Prof. Rooney Paneira	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Rachel Van Kooij	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
Rene Hartung	Amber Hill B&B, Galway	6
Richard Jozsa	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	4
Richard Tillinghast	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Richard Weidmann	Abbey House B&B, Galway	4
Robert Clarke	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Rod Gow	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Roy Tomlinson	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
Ruairí Ó Conchuir	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Sadat, Leila	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Sandra Corr	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Sara Arber	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Sarah Ann Buckley	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Scheffer, David	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Sean Campbell	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Seán Mac Aindreaas	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Sergey Shpectorov	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	4
Simon Cutts & Erica Van Horn, Coracle Press	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Simon McGarr	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Stan Brun	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Stephen Glasby	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	7
Steve Linton	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	5
Steven Wills	Abbey House B&B, Galway	1
Thomas Laffey	Abbey House B&B, Galway	1
Tom Gibbons	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Viacheslav V. Nikulin	Abbey House B&B, Galway	1
Warwick de Laney	Baybery House, Galway	7
Christopher Gurtin	Adare Guest House, Galway	1
Prof. José Luis Oncins	Local B&B, Galway	5
Ms Cristina Rodríguez Guntín	Local B&B, Galway	1
Prof. Julieta Ojeda Alba	Local B&B, Galway	5
Lisa Hennessy	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Vincent Harrison	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Duncan Curley	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Rosswurm, Glenn	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Venter, Christine	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Nsereko, Daniel	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Clapham, Andrew	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Gerald Porter	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Karen Randall	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Werner Huber	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Allegra Huston	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Paul Moore	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1

## NUI Galway 2010 Details

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Kres, Claus	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Aage Paus	Local B&B, Galway	2
Aisling Murtagh	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Alesandro Sisto	The Ivies B&B, Galway	6
Alexander Ivanov	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Alexandre Borovik	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Allegra Nave	Roundstone	4
Allegra Nave	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Annabel Pangborn	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Anne Henke	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	4
Ariadna Fossas	The Ivies B&B, Galway	7
Asbjorn, Eide	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Bartosz Putrycz	The Ivies B&B, Galway	6
Brendan Guilfoyle	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Brian Ó Conchubair	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Bruno Martelli	The Ivies B&B, Galway	6
Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith	Park House Hotel, Galway	1
Charalampos Charitos	Desota B&B, Galway	6
Charles Barr	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Charles Orser	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Christopher Prior	Forster Court, Galway	1
Claire Squires	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Clare Dwyer	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Clarice Demitrio	Desota B&B, Galway	10
Clarice Demitrio	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Colin McCabe	The House Hotel, Galway	4
Coracle Press	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Cynthia Waddell	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Cyril Lecuire	Asgard B&B, Galway	4
Dan Boyd	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Danielle Allesandrini	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	1
Danielle Allesandrini	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	6
David Chillingsworth	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	2
David Kielak	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	6
David Nally	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
David Wheatley	The House Hotel, Galway	2
de Brun workshop participants	James Tierney B&B, Galway	3
Des O'Rawe	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Eamonn Slater	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Edmond Robertson	Adare Guest House, Galway	6

## [Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Eibhear Walsh	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Eoin O Colgain	Desota B&B, Galway	2
Eugene Hynes	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Fergal Tobin	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Fintan Vallely	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Frances Fahy	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Francesco Russo	Desota B&B, Galway	4
Franz Fernic	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Ged Martin	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	5
Gerry Maher	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Gita	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Glenn Meade	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Gordon Jeyes	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Greg Oates	Ward's Hotel, Galway	2
Greta Jones	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Gwen Sullivan	Local B&B, Galway	1
Hamish Short	The House Hotel, Galway	6
Harris, Geoffrey	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Heather Laird	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Hugo Parlier	Asgard B&B, Galway	5
Iain Wilkinson	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ian Kuijt	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ireme Delgado-Fernandez	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
James Nave	Roundstone	4
James Nave	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2
Jeff Brock	The House Hotel, Galway	4
Jeremy Nathan	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Joanne McCarthy	The House Hotel, Galway	1
John Bew	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
John Cosgrove	Desota B&B, Galway	1
John Eastlake	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Jonathan Dean	The Western, Galway	1
Jonathan Williams	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	2
Katie Gough	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ken Johnston	Desota B&B, Galway	4
Kiron Reid	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
Lines, Rick	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	2
Magnus Toren	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Malte Rehbein	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	3
Marion McGarry	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Mark Phelan	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Marks, Steve	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	3
Max Neunhoffer	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	5
Maxime Nguyen	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	7
Mícheál Ó Conghaile	Park House Hotel, Galway	1
Mike Collins	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Ms Selena Daly	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	1

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Ms. Clodina Gubbiotti	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	1
Natalie Vivas	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Neil Fullerton	Desota B&B, Galway	7
Nick Krempel	Inishmore Guesthouse, Galway	6
Noe Barcenas Torres	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	6
Notebene Musicians	The Ivies B&B, Galway	2
Oldrich Spacil	Desota B&B, Galway	7
Olga Flor	The Ivies B&B, Galway	2
Padraig Carmody	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Paul Arthur	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Paul Mularkey	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Peter Jankowsky	The Ivies B&B, Galway	1
Peter White	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Prof John Flower	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Prof Margaret Higonnet	Jury's Inn, Galway	3
Prof Paul Baker	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Prof Stephen Prickett	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Prof Timothy Cornell	Local B&B, Galway	1
Prof. Ivanoff	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Radim Polcak	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	3
Richard Jenkins	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Robert Clarke	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Robert Clarke	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Robert Robertson	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Robert Tang	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Roberto Frigerio	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Ronaldo Munck	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Ruth Charney	The Ardilaun Hotel, Galway	3
Samuel Moncada	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Sandrine Caruso	Desota B&B, Galway	7
Sara Maloni	Desota B&B, Galway	7
Sarah Edge	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Scobbie, Ian	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	4
Sean Donnelly	The House Hotel, Galway	3
Sebastian Franz	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Sebastian Hensel	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	7
Sellers, Patricia	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	5
Simon Wilson	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Stathis Kalyvas	Stauntons Hotel, Galway	1
Stephen O'Brien	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Sylvia Stephens	The House Hotel, Galway	1
Terhi Rantanen	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Thomas Collyer	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Thomas Ferris	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Tim Kilmartin (UK)	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	4
Tom Clonan	Jury's Inn, Galway	1
Vanentina Diasarlo	Ashgrove House B&B, Galway	7
Volkmar Welker	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	2

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

Name of Visiting Lecturer	Location of Stay	Duration of Stay
Waughray, Annapuma	Clarion Hotel Dublin Airport, Galway	1
William Jenkins	The House Hotel, Galway	1
William McClymount	The House Hotel, Galway	2
Woods, Michael	Hotel Meyrick, Galway	1
Zgonec-Rozej, Misa	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	1
Zsolt Balogh	Desota B&B, Galway	1
Lesa Ní Mhunghaile	Park House Hotel, Galway	1
Dr Federico Luisetti	Corrib Haven B&B, Galway	2
Jose Luis	Adare Guest House, Galway	1
Catherine Davies	Jury's Inn, Galway	2
Prof. Karina Socorro	Local B&B, Galway	5
Dr Chris Harris	Corrib Village, Galway	2
Prof Daniel Balderston	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	3
Lisa Hennessy	The Radisson Hotel, Galway	2
Louis Meuleman	The Harbour Hotel, Galway	3
Tammy Cosseboom	Westwood House Hotel, Galway	1
Dave Marash	The Town House, Galway	3

## UCD 2010 Details

LOCATION	Purpose	Room	Cost €
AIRFIELD TRUST	UCD Adult Education Centre -Art Classes	Studio	1,240
AVIVA STADIUM	UCDMDP Business Breakfast	Havelock Space Area	1,936
BELLINTER HOUSE EDUCATION & CONFERENCE CTR	Graduate Business School Event	Room Hire	1,220
BUSWELLS HOTEL	Lecture Overflow	The Georgian Suite	893
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	MBA Programme Event-Workshop	Meeting Room	540
COMHARCHUMANN FORBARTHA CHORCA DHUIABHNE TEO	Cursa Gaeltachta UCD	Room Hire	300
CONRAD DUBLIN	Alumni Event	Room Hire	7,627
DD PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	Hire of Wood Quay-National Folklore Centre	Room Hire	400
DROMARTIN ESTATES CO LTD	Adult Education Course	Room Hire	840
DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL	Hire of Wood Quay-National Folklore Centre	Room Hire	121
FERRYCARRIG HOTEL	HEAR Student Meeting	Room Hire	250
FOUR SEASONS HOTEL	School of Law Dinner	Room Hire	6,514
HAMPTON HOTEL	Staff Consultation Meeting	Room Hire	250
LEGACY VENTURES	MBA International Study Trip — Brazil	Room Hire	1,810
MOUNT MERRION COMMUNITY CENTRE	UCD Adult Education Centre	Room Hire	3,090
NATIONAL CONCERT HALL	UCD Spring Festival Gala Of Ireland	Auditorium	6,114

LOCATION	Purpose	Room	Cost €
NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND	Joint Board Dinner	Room Hire	1,500
O'CALLAGHAN — DAVENPORT HOTEL	Paul Donovan Guest Lecturer	Gandon Suite	792
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST	Hire of Laboratory Facilities	Lab Facilities	351
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Le Panto Copper Room	320
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Jacobean Board Room	500
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Le Panto Library	308
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Thomas Cooley Suite	312
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Sir John Nutting	232
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	UCD Smurfit School Business Dinner	Seamount Suite	1,655
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	EQUIS Accreditation	Room Hire	624
ROAD STONE SPORTS CLUB	BBQ & Sports Day	Room Hire	450
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND	Business Breakfast with Guest Speaker	Graves Hall	2,187
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND	Charles Institute Seminar Series	Graves Hall	2,000
ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY	Institute for British Irish Studies Event	Meeting Room	900
ROYAL MARINE HOTEL	Coaching Psychology	Meeting Room	375
STILLOGAN PARK HOTEL	Mediation	Nutley Suite	310
THE CASTING COUCH	Focus Group Meetings	Room Hire	847
THE CLARION HOTEL	Career Workshop	Meeting Room	150
THE CLARION HOTEL	Constitutional Studies Group	Meeting Room	210
THE GLENROYAL HOTEL	Mediation	Room Hire	133
THE HONORABLE SOCIETY OF KINGS INNS	Fordham Summer School Dinner	Room Hire	900
THE MERRION HOTEL	Dermot Byrne Talk	Meeting Room	500
THE MERRION HOTEL	Christmas Reception	Room Hire	760
THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL	Chinese New Year Celebrations	Main Auditorium	1,000
THE STEPHEN'S GREEN HIBERNIAN CLUB	Development Council Meeting	Room Hire	100

## UCD 2011 Details

LOCATION	Purpose	Room	Cost €
BALLYFERMOT COMMUNITY CIVIC CENTRE	School Liaison/Outreach Activity	Conference Room 2	40
BELVEDERE HOTEL	Constitutional Studies Group	Meeting Room	60
BUSWELLS HOTEL	IBIS Evening Lecture Series	Room 5531	586
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	MBA Coaching sessions	Room Hire	200

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LOCATION	Purpose	Room	Cost €
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	774
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	MBA Open Evening	Room Hire	250
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	MBA Event	Room Hire	200
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	MBA Open Evening	Meeting Room	150
CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN — IFSC	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	355
CONFERENCE PARTNERS LTD	Alumni Awards Dinner 2011	Room Hire	18,036
DROMARTIN ESTATES CO LTD	UCD Adult Education Centre -Art Classes	Room Hire	840
ENTERPRISE IRELAND	New York Office Space Rental-International Recruitment	Room Hire	3,195
LONDON COLLEGE DUBLIN	Classroom Hire For Evening Class	Room Hire	7,000
MOUNT MERRION COMMUNITY CENTRE	Adult Education	Fitzwilliam 2	1,320
PERCHERON T/A MORRISON HOTEL	Programme Office Meeting	Morrison Boardroom	384
PROJECT ARTS CENTRE	Rental Of Cube In Project Art-Showcase of Students Work	Room Hire	1,800
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST	U21 Summer School	Room Hire	338
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	228
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	312
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Governing Authority	Sir John Nutting	1,100
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	230
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	308
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Governing Authority	Pembroke Suite	1,100
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Video Shoot Irish Board-Alumni	Room Hire	180
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Governing Authority	Pembroke Suite	1,100
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Governing Authority	Pembroke Suite	1,100
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Preliminary Meetings for Quality Review Group	Room Hire	280
RADISSON SAS — ST HELEN'S HOTEL	Conference Delegates		420
RADISSON BLU HOTEL	MBA Event	Room Hire	250
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND	Business Journalist Awards	The Corrigan, Graves Hall & Cheyne Room	1,210
ROYAL MARINE HOTEL	Executive Education Room Hire	Room Hire	650
ST KILIANS GERMAN SCHOOL	Summer Language School Gym Hall Rental	Gym Rental	3,000
STILLORGAN PARK HOTEL	School of Law Away Day	Room Hire	400

LOCATION	Purpose	Room	Cost €
THE CLARENCE	Book Launch		544
THE GRAFTON SUITE LTD	Focus Group Event	Clarence Suite	272
THE IRELAND INSTITUTE	Book Launch	Room Hire	75
THE SPENCER DOCK CONVENTION CENTRE DUBLIN LTD	MBA Book Launch	Room Hire	605
THE STEPHEN'S GREEN HIBERNIAN CLUB	Executive Education	Room Hire	250

## TCD 2010 Details

Room Hired €	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
243,857	Jesuit Conference Centre, Milltown Park, Ranelagh, D6	ISE Rental of Theatre & Lecture Rooms
129,943	9th Floor Apollo House	Nursing School
48,833	40 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9	Office & Teaching Space for Deaf Studies
43,387	683 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT154 4EG	Premises for Reconciliation Studies Course
37,568	Copley Court, Copley Street, Cork	Health Assessment Centre
37,000	Springfield Medical Centre, Tallaght D24	Provision of Surgery Space
15,000	Independent Colleges, 60-63 Dawson Street, D2	Hire of Room for new MSc — Business
11,920	Woodbrook Road, Cork	Rooms for Students on Clinical Placement
7,466	11 Earlsvale Road, Cavan	Rooms for Students on Clinical Placement
3,500	Jesuit Conference Centre, Milltown Park, Ranelagh, D6	ISE Conference Rental of Theatre & Lecture Rooms
1,440	10 Bishopcourt Place, Wilton, Cork	Rooms for Students on Clinical Placement

## TCD 2011 Details

Room Hired €	Location	Purpose of Hired Room
247,151	Jesuit Conference Centre, Milltown Park, Ranelagh, D6	ISE Rental of Theatre & Lecture Rooms
115,346	9th Floor Apollo House	Nursing School
40,421	683 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT154 4EG	Premises for Reconciliation Studies Course
94,339	Copley Court, Copley Street, Cork	Health Assessment Centre
35,170	Springfield Medical Centre, Tallaght D24	Provision of Surgery Space
10,200	Woodbrook Road, Cork	Rooms for Students on Clinical Placements
7,720	11 Earlsvale Road, Cavan	Rooms for Students on Clinical Placements

**Higher Education Grants**

128. **Deputy Ciara Conway** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when a person (details supplied) in County Wexford will hear back regarding an appeal application made in respect of a local authority grant application; if he will ensure that this application will be completed as a priority matter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40636/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The student in question wished to be assessed as an independent mature student for student grant purposes. His grant awarding

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

authority decided that the documentation submitted by him did not sufficiently support this position. This decision was upheld by its appeals officer. Following a review of the case, my Department subsequently upheld the appeals officer's decision. This outcome was communicated by my Department to the student on 7 June 2011. Further correspondence was subsequently received and a response to this issued on 4 October 2011.

The Deputy will appreciate that the onus is on an applicant to provide sufficient proofs in support of his/her student grant application and this requirement is applied equally to all students.

### **School Staffing**

129. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will consider a proposal (details supplied) on guidance counselling; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40642/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** Until now, a specific resource was provided for guidance in addition to the standard teacher allocation to post primary schools. In future, schools must meet their guidance requirements from within the overall resource provided by that normal staffing schedule. Individually schools can continue to make provision for guidance and counselling. Decisions on how this will be done will be taken at school level in the best interests of students and to ensure the best use of resources available. I am confident school management and teachers will continue to work together to meet the needs of the students in their care.

In this way, the main teacher allocation can be maintained at 19:1 for schools generally, while schools will have discretion to balance what they allocate for guidance against the competing demands of providing subject choice. The change that has been announced gives schools greater autonomy in how they allocate staff resources to best meet the needs of their students. My Department will be notifying schools of the impact of the budget changes in January, 2012.

### **Schools Building Projects**

130. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position on an awaited new school (details supplied) in County Kerry; if this school is considered an absolute priority by him in view of its condition; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40677/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** A major building project for the school referred to by the Deputy was included in the School Buildings Work Programme for 2011 announced last January. The project was listed for completion of the brief and the appointment of a design team. The brief was recently completed and the process of appointing a Design Team will commence shortly.

*Question No. 131 answered with Question No. 105.*

### **School Transport**

132. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total funding provided for the school transport scheme for 2011; the total funding raised by charges on parents; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40694/11]

133. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the expenditure to date for the school transport scheme for 2011; the expected expenditure by the end of the year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40695/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy Ciarán Cannon):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 132 and 133 together.

The 2011 allocation for school transport services is nearly €180 million. My Department's expenditure on the School Transport Scheme was €155.2m to the end of November 2011. The expenditure to the year end will be in the region of €172m. This expenditure provides for all aspects of school transport provision including the payment of grants. The income generated by pupil charges is estimated at some €11.5m in respect of 2011.

#### **Schools Building Projects**

134. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when a project (details supplied) will proceed to construction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40696/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The new school referred to by the Deputy is one of eight schools which were approved for inclusion in the 3rd Bundle of schools to be procured via Public Private Partnership. This Bundle was handed over to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) in July 2010 to commence the tender procurement process. I am pleased to inform the Deputy that tenders were received on 5th July 2011 and following evaluation, the BAM PPP consortium was appointed Preferred Tenderer on 30th September 2011. BAM submitted applications for full planning permission to the relevant local authorities and subject to the successful outcomes to these applications and the completion of the procurement process, it is anticipated that construction of the schools in the Bundle will commence in the first quarter of 2012. The accommodation is expected to be ready for occupation in September 2013.

#### **Schools Building Projects**

135. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills when a project (details supplied) in County Leitrim will proceed to the next stage in view of the fact that there is an urgent need to upgrade existing accommodation and provide additional new permanent accommodation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40697/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I can confirm that the school referred to by the Deputy contacted my Department regarding a proposed extension. Following communications between my officials and the school, an application for major capital works was furnished to my Department in October 2011. This application is being assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large-scale building projects. The outcome of this assessment will be conveyed to the school authority in due course and a band rating will be assigned to the proposed project, details of which will be published on the Department's website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

The progression of all large-scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase will be considered in the context of the Department's multi-annual school building and modernisation programme. In light of current competing demands on the capital budget of my Department and the demographic challenge facing the education system in the coming years, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

The Government's Medium Term Infrastructure and Capital Investment Framework, which was published on 10th November 2011, sets out the demographic challenge facing the education system with substantial increases in enrolments at both primary and post primary level projected in the coming years. Therefore, the delivery of new schools, together with extension projects to meet the increase in demand, will be the main focus for capital investment in schools in the coming years. Given the constraints on capital funding, the Government has to prioritise school building projects and the very real need to ensure that every child has access to a school place.

I have previously committed to publishing details this month of the school building projects to be constructed in 2012 and in the new year, I will publish a five year plan outlining the projects to be constructed in that time.

### **Schools Refurbishment**

136. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if funding will be provided at an early date to enable necessary improvement works to be undertaken at a school (details supplied) in County Monaghan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40698/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The school in question submitted an application in April 2011 for Emergency Funding for a sewerage system upgrade. As the scope of works for this project is outside the terms of the Emergency Works Scheme it cannot be considered for emergency funding. A refusal letter in respect of this application issued to the school authorities on 2nd June 2011.

### **Third Level Fees**

137. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if it is mandatory for a third level student to pay full tuition fees when a student changes course before completion of the original course; if there is a consistent approach taken by all third level institutions in relation to such costs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40699/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The position is that under my Department's Free Fees Scheme, students who have previously pursued but have not completed a course of third level study and subsequently resume third level studies are not eligible for free fees for the equivalent period of time spent on the first course of study.

As the Deputy may be aware it is the third level institution concerned that determines a student's eligibility for free fees in line with the terms and conditions of the scheme.

### **School Staffing**

138. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a person (details supplied) in County Kerry will be given panel rights; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40743/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The teacher referred to by the Deputy was not eligible for access to the redeployment panel in respect of the current school year. My Department will begin the process early in 2012 of identifying schools with vacancies to which surplus permanent and CID holding teachers in primary schools will be redeployed for the 2012/13 school year. As part of this process the redeployment arrangements, including access to the supplementary panel will be published on my Department's website.

### Schools Refurbishment

139. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding an awaited grant for a school (details supplied) in County Kerry; if the situation at the school is considered urgent by him, in view of the possible health and safety implications of inaction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40758/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** The school in question submitted an application in October 2010 for emergency funding for a perimeter fence. As the scope of works for this project is outside the terms of the Emergency Works Scheme it cannot be considered for emergency funding. A refusal letter in respect of this application issued to the school authorities on 17th November 2010. The school applied for a Summer Works Scheme grant in 2011 to carry out replacement of windows. Due to the scale of demand for funding under the scheme, it was not possible to fund all applications. The school was advised accordingly.

140. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if additional funding will be provided to a school (details supplied) in County Kerry in the interest of health and safety; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40764/11]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** My Department has received an application for additional funding from the school in question. This application is being assessed and the school authorities will be notified of the outcome as quickly as possible.

### Pension Provisions

141. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will consider arrangements concerning pension entitlements (details supplied). [40585/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Civil servants recruited before April 2004 generally have a minimum pension age of 60 years. This is a key long-standing feature of their pension scheme and I have no plans to stop pensions in payment to retired civil servants under the age of 65 years until those persons reach that age.

Civil servants recruited from April 2004 onwards generally have a minimum pension age of 65 years with no maximum retirement age.

Under the proposed single public service pension scheme, as provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme) and Remuneration Bill 2011, which is currently before the Dáil, it is planned that future entrants to the civil service and the public service generally will have a pension age of 66 years, rising to 67 and 68 years in 2021 and 2028 respectively, in tandem with increases in the State Pension age, with a maximum retirement age of 70 years.

I should point out that retirement is a significant means of reducing Public Service numbers and assisting in meeting the budgetary targets.

These prospective changes to the minimum pension age in the single scheme are part of the Government's drive to reduce the long-term cost of public service pensions, thereby putting public service pensions on a more sustainable footing.

### Capital Expenditure

142. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will report progress on the development by the Office of Public Works of new facilities to house a forensic science laboratory in Backweston, Celbridge, County Kildare; the timetable for the completion of this project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40638/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes):** While design work for construction of new Forensic Science Laboratory facilities at Backweston has been brought to an advanced stage by the Office of Public Works, capital allocations within OPW and the Department of Justice and Equality, do not permit tendering of the project at this time.

### State Property

143. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will clarify the details of the agreement with the EU, IMF, ECB in relation to the sale of State assets, including details of the value of assets to be sold and the timeframe for their sale; and if he will give further details on the way any such sale proceeds are to be used. [40657/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Under the arrangements entered into with the European Commission, the IMF and the ECB on external financial support for Ireland, the Government has agreed to prepare a draft programme of asset disposals and associated regulatory reforms, by the end of December 2011, for discussion with the Troika in advance of taking final decisions on the programme to be pursued. The draft programme will include:

- the identification of the potential assets to be disposed;
- any regulatory steps and changes deemed necessary, including those required to be consistent with relevant EU legislation, that would have to be completed in advance of a disposal;
- a timetable for implementation, taking into account the need for an orderly process that avoids fire sales and allows time to implement regulatory reforms; and
- an assessment of their classification as financial or non-financial transactions.

The Government's final decision on the programme to be pursued will take account of discussions with the Troika on the amount of proceeds to be generated and also the use to which these proceeds will be put.

### Departmental Properties

144. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in the context of the recent debate concerning the out-dated anomaly of upward only rent reviews which are contained in leases concluded prior to February 2010, and particularly in line with his recent budget announcement concerning guidelines from National Asset Management Agency for arbitration purposes, pertaining to its properties and tenants, if he will now immediately instruct all Government departments and agencies under Government control, as a gesture of goodwill, to adopt a similar policy in respect of pre February 2010 leases, where such Departments and agencies hold tenants across the country in respect of Government properties, and immediately enter into discussions with these tenants, which have such upward only rent review clauses contained in their said leases and reduce the rents which are exorbitant and are threatening the survival of businesses contained in such properties to a more realistic level of rent which now prevails; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40683/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The question of putting in place a policy in relation to rents receivable by Government Departments and associ-

ated bodies on the lines adopted by NAMA is under consideration in my Department in consultation with potentially affected Departments.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

145. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40407/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** I refer the Deputy to the Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-2014 (Part IV Estimate of Supply Services, page 155), published recently by my Department and which contains the details requested.

### **Flood Relief**

146. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the progress made in relation to a project (details supplied) in County Mayo; the position regarding the hydrologists report in relation to same in view of the fact this report was commissioned four years ago; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40416/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes):** The Office of Public Works completed a study in 2009 into the feasibility of a number of possible flood alleviation measures in the area concerned. These measures included the construction of new channels to provide drainage into Lough Corrib and Lough Mask.

As indicated in my response to the House of 3 May, 2011, the study identified no practical drainage solutions, and road raising was found to be the only practical option available to alleviate flood risk. A subsequent application by Mayo County Council, under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works Scheme, for funding for these works was not approved as they fell outside the scope of the Scheme.

The OPW has recently met with Mayo County Council to discuss flooding issues generally in Co. Mayo, including the Neale. Subsequent to these discussions, OPW and council engineers have exchanged information with a view to assessing the viability of providing a flood relief route via the proposed trench for the local water services upgrade to be undertaken by the council.

Should the council bring forward a feasible proposal to undertake drainage works as part the water services upgrade, it will be open to the council to submit a funding application under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works Scheme. Any application received will be assessed in accordance with the scheme eligibility criteria and having regard to the overall availability of resources for flood risk management.

It should be noted that while the proposed water services infrastructure can follow the ground contours, a flood relief conduit would have to be constructed at a gradient, or at various gradients, with appropriate pumping. Such engineering requirements will impact on the economic viability of any proposal identified.

### **Consultancy Contracts**

147. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40511/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** As clarified with the Deputy's office, my Department had no expenditure on public relations consultants in 2011.

### Ministerial Appointments

148. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40555/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** In response to the Deputy's question the following table contains details of committees, advisory groups etc. set up since March 2011 and which come under the aegis of my Department.

Committees and Advisory Groups

Title	Function
Interdepartmental committee to progress examination of sick leave arrangements	The purpose of this committee is to contribute to the development of policy around sick leave in the public service.
Senior Public Service Management Committee	The Senior Public Service Management Committee has been established to support the development of the Senior Public Service. The SPS, which has been established initially within the civil service, aims to strengthen leadership capacity across the public service. The SPS Management Committee will oversee the development of policies on mobility and training and development. The Committee is comprised of the Secretaries General of six Government Departments and is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
Human Resources Shared Services Centre (HRSSC) Project Management Board	This is a cross Departmental Body that will oversee the delivery of the HRSSC project.
ESB Sale Steering Group	This group has been established on foot of a Government Decision of 14th September 2011 to consider the best approach to achieve the sale of a minority stake in the ESB as an integrated utility, including regulatory, legal, financial, economic and energy and other policy considerations, and report back to Government by end-November with a recommendation
State Assets Disposal Steering Group	This group has been established on foot of a Government Decision of 14th September 2011 to examine a range of other assets identified by Government as potential candidates for inclusion in any asset disposal programme and advise on the appropriate valuations to be placed on the assets and on the most appropriate method of disposal, likely timeframe and economic impact of any such disposal, in order to inform any further decisions that the Government may wish to make.
Public Service Information Officer( CIO) Council	It comprises senior representatives from a range of Departments/Offices and public bodies with responsibility for Information Communications Technology (ICT) and eGovernment. The aim of the group is to assist CMOD with the development of ICT and eGovernment policies in support of the Programme for Government and the Reform Implementation Plan.

### Flood Relief

149. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform further to Parliamentary Question Nos. 22 and 23 of 8 December 2011, the reason the Office of Public Works is refusing to provide a breakdown of the €270,000 allocated in 2010 and fully drawn down by the local authority; if he will confirm that the OPW has no role in ensuring that public funds are used in a proper manner; his views on the fact that public funds were allocated for a specific project which failed on the first occasion that it was required to work; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40574/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes):** In relation to a breakdown of the funding for this project, this information is not available to the Office of Public Works and, as pointed out in my reply to the Deputy of 8 December 2011, Roscommon County Council, as the local authority responsible for this project, is best placed to provide this information.

Under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works Scheme, funding is provided to the local authorities who are then responsible for the planning, procurement, detailed financial management and day-to-day implementation of the works. Applications received under the scheme are assessed under a number of criteria, which are designed to ensure value for money.

OPW has not been made aware by the council of any difficulties in relation to this project. Any such difficulties would be a matter for the council to address. If further works are considered necessary, then it is open to the council to apply for funding, and the application will be assessed in the normal way.

### Members Allowances

150. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the conditions that apply to the payment of the leaders' allowance to Deputies and Senators; and his plans to reform the payments to those Deputies and Senators that are outside of political parties. [40637/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The Party Leader's Allowance is provided for in the *Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) Act, 1938*, as amended by the *Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Amendment) Act, 2001*.

The allowance is paid to the parliamentary leader of a qualifying party in relation to expenses arising from the parliamentary activities, including research, of the party. Payments are made in respect of members of the party elected to Dáil Éireann and members elected/nominated to Seanad Éireann at the last preceding general election, or a subsequent bye-election or, in the case of Seanad Éireann, nominated to it after the last preceding general election.

The primary restriction in the Act on the use of the allowance is that it may not be used in respect of election expenses.

In addition, the 2001 Act gives a statutory oversight role in relation to the Party Leader's Allowance to the Standards in Public Office (SIPO) Commission. This requires each party leader to prepare a statement of expenditure for the allowance, to have it audited by an independent auditor and furnish it with the auditor's report to the Commission. Based on the accounts submitted, the Commission is required to make a report to the Minister in relation to the use of the Party Leader's Allowance and cause a copy of the report to be laid before the Oireachtas.

In relation to payments made to Deputies and Senators that are outside political parties, an allowance in connection with his or her parliamentary activities may be paid if he or she is a member of Dáil Éireann or Seanad Éireann, who at the last preceding general election or a subsequent bye-election, was elected as a member of Dáil Éireann or elected/nominated for Seanad Éireann after the preceding general election, other than as a member of a qualifying party, i.e. an Independent member. The SIPO Commission's oversight provisions do not apply to the allowances paid to Independent members. I intend to bring proposals to Government in early 2012 in relation to the Party Leader's Allowance.

### Public Service Staff

151. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in all

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cases shown by category such as health, education and so forth, the number of persons employed in the public sector at the peak; the number who have since left the public sector; the number he expects will leave by the end of February 2012; if he will clarify his overall targets for the public sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40656/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** The information the Deputy is seeking is freely available on my Department’s website in the Public Service Staff Numbers Databank.

The information is presented on a whole time equivalent basis and shows the number of staff employed in each sector at the end of each year for the period 1994 to 2010. For 2011 the data is published on a quarterly basis.

The Databank is regularly updated and uses the end 2008 figures as its base. The numbers are based on information reported to my Department on a quarterly basis. As outlined in the Public Service Reform Plan that I published on 17 November last, the Government plans to reduce the size of the public service to 282,500 by 2015. A sectoral breakdown of this figure will be announced in due course.

The numbers reduction set out in the Budget last week will see 2012 public service numbers reduced to some 294,000, a 6,000 reduction over projected end 2011 figure of 300,000. This represents a third of the required reductions between now and 2015 and is consistent with Government’s policy to front-load the correction, thus maximising the potential savings. Overall, from the peak level in 2008, by end 2015 we will see a 37,500 reduction in numbers. There will also be a €3.5 billion or 20% reduction in the Exchequer paybill over that period.

My Department has estimated that up to 9,000 staff are due to retire in 2012. It is expected that the vast majority of these will retire under the “Grace Period” which ends in February 2012. A full sectoral breakdown of the numbers remaining will not be available until the end of the first quarter of 2012 and will be published on my Department’s website.

### Public Sector Pay

152. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he will give details of the number of public servants who earn more than €60,000 or less; the number of public servants that earn more than €70,000; €80,000; €90,000 and €100,000; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40688/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** Contemporary data on earnings for public servants is not available to my Department. The most up to date earnings data available to the Revenue Commissioners, as stated in my Reply to Parliamentary Question 37624/11 on 29 November 2011, is not comparable for a number of reasons to the statistics produced by my Department on public service numbers and earnings. They also predate the measures taken to reduce gross public service wages in 2010.

The closest data currently available within the Department to that sought by the Deputy relates to salary ranges. The estimated breakdown of employee numbers on a whole time equivalent basis (based on a whole time equivalent figure of 300,000) by salary range within the public service in 2011 is set out in the Table below:

Pay Parameters	Numbers
€0-€20,000	19,442
€20,001-€40,000	93,253

Pay Parameters	Numbers
€40,001-€60,000	112,954
€60,001-€80,000	52,600
€80,001-€100,000	14,960
Over €100,000	6,791
Total	300,000

The above salary figures include the reduction imposed on the remuneration rates of public servants under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No 2) Act 2009 effective from 1 January 2010. However, the salary ranges exclude the impact on gross salaries of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009 which imposed a pension related deduction on the salary of public servants of an average of some 7% effective from March 2009.

153. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the position regarding the public sector pay cap; if any voluntary pay reductions have been obtained to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40689/11]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin):** In June of this year, the Government agreed with my proposal to the introduction of:—

- a general pay ceiling of €200,000 for future appointments to higher positions across the public service; and
- a general pay ceiling of €250,000 for future appointments to CEO posts within Commercial State Companies.

I proposed this pay ceiling in light of the decision taken by the Government on its first day in office to reduce the salary of the Taoiseach to €200,000 and to apply a *pro rata* reduction to other members of the Government. In relation to current incumbents, the Government gave detailed consideration to the potential legal and contractual issues arising from the imposition of an immediate reduction of salaries. Having regard to those issues, the Government decided to seek voluntary waivers of salary of 15%, or by a lesser amount if the application of the full 15% reduction would bring the salary levels of such individuals to below the proposed pay ceiling.

From the information available to my Department, 23 positive responses have been received on foot of the Government Decision including from former incumbents who have since retired.

Arrangements are being made to implement the pay ceiling for future appointments where salaries are determined by the appropriate Minister. In addition, the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Amendment) Bill 2011 will, once enacted, apply the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts of 2009 to serving members of the judiciary in line with the decision of the people in the referendum on the Twenty Ninth Amendment of the Constitution is currently before the Oireachtas. This legislation will also amend the salary rate for future appointments to certain statutory offices, such as the Presidency, the Judiciary and the Ombudsman and formally provide for the reduction in the salary rates for members of the Government.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the substantial number of voluntary waivers of salaries made by other public servants including that made by the President on assuming Office.

### Work Permits

154. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he will consider implementing incentives such as the waiver of the €30,000 salary conditions for those non-EEA students who have completed their studies and cannot fulfil the work permit requirements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40429/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Department of Justice and Equality determines the immigration status of persons within the State and whether they can remain in the State. A student on an Immigration Stamp 2, issued by the Department of Justice and Equality, is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies and is permitted to engage in casual employment which is defined as not more than 20 hours per week during term, and up to 40 hours per week during holidays. A student on a Stamp 2 is prohibited from engaging in full time employment and cannot be issued with an employment permit.

Students on a Stamp 2 should be present in the State to pursue a course of studies and are not here for the purpose of entering employment. Accordingly, this Department is not in a position to consider employment permit applications from persons present in the State on a student status apart from applications received under the “Third Level Graduate Scheme”.

Non-EEA students who have, on or after 1 January, 2007, acquired a primary, masters or doctorate degree from an Irish third level educational institution are eligible to apply under the Scheme.

Persons who qualify under this scheme will be granted one non-renewable extension to their current student permission (Stamp 2) for a six month or 1 year period, depending on their level of qualification, starting on the date upon which the person receives their exam results. The purpose of the permission to remain in the State under this Scheme is to seek employment and apply for a Green Card or Work Permit under normal criteria.

I wish to advise the Deputy that it is current Government policy to issue new employment permits only in respect of:

- highly skilled, highly paid positions or;
- non-EEA nationals who are already legally resident in the State on valid employment permits or;
- positions requiring specialist or scarce skills, expertise or qualifications which, otherwise, cannot be filled.

Furthermore, applications for new employment permits are normally only considered where a starting salary of €30,000 is on offer. While no change in this general policy is contemplated, consideration of Work Permit type applications under the Third Level Graduate Scheme may take cognisance of lower industry norms for the starting salaries of graduate occupations.

### Job Protection

155. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the efforts he has made to secure the maximum level of employment at Aviva Insurance both at its head office in Dublin and at the various branch offices throughout the country in view of the concerns of the employees; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40387/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** In October 2011, Aviva announced that it had undertaken a review of its Irish operations.

Reasons cited for this review, according to the company, included the significant reduction in demand for insurance and pension products in the Irish market. Industry figures indicate that the market for General Insurance i.e. motor, household insurance, in Ireland had contracted by over 20% in the last two years with Life and Pensions insurance contracting by over 30%. Given the above, Aviva stated that it found it necessary to review its Irish operations to ensure that its cost base was in line with domestic demand to ensure sustainability.

Aviva have indicated to IDA and myself their continued commitment to ongoing engagement with employees and unions and also have stated their intention, post-transition, to remain one of the largest employers of insurance people in Ireland.

I have met with and had a number of discussions with senior management from Aviva, including the company's CEO, and had asked IDA to engage with the company to minimise job losses.

In that context, IDA have and continues to engage with Aviva in an effort to develop other alternatives for the company's operations in Ireland.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

156. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40405/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The net Exchequer provision for my Department for 2011, which is published in the Revised Estimates, is €844.840 million. This sum comprises €336.9 million in Current expenditure and €507.9 million in Capital expenditure and takes into account a targeted saving of €14.6 million on Programme Payroll and non-pay administrative savings for 2011 agreed in the context of the development of the National Recovery Plan. This allocation is broadly spent across 6 key Programme Areas.

Actual outturn figures for end year expenditure are not yet available. However, significant spend is profiled for the last month of the year. My Department is closely monitoring spending under all expenditure lines with a view to returning savings made to the Exchequer.

### **County Enterprise Boards**

157. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the budget for each county and city enterprise board in budget 2012; if funding has changed since the budget in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40488/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Budget 2012 contains details of the overall funding available to my Department which is not broken down on an individual County and City Enterprise Board (CEB) basis. There has been no change to this figure since the Budget.

My Department, like all others, will find savings across its current expenditure, including in administration and pay budgets. However, capital spending on job-creating programmes will be maintained or increased in 2012. My Department and its agencies will be able to continue present levels of capital spending on job-creation, as well as increasing the scope of some crucial programmes and implementing some new measures.

Individual allocations to CEBs will be made early in the first quarter of 2012 in line with established criteria administered through the CEB Central Coordination Unit (CCU) based within Enterprise Ireland.

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Under the 2012 Estimates Process, the Capital Allocation for the CEBs in 2012 has been set at €15 million which is the same as under the original 2011 Estimates Process figure. In view of the on-going challenges surrounding the public finances, this preservation of funding represents the Government's continued commitment to providing supports to businesses in the micro-enterprise sector.

### Departmental Schemes

158. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the level of funding available for the job expansion fund and the competitive start fund in 2011; if this has changed since budget 2012; if the conditions have changed since the budget; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40489/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The objective of the Job Expansion Fund is to assist Enterprise Ireland client companies with significant growth potential achieve increased employment. A company can obtain grant support up to a maximum of €150,000 towards the recruitment of new employees. Under the Fund, commitments of €4.6m have been made for 2011. The Job Expansion Fund will continue along similar lines in 2012.

The Competitive Start Fund is focused on accelerating the growth of Lifesciences, Cleantech and Industrial start-up companies that have the capability to succeed in global markets. The Fund is designed to enable those companies reach their key commercial and technical milestones. The Fund is a competitive one with 4 calls for applications in 2011 and a further 4 calls planned for 2012. In 2011 €2.75m was available in equity support and €96,250 in mentor support. The full amount was approved with 55 companies supported. In 2012, at least an equivalent amount will be available in equity support and mentor support.

159. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount of funding made available for capital grants in 2012; the amount available in 2011; if the conditions have changed since budget 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40493/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** An amount of €514 million has been allocated to my Department in respect of capital grants for 2012. This amount compares with an allocation of €508 million for 2011 and represents an increase of €6 million year on year, which is in line with the Government's commitment to provide €1 billion in capital supports for enterprise over the next two years.

The increased capital budget will, in 2012, allow:

- A 4% increase in the Enterprise Ireland capital budget
- Maintenance of the IDA capital budget
- Maintenance of the County Enterprise Boards' capital budget
- A 10% increase in the number of high potential start-up Irish companies supported
- €18million spend on Innovation Fund Ireland to further improve the Irish venture capital industry
- New technology centres in Cloud, E-learning and Financial Services to be commenced

- A 20% increase in the number of Innovation Partnerships
- Delivery of the Partial Loan Guarantee Scheme and Micro Finance Loan Fund
- Support for the SFI research community of over 3,000 researchers, including research teams working with over 500 industry partners
- Maintenance of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions
- Doubling the number of Technology Innovation Development Awards to 200

### Tax Code

160. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if he has investigated the likely effects of an increase in Ireland’s corporation tax on employment, the presence of multinational corporations and any other macroeconomic effects; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40494/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Ireland’s 12.5% corporation tax trading rate forms the cornerstone of our attractive international tax offering and has become an international brand name. Any change to the 12.5% rate would damage this brand name by indicating a lack of long-term commitment to certainty, a very important criterion for companies considering an investment in Ireland. In his recent Budget speech the Minister for Finance reaffirmed the Government’s Programme for Government commitment to retain the 12.5% corporation tax rate.

There is a sound rationale underpinning our commitment to this sustaining this rate. Not only is it important for competitiveness. Empirical evidence obtained by the OECD during an ongoing study of the impact of various categories of taxation on economic growth across a range of jurisdictions suggests that corporate taxes are the most damaging category in terms of impact on economic growth, followed by income taxes as the second most damaging category and indirect taxes as the third most damaging category, with annual property related taxes being the least most harmful category in terms of adverse impact on economic growth. The impact of alternative categories of taxation on economic growth and job creation is more significant in the case of a small open economy such as Ireland. Hence the tax focus of Budget 2012.

### Departmental Agencies

161. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount of funding made available for the Source Ireland portal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40495/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** *Enterprise Ireland* now has in place a website service for sourcing queries from international buyers or procurement managers, who are looking to source world-class products, services and technologies from Irish-based companies. That Agency also has experienced advisers in place both in Ireland and in overseas locations, who work directly with Irish companies.

### Science Foundation Ireland

162. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the level of funding to Science Foundation Ireland over the years 2004 to 2011; its budget for 2012; the number of researchers supported in each year; the anticipated number of researchers supported next year; if conditions for qualifying for funding have changed since budget 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40497/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Sean Sherlock):** The total Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) expenditure over the period 2004-2011 inclusive is shown in a table:

Year	Capital/ Research grants expenditure (€)	Current/SFI Paybill (€)	Administrative costs of running SFIs grant programmes (€)
2004	108.59m	1.32m	3.82m
2005	118.20m	2.74m	4.62m
2006	139.86m	3.21m	4.49m
2007	155.72m	3.56m	4.77m
2008	158.81m	4.37m	5.01m
2009	171.17m	4.67m	4.54m
2010	150.00m	4.32m	3.92m
2011	153.80m	4.29m	3.56m

As part of the transfer of certain research related functions from the Department of Education and Skills to my Department during 2010, an amount totalling €5m in current expenditure was paid out via SFI in early 2011. This €5m was for the provision of e-Journals, which allows scientific researchers access to key databases, to assist them in conducting their work. This was not an additional cost to the Exchequer in 2011.

The indicative SFI allocation for 2012 is as follows:

- Capital/Research Grants allocation is €156m.
- Current expenditure/Pay allocation is €4.40m.
- Current expenditure/Non-Pay cost allocation to run SFI programmes is €4.49m.

The number of researchers supported in each year from 2004-2011 is set out in a table:

Year	Number of Researchers directly supported by SFI
2004	1,067
2005	1,610
2006	1,362
2007	2,409
2008	2,806
2009	3,225
2010	2,999
2011	3,000 (estimated)

In 2012 the capital provision of €156m to SFI will allow it to retain support for the current levels of approximately 3,000 researchers and 28 research centres, subject to a number of factors including the quality and strategic relevance of new grant applications received.

There are no changes to qualifying conditions for funding arising from the Budget.

### Intellectual Property

163. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the progress made on the development of an international content services centre to make Ireland a world leader in managing intellectual property; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40498/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Programme for Government contains a commitment to “support the development of an International Content Services Centre to make Ireland a world leader in managing intellectual property.” There is a caveat to this commitment in that this proposal is subject to cost benefit analysis. In order to deliver on this commitment my Department issued a Request for Tenders for a Feasibility Study to examine what structures and policies could be developed to make Ireland a world centre for managing and trading in Intellectual Property. The objectives of the study are:

- to identify and describe the emerging trends in IP Portfolio Management in corporations globally; and
- taking account of such global emerging trends, to identify options and models for Ireland to leverage its existing strengths to become an internationally attractive centre for managing and trading in IP such that this could realise an economic and jobs potential.

The deadline for receipt of tenders has expired and tenders received are currently being assessed. Although well advanced, the deliberative process for selecting the successful tenderer is still ongoing. I hope to make an announcement on this matter very soon.

### Consultancy Contracts

164. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40509/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The information requested by the Deputy in respect of the external public relations and consultant persons and organisations used by my Department is set out in the following tables:

2010

Name of Company/Payee	Purpose	Cost (€)
Mr. John Travers	Facilitation of Code of Practice for Grocery Goods Undertakings	€24,805
SIRA Consulting BV	Provision of training in the Standard Cost Model to facilitate measurement of administrative burdens.	€9,950
SIRA Consulting BV	Support and Quality Assurance in respect of the measurement of administrative burdens.	€8,531
Capgemini Consulting	Provision of training in use of the National Application Database — a system developed by the European Commission to assist countries in the collation and interrogation of results arising from their cross-Government administrative burden measurements	€4,963
Jacobs and Associates	Training support in the Standard Cost Model methodology for the measurement of administrative burdens in Ireland.	€3,300

[Deputy Richard Bruton.]

Name of Company/Payee	Purpose	Cost (€)
Connolly Lowe	Consultancy — Accountancy for ODCE	€12,778
Caroline Costello	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€424
Paul Anthony McDermott	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€3,933
Brian Murray	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€5,288
Paul O'Higgins	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€3,933
Nessa Cahill	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€1,892
Tom Mallon	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€557
Brian Murray	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€4,564
Cyril O' Neill	Consultancy — Accountancy for ODCE	€2,056
Remy Farrell	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€424
Remy Farrell	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€333
Paul Anthony McDermott	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€1,210
Paul O'Higgins	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€1,210
Catherine Donnelly	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€4,235
Remy Farrell	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€3,237
Horwath Bastow Charleton	Consultancy — Accountancy for ODCE	€1,252
Nessa Cahill	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€3,896
Mr. Eoghan O'Briain	To assist the Dept. in the technical aspects of Emissions Trading, Climate Change and other related Environment work	€8,785
Keating & Associates	To provide NERA with PR Consultancy Services re their information campaign on employment rights matters.	€29,011
Brendan Moran	Computer consultancy services (NERA)	€3,085
Version 1 Software	Phase 1 analysis of Geo Smart — ERCES IT system (NERA)	€9,317
Achilles procurement Services ltd	Procurement consultant Services (NERA)	€1,411
Mazars	Professional services for NERA business planning	€3,630
Mairéad Carey	Case Summaries for The Labour Court Annual Report 2009	€6,679
Rits	Security review	€4,847
Version 1	Software asset management review	€9,518
Bearing Point	Technical skills gap and training needs analysis	€9,680
Kilroys Solicitors	Provision of legal advice on Export Credit Insurance issues	€7,213
LHM Casey McGrath	Audit work as part of closure of the Productive Sector Operational Programme, to support Ireland's drawdown of eligible EU monies under the European Regional Development Fund	€55,575

2011

Name of Company/Payee	Purpose	Cost (€)
Mr. John Travers	Facilitation of Code of Practice for Grocery Goods Undertakings (continuation of services provided in 2010)	€24,805
Reidy Brophy Limited	Facilitation of a focus group with business to develop a web portal on regulation affecting businesses	€3,570
Connolly Lowe	Legal Accounting Assignment for ODCE	€8,963
Remy Farrell	Counsel's Opinion for ODCE	€545
Una Ni Raifeartaigh	Opinion and Advices for ODCE	€1,210
Una Ni Raifeartaigh	Opinion and Advices for ODCE	€4,840
Karole Cuddihy	Legal Proofing of document for ODCE	€968

Name of Company/Payee	Purpose	Cost (€)
Una Ni Raifeartaigh	Opinion and Advices for ODCE	€454
Capital for Enterprise Ltd.	Design of Temporary Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme	€59,565
Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants	Assessment of the Productive Sector Operational Programme, 2000-2006	€15,730
Leo Burnett	Design work for publicity campaign re increase in National Minimum Wage Rate	€847
UCD (Dr Frank Walsh)	Review of ERO and REA Wage Setting Mechanisms	€15,000
Keating & Associates	To provide NERA with PR Consultancy Services re their information campaign on employment rights matters.	€18,226
Greater Heights Ltd	Learning needs Analysis (NERA)	€15,645
Mairéad Carey	Case Summaries for The Labour Court Annual Report 2010	€7,889
Rits	IT Security assessment of new hosting site established in the Revenue Hosting Centre, John's Road	€7,093
IBM	Lotus Notes healthcheck	€10,239
Maxima Ireland	Virtualisation Strategy Review — a short high-level assessment of the future opportunities available to the Department to virtualise some of its servers with a view to making cost savings.	€8,276

### Ministerial Appointments

165. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40553/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Since assuming office on 9 March 2011 I have established four new Committees / Groups, as set out in the following table.

Name of Committee / Advisory Group / New Position	Purpose	Date Established
Copyright Review Committee	To review the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000 in the context of its operation in the digital environment.	May 2011
Advisory Group on Small Business	To facilitate structured and regular dialogue between the Minister and representatives of the small business sector on issues of interest. The membership is focused on people engaged in and having direct experience in running a business.	June 2011
Cloud Computing Implementation Group	To support the implementation of the commitment in the Programme for Government on Cloud Computing.	June 2011
Steering Group on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) Access to Public Procurement	To examine further opportunities to improve SME participation in tendering for public contracts.	July 2011

### EU Directives

166. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation when the EU Directive 2008/14/EC on Temporary Agency Work is due to be transposed into Irish law. [40588/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** European Directive 2008/104/EC on Temporary Agency Work was adopted in 2008 with a transposition date of 5 December 2011. A central aim of the Directive is to ensure protection of temporary agency workers by applying the principle of equal treatment in their basic working and employment conditions.

Earlier this week, Government approved the publication of a Bill entitled Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Bill 2011 to transpose the provisions of the Directive and the Bill will be published this week. This is one of the priority Bills for my Department and the intention is to progress the Bill to early enactment in the Houses of the Oireachtas in the new parliamentary session in 2012. When enacted, the Bill will, with the exception of the provisions that create offences, have retrospective effect to 5 December, 2011.

This means that with effect from 5 December 2011, temporary agency workers employed by employment agencies and assigned to work with a hirer, are entitled to equal treatment in basic working and employment conditions in the same way as if they were directly recruited by the hirer to the same job. My Department has engaged with the representatives of Employment Agencies and hirer undertakings with a view to making appropriate arrangements to ensure that equal treatment is given effect from 5 December, 2011 in respect of all temporary agency workers.

### Work Permits

167. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the reason a person (details supplied) has been refused a work permit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40644/11]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton):** My Department processes applications in respect of the different types of employment permits and all applications are processed in line with the Employment Permits Act 2006.

I wish to advise the Deputy that, following completion of the appeals process, a Work Permit has now issued in this case.

### Community Employment Schemes

168. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Social Protection the way she will help a project (details supplied) fund their ongoing operations following the cuts in material grants announced in budget 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40391/11]

180. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Social Protection following her budgetary decision to cut a community employment scheme (details supplied) in Dublin from €24,000 to €12,600 the measures she will put in place to protect the schemes current service provision of the delivery of 400 meals a week to the elderly noting that a similar scheme in Finglas is now to close as a result of the CE budget cuts resulting in the loss of 600 meals per week to elderly in the community. [40477/11]

186. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Social Protection the steps she will take to protect individual community employment schemes in view of cuts announced in budget 2012; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40572/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 168, 180 and 186 together.

Due to the current economic circumstances and the need for the Department of Social Protection to find savings of €475 million in Budget 2012, it was necessary to examine all aspects of the Department's expenditure. We are planning savings of €27.5m which represents a reduction of 7.5% in the total 2011 Community Employment Budget of €360m.

The Government is fully committed to the protection and development of community and social employment initiatives.

Community Employment schemes provide a very important and valued contribution to social employment, training and progression for unemployed people. Furthermore, many Community Employment schemes provide vital community services right across the country.

As part of the integration of the employment services division of FAS into the Department of Social Protection on the 1st of January 2012, I have directed that a review of CE schemes will commence immediately.

No Community Employment scheme will close pending the outcome of this review.

The purpose of the review will be to establish the on-going viability of each scheme in the context of the overall objectives of the CE programme and recognising in particular the community and social value of each CE scheme.

### **Redundancy Payments**

169. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Social Protection the supports available and the consultation with employers groups that was made in advance of the decision to reduce the redundancy rebate; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40490/11]

170. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she has prepared an impact analysis on the effects on jobs of the reduction in the redundancy rebate; the effects it will have on the level of redundancy payments; if there are other macro-economic effects; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40491/11]

175. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Social Protection her views on the impact of the reduction in the employer rebate under the redundancy and insolvency scheme on the incentive for employers to take on additional staff; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40674/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 169, 170 and 175 together.

As announced in Budget 2012, the employer rebate of statutory redundancy payments will reduce from 60% to 15% with effect from January 2012. It is expected that this measure will save €81 million in 2012. To give effect to this change, legislation was introduced and passed all stages in this House last week and is due to be debated in the Seanad this week. While I acknowledge that this change may cause difficulties for employers it must be recognised that in the current economic climate, the 60% level of rebate is not sustainable.

This measure will bring redundancy rebates arrangements generally into line with other EU jurisdictions where the payment of redundancy rebates is not general practice. For example, in the UK the redundancy payment is funded by the employer and there is no recovery from the State. In Sweden there is no statutory system of redundancy payments from the employers while in Spain the employer cannot claim back any amount from the State. In contrast in Ireland last year, €373.2 million was paid out in redundancy rebates to employers and €186.2 million has been paid so far this year. Supports to enterprise are generally a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

### Social Welfare Appeals

171. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the current waiting time for appeals for persons who were on illness benefit and were refused invalidity or disability allowance when their two years were up; in view of the fact that persons often have to pay for medication, her views that this timeframe is acceptable; the measures she intends to implement to ensure a reasonable waiting time; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40628/11]

184. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason for the delay in dealing with cases in the social welfare appeals office; the average timescale for dealing with appeal applications; if her attention has been drawn to the hardship that can arise from such delays; if she has any proposals to expedite the hearing of appeals; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40562/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 171 and 184 together.

I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, based on 2010 figures the average processing times for all appeals dealt with by way of summary decision was 27.4 weeks while cases which required an oral hearing took, on average, 45.6 weeks. In the case of illness benefit, invalidity pensions and disability allowance the average times for all appeals were 39.2/56.4, 40.9/59.7 and 30.8/51 respectively. There are no separate figures maintained which identify appeals where persons who were on illness benefit were refused invalidity pension or disability allowance when their two years were up.

These processing times are calculated from the registration date of the appeal to the date of its finalisation and include all activities during this period including time spent in the Department for comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal put forward by the appellant and any further investigation and examination or assessment by the Department's Inspectors and Medical Assessors where deemed necessary. A considerable period of time is added to the process when an oral hearing is required because of the logistics involved in this process. I am assured by the Chief Appeals Officer that she is keeping the methods of operation by which the Social Welfare Appeals Office conducts its business under constant review, and that the processes are continuously being enhanced to reduce the backlogs in the Office and, overall, to reduce the processing times for dealing with appeals. In that regard, as a result of various initiatives, including the assignment of 9 additional Appeals Officers from April, 22,406 decisions were made by appeals officers in the first eleven months of 2011, in comparison to 16,232 for the same period in 2010.

### Social Welfare Benefits

172. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason a person suffering from depression on illness benefit who had applied for invalidity benefit and was refused only received three days notice that all benefits were to be cut and was left with no money to purchase their medication which was so desperately needed. [40629/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The person concerned was in receipt of illness benefit from 21 December 2007 at the maximum personal rate with an additional half-rate payment for a dependent child. On 15 September 2011 she was assessed by a departmental medical assessor who expressed the opinion that she was capable of work. Her illness benefit payment was stopped from 23 September 2011. This is in line with normal practice. She was advised of her right of appeal and she lodged an appeal thereafter. There is no record of an application for invalidity pension. She has been in receipt of jobseeker's benefit at a gradu-

ated rate since 25 October 2011. If the person concerned is experiencing difficulties in purchasing medication she may wish to consider applying for a medical card.

173. **Deputy Sandra McLellan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason so many persons suffering from mental health issues are being refused invalidity benefit without a medical assessment and left without any money or clear alternative options as to the benefit they might be entitled to apply for particularly when the community welfare officer also refuses to give an emergency payment and recommends that they go on jobseeker's and that is not an option as their general practitioner will not sign them off as fit for work; and when they have exhausted all those options, if she will clarify the other options available in order that they are not left destitute and without money to survive and purchase medication. [40630/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Invalidity pension is a payment for people who are permanently incapable of work because of illness or incapacity and who satisfy the contribution conditions. Illness benefit is a short-term payment for people who are incapable of work due to illness or injury. Since January 2009 payment of illness benefit is limited to a maximum of 104 weeks (624 days) in most cases. Currently, letters are sent to illness benefit customers 13 weeks before their claim is due to expire. The customer is advised about other possible schemes for which they may qualify, depending on their circumstances, including invalidity pension, disability allowance, jobseeker's benefit, jobseeker's allowance and supplementary welfare allowance.

An applicant is not refused invalidity pension without an assessment of their medical suitability for the scheme. Where a customer has had a recent medical review under the illness benefit scheme this review is used to assess medical suitability for other schemes as appropriate. Where there has not been a recent medical review, medical information is requested. This evidence is supplied by the applicant in the form of a diagnostic report completed by their General Practitioner, along with other medical evidence if available. A medical assessor examines this evidence and decides if the person is suitable for invalidity pension. Medical assessments are conducted in accordance with evidence-based medical protocols. If the applicant does not satisfy the medical criteria the application is disallowed by a deciding officer. The applicant is notified in writing and is advised of their right to request a review of the decision or to appeal it to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

The Deputy refers to the community welfare officer refusing to give an emergency payment under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme. A community welfare officer may issue a payment if a person is awaiting a decision on entitlement or awaiting the result of a review or appeal. However, assistance under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme is means-tested and is subject to other conditions.

There are a number of possible social welfare payments for which a customer may qualify thereafter, depending on their circumstances. If a person is refused invalidity pension or illness benefit on medical grounds, they may apply for jobseeker's allowance including where the decision on their illness payment is under appeal.

174. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Social Protection the funding available for persons whose private homes become flooded when there is heavy rain; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40652/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Under the supplementary welfare allowance (SWA) scheme, my Department makes exceptional needs payments (ENP) to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure, which cannot be met out of people's weekly income. In addition to the payment of ENPs, my Department also makes urgent needs pay-

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ments, which can be made to persons who would not normally be entitled to SWA. The aftermath of flooding is one situation where urgent needs payments can be made.

The Deputy will also be aware that in the immediate aftermath of the severe flooding experienced in October 2011, the Government put in place a humanitarian aid scheme which provides up to €10 million to assist the people affected by that flooding. The scheme is being administered by staff of the Department of Social Protection (former Community Welfare Officers).

Since these recent floods, my officials have been providing individuals with emergency payments to offset their immediate needs such as the purchase of food, clothing, fuel and household goods. Payments have also been made in respect of essential household items such as carpets, flooring, furniture and white goods.

Larger payments in respect of longer-term needs, such as meeting the cost of repairing homes and making them habitable again will be made in the coming weeks and months as the extent of the damage caused becomes apparent.

My officials have made house to house calls to individuals they have identified as being vulnerable at this difficult time. In addition special clinics were established to offer help to affected households.

Any person experiencing hardship as a result of the recent flooding should contact the local Department of Social Protection representative administering the SWA scheme who may be able to offer assistance.

*Question No. 175 answered with Question No. 169.*

### **Departmental Expenditure**

176. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Social Protection the total allocated budget for her Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of her Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40408/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The total estimate, as published, for expenditure on schemes services and administration, in the Department of Social Protection, in 2011 is €20.62 billion. The outturn will not be available until early in the New Year as payments will continue to be made up to the end of this month.

### **Social Inclusion**

177. **Deputy Gerald Nash** asked the Minister for Social Protection when she will publish and present the Annual Social Inclusion Report for 2009 and 2010; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40413/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (NAPinclusion) identifies a wide range of targeted actions and interventions to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty. My Department is currently preparing the third annual report on social inclusion which will outline progress in implementing the action plan over the two year period from January 2009 to December 2010.

The completion of the report is at an advanced stage and can now move to finalisation with the recent publication by the Central Statistics Office of the 2010 Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) survey. I expect that the report will be finalised early in 2012 and will be made publicly available as soon as possible after that.

### Work Placements

178. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Social Protection in view of the fact that many work placement positions are now being made available to the unemployed through the JobBridge scheme, if she will review the criteria which debar one parent family recipients from availing of the JobBridge scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40435/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** There are currently no plans to review the JobBridge criteria, which limits participation to individuals who are currently on the Live Register. Given the scale of the unemployment crisis, the key objective of labour market policy is to keep those on the live register close to the labour market and prevent the drift into long-term unemployment. This will ensure that live register members availing of activation measures such as JobBridge will, while retaining social welfare unemployment payments and a top up allowance of €50, get an opportunity to engage in the workplace, get work experience and so be in a position to avail of employment opportunities as the economy improves.

For these reasons, the eligibility for the scheme is confined to those on the live register and in receipt of unemployment payments or signing for credits for 78 days in the previous six months. In so construing the scheme, the policy objective is to prioritise scarce resources on those on the live register so as to increase their chances of leaving it and ensure a reduction in exchequer costs over time.

Individuals in receipt of one parent family payment may continue to access a wide range of activation supports including the FÁS work placement programme, which is designed to provide participants with valuable work experience, thereby improving their prospects of securing employment. The FÁS work placement programme still offers many opportunities for individuals to secure work experience.

### Pensions Provision

179. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding pension entitlements for supervisors on community employment projects; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40452/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I refer the Deputies to my reply to questions numbers 99, 89 and 102 on 1 December 2011 set out as follows. The position remains unchanged.

The Labour Court recommended in July 2008 that an agreed pension scheme should be introduced for community employment (CE) scheme supervisors and assistant supervisors, and that such a scheme should be adequately funded by FÁS. Notwithstanding the positions of the Department in rejecting that liability for these costs falls to be met from public funds, this matter has been the subject of discussions between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, my Department, and the unions representing CE supervisors. In the event that funding was required from FÁS, the implementation of the claim is not considered sustainable in light of the current and ongoing fiscal environment and the requirement to contain and reduce public expenditure. The costs of the introduction of any scheme are likely to be of the order of €3m per annum with retrospective costs of the order of at least €30 million

The Deputy should also note that FÁS is not the employer of CE supervisors and such employees are not public servants. Neither was FÁS a party to the Labour Court dispute on this matter. The responsibilities of the sponsoring organisations and the individuals concerned must also be recognised when considering pension provision arrangements.

*Question No. 180 answered with Question No. 168.*

### Consultancy Contracts

181. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Social Protection the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by her Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40512/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The procurement of services is essential to support the Department in providing high quality service to the public in a cost effective and efficient manner and is governed by a comprehensive regulatory, legal and procedural framework.

The Department engages consultants (individuals or organisations) to provide intellectual or knowledge based services, e.g. expert analysis and advice, including the delivery of reports, studies, assessments, recommendations and proposals that contribute to decision making or policy making. The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the table which shows consultancy provided by persons and organisations with expenditure incurred for the period 1 January 2010 to 5 December 2011. The Department's press office deals with all media queries and public relations matters. No money has been spent by my Department on public relations companies during the period in question.

#### YEAR: 2010

Contractor	Purpose	€
ESRI	SWITCH Model — Support for analysis of Budget proposals	150,000
Naked Objects Group Ltd	SDM — Technical Development Advice	137,255
Naked Objects Group Ltd	SDM — Business Objects Modelling Advice & Expertise	105,289
Deloitte & Touche	Information Systems Audit Consultancy	67,175
ESRI	Activation: Customer Profiling & Case Management (APCM)	36,602
P.A Consulting Group	ePayments RFI Evaluation	34,058
Ernst & Young	Security Partner to provide ongoing Information Security Support	29,889
ESRI	National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) Evaluation	25,924
Deloitte & Touche	Provision of Confidential Forensic Investigation Services	8,671
Camille Loftus	Feasibility Study on Introduction of Single Social Assistance Payment for People of Working Age	1,800

#### YEAR: 2011 (Spend to 5th December)

Contractor	Purpose	€
Accenture	Business Process Improvement	186,562
ESRI	SWITCH Model — Support for analysis of Budget proposals	150,000
P.A Consulting Group	Payments Strategy	108,495
Naked Objects Group Ltd	SDM — Business Objects Modelling Advice & Expertise	77,241
Naked Objects Group Ltd	SDM — Technical Development Advice	59,537
Deloitte & Touche	Information Systems (IS) Internal Audit Services	14,792

Contractor	Purpose	€
Deloitte & Touche	Confidential Forensic Investigation Services	7,109
Patrick Oliver Ryan	Gender Recognition Advisor Group Report	7,000

\*Social Inclusion Division

Trinity College Dublin	Poverty Research Initiative Awards	9,788
NUI Maynooth	Poverty Research Initiative Awards	6,500
NUI Galway	Poverty Research Initiative Awards	5,000
Eleanor Ashe	Proof Reading	1,750
Dr Mary E Mulcahy	Editing	1,422

\*Social Inclusion Division was the responsibility of the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs prior to 30 April 2011.

### Ministerial Appointments

182. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40556/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** In line with a commitment in the programme for Government, I established an advisory group on tax and social welfare in June of this year. Members of the group have expertise in economic and social policy as well as other relevant areas and include a mix of experience and expertise from within and outside the public sector. The group has been tasked with recommending cost-effective solutions as to how employment incentives can be improved and better poverty outcomes achieved, particularly child poverty outcomes. The issue of family and child income supports is currently being examined by the Group.

I also appointed a steering group on the national internship scheme in May to advise me on the implementation of the scheme. The steering group is comprised of representatives from the private, public and voluntary sectors.

### Social Welfare Benefits

183. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding carers allowance in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40560/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The person concerned was refused carers allowance in August 2011 on the grounds that the care recipient is not so invalidated or disabled as to require full time care and attention as laid down in legislation.

The person in question requested a review of the decision and submitted additional medical evidence in support of her claim. A decision on the review will be made shortly and the person in question will be notified accordingly. If it is decided that a revision of the original decision is warranted and that carers allowance is payable, any arrears due from the date of the original application to the date of death of the care recipient will issue to the person in question.

*Question No. 184 answered with Question No. 171.*

185. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Social Protection the current time delay in processing family income supplement renewal applications; the steps she is taking to address this backlog in view of the financial hardship it causes to families; if the renewal date is extended in view of the departmental delays; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40569/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Department is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers. This includes ensuring that applications are processed and decisions made on entitlement as quickly as possible.

The average waiting time for new family income supplement (FIS) claims at the end of November is 17 weeks. The waiting time for renewal FIS claims is currently 8-9 weeks. At the end of November there were approximately 8,431 new FIS applications and approximately 5,136 renewal applications awaiting approval.

The volume of FIS claims on hands and the delays in processing are a consequence of continued strong claim intake.

The Department has introduced a number of measures to address the efficiency of claim processing for FIS in light of the current waiting times:

- Priority is given to renewal claims to preserve continuity of payment;
- Additional temporary staff have been recruited to help reduce the backlog;
- Existing processes and procedures are reviewed on an ongoing basis with the objective of reducing delays in claim processing;
- Overtime working is being applied where feasible.

These measures are aimed at reducing the number of claims on hand and the average waiting time for a decision.

As individual customer circumstances may change, renewal dates are not normally extended. Where possible, cases of urgent need are prioritised for review and all customers who re-qualify for FIS are paid any arrears due with effect from their renewal date when their claim is re-awarded.

The position is being closely monitored and kept under review by the Department.

*Question No. 186 answered with Question No. 168.*

187. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of persons signing on for credits but not receiving any social welfare payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40620/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** As of November 25th 2011, there were 30,462 persons on the live register signing for Jobseeker Credits but not receiving a payment from my Department.

### **Social Welfare Code**

188. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Social Protection with regard to persons in receipt of one-parent family payments and disability payments who are existing community employment scheme participants, if they could lose their benefit if they go for an extension of their place on the scheme or if they go on maternity leave; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40679/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Individuals, including recipients of One Parent Family and Disability payments, who are employed on a Community Employment scheme and commenced that Community Employment placement before the 16 January 2012, will not be considered as a new applicant in the event that they are renewing their contract or receiving a Community Employment extension.

They will therefore not be affected by the measure contained in Budget 2012 to stop concurrent entitlements for new applicants on Community Employment.

However, if a person is on a Community Employment Scheme and is in receipt of One Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Allowance/Benefit or Widow(er)'s Pensions, they will no longer receive the payment of two qualified child increases while participating on the Community Employment scheme. This will take effect from January and will apply to both new and existing recipients.

189. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Social Protection in respect of lone parents and the changes which are due with regard to the age limit of the child, the timeframe for these reforms to take place; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40680/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** There is no change to the payment of the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) for existing customers on 1 January, 2012. Phasing arrangements for existing OFP customers are being considered. For new claimants, from April, 2012, the upper age limit of the youngest child will be 12 years. This is being reduced on a phased basis — to age 10 in 2013 and then to age 7 in 2014.

190. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Social Protection if a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath who is in receipt of domiciliary care payment, which ended on 19 June 2011 upon their reaching the age of 16 years, would be entitled under the new rules to continue in that payment, until they are 18 years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40685/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** As a result of the decision to withdraw sections 8, 9 and 10 from the SW Bill 2011, the age limit for receipt of domiciliary care allowance (DCA) remains at 16 years. As the child referred to is over 16 years of age, DCA is no longer payable.

### **Social Welfare Appeals**

191. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an appeal of a decision to disallow a claim for jobseeker's allowance made in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40692/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the appeal from the person concerned was referred to an Appeals Officer who proposes to hold an oral hearing in this case.

There has been a very significant increase in the number of appeals received by the Social Welfare Appeals Office since 2007 when the intake was 14,070 to 2010 when the intake rose to 32,432. This has significantly impacted on the processing time for appeals which require oral hearings and, in order to be fair to all appellants, they are dealt with in strict chronological order. While every effort is being made to deal with the large numbers awaiting oral hearing as quickly as possible, it is not possible to give a date when the person's oral hearing will be heard, but s/he will be informed when arrangements have been made.

[Deputy Joan Burton.]

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

### **Social Welfare Code**

192. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the appropriate level of mortgage interest support payable in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40711/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The person concerned is in receipt of a mortgage interest supplement at the rate appropriate to their circumstances.

### **Social Welfare Appeals**

193. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if and when domiciliary care allowance will be restored in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 8; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40713/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** This domiciliary care allowance (DCA) was reviewed by one of the Department's Medical Assessors who found that the child was no longer medically eligible for the allowance. A letter issued on 12th October 2011 informing the person concerned of this decision and she subsequently lodged an appeal. The application will now be reviewed by another medical assessor and will be sent to the Social Welfare Appeals Office for consideration, if the earlier decision is upheld.

DCA will be restored if the application is found to be eligible on review, or if the customer's appeal is successful.

### **Social Welfare Benefits**

194. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason rent support has not been paid in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; if she will further investigate the reason for the continued delay in the issue of payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40714/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The position is as outlined in reply to Question No. 36 of 8th of December 2011.

195. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she expects mortgage interest support to be paid in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40719/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** The person concerned applied for mortgage interest supplement in September 2011. A decision will be made in this case on receipt of all the documentation requested.

196. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the current or expected position in the relation to the determination of entitlement in respect of disability allowance and invalidity pension in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; if payment of supplementary welfare will issue in the interim; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40720/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** I confirm that the Department is in receipt of an application for disability allowance from the above named person. On completion of the necessary investigations on all aspects of the claim a decision will be made and the person concerned will be notified directly of the outcome. The average time taken to process a claim to completion, including assessment of the claimant's means, medical condition and habitual residence status is approximately 17 weeks.

This Department had earlier received a claim for invalidity pension from the person concerned. The medical evidence provided was examined by a medical assessor who found that the person concerned is not eligible for invalidity pension as he does not satisfy the medical criteria. The deciding officer accepted this opinion, the claim was disallowed and the person was notified of this decision on 10 November 2011.

The person submitted further medical evidence in relation to his invalidity claim which was reviewed by a medical assessor but this did not alter the original decision. The person has been notified of the result of the review.

The person concerned is currently in receipt of supplementary welfare allowance.

197. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of illness benefit applications refused and approved in the past 12-month period available; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40746/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** In the twelve month period from 1 December 2010 to 30 November 2011 the Department processed 297,030 claims for illness benefit. 257,717 claims were approved for payment, 33,707 were disallowed and 5,606 were cancelled or withdrawn.

### **Employment Support Services**

198. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Social Protection her views on incentivising participation in voluntary work abroad by allowing unemployed persons to take up such activities without losing their eligibility to participate in employment schemes on their return. [40752/11]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton):** Eligibility to access employment schemes such as Community Employment or JobBridge require participants to be in receipt of a social welfare payment for a prescribed period of time. This requirement exists as there is a significant cost to the State in the provision of these schemes. In addition, it is important from an activation perspective that the link is maintained between employment schemes and individuals who are currently in receipt of a social welfare assistance payment.

It should be noted that approximately 60% of individuals who first receive Jobseekers Allowance/Benefit actually sign off the Live Register within the first three months. It is envisaged that reducing the eligibility period to access employment schemes will decrease the number of people who would have left the Live Register or other social welfare assistance payments and consequently result in increased costs to the Exchequer. In essence if the eligibility to participate in an employment scheme was removed or amended this would significantly increase the deadweight costs to the State and may lead to those identified as in need of a place being displaced by others. That is why I would not be in favour of allowing individuals retain their eligibility to participate in an employment scheme if they went abroad.

### **Architectural Heritage**

199. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if

[Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan.]

he will confirm that he is in consultation with the National Museum concerning the conditions imposed by An Bord Pleanála in relation to the application to develop the Carlton site; and in view of the Oireachtas undertaking to preserve the National Monument at 14 to 17 Moore Street, preservation order No. 1 of 2007, the stage at which Members of the House will be given an opportunity to assess their recommendations in relation to same. [40425/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** The National Monuments Preservation Order in relation to Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street was made in 2007 by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as Minister responsible for heritage matters at that time.

The effect of the order is that works affecting these properties, including any excavation or ground disturbance within, around or in proximity to them, requires my consent under section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended.

The proposed development of the Carlton Cinema site, of which Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street form part, and for which approval has been granted by An Bord Pleanála, envisages the retention of these buildings and the provision of a commemorative centre to the 1916 Rising in No. 16. The developer's application to my Department for consent to these proposals under section 14 of the National Monuments Acts is being examined. My Department is currently in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland in relation to the application and a decision will be made on it as soon as possible.

The Oireachtas Consultation Group on Commemorative Matters will continue to be informed of developments in relation to the Moore Street monument in the context of its role in the 1916 centenary preparations.

### Údarás na Gaeltachta

200. **Deputy Willie O'Dea** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding available to Údarás na Gaeilge for employment grants in 2011 and 2012; if this has changed since budget 2012; if the conditions have changed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40492/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** Údarás na Gaeltachta's capital allocation from the Exchequer for 2011 was €6m. The indicative capital allocation from the Exchequer for Údarás na Gaeltachta for 2012 is €5.938m, as published in the budget.

Údarás na Gaeltachta's capital allocation from the Exchequer is supplemented annually by income generated from its own resources. Údarás na Gaeltachta estimates that expenditure from this source will amount to an additional €5.2m in 2011 and €4m in 2012.

The conditions under which Údarás na Gaeltachta receives its Exchequer allocation are reviewed annually and are notified formally to the organisation in my Department's annual letter of approval.

### Departmental Expenditure

201. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40396/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** A gross total of €269.089m was made available to my Department in the 2011 Revised Estimates Volume.

Details of this allocation are available on the Department of Public Expenditures Website via the following link: <http://per.gov.ie/estpubexp2011/>

For the Deputy's convenience, details of the full year 2011 (and proposed 2012) allocations at subhead level are available on my Department's website via the following link: <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/Publications/CorporatePublications/CurrentPublications/>

With regard to the actual outturns for 2011, the Deputy will appreciate that there are a number of weeks remaining before the end of the year and that ongoing expenditure figures are provisional and subject to verification internally through my Department's financial management system and, ultimately, by the Comptroller and Auditor General. That said, expenditure to date remains more or less on profile and I am confident that close to the full available budget will be expended before year-end.

### National Parks and Wildlife Service

202. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the plans the National Parks and Wildlife Service has for interpretative facilities in the Burren and Corofin in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40474/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** The National Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department has taken a lease on the ground floor of the Heritage and Genealogical Centre in Corofin with a view to opening it as an information point for the Burren National Park. Good progress has been made on the design, fabrication and installation of interpretative material for the information point. Work is nearing completion and the centre will be open to the public for the 2012 season.

The new facility will provide information and an introductory level of interpretation and orientation for visitors to the Burren National Park. The siting of the facility within the village of Corofin will afford the opportunity for the local community to benefit from its connection with the National Park.

### Consultancy Contracts

203. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40500/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** As the Deputy will be aware, my Department, as currently configured, was established on 2 June 2011 and therefore the available information is being provided from that date.

The total amount spent by my Department on external public relations from 2 June 2011 to 13 December 2011 is €162,301 and I am also advised that €113,366 was spent on consultancy during this timeframe. The details of this expenditure are set out in the tables. The Deputy may wish to note that further payments may arise between now and the end of the financial year.

Table 1: Expenditure on External Public Relations

Name of company	Service provided	Total amount paid since 2 June 2011
Arts and Culture Network Inc.	Advertising campaign for Bloomsday as part of Imagine Ireland, Culture Ireland's year-long programme of events in the USA during 2011.	€113,737

[Deputy Jimmy Deenihan.]

Name of company	Service provided	Total amount paid since 2 June 2011
Zoetrope	Press and publicity services for Imagine Ireland, Culture Ireland's year-long programme of events in the USA during 2011 and for the update of the Imagine Ireland website.	€48,564

Table 2: Expenditure on Consultancy

Name of company	Service provided	Total amount paid since 2 June 2011
APGI	Genealogy Service	€24,194
Ebow	Treaty Project	€6,050
Dr Evelyn Moorkens, Environmental Consultant	Advice on strategic approach to Margaritifera conservation	€1,594 (ex VAT)
Carrig Conservation Consultants	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage — Cork suburbs survey	€38,587
Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd	Historic gardens and design landscapes for Fingal	€2,292
Queen's University Belfast	2015 — Local Area Plans best practice manual	€14,440
JH Associates	Interpretive planner	€12,100
Hickey Moynihan	Consulting engineers	€10,890
Bright 3D	Interpretive planner	€1,283

### Ministerial Appointments

204. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40544/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** As the Deputy will be aware, my Department, as currently configured, was established on 2 June 2011 and therefore the available information is being provided from that date. I assume that the Deputy is not referring to routine internal committees and working groups, established within my Department to support the delivery of its goals. On that basis, the following groups have been established:

- The Peatlands Council — established to respond to commitments set out in the Programme for Government and to assist Ireland in responding in a strategic way to the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive, which require Ireland to protect and conserve important peatland habitats.
- Cross-representative advisory/working group to consult across the arts sector and recommend actionable steps in the area of philanthropy in relation to the arts.
- Inter-departmental committee to examine the feasibility of the implementation of the Creative Capital Report — *Building Ireland's Audiovisual Creative Economy*.
- Working Group to review the operation of Part IV (Architectural Heritage) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

### Natural Heritage Areas

205. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will outline the current designated status of a large geographical area of bogland (details supplied); if this status will allow the hundreds of turbary owners thereon to harvest turf therefrom for their own domestic use and purposes for the foreseeable future without limitations as to a time period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40684/11]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan):** The bogland referred to by the Deputy was designated as an Natural Heritage Area (NHA) on 20 September 2005 by way of Statutory Instrument. A map of the NHA in question is available to view on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website *www.NPWS.ie*.

The area referred to by the Deputy is within one of 75 NHAs designated for the protection of raised bog habitat. In 2010, the then Government decided that turf-cutting should come to an end on such sites at the end of 2013. However, the Programme for Government undertook to review the situation with regard to NHAs and the future of turf-cutting on such sites will be considered as part of that review. For 2012, turf-cutters on this bog can continue to extract turf as before for their own domestic supply.

### Departmental Expenditure

206. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40398/11]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The total funding allocated to my Department as set out in the Further Revised Estimates published in June 2011 is €494.716m. Actual outturn for my Department for 2011 will not be available until after 31 December 2011, however, expenditure as of the 30 November 2011 was €392.773m.

The table shows the 2011 allocations and outturns to end November for each subhead under my Department's Vote.

Subhead	2011 Budget	Outturn @ 30th Nov 2011
	€000	€000
A1 — Salaries, Wages & Allowances	16,289	14,404
A2 — Travel & Subsistence	552	351
A3 — Training and Development & Incidental Expenses	1,092	815
A4 — Postal & Telecoms Services	528	348
A5 — Office Equipment & External IT Services	3,118	1,675
A6 — Office Premises Expenses	920	710
A7 — Consultancy Services and Value for Money & Policy Reviews	1,980	895
A8 — Equipment, Stores & Maintenance	123	64
B1 — Information and Communications Technology Programme	29,630	6,362
B2 — Multimedia Developments	8,495	6,487
B3 — Information Society	950	21
C1 — Grant to RTE	185,724	168,029
C2 — Payment to an Post	12,457	11,372
C3 — Deontas I Leith TG4	33,550	36,260

[Deputy Pat Rabbitte.]

Subhead	2011 Budget	Outturn @ 30th Nov 2011
	€000	€000
C4 — Broadcasting Fund	14,704	13,339
C5 — Grants for Digital Terrestrial Television	3,000	454
D1 — SEAI Admin & General Expenses	8,968	7,164
D2 — Sustainable Energy Programmes	109,451	78,465
D3 — Energy Research Programmes	14,400	6,300
D4 — Strategic Energy Infrastructure	1	—
E1 — Petroleum Services	1,367	53
E2 — Mining Services	4,700	805
E3 — GSI Services	540	326
E4 — Geoscience Initiatives	2,208	1,165
E5 — National Seabed Survey	2,900	2,066
E6 — Ordnance Survey Ireland	7,451	7,100
F1 — Inland Fisheries	28,617	27,538
G1 — Subs to International Orgs	467	174
G2 — Change Management Fund	1	—
G3 — Gas Services	32	31
G4 — Other Services	501	—
Gross Total	494,716	392,773

### Energy Efficiency

207. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will reverse the cuts to the external insulation grant for housing in view of the unemployment that it is creating and due to the fact that it will retard progress towards energy efficiency. [40415/11]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** I have secured a budget allocation of €76 million for the Better Energy programme in 2012. The programme will continue to support at least 4,500 jobs and generate anticipated energy savings of 340GWh.

Support for external wall insulation was originally set at a level designed to stimulate demand and assist in the market development of this sector. In recent months, it is clear from the pattern of grant applications for Better Energy: Homes that this measure is in increasingly high demand. The changes to the external wall insulation grant reflect increased price competitiveness in the market and the relative cost of undertaking this work on the various house types. I do not propose to request Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to make any further changes to the grant for external insulation.

Changes to the grant support levels are set out in the table.

Better Energy: Homes scheme	Previous Support Levels €	New Support Levels €
Roof Insulation	200	200
External wall insulation		
Apartment (any) OR Mid-terrace House	4,000	1,800
Semi-detached OR End of terrace		2,700
Detached House		3,600
Internal Wall Dry-Lining		
Apartment (any) OR Mid-terrace House	2,000	900
Semi-detached OR End of Terrace		1,350
Detached House		1,800
Cavity Wall Insulation	320	250
High Efficiency Gas or Oil fired Boiler with Heating Controls Upgrade	560	560
Heating Controls Upgrade	400	400
BER After Upgrade Works (Only one BER grant per home)	80	50
Solar Thermal	800	800

### Consultancy Contracts

208. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40502/11]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** In the time available, it has not been possible to identify and assemble the information requested.

My Department is in the process of identifying and assembling the information and I will revert to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### Ministerial Appointments

209. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40546/11]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** In the time available, it has not been possible to identify and assemble the information requested.

My Department is in the process of identifying and assembling the information and I will revert to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### Electricity Transmission

210. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the advice available to him regarding the undergrounding of 400 kV power lines; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40566/11]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Pat Rabbitte):** The planning, development and routing of 400 kV transmission line infrastructure is a matter for EirGrid, which is the State owned body responsible for operating the electricity transmission system in Ireland and I have no statutory function in this regard. Reports have been commissioned by EirGrid on undergrounding technology options for the Irish grid including the Transgrid Report and the TEPCO Report in 2009. My Department also commissioned in 2008 an independent study on Comparative Merits of Overhead Electricity Transmission Lines versus Underground Cables.

The analysis was undertaken by international consultants Ecofys, in partnership with an expert in underground cable technology, Professor Dr Heinrich Brakelmann of the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, and with Golder Associates, a global group specialising in ground engineering and environmental services.

The programme for Government committed to the establishment of an independent international expert commission to review within six months the case for, and cost of, undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone line. The Commission was appointed in July and I intend to publish its Report early in the new year.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

211. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40401/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The total allocation for my Department in 2011 is €1,710m\*, made up of €652m in current spending and €1,058m on the capital side. Actual outturns are not yet available pending completion of 2011 spending in the coming weeks.

*(\*all figures are gross and include the full year cost of the Community programmes, for which responsibility transferred to my Department in May 2011).*

### **Water Services Inspectorate**

212. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the appropriate inspectors with the qualified experience will be appointed to inspect the state of septic tanks and if proper professional certification of fitness of the septic tanks will be granted to the residents upon inspection; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40428/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** On 3 November 2011, I published the Water Services Amendment Bill 2011 which will introduce a system of registration and inspection for septic tanks and other on-site waste water treatment systems. The appointment of inspectors is dealt with in Section 70E of the Bill. The Environmental Protection Agency will appoint inspectors for the purposes of the new system and specific criteria regarding professional or technical qualifications, training and professional indemnity insurance requirements will have to be met by those applying for appointment. I will be specifying the criteria in Regulations to be made following enactment of the Bill.

Inspections will be carried out to identify domestic waste water treatment systems which pose a risk to public health or the environment. The results of the inspection will be notified to the householders concerned, in addition to being notified to the relevant water services authority.

### Unfinished Housing Developments

213. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a list of ghost estates designated three and four; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40464/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** There are 1,325 estates in total which fall into categories 3 and 4. I will arrange for a list of these estates to be emailed to the Deputy.

### Social and Affordable Housing

214. **Deputy Alex White** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will review section 99 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and section 10 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 pertaining to the clawback provision for affordable housing in view of the property crisis and the effects of the provision on those who bought affordable homes between the years 2004 and 2008. [40485/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** As announced in the Government's Housing Policy Statement published on 16 June 2011, all affordable housing schemes, including shared ownership, have been stood down in the context of a full review of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The review will commence in early 2012 and will encompass the issues raised.

It should be noted that at present where a person is selling and the claw-back amount payable would reduce the proceeds of resale below the initial price actually paid, the legislation provides for the amount of the claw-back payable to be reduced to the extent necessary to avoid that outcome.

### Consultancy Contracts

215. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40505/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The information requested is being compiled and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### Social and Affordable Housing

216. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of persons who availed of the various affordable housing options from local authorities for each year from 2001. [40540/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Data in relation to affordable housing activity to the end of 2009 are available on my Department's website, *www.environ.ie*. Data for 2010 will be available shortly.

### Ministerial Appointments

217. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general

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that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40549/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):**

The committees and advisory groups established by me since my appointment in March 2011, and under the responsibility of my Department are as follows:

Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group;

Local Government Efficiency Review Implementation Group;

Independent Group to review staffing levels in Cork City Council;

Limerick Reorganisation Implementation Group;

Tipperary Reorganisation Implementation Group;

Waterford Local Government Committee;

Historic Landfills Working Group;

Waste Management Planning National Coordination Committee;

Environmental Law Implementation Group;

National Radon Strategy Group;

Foreshore Advisory Group;

National Co-ordination Committee on Unfinished Housing Developments;

Joint Working Group on the transfer of Rent Supplement from the Department of Social Protection to the Department;

Independent Panel to facilitate a resolution to the problem of pyrite;

Local Authority Mortgage Arrears Guidance Group;

Steering Group to oversee independent assessment by consultants on the establishment of a water utility.

### **Community Development**

218. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if funding will be approved through the partnership company in County Carlow for a project (details supplied) in conjunction with Carlow Town Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40579/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):**

Funding of €427 million is available under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 for allocation to qualifying projects up to the end of 2013. There are 35 Local Action Groups (LAGs) contracted, on my Department's behalf, to deliver the RDP throughout the country and these groups are the principal decision-makers in relation to the allocation of project funding. Such decisions are made in the context of the local development strategy of the individual groups and in line with Departmental operating rules and EU regulations.

Projects that request funding of €150,000 or more are required to seek final approval from my Department. The project referred to in the question sought approval for a grant of €200,000. The assessment of higher value projects (projects with a grant approval of €150,000 or more) usually involves detailed consultations between my Department and the relevant LAG. It frequently necessitates the provision of further documentation or clarifications, as was the case for this project. It may also, in some instances, result in modifications to the project proposed

to ensure best value for money and compliance with all the necessary regulations, both national and European, governing the activities funded under the programme. These assessments also consider whether the project as proposed addresses the needs of the local community in the best possible way. A full and detailed assessment of all projects is vital. The LEADER activities are co-financed by the European Union at a rate of 55% and, accordingly, come within the remit of a strict regulatory regime which requires that each project must be compliant before any funding is awarded by the LEADER companies.

My Department will continue to work with the relevant LAG to make a full assessment of the eligibility of this project for grant aid of €200,000 and will inform the LAG once all queries have been addressed satisfactorily.

### **Planning Issues**

219. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if two similar planning applications are put up on one site, and if an objection is lodged for one application, does it automatically apply as an objection for the second. [40586/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Article 29 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2011 provides that any person or body, on payment of the prescribed fee, may make a submission or observation in writing to a planning authority in relation to a planning application within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

The submission is made in relation to a particular application which appears on the planning register under its own reference number. A planning authority or An Bord Pleanála will not associate the submission with any other application.

While there is not a limit to the number of planning applications that may be submitted in relation to a particular site, section 37(5)(a) of the Planning and Development Act provides that no application for permission for the same development or for a development of the same description as an application which is the subject of an appeal may be made before the appeal is dealt with by the Board.

If a subsequent application is made for a similar development on the same site it is of course open to anyone who made a submission on a previous application to make a submission on the subsequent application under the same conditions provided for by article 29 of the Regulations, including payment of the prescribed fee.

### **Departmental Funding**

220. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the full year reduction in funding for his Department; and if he will provide a detailed breakdown of where these reductions are planned. [40634/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The following table, as published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in Part IV of Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-14 in the context of Budget 2012, details the 2011 and 2012 Estimates for my Department across the various programmes:

Programme Expenditure	2011 Estimate			2012 Estimate			Change 2012 Over 2011
	Current	Capital	Total	Current	Capital	Total	
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	
A — Housing	299,971	508,698	808,669	301,314	390,545	691,859	-14%
B — Water Services	8,863	435,126	433,989	8,844	371,156	380,000	-14%
C — Environment & Waste	31,704	16,579	48,283	26,174	4,570	30,744	-36%
D — Local Government	179,992	23,565	203,557	14,977	17,256	32,233	-84%
E — Community & Rural Development	92,263	72,880	165,143	82,230	76,428	158,658	-4%
F — Planning	19,664	36	19,700	16,832	45	16,877	-14%
G — Met Éireann	19,372	940	20,312	16,331	1,000	17,331	-15%
Gross Total	651,829	1,057,824	1,709,653	466,702	861,000	1,327,702	-22%

Further information in relation to my Department's Estimate for 2012 and allocations for later years is contained in Part II of Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-14, and Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-16: Medium Term Exchequer Framework published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on 10 November 2011.

### **Local Authority Mortgageholders**

221. **Deputy Dessie Ellis** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the efforts he will make to ensure that the ECB cut will be passed on to local authority mortgage holders. [40645/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The Board of the Housing Finance Agency decided at its meeting on 9 December to pass on in full the rate cut of 0.25%, announced the previous day by the European Central Bank, to those local authority borrowers with variable interest rate mortgages. As a result of this latest decrease local authority borrowers will enjoy a differential of well over 1.5% below the average variable rate in the wider mortgage market.

### **Local Authority Housing**

222. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the total number of houses built and purchased by Wexford County Council each year for November 2007 to November 2011. [40646/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Data on Local Authority completions and acquisitions, broken down by county and city, are available on my Department's website, *www.environ.ie* and the most recent data published in this regard relate to 2009. Data for 2010 will be published shortly.

### **Flood Relief**

223. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if there is any funding available for preventative measures in order that private homeowners can undertake works to allow them to leave their homes when flooding starts; the funding available and the conditions attached to same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40652/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Neither my Department nor local authorities make funding available for preventative measures so that private homeowners can undertake works to allow them to leave their homes when flooding starts. However, through the distribution of sandbags and the efforts of the fire service, civil defence and other services, local authorities provide as much practical assistance as possible to homeowners whose properties are at risk during flooding.

Following the severe flooding on 24 October 2011, which particularly affected Dublin and parts of Meath, Monaghan and Wicklow, the Government established an inter-Departmental/Agency Working Group, which my Department is chairing, to oversee and to report to Government on any gaps that may exist within existing services, or on other services required, to address the consequences of the flooding on individuals, families and communities. It is expected that the Group will report to Government in early 2012.

### **Local Authority Funding**

224. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local

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Government the Local Government Fund grant to each local authority for 2012; the percentage reduction in the local government fund grant to each local authority on the 2011 figure; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40653/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** I assume the Question refers to General Purpose Grants paid to local authorities from the Local Government Fund. General Purpose Grants are my contribution to meeting the difference between the cost to local authorities of providing a reasonable level of day to day services and the income available to them from local sources and from specific grants.

The 2012 general purpose grant allocations in respect of each local authority is set out in the table.

Local Authority	2011 payment	2012 Allocation	% Change on 2011
Carlow County Council	9,319,519	8,532,829	-8.44%
Cavan County Council	15,381,808	14,200,854	-7.68%
Clare County Council	10,762,263	10,176,044	-5.45%
Cork County Council	36,381,937	33,495,626	-7.93%
Donegal County Council	33,570,767	30,945,838	-7.82%
Fingal County Council	22,472,627	20,455,071	-8.98%
D.Laoire/Rathdown Co Co	28,323,120	25,780,316	-8.98%
Galway County Council	30,405,607	28,105,841	-7.56%
Kerry County Council	20,660,244	19,005,401	-8.01%
Kildare County Council	21,604,877	20,127,482	-6.84%
Kilkenny County Council	16,189,481	15,113,016	-6.65%
Laois County Council	14,018,331	13,189,788	-5.91%
Leitrim County Council	12,629,306	11,809,261	-6.49%
Limerick County Council	19,427,980	17,683,768	-8.98%
Longford County Council	12,033,108	11,252,795	-6.48%
Louth County Council	9,976,131	9,130,490	-8.48%
Mayo County Council	29,685,902	27,800,750	-6.35%
Meath County Council	23,604,137	21,684,996	-8.13%
Monaghan County Council	12,746,531	11,902,168	-6.62%
Tipp NR County Council	15,235,676	14,267,841	-6.35%
Offaly County Council	13,035,084	12,164,815	-6.68%
Roscommon County Council	17,213,351	15,967,965	-7.24%
Sligo County Council	14,121,597	13,553,783	-4.02%
Sth Dublin County Council	18,087,797	16,963,904	-6.21%
Tipp SR County Council	18,860,749	17,472,862	-7.36%
Waterford County Council	19,345,029	17,888,261	-7.53%
Westmeath County Council	17,354,945	16,016,846	-7.71%
Wexford County Council	17,413,069	16,229,752	-6.80%
Wicklow County Council	15,847,851	14,625,057	-7.72%
Cork City Council	18,968,770	17,265,785	-8.98%
Dublin City Council	60,211,447	54,805,761	-8.98%
Galway City Council	6,440,990	5,990,156	-7.00%
Limerick City Council	8,204,778	7,968,166	-2.88%
Waterford City Council	5,486,422	5,223,860	-4.79%
Clonmel Borough Council	2,585,210	2,353,114	-8.98%

Local Authority	2011 payment	2012 Allocation	% Change on 2011
Drogheda Borough Council	3,524,508	3,208,084	-8.98%
Kilkenny Borough Council	1,391,511	1,266,584	-8.98%
Sligo Borough Council	2,313,539	2,105,833	-8.98%
Wexford Borough Council	1,948,097	1,773,200	-8.98%
Arklow Town Council	1,388,868	1,264,178	-8.98%
Athlone Town Council	1,424,138	1,296,281	-8.98%
Athy Town Council	628,010	571,629	-8.98%
Ballina Town Council	1,398,588	1,273,025	-8.98%
Ballinasloe Town Council	746,185	679,194	-8.98%
Birr Town Council	683,013	621,693	-8.98%
Bray Town Council	3,629,819	3,303,940	-8.98%
Buncrana Town Council	770,995	701,776	-8.98%
Bundoran Town Council	467,601	425,621	-8.98%
Carlow Town Council	1,464,060	1,332,619	-8.98%
Carrickmacross Town Council	512,215	466,229	-8.98%
Carrick-on-suir Town Council	994,816	905,503	-8.98%
Cashel Town Council	567,385	516,446	-8.98%
Castlebar Town Council	802,028	730,023	-8.98%
Castleblayney Town Council	397,300	361,631	-8.98%
Cavan Town Council	718,591	654,077	-8.98%
Clonakilty Town Council	521,171	474,381	-8.98%
Clones Town Council	510,103	464,307	-8.98%
Cobh Town Council	1,046,319	952,382	-8.98%
Dundalk Town Council	3,943,890	3,589,814	-8.98%
Dungarvan Town Council	778,635	708,731	-8.98%
Ennis Town Council	1,879,448	1,710,714	-8.98%
Enniscorthy Town Council	1,016,035	924,817	-8.98%
Fermoy Town Council	726,081	660,894	-8.98%
Kells Town Council	397,076	361,427	-8.98%
Killarney Town Council	1,447,614	1,317,649	-8.98%
Kilrush Town Council	533,658	485,747	-8.98%
Kinsale Town Council	344,812	313,856	-8.98%
Letterkenny Town Council	874,805	796,266	-8.98%
Listowel Town Council	617,445	562,011	-8.98%
Longford Town Council	960,046	873,855	-8.98%
Macroom Town Council	525,612	478,423	-8.98%
Mallow Town Council	951,776	866,327	-8.98%
Midleton Town Council	486,711	443,015	-8.98%
Monaghan Town Council	910,206	828,489	-8.98%
Naas Town Council	1,234,484	1,123,654	-8.98%
Navan Town Council	430,976	392,283	-8.98%
Nenagh Town Council	931,619	847,980	-8.98%
New Ross Town Council	857,575	780,583	-8.98%
Skibbereen Town Council	370,292	337,047	-8.98%
Templemore Town Council	554,945	505,123	-8.98%
Thurles Town Council	801,681	729,707	-8.98%
Tipperary Town Council	693,230	630,993	-8.98%
Tralee Town Council	2,404,057	2,188,225	-8.98%

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Local Authority	2011 payment	2012 Allocation	% Change on 2011
Trim Town Council	468,025	426,006	-8.98%
Tullamore Town Council	1,016,077	924,856	-8.98%
Westport Town Council	672,286	611,929	-8.98%
Wicklow Town Council	1,320,599	1,202,037	-8.98%
Youghal Town Council	965,305	878,642	-8.98%
Total	704,570,302	651,000,000	-7.60%

### Local Authority Housing

225. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 129 of 30 November 2011, the date on which refurbishment works commenced on the 12 housing units in the Cranmore Estate, Sligo; the date the refurbishment works will be completed; the date on which the units will be available for re-letting; the funding provided by him for the refurbishment of the 12 houses; if he will identify the ten houses which have been identified for future demolition under the regeneration project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40654/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** My Department approved an initial budget cost of €445,000 for the refurbishment of houses in the Cranmore estate. The detailed information relating to the current status of the refurbishment contract, final contract cost, the date the units will be available for letting and the precise location of houses for demolition is a matter for Sligo Borough Council and may be obtained from the Council.

### Community Development

226. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his attention has been drawn to the fact that funding for the community warden scheme in Cranmore Estate, Sligo, was provided by him through the sustaining communities fund over the period 2008 to 2010; if his further attention has been drawn to the fact that in February 2011 he invited local authorities to submit applications for a further tranche of funding under the sustaining communities fund; if it has been brought to his attention that Sligo Borough Council did not make an application for funding from the sustaining communities fund in response to the invitation; the amount of funding that was provided for regeneration project by him for the community warden scheme in Cranmore in the current year; if he has received an application from Sligo Borough Council for funding for the community warden scheme in 2012; in view of the significant benefit of the scheme to the residents of Cranmore, if it his intention to approve funding for the community warden scheme in the estate in 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40655/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Funding of €163,350 was provided from the Sustainable Communities Fund for the Community Warden Scheme in the Cranmore Estate, Sligo, over the period 2008-2010. An application was received from Sligo Borough Council in November 2010 seeking approval to use regeneration funding to support the Tenancy Support and Resettlement Programme, Community Wardens Scheme and the Youth Active Citizens Project.

Following consideration of the request and having regard to the reduced funding available under the Sustainable Communities Fund, the beneficial impacts of these programmes in building community confidence in the regeneration project and fostering community involvement and tackling anti-social behaviour, it was decided to fund these projects from the regeneration budget. Approval to this effect issued in August 2011. So far this year €72,954 has been recouped to Sligo Borough Council in respect of the Community Wardens Project.

My Department will review the continued funding arrangements for this project next year in the context of the Council's regeneration work programme for 2012.

### **Water Charges**

227. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when he expects to commence and complete the domestic water metering project; and when he plans to start charging households for water use. [40660/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** The Memorandum of Understanding between Ireland and the EU/IMF includes a commitment to introduce water charges for households. The Programme for Government provides for the introduction of a fair funding model to deliver clean and reliable water. The objective is to install water meters in households connected to public water supplies and move to a charging system based on usage above a free allowance. My Department is currently finalising a strategy to implement these proposals, including details of the metering programme.

### **Water and Sewerage Schemes**

228. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when approval will issue to Monaghan County Council in respect of a project (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40700/11]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan):** Revised proposals in respect of the phased implementation of the Mullaghmat Remedial Works Scheme are awaited in my Department. Further consideration of the proposal must await receipt of this information from Monaghan Town Council.

### **Sexual Offences**

229. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the full extent if any to which a register of sex offenders exists with a view to ensuring that such persons do not have access to children for whatever reason; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40701/11]

230. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the steps he has taken or intends to take to ensure the protection of children from sex offenders; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40702/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 229 and 230 together.

The Sex Offenders Act 2001 contains a number of provisions aimed at reducing the risk to the public from convicted sex offenders. These include a notification system, also known as the "Sex Offenders' Register". A convicted sex offender is required to notify his name and home address to An Garda Síochána within 7 days of becoming subject to the notification requirement. Thereafter, offenders must notify the Gardaí of any subsequent change of name or

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address within 7 days of such change. Absences from and return to the State are required to be notified and the legislation also applies to sex offenders convicted outside the State.

Apart from the notification requirements in the 2001 Act, sex offenders released from prison can be subject to supervision and other restrictions. Part 5 of the Act introduced a system for the supervision of sex offenders after release from prison. Post Release Supervision Orders allow for court sanctioned supervision of offenders after custodial sentences have expired.

The Act also provides a mechanism whereby the Gardaí can apply to the courts for a civil order, known as a Sex Offender Order, prohibiting a convicted sex offender from doing certain things, such as going to or being in a particular location, or loitering in the vicinity of a school or other place where children congregate.

An added safeguard in the legislation provides that a convicted sex offender must advise his employer or any prospective employer of his conviction, if the work involves unsupervised access to or contact with children or mentally impaired persons.

My Department has been conducting a wide-ranging examination of the law on sexual offences and a review of the Sex Offenders Act 2001 formed an integral part of that examination. Arising from the review, I expect to bring forward legislative proposals, including a number of amendments to the 2001 Act, in the coming months.

In addition, my Department is preparing two new pieces of legislation to further enhance the protections afforded to children and vulnerable adults. These are the Criminal Justice (Withholding Information on Crimes against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill and the National Vetting Bureau Bill.

The purpose of the “Withholding” Bill is to create an offence of failing to disclose, without reasonable excuse, information to the Gardaí where a serious criminal offence against a child or vulnerable person has been committed and the person knows or believes that the information s/he holds may be of material assistance in the arrest, prosecution or conviction of the offender.

The “Vetting” Bill has two main objectives. The first is to provide a statutory basis for the existing procedures where the Garda criminal records database is used to vet people applying for employment in the public service or those working with children or young adults. The second is to provide for the use of “soft information” in vetting, i.e information other than a court determined criminal record, and disclosure of such information to prospective employers.

I hope to publish both these Bills in the near future.

### **Legal Judgments**

231. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 11 of 2 November 2011, if the outstanding issues therein identified have been resolved following discussions with the Office of the Attorney General; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40738/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The legal issues that bear on the case referred to by the Deputy are the subject of an appeal to the Supreme Court in another preceding case and, as they are sub-judice, I am constrained as to any comment I can make on the matter.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

232. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the total allocated

budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40406/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The total net allocated budget for the Justice and Equality Vote in 2011 is €355,195,000. The actual outturns at subhead level will not be available until after the end of the financial year and will be published in the Departments Appropriation Account for 2011.

### **Citizenship Applications**

233. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will consider revoking the citizenship application fee of €175 or reducing such fee, to those immigrants applying for naturalisation certificates in view of the fact that this fee is non-refundable on top of the €950 processing fee immigrants need to pay; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40430/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** Last month, I signed into law Statutory Instrument 569/11, which introduced an application fee of €175 for applications for a certificate of naturalisation.

Managing and dealing with incomplete applications consumes scarce processing resources and the application fee is designed to recoup some of the costs associated with the application process. The application fee is also intended to help cover costs associated with the processing of unsuccessful applications that often consume more processing time and resources than successful applications, but which heretofore attracted no fee.

I might point out to the Deputy that the current certification fees, which have not changed since August 2008, do not recoup the full cost of processing.

### **Illegal Immigrants**

234. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will consider the implementation of an earned regularisation scheme which provides a chance for undocumented migrants to earn their way to permanent residency for them and their families; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40431/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I refer the Deputy to my reply below to Parliamentary Question 168 of 17 November 2011, Parliamentary Questions 161 and 174 of 24 November 2011 and Parliamentary Question 276 of 6 December 2011. The position is unchanged since then.

*I am aware that there have been proposals of this nature and of course my Department will give due consideration to the issue. However great caution should be exercised before embarking on such a project. A proposal of this nature could give rise to very large, unpredictable and potentially very costly impacts across the full range of public and social services.*

*At EU level, the Member States, in agreeing the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum at the European Council in October 2008, made specific commitments “to use only case-by-case regularisation, rather than generalised regularisation, under national law, for humanitarian or economic reasons”. While the Pact is not legally binding, the political commitment among the Member States, then and now, is clearly against any form of process that would in any way legitimise the status of those unlawfully present without first examining the merits of their individual case.*

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*Any possible implication for the operation of the Common Travel Area would also have to be very carefully considered.*

### **Criminal Injuries Compensation**

235. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if there is any funding scheme available by way of compensation to a person who has been injured as result of an assault; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40450/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I can inform the Deputy that a person who has suffered personal injuries as a result of a crime of violence in this State may make application for compensation under the terms of the Scheme of Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal. An application form may be obtained by contacting the Tribunal's Offices at 13 Lower Hatch Street, Dublin 2, telephone number 6610604, fax number 6610598. An application form may also be printed down from my Department's website ([www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)).

### **Consultancy Contracts**

236. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40510/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I wish to inform the Deputy that my Department does not, as a matter of policy, incur public relations expenditure. However, expenditure does arise from time to time on public information notices such as, for example, the dangers of fireworks, illegal drug dealing or the bringing into force of new legislation and other statutory notices. The information requested concerning consultancy persons and organisations used by my Department in 2010 and 2011 is set out as follows:

Consultancy Persons and Organisations	Amount
	€
<i>2010</i>	
IBI Group (UK) Ltd	26,978
Byrne O Cléirigh Consultants	5,114
Equality Strategies Ltd	8,167
<i>2011</i>	
Byrne O Cléirigh Consultants	3,993
Professor Gisli Gudjonsson	5,602
Mr. John Pearse	5,969
HLM Casey McGrath	15,711
Giles O'Connor Engineering	484

### **Citizenship Applications**

237. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding an application for naturalisation in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40532/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that a valid application for a certificate of naturalisation was received from the person referred to by the Deputy in May, 2011.

The application is currently being processed with a view to establishing whether the applicant meets the statutory conditions for the granting of naturalisation and will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible.

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.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### **Ministerial Appointments**

238. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40554/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The Question posed by the Deputy is very general and non-specific in nature. I am not aware of any new positions that have been created. However, the number of new committees and advisory groups that have been created are set out as follows:

- Expert Group on Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- A new National Steering Committee on Violence against Men met for the first time on 14 December, 2011.
- Minister Lynch has established and is personally chairing the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group (NDSIG), which held its inaugural meeting on 30 November 2011. The NDSIG is not an additional group in the sense that it has replaced and will build on the achievements of the former National Disability Strategy Stakeholder Monitoring Group, which was in place under the previous administration.
- A Working Group on the establishment of the new, enhanced Human Rights and Equality Commission was appointed on 6 October 2011 to advise me on this extremely important matter. The Group will have a short timeframe for their work as it is intended to have a new Commission in place early in the New Year.
- On foot of the commitment in The Government Programme for National Recovery “to review the proposal to build a new prison at Thornton Hall and to consider alternatives, if any, to avoid the costs yet to be incurred by the State in building such a new prison” I set up a Review Group in April of this year to review the need for the Thornton Hall Prison Project. The Group reported to me on 8th July.

[Deputy Alan Shatter.]

- An Inter-Departmental Committee which is independently chaired by Senator Martin McAleese, was set up to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries, to clarify any State interaction, and to produce a narrative detailing such interaction.
- An ICT Governance Group has been established. This body is charged with the review and oversight of IT spending and direction in the Department and in some of the bodies under the aegis of the Department. It has been established to obtain value for money and greater synergies and efficiencies in the area. It is chaired by an Assistant Secretary in my Department.

In the time available it has not been possible to obtain information on the above matter from the Garda Síochána. If additional information comes to light I will forward it to the Deputy.

### Prison Committals

239. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of persons committed to prison for non-payment of fines and non-payment of debt in 2011; if he will provide comparative figures for the previous three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40561/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The number of committals for the past 3 years solely for non-payment of fines and civil debt is set out in the table. Figures are taken from the Annual Reports of the Irish Prison Service. In the case of 2011, these figures are provisional pending the publication of the 2011 Annual Report.

Year	Committals for non — payment of fines	Committal for non — payment of civil debt
2011 (up to 30/11/2011)	6,969	29
2010	6,683	5
2009	4,806	162
2008	2,520	255

I can advise the Deputy that the number of such persons held in custody at any one time is a minute fraction of the overall prisoner population. To illustrate this point 20 prisoners or 0.5% of the prison population on 30 November 2011 fell into this category. The Deputy may also wish to note that the Fines Act 2010 includes a number of provisions designed to minimise the level of fine default and where it does occur, to ensure, as far as possible, that fine defaulters are not committed to prison. In particular, under Section 14 of the Act, the court must consider the financial circumstances of the person before the amount of the fine is determined. There are also provisions in the Act, that I intend to commence in 2012, allowing for the payment of fines by instalments; the appointment of receivers to recover outstanding fines (or property to the value of those fines); and the substitution of community service orders for fines, where they remain unpaid after the receiver has completed his or her work. I expect that these measures, taken together, will all but eliminate the need to commit persons to prison for non-payment of fines.

### Courts Service

240. **Deputy Eoghan Murphy** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he has concluded

discussions with the Office of the Attorney General in relation to the High Court decision regarding Start mortgages. [40589/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The position is that options to respond to the High Court judgment continue to be considered in the light of advices from the Office of the Attorney General.

### Residency Permits

241. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current position in regard to residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 24; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40721/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to by the Deputy was granted permission to remain in the State based on his parentage of an Irish born citizen child in 2000. This permission has been renewed on a number of occasions and is currently valid to 30 January 2012. The person concerned should attend the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) two weeks before the expiry date of his current permission to register and renew his permission.

I should add that an application for a certificate of naturalisation from the individual referred to was received in the Citizenship Section of my Department in April 2008 and my predecessor decided in his absolute discretion to refuse the application. The person concerned was informed of that decision in a letter issued to him on 30 November 2010. It is open to the person concerned to make a new application at any time.

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

242. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected position in regard to residency and citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40722/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The persons concerned are failed asylum seekers. Their respective applications for Subsidiary Protection were considered and refused. Deportation Orders were made in respect of the persons concerned and these Orders were served by registered post which placed a legal obligation on them to leave the State.

The persons concerned initiated judicial review proceedings in the High Court, challenging the decisions to refuse them Subsidiary Protection and to make Deportation Orders in respect of them. As these proceedings are ongoing, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on the cases of the persons concerned at this time.

Given that the persons concerned have no current right of residency in the State, the issue of applications for citizenship do not arise at this time.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to the INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may

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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.

243. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected position in regard to residency and update of stamp 4 or naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 11; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40723/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned had her status as a refugee revoked in March, 2010. She was subsequently granted Permission to Remain in the State for the twelve month period to 4th February, 2012. This position still obtains.

An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in October 2007.

Arising from the revocation of her status as a refugee, it was determined that the person in question did not meet the statutory residency requirements as set out in the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended. The person concerned was informed of this in a letter issued to her on 19 November, 2010.

Section 15 of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. The conditions are that the applicant must—

- be of full age
- be of good character
- have had a period of one year's continuous residency in the State immediately before the date of application and, during the eight years immediately preceding that period, have had a total residence in the State amounting to four years
- have, before a judge of the District Court in open court, in a citizenship ceremony or in such manner as the Minister, for special reasons, allows—

(i) made a declaration, in the prescribed manner, of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State, and

(ii) undertaken to faithfully observe the laws of the State and to respect its democratic values.

In the context of naturalisation, certain periods of residence in the State are excluded. These include—

- periods of residence in respect of which an applicant does not have permission to remain in the State
- periods granted for the purposes of study
- periods granted for the purposes of seeking recognition as a refugee within the meaning of the Refugee Act 1996.

Section 16 of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, waive some or all of the statutory conditions in certain circumstances i.e. where an applicant is of Irish descent or of Irish associations; where an applicant is a person who is a refugee within the meaning of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; or where an applicant is a Stateless person within the meaning of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless persons. A foreign national who is married to, or is the Civil Partner of, an Irish citizen for at least three years may apply for naturalisation under section 15A of the Irish Naturalisation and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended, where they have been continuously resident in the island of Ireland for the year immediately prior to the date of their application and for two out of the four years prior to that year. The marriage or civil partnership must be subsisting and recognised under Irish law.

It is open to any individual to lodge an application for citizenship if and when they are in a position to meet the statutory requirements as prescribed in the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 as amended.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### **Deportation Orders**

244. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected residency status in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40724/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The first named person concerned applied for asylum on 17 April 2007. His application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, by the Refugee Appeal Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 9 February 2009, that the then Minister proposed to make a Deportation Order in respect of him. He was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a Deportation Order or of making representations to the then Minister setting out the reasons why he should not have a Deportation Order made against him. In addition, he was notified of his entitlement to apply for Subsidiary Protection in accordance with the provisions of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006.

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in accordance with these Regulations. Following consideration of the information submitted, the application was refused. The person concerned and his legal representative were notified of this decision by letter dated 17 July 2009. The case file of the person concerned, including all representations submitted, will soon be considered under Section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

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The second named person arrived in the State on 9 June 2006 and applied for asylum. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, and on appeal, by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 18 April 2007, that the Minister proposed to make a Deportation Order in respect of her. The person concerned was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a Deportation Order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State i.e. why she should not be deported.

She was notified of her entitlement to apply for Subsidiary Protection pursuant to the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations, 2006. By correspondence dated 8 May 2007, an application for Subsidiary Protection was made on behalf of the person concerned by her legal representative. Following consideration of the information submitted, the application was refused. The person concerned and her legal representative were notified of this decision by letter dated 25 September 2008.

Her case was then examined under Section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996, as amended, on the Prohibition of Refoulement. Consideration was given to representations submitted on her behalf by her legal representative. On 12 November 2008, the then Minister for Justice made a Deportation Order in respect of the person concerned. Notice of the order was served by registered post requiring the person concerned to present at the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 on Tuesday 2 December 2008 in order to make travel arrangements for her removal from the State.

I am satisfied that the application made by the person concerned for Subsidiary Protection, as well as the representations made under Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) together with all refoulement issues, was fairly and comprehensively examined and, as such, the decision to deport is justified.

The effect of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must leave the State and remain thereafter out of the State. To date, the person concerned has not complied with the requirement in the Deportation Order to leave the State. The enforcement of the Deportation Orders is, and remains, an operational matter for the GNIB. Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

245. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position in regard to the determination of residency in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40725/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The persons concerned are a husband and wife who lodged separate asylum applications in 2005. Their asylum applications were refused following the consideration of their individual cases by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of their respective asylum applications, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), they were separately notified, he by letter dated 25th May, 2010 and she by letter dated 21st July, 2010 that the then Minister proposed to make Deportation Orders in respect of them. They were each given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a Deportation Order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why a Deportation Order should not be made against them. In addition, they were notified of their respective entitlements to apply for Subsidiary Protection in accordance with the provisions of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006.

The persons concerned submitted individual applications for Subsidiary Protection. When consideration of these applications has been completed, the persons concerned will be notified in writing of the outcomes.

In the event that the applications for Subsidiary Protection are refused, the position in the State of the persons concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of Section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. All representations submitted will be considered before final decisions are made. Once decisions have been made, these decisions and the consequences of the decisions will be conveyed in writing to the persons concerned.

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

246. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress made to date in the determination of residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40726/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The person concerned made an application for refugee status in the State on 14 August 2003. The application was refused on 9 February 2005 and Judicial Review proceedings were lodged challenging this decision. These proceedings were settled. The person concerned subsequently made a second application for refugee status on 15 February 2006 which was refused at first instance and on appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. The decision to refuse by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal was made on 23 April 2009.

The previous Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform informed the person concerned that it was proposed to make a Deportation Order in his case and he was invited to make representations as to why a Deportation Order should not issue. The person in question was also invited to make an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State. Following consideration of the representations made and the application for Subsidiary Protection a Deportation Order was signed on 10 June 2010. Judicial Review proceedings were subsequently lodged in the High Court challenging the Deportation Order and accordingly, as the matter is sub judice, I do not propose to comment further.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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

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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.

### **Citizenship Applications**

247. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress made to date in the determination of residency and naturalisation status in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 6; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40727/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to by the Deputy was granted permission to remain in the State in 2002 under the arrangements then in place for the non-EEA parents of Irish born children. The permission has been renewed on a regular basis and is currently valid until 22 April, 2012.

An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to was received in the Citizenship Division of INIS in June 2006. On examination of the application submitted, it was determined that the person in question did not meet the statutory residency requirements as set out in the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended. The person concerned was informed of this in a letter issued to him on 21 October, 2006.

Section 15 of that Act provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. The conditions are that the applicant must—

- be of full age,
- be of good character,
- have had a period of one year's continuous residency in the State immediately before the date of application and, during the eight years immediately preceding that period, have had a total residence in the State amounting to four years,
- have, before a judge of the District Court in open court, in a citizenship ceremony or in such manner as the Minister, for special reasons, allows—

(i) made a declaration, in the prescribed manner, of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State, and

(ii) undertaken to faithfully observe the laws of the State and to respect its democratic values.

In the context of naturalisation, certain periods of residence in the State are excluded. These include—

- periods of residence in respect of which an applicant does not have permission to remain in the State
- periods granted for the purposes of study
- periods granted for the purposes of seeking recognition as a refugee within the meaning of the Refugee Act 1996.

It is open to any individual to lodge an application for citizenship if and when they are in a position to meet the prescribed statutory requirements. To date no new application has been received.

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

248. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress made to date and expected in the determination of residency and naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40728/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that a valid application for a certificate of naturalisation was received from the person referred to by the Deputy in April, 2011.

The application is currently being processed with a view to establishing whether the applicant meets the statutory conditions for the granting of naturalisation and will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible.

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.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### **Visa Applications**

249. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the procedure to be followed in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40729/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed that it would appear that the person concerned departed the State without having firstly secured a re-entry visa. Contact was made on behalf of the person concerned by a family member who was advised by a Visa Official that the only option available in such circumstances was that a fresh visa application be made, whilst outside of the State.

A visa application for the person concerned was received in the Visa Office, Dublin on the 14 November 2011. Given the circumstances the application was dealt with in an expeditious manner. A Visa Officer considered the application and refused the granting of the visa sought on the 15 November 2011 for the following reasons:

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1. There was insufficient documentation submitted in support of the application. The Visa Officer noted that a detailed explanation was not provided as to why the person concerned travelled outside the State without a valid Garda registration card or a re-entry visa;
2. There was an inconsistency noted in that the recently issued passport submitted by the Applicant had not been signed.

As is the case with all refused visa applications, the refusal decision and the reasons for that decision were sent by way of letter to the applicant. In addition, and in common with all visa applications refused in Dublin, the refusal decision and the reasons for that decision were posted promptly on-line (in a format confidential to the applicant). It is open to the person concerned to submit an appeal within two months of the date of refusal, in this case before the 15 January 2012. Guidelines on the visa appeals process is available on the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service ([www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)).

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### **Citizenship Applications**

250. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the progress made to date in the determination of an application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40730/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in April, 2008.

The application is at an advanced stage of processing and will be submitted to me for decision in due course.

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.

I should remind the Deputy that queries in relation to the status of individual Immigration cases may be made direct to INIS by Email using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. The service enables up-to-date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek this information through the more administratively expensive Parliamentary Questions process.

251. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected position in regard to the determination of residency and naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40731/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to by the Deputy is the sibling

of an Irish born child of non-EEA parents born in the State prior to 1 January, 2005. The person concerned was granted permission to remain in the State on the basis of family dependency by INIS on 21 December, 2004, and this permission has expired on 15 September, 2011. I am informed that the person concerned attended the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) to have his permission to remain renewed recently. However, given that he provided conflicting details regarding his current residence, I would advise him to write to INIS c/o PO Box 10003, Dublin 1 to seek renewal of his permission to remain (including proof of his current address). Upon receipt of the appropriate documentation, his case will be examined by the relevant officials in INIS and a decision communicated to him in due course.

I am informed that no application for a certification of naturalisation has been received from the person concerned in the Citizenship Division of my Department to date.

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

**252. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current or expected position in the determination of an application for residency, citizenship and family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 24; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40732/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in October 2007.

On examination of the application submitted it was determined that the person in question did not meet that statutory residency requirements as set out in the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended. The person concerned was informed of this in a letter issued to him on 28 November, 2008.

Given that the person concerned has no current right of residency in the State, the issue of a further application for citizenship does not arise at this time.

I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to is the subject of a Family Reunification application made in March 2009. I refer the Deputy to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 272 of Tuesday, 6th December, 2011 — set out below. The position is unchanged since then.

In the event that the application for Family Reunification has a favourable outcome then the case of the person concerned will require no further consideration. However, in the event that the application for Family Reunification is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. All representations submitted will be considered before a final decision is made. At that juncture, the case of the person concerned will be examined to determine what, if any, impact the European Court of Justice Judgment in the Zambrano case may have on his case. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to the INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for

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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.

*I have been informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the documentation referred to by the Deputy has been received and has been responded to. INIS will write to the person concerned when a final determination of his application has been made.*

*Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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 waited.*

### **Residency Permits**

253. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if in the context of residency status, a review of the papers in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath will be undertaken in view of the somewhat contradictory statement by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to the effect that it was not inclined to give the benefit of the doubt despite the existence of an MDC card number; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40733/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal that this case is currently the subject of Judicial Review proceedings. I am therefore unable to comment further on the matter at this time.

### **Visa Applications**

254. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if and when temporary travel documentation will be issued in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40734/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person concerned had a recent application for an Irish temporary travel document refused. She was advised to contact her own consular authorities to establish the procedures to be followed which would allow for her to procure a national passport whilst resident in this State. She currently has permission to remain in the State until 21 April, 2012.

In exceptional cases an application for an Irish temporary travel document may be considered in respect of qualifying non Irish nationals who are resident in Ireland. In all such cases, the INIS must be satisfied that there is no alternative open to the applicant before an Irish temporary travel document will issue. The person concerned has to show that they have made reasonable and formal efforts to obtain a national passport, that it has been formally and unreasonably refused and that their own consular authorities are unable to offer consular assistance to them whilst resident in the State.

It is open to the person in question to submit a new application for a temporary travel document accompanied by the relevant supporting documentation to the Travel Document

Unit of the INIS which is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2. Full information in this regard and the applicable application form is available at [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie).

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### Visa Applications

255. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the procedure to be followed in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40740/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** It is unclear on the basis of the information supplied by the Deputy whether the person referred to is a visa required national. In circumstances where the person concerned is visa required, it is open to that national to apply for a visa for any purpose. Each visa application is considered on its individual merits, the onus resting with the Applicant to satisfy the Visa Officer as to why the visa sought should be granted. Guidelines on the visa application process are available on the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie).

### Citizenship Applications

256. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when an for citizenship will be processed in respect of a person (details supplied). [40750/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** I am advised by the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that an application for a certificate of naturalisation was received from the person referred to by the Deputy in July 2007. The application is being processed with a view to establishing whether the applicant meets the statutory conditions for the granting of naturalisation and will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible. The nature of the naturalisation process is such that for a broad range of reasons some cases will take longer than others to process. It is not possible to provide a specific date for determination of an individual application. However, I can inform the Deputy that good progress is being made in reducing the time taken to process the generality of applications and it is my objective that by the spring of next year, save in exceptional circumstances, a person applying for citizenship will be given a decision on their application within six months. It is open to applicants for a certificate of naturalisation to submit whatever additional documentation they wish in support of their application. Any such documentation will be considered. However, it is important to reiterate that all applications are being dealt with as expeditiously as possible. 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. It is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process. Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been 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.

### **Court Accommodation**

257. **Deputy Frank Feighan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will provide details of allocations from the funds available to his Department towards the refurbishment of the courthouse, a listed building in Ballinamore, County Leitrim, over the past ten years; the expenditure to date from such allocations; the amount left unspent; the reason such moneys were left unspent and by whom such a decision was made; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40757/11]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter):** Under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998, management of the courts is the responsibility of the Courts Service. The Act provides that the service is independent in the performance of its functions, including the maintenance and provision of courthouse facilities. In order to be of assistance to the Deputy, I have had inquiries made and the Courts Service has informed me that between 2008 and 2010 a total of €232,616.09 was spent on architectural, engineering and quantity surveying services appointed by the Office of Public Works relating to preparatory work carried out between 2008 and 2009 for the proposed refurbishment of Ballinamore courthouse. However, given that work resulted in an estimated refurbishment cost of €2.5 million and in the context of reduced capital funding allocations, I am informed that the Courts Service decided in November 2009 not to proceed with the project. I am informed that no further funding was allocated and no moneys remain unspent and this remains the position in light of the current economic circumstances. It is regrettable that this expenditure did not lead on to a refurbishment but the Deputy will appreciate that quite extensive preliminary work is essential in preparing for capital projects. The Courts Service Board subsequently decided in 2010 to amalgamate the District Court Area of Ballinamore with Carrick-on-Shannon and therefore the court no longer sits in Ballinamore. I should add that a new courthouse was provided in Carrick-on-Shannon in 1998 at a cost of €1.98 million.

### **Defence Forces Reserve**

258. **Deputy Simon Harris** asked the Minister for Defence his plans regarding recruitment for the Reserve Defence Forces, having regard to the significant waiting lists of applicants that currently exists; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40568/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The number of personnel that can be recruited to the Army Reserve and the Naval Service Reserve is dependent on the level of funding available for training. The level of resourcing available for Defence has reduced significantly over recent years. The funds available for paid training days for members of the Reserve have been cut from €4.96 million in 2009 to €2.48 million in 2011. This provided for approximately 30,000 paid training man-days in 2011. These paid training days provided targeted development training for existing members of the Reserve including career courses and skills courses. In addition, it was possible to provide for the training of 200 new recruits to the RDF. This level of recruitment was agreed in consultation with the Military Authorities, having regard to the requirement to maintain the existing capabilities of the Reserve to the greatest extent possible. The number of personnel that may be recruited in the coming year or future years has not been determined as yet. Officials from my Department are due to meet with the Acting Director of Reserve Forces in the coming week to discuss the training priorities within the Reserve over the coming year and to determine the level of recruitment that can be accommodated within the available resource envelope.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

259. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Defence the total allocated budget for

his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40399/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The net budget allocation for my Department for 2011 for Defence (Vote 36) and Army Pensions (Vote 37) is €882 million. The final expenditure will not be available until after the end of the year. The Army Pensions Vote required a supplementary estimate of €15.6 million. This will be offset by savings in the Defence Vote. The expenditure to 30 November 2011 at subhead level is provided in the following tables:

## Defence (Vote 36)

Subhead	Description	Expenditure to 30/11/2011 (€000)
A1	Salaries, Wages and Allowances	14,746
A2	Travel and Subsistence	384
A3	Training and Development and Incidental Expenses	158
A4	Postal and Telecommunications Services	660
A5	Office Equipment & External IT Services	770
A6	Office Premises Expenses	949
A7	Consultancy Services & Value for Money and Policy Reviews	0
B	Permanent Defence Force: Pay	388,784
C	Permanent Defence Force: Allowances	37,635
D	Reserve Defence Force: Pay, etc.	3,194
E	Chaplains & Officiating Clergymen: Pay & Allowances	1,076
F	Civilians attached to Units: Pay, etc.	29,597
G	Defensive Equipment	24,710
H	Air Corps: Equipment and Expenses	11,740
I	Military Transport	10,736
J	Naval Service: Equipment and Expenses	26,252
K	Barrack Expenses & Engineering Equipment	13,021
L	Buildings (incl. capital carryover of €1.5m)	13,673
M	Ordnance, Clothing & Catering	16,189
N	Communications & Information Technology	5,094
O	Military Training	1,656
P	Travel & Freight Services	2,378
Q	Medical Expenses	2,645
R	Lands	978
S	Equitation	718
T	Compensation and Associated Costs	4,464
U	Miscellaneous Expenditure	2,326
V	Costs arising directly from Ireland's participation in the EU's Common Security & Defence Policy	607
W	Civil Defence Board (Grant-in-Aid)	5,175
X	Irish Red Cross Society (Grant-in-Aid)	951
	GROSS TOTAL (incl. capital carryover of 1.5m)	621,266
Y	Appropriations-in-Aid	36,589
	Net Total	584,677

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## Army Pensions (Vote 37)

Subhead	Description	Expenditure to 30/11/2011 (€000)
A	Army Pensions Board — Salaries, Wages and Allowances	91
B	Defence Forces (Pensions) Schemes & Payments in respect of transferred service	193,920
C	Wound & disability pensions, allowances & gratuities to or in respect of former members of the Defence Forces	7,766
D	Payments in respect of Veterans of the War of Independence	1,038
E	Compensation Payments	17
F	Medical Appliances and Travelling & Incidental Expenses	36
	Gross Total	202,868
G	Appropriations-in-Aid	5,114
	Net Total	197,754

**Defence Forces Expenditure**

260. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Defence in respect of annual training, the amount deducted from the Defence Forces Reserve and Naval Service Reserve in each of the years 2005 to 2011 for officers and men, for rations, accommodation, PRSI, PAYE and universal social charge showing the amount separately and giving the numbers of each rank; the numbers of each rank on annual training; the class of PRSI that was applied; if the PRSI, PAYE and universal social deductions from pay of the RDF and NSR are notified to the Department of Social Protection and the Revenue; if the personal records of persons concerned are credited with these deductions; the benefits that accrue from these deductions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40455/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** It has not been possible in the time available to compile all of the information requested by the Deputy. The information will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

**Consultancy Contracts**

261. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Defence the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40503/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** No external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations were used by the Department of Defence for the years 2010 and 2011.

**Defence Forces Reserve**

262. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Defence if he will provide an update on the Army Reserve and Naval Reserve; the current numbers of reservists; if there is a recommended number; his plans to allow recruitment to the Army Reserve and Naval Reserve, to give persons an opportunity to make a contribution to our country, and to obtain valuable experience particularly when unemployment is high; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40529/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The establishment versus the current strengths (as of 31 October 2011) for the Reserve are contained in the attached table. The number of personnel that can be recruited to the Army Reserve and the Naval Service Reserve is dependent on the level of funding available for training.

The level of resourcing available for Defence has reduced significantly over recent years. The funds available for paid training days for members of the Reserve have been cut from €4.96 million in 2009 to €2.48 million in 2011. This provided for approximately 30,000 paid training man-days in 2011.

These paid training days provided targeted development training for existing members of the Reserve including career courses and skills courses.

In addition, it was possible to provide for the training of 200 new recruits to the RDF in 2011. This level of recruitment was agreed in consultation with the Military Authorities, having regard to the requirement to maintain the existing capabilities of the Reserve to the greatest extent possible.

The number of personnel that may be recruited in the coming year or future years has not been determined as yet. Officials from the Department are due to meet with the Acting Director of Reserve Forces in the coming week to discuss the training priorities within the Reserve over the coming year and to determine the level of recruitment that can be accommodated within the available resource envelope.

	Establishment	Strength (31/10/2011)
Army Reserve*	9,292*	5,133
Naval Service Reserve	400	228
Total:	9,692	5,361

\*There is an additional establishment of 55 personnel in the Reserve Defence Force Training Authority.

### Defence Forces Strength

263. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Defence the date on which the Army will recruit additional personnel in view of approval of limited recruitment to the Army to keep the numbers at a required level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40530/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** The Government has decided to accept my recommendations that the strength of the Permanent Defence Force will be maintained at 9,500. I believe that this is the optimum level required to fulfil all roles assigned by Government. I am advised by the Military Authorities that the strength of the Permanent Defence Force at 30 November, 2011, the latest date for which details are available, was 9,460 comprising 7,671 Army, 806 Air Corps and 983 Naval Service. Targeted recruitment has continued in 2011 to maintain the appropriate level of Defence Forces personnel and capabilities. Since 1 November 2011 there has been an intake of 201 recruits for general service enlistment with a further 39 due to be enlisted by the end of this month.

It is my intention that targeted recruitment will continue in 2012, within the resource envelope allocated to Defence, so as to maintain the Government approved strength of the Defence Forces.

### Ministerial Appointments

264. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Defence the number of new commit-

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tees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40547/11]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter):** No new committees or advisory groups have been put in place in my Department since this Government took office.

### Departmental Expenditure

265. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the capital expenditure of his Department from 2004 to 2011, inclusive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40388/11]

271. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the amount of money spent by him on capital expenditure per annum from 2000 to date in 2011. [40481/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 265 and 271 together.

Capital Expenditure in my Department over the period 2000 to 2011 (to date, 14 December) was as follows:

Year	Amount (€m)
2000	127.2
2001	111.9
2002	57.9
2003	133.9
2004	140.1
2005	156.2
2006	149.5
2007	295.3
2008	684.1
2009	546.0
2010	491.2
2011 (at 14 December 2011)	186.1

The substantial increase in capital expenditure over the years 2007 to 2010 is accounted for largely by payments under the Farm Waste Management Scheme.

266. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40395/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The budget for my Department is set out in the Revised Estimates for the Public Services, 2011 under the following four (4) expenditure programmes:—

	€m
A. Agrifood policy, Development and Trade:	383.6
B. Food Safety, Animal Health and Welfare And Plant Health	317.1

	€m
C. Rural Economy and Environment	647.9
D. Effective Delivery of Client Focused Schemes and Services	298.9
Total	1,647.5

Based on the latest available information, the Department is forecasting that savings on the Vote will arise. As the Department will be incurring expenditure up to and including 31 December 2011, it is not possible to indicate the final outturn under each expenditure programme at the end of the year.

### Grant Payments

267. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a single farm payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Waterford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40411/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the 2011 Single Payment Scheme was received from the person named on 29 April 2011, processing of which has recently been finalised, thereby allowing payment to issue on 7 December, directly to the nominated bank account of the applicant.

268. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a single farm payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Waterford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40412/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the 2011 Single Payment Scheme was received from the person named on 15 April 2011, following processing of which over-claims were identified on three of the land parcels declared by the person named. The person named has been written to in this regard and, on receipt of a satisfactory reply, the application will be further processed with a view to the appropriate payment issuing immediately thereafter.

269. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will outline the detail of the new water harvesting scheme including the level of grant and eligibility criteria; when the scheme will open up; the period of the funding programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40440/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I have provided funding in the Department's Vote for 2012 to allow the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS), including the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme, to be re-opened and I will be announcing the details very shortly.

The grant rate of 40% which was available under the previous version of the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme will be retained and the maximum eligible investment ceiling will remain at €25,000 per holding, i.e. a maximum grant of €10,000. My intention is that the Scheme will remain open for applications until the end of the current Rural Development Programme, i.e. until end-December 2013. However, the number of projects approved will be subject to the limit of the funding available.

270. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment for grazing sheep scheme will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40446/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the 2010 Single Payment Scheme/Grassland Sheep Scheme was received from the person named on the 7 May 2010. This application was fully processed and payment under the Grassland Sheep Scheme issued on 1 February 2011, based, in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme, on the original Sheep Census return received by my Department, which indicated that the person named had 50 breeding ewes in his flock.

An application under the 2011 Single Payment Scheme/Grassland Sheep Scheme was received from the person named on the 4 May 2011, processing of which is not yet finalised. Payment in respect of the 2011 Grassland Sheep Scheme is due to commence issuing in early 2012.

*Question No. 271 answered with Question No. 265.*

272. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will reinstate entitlements to a person (details supplied) in County Offaly; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40482/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The person named had 6.01 standard entitlements with a unit value of €58.49 (total value of €351.52) that expired in scheme year 2010 due to non-usage. These entitlements were reverted to the National Reserve on 2 February 2011.

EU Regulations governing the Single Payment Scheme provide that entitlements must be used at least once in each two year period. ‘Used’ in this context means that in any one of these years a hectare of eligible land must be declared in respect of each entitlement held. The Regulations further provide that any entitlements that remain unused over the two year period revert to the National Reserve and are thereby lost to the farmer.

A letter issued to the person named on the 22 February 2011 explaining that her 6.01 expired entitlements had been reverted to the National Reserve due to non-usage and invited her to put forward any extenuating circumstances that might be relevant to her case. The person named submitted an appeal under Force Majeure supported by medical evidence, which has been examined by my Department and has been deemed to be acceptable. The entitlements concerned have now been returned and a letter to this effect has issued to the person named.

### **Consultancy Contracts**

273. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40499/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** My Department does not employ external public relations companies and has not for the years in question. Public relations advice, where required is provided by my Department’s Press Office. It is not possible to provide costs for this service, as the work is carried out as part of the standard duties of the staff involved.

### **Ministerial Appointments**

274. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40543/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** My Department established a steering committee to oversee the Environmental Analysis of scenarios related to the implementation of the recommendations of the Food Harvest 2020 Report since I became Minister.

### Grant Payments

275. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if there are grants available to farmers who wish to retain and repair old stone barns and other farm buildings; if there are no grants currently available, his plans to introduce such grants; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40565/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The Traditional Farm Building Scheme was introduced as a supplementary measure under REPS 4 in 2008. Its objective is to ensure that a number of traditional farm buildings, which contribute to the visual landscape and are of historical and architectural value, will be maintained into the future. The Heritage Council administer the Traditional Farm Building Scheme on behalf of my Department. The closing date for the 2011-2012 scheme was 1st July 2011. A budget of €800,000 is available for the scheme year 2012, and a maximum grant of €20,000 will be payable to successful applicants. I have not yet made any decision regarding the reopening of this scheme in 2012-13.

276. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will approve a single farm payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Leitrim; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40573/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 11 May 2011. This application was selected for a Ground Eligibility/Cross Compliance inspection. During the Cross Compliance inspection discrepancies were recorded in relation to Bovine Identification and Registration concerning Bovine Passports and a failure to notify movements to the Cattle Movement and Monitoring System. These discrepancies resulted in a 1% Cross Compliance penalty being recorded for 2011. During the course of the Ground Eligibility inspection discrepancies were found which resulted in the claimed area for the Single Payment Scheme of 10.26ha being reduced to a payable area of 10.15ha.

The person named was advised of this outcome on 27 October and a Final Notice will issue shortly detailing the reductions in area. He was also advised of his right to seek a review of this decision and to have the outcome of any such review appealed to the Independent Agriculture Appeals Office. This inspection is now complete and the results have been fully processed. A 50% advance payment under the Single Payment Scheme issued on 24 November with the balance of the payment issuing on 1 December. Full payment under the Disadvantaged Area Scheme issued on 7 December.

### Disadvantaged Areas Scheme

277. **Deputy Seamus Kirk** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in relation to stock and density charges for the disadvantaged areas if he will advise the following, for the purpose of the scheme the age at which a lamb become a sheep; the period the animal must be retained on the claim area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40627/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The Disadvantaged Areas Schemes seeks to compensate over 100,000 Irish farm families, whose ability to farm is

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restricted due to the poor quality of their land. Over seventy five percent of Ireland's total agricultural area is designated as disadvantaged and in order to encourage sustainable use of this land, and protect against land abandonment, thereby maintaining the countryside, the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was introduced. As part of the recent budgetary process, I decided that there will be no changes in either the rates or the eligible areas qualifying for a disadvantaged area payment, that expenditure would be reduced by some €30 million in 2012.

This lower financial limit will be achieved by the introduction of targeted reform in the Disadvantaged Areas Payments, which will be achieved through reform of the stocking density, retentions period and other elements of the scheme. The changes being introduced will favour active farmers, whose holdings are exclusively in Disadvantaged Areas and are subject to clearance by the European Commission.

The main changes to the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme are:

- The minimum stocking density for 2011 must be 0.30 livestock units per hectare or greater and for 2012 must be 0.15 livestock units per hectare or greater. For official purposes a lamb becomes a sheep at 12 months.
- The minimum retention period has been increased from 3 months to 6 months and will be calculated over 12 months.
- There will be a reduced rate of aid where applicants hold both Disadvantage and non-Disadvantaged Lands.
- Exclusion of horses from the stocking density calculation. Remaining qualifying animals include cattle, sheep, deer and goats
- An exclusion of land more than 80 kilometres from a farmer's main holding where that is situated in a non-Disadvantaged Area.

### **Grant Payments**

278. **Deputy John Browne** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Wexford in respect of single farm payment and agri environmental option scheme. [40647/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the 2011 Single Payment Scheme was received from the person named on 16 May 2011. Processing of the application has been finalised in recent days with full payment issuing today, 15 December 2011. The person named was approved for participation in the Agri-Environment Options Scheme with effect from 1 September 2010.

Under the EU Regulations governing the Scheme and other area-based payment schemes, a comprehensive administrative check, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System, had to be completed before any payment could issue. The chosen AEOS actions of the person named are Wild Bird Cover and Tree Planting Whips, payment for which is due for 2011 onwards. The application of the person named was randomly selected for an on farm inspection and my Department is now finalising the examination of this case with a view to resolving all outstanding issues as quickly as possible.

279. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine with reference to the proposed septic tank legislation being dealt with by the Department of the Environment Community and Local Government, if he will confirm that if an inspector goes out and they form the opinion that the septic tank in a farmer's place is not up to the required standard that in no instances will that person's farm payments be ceased immediately; if he will confirm that the new legislation will not affect direct payment to farmers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40676/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Under the Single Payment Scheme it is a requirement of all applicants to comply with the cross compliance requirements relating to 18 Statutory Management Requirements (SMR's) and Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC).

There are a number of environmental and protection of water provisions — SMR2 relates to the protection of groundwater against pollution caused by certain dangerous substances, SMR3 relates to the protection of the environment and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture and SMR4 concerns the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. Controls relating to the use of sewage sludge from local authority treatment plants where applied to agriculture land form part of these cross compliance requirements.

My Department in implementing the provisions of the Single Payment Scheme is not responsible for checking the functioning of domestic septic tanks. The inspection and control of domestic septic tanks is not part of the regime governing the operation of the Single Payment Scheme.

### EU Directives

280. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if urgent and favourable consideration will be given to a request by an organisation (details supplied) in view of the need to find a solution before the end of this month taking into consideration the major progress made to date in providing appropriate facilities to comply with new regulations effective from the 1 of January 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40686/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The prohibition on placing eggs from hens in conventional (unenriched) cages is laid down in EU legislation, and Member States are required to enforce these provisions with effect from 1 January 2012. There is no provision for a three month derogation as requested, and the Commission has made it clear on a number of occasions that it intends to fully enforce these requirements.

From an Irish perspective, I understand that the vast majority of egg producers will be compliant by the deadline.

### Grant Payments

281. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40745/11]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney):** An application under the Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 8 April 2011. This application was selected for and was the subject of a Ground Eligibility/Cross Compliance Inspection. This inspection was completed and the results are now

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being processed. In the vast majority of inspected cases, including this case, amendments have had to be made to the maps in order that the Land Parcel Identification System that is used for making payments to farmers is kept up-to-date. This work is ongoing and every effort is being made to complete the processing of those who were the subject of a Ground Eligibility Inspection.

### Departmental Expenditure

282. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the total allocated budget for her Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of her Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40397/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Deputy might wish to note that the resource allocations made available to my Department under Vote 43, which was established in June of this year, are contained in the Revised Estimates for Public Services 2011 as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on 21 July 2011. This gross funding allocation in 2011 amounts to €230 million and this includes a current provision of €224 million and a capital allocation of €6 million.

Particulars relating to the funding allocations in 2011 across each Subhead in the Vote and the provisional expenditure outturn in each case is set out in the following table—

Subhead	2011 Estimate Allocation €000	2011 Provisional Outturn €000
<i>Administration</i>		
A.1 Salaries, Wages and Allowances	6,505	6,218
A.2 Travel and Subsistence	137	70
A.3 Training and Development and Incidental Expenses	235	116
A.4 Postal and Telecommunications Services	100	100
A.5 Office Equipment and External IT Services—		
Current	92	92
Capital	28	28
A.6 Office Premises Expenses	200	200
A.7 Consultancy Serviced and Value for Money Reviews	118	10
<i>Childcare Payments and Programmes</i>		
B.1 Early Childcare Payment	1,000	1,000
B.2 National Childcare Investment Programme—		
Current	24,304	24,304
Capital	4,950	4,450
B.3 Early Intervention Programme for Children	3,625	3,625
B.4 ECCE Pre-School Year Programme	80,080	77,080
<i>National Children's Strategy</i>		
C. National Longitudinal Study and Other Programmes—		
Current	17,291	14,591
Capital	800	800
<i>Youth Services</i>		
D. Grant-in-Aid Fund for General Expenses of Youth Organisations	23,795	23,795

Subhead	2011 Estimate Allocation €000	2011 Provisional Outturn €000
<i>Other Services</i>		
E. School Completion Programme	30,256	29,256
F. Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers	207	198
G. Grants to Community Organisations (National Lottery)	500	500
H. Statutory and Non-Statutory Inquiries/Legal Fees/Settlements	1,000	285
I. Developmental, Consultative, Supervisory, Regulatory Bodies	31,468	30,215
J. Constitutional Referendum on Children's Rights	3,000	3,000
Gross Total	229,691	216,933
K. Less Appropriations-in-Aid	7,828	4,129
Net Total	221,863	212,804

### Consultancy Contracts

283. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by her Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40501/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** My Department was formally established on the 3rd of June 2011. Please find below the amount paid to date, to external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations since that date.

Name of External Public Relations and Consultancy Persons/Organisations	Amount Paid for work/Service Provided
Deloitte	€7,617 — 2011. External audit on Youth in Action Programme in Ireland for 2009 and 2010 required by EU Commission
ELM Training	€3,700 — 2011. Consultation on Standards for Local Youth Clubs

### Ministerial Appointments

284. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40545/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** My Department was formally established on the 3rd of June 2011 and to date an inter-departmental Committee on the Implementation of the Children First National Guidance and a Task Force on the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency have been established.

### Health Service Staff

285. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if the deputy manager at Gleann Alainn special care unit, County Cork, is a permanent or acting deputy manager; and if the unit has permanent full-time senior child-care workers. [40621/11]

286. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the length of time in which there was no manager at Gleann Alainn special care unit, County Cork, in 2011. [40639/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 285 and 286 together.

As these are service matters, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### Child Care Services

287. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if each special care unit has a full complement of multi-disciplinary teams on site, that is, psychiatrists, educational and behavioural psychologists, speech and language therapists including for the social use of language, and sensory integration therapists; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40640/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

288. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the markers used to determine that a High Court order can safely be rescinded in respect of a child in a special care unit. [40641/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### Child Support

289. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent to which structures exist to protect children at risk of being abused within or without the family with particular reference to detection and reporting; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40703/11]

290. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent to which structures to protect children with particular reference to social services back-up are sufficient to meet requirements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40704/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 289 and 290 together.

The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991 for child protection and welfare matters. It carries out this remit through its Children and Family Services directorate, under Mr. Gordon data National Director. The HSE has a national and regional structure in place, with services provided across a range of professional disciplines.

The key guidance document in respect of child welfare and protection is *Children First*, which was first introduced in 1999. I launched the revised *Children First* National Guidance In July, 2011. The Guidance is designed to assist in identifying and reporting child abuse. It specifically highlights the roles and responsibilities of the HSE and An Garda Síochána, as the two agencies with statutory responsibility for child protection, and forms an integral part of their existing operations and practice. The Guidance is also intended to assist organisations in ensuring that children under their care are safe, that staff/volunteers can identify possible abuse within the

organisation or elsewhere and that there is in place the appropriate structure for reporting to relevant statutory bodies.

In addition, the HSE published a Child Welfare and Protection Practice Handbook for all its staff in order to achieve better consistency and compliance with *Children First*. The HSE has in place a network of personnel to provide training, information and advice on the implementation of *Children First*. It is currently delivering a programme of information and training on the new Guidance across the country.

My Department is finalising legislative proposals to make compliance with the Children First Guidance a statutory obligation. The legislation will reflect a broad based approach to compliance with obligations extending beyond reporting to one of safeguarding children at risk and the objective will be to ensure the greater protection of children by strengthening the existing system for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse.

In addition to the existing structures in place to support *Children First*, significant additional resources have been provided to the HSE over the past two years to increase the number of social workers in the child welfare and protection area. The number of social workers increased in 2010 by over 200 and the necessary funding has been provided to the HSE to complete the recruitment of an additional 60 social workers by year end. The recruitment of these additional social workers was included in the Ryan Report Implementation Plan. This additional resource will be of particular assistance to the HSE in driving forward the process of implementation of *Children First*.

The social work positions will be targeted at priority areas of the service having regard to an overall assessment of workload undertaken by the National Director and his team. The recruitment of the additional social workers is one element of a wider reform agenda within the HSE, through which I believe we can deliver better outcomes for children and families. This reform agenda will lead to the establishment of a new Child and Family Support Agency which will provide a dedicated focus on child protection and will support families in need.

It should also be emphasised that the grade of social worker is currently exempt from the moratorium on recruitment and filling of vacancies. The HSE is therefore free to fill social worker vacancies as they arise and within available resources.

It must be pointed out that necessary and appropriate social services cannot be provided in the absence of knowledge about need. We must recognise that child abuse takes many forms and occurs in many settings, including the home. In this context there is a wider societal duty to report suspected child abuse. Anyone with child abuse concerns or information should not hesitate to come forward and assist the HSE and An Garda Síochána in their respective roles in carrying out their work to protect children.

An Garda Síochána have powers under the Child Care Act 1991 to take children at risk to a place of safety. They also have extensive investigatory powers. I am working closely with my colleague the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence on a range of legislative measures designed to both strengthen child protection and ensure that those brought before the courts on abuse charges are subject to the full rigour of the law.

The Government is progressing a range of measures which will serve to significantly strengthen the existing legislative, policy and practice framework in the area of child protection. The intention is to ensure that child abuse in Ireland, whether within or outside the family, is strongly and decisively tackled, and that children are properly safeguarded. The various enhancements under way, coupled with the establishment of a dedicated Child and Family Support Agency, will be of considerable help in achieving this objective.

### **Youth Services**

291. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent

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to which youth services are likely to play a role in the context of her responsibilities to the young population now and in the future; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40705/11]

293. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she is satisfied that children and youth support services throughout the country are adequate in terms of modern requirements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40707/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 291 and 293 together.

My Department provides a range of funding schemes, programmes and supports to the youth sector. These include the Youth Service Grant Scheme, the Special Projects for Youth Scheme, the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund and certain other provisions including the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, Youth Information Centres, European Youth in Action Programme (administered by Léargas — The Exchange Bureau) and Gaisce — the President's Award.

As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I am committed to placing children, young people and families at the heart of the work of my Department. In this regard, my Department supports the provision of a wide range of services and supports for children, young people and families. To further enhance this work, a new children's strategy and youth policy framework are currently being progressed by my Department; these will place outcomes for children and young people at the centre of policy and service delivery and will aim to support children and young people to an even greater extent as they progress through important life stages.

One of my key aims for policy development within my Department will be to ensure optimum use of all the financial and human resources available. Accordingly, the development of my Department's policies in relation to children and young people will focus specifically on ensuring greater coherence, coordination and impact in policy and provision so as to ensure quality outcomes for all.

### **Health Service Staff**

292. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent to which the number and location of social workers is adequate to meet ongoing child support requirements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40706/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Government is committed to a series of measures designed to significantly strengthen the existing legislative, policy and practice framework in the area of child protection. The intention is to ensure that child abuse in Ireland is strongly and decisively tackled and that children are properly safeguarded. A number of significant structural and legislative changes are being progressed in this context. These include the establishment of a new agency with dedicated responsibility for the delivery of child welfare and protection services, separate from the HSE and reporting directly to my Department. Work on the establishment of the agency is under way and includes the preparation of primary legislation to provide for its establishment. I believe the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency in 2013 and associated reforms will represent a decisive shift towards achieving nationally consistent standards across all child protection services including better development of available resources in line with identified need.

The HSE compiles a monthly census of employment in the public health and social care sector; the latest data available are in respect of October 2011. These show that the total

number of social workers employed in the HSE and in directly funded agencies across all care groups at that time was 2,416 whole time equivalents (WTEs). The number of social workers has increased from 2,189 at the end of 2009.

The employment census also provides a breakdown of staffing levels by care group. In the case of social workers employed in the Children and Families area. The figures indicate that there were 1,207 WTEs employed at the end of October 2011. It should be noted that the classification by care group is viewed by the HSE and the Department as provisional and is subject to ongoing revision/refinement as part of the process of disaggregating the children and families resource base from the HSE prior to the establishment of the new Children and Family Support Agency.

The policy goal, in line with the Implementation Plan, published in 2009 in response to the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Ryan Report), is to achieve an overall increase of 270 social workers. In this context, it should be noted that the HSE has made provision for the recruitment of additional social workers this year, to build on the recruitment of over 200 additional social workers in 2010. The recruitment process is being managed by the HSE National Recruitment Service (NRS). The latest available information from the HSE indicates that 53 posts have been either filled or accepted, while a further 5 posts are being offered to candidates this week. An additional 4 posts are due to be filled by individuals returning from career break. The HSE is attaching a high priority to the completion of the recruitment process by the end of the year. My Department will continue to closely monitor the position with regard to the recruitment of the additional personnel.

The additional social workers will be targeted at priority areas of the service having regard to an overall assessment of workload undertaken by the National Director and his team. The recruitment of the additional social workers is one element of a wider change agenda within the HSE, through which I believe we can deliver better outcomes for children and families.

It should also be emphasised that the grade of social worker is currently exempt from the moratorium on recruitment and filling of vacancies. The HSE is therefore free to fill social worker vacancies as they arise and within available resources.

*Question No. 293 answered with Question No. 291.*

### **Child Abuse**

294. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of reports of child sex abuse or other incidents of child abuse that have been reported in each of the past five years to date in 2011; the number of such reports acted upon; in terms of those deemed to have serious grounds for further action, the action taken, if any; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40708/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Homeless Persons**

295. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the extent to which support services are available to meet requirements in the event of homelessness in the case of children or teenagers; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40709/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy with the most up-to-date information.

### **Social Inclusion**

296. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the progress made to date in addressing issues arising from unemployment, educational dropout, social and economic deprivation and exclusion with particular reference to the need to put in place corrective measures and support structures; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [40710/11]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** Tackling poverty, social and economic deprivation and exclusion is a priority for Government and a goal of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, coordinated by the Department of Social Protection. That Department is working closely with the Departments of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation and Education and Skills to deliver a range of measures aimed at getting people back to work.

My Department has direct responsibility for a number of programmes which play an important role in improving outcomes for children and families. Early childhood care and education programmes, in particular those aimed at low income families, are important priorities for my Department, to enhance children's opportunities for social and education development and to support parents. Over €160 million will be spent in 2011 on the free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. A further €76 million will be spent on the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme and the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme, both of which assist low income parents with the costs of childcare.

My Department also oversees grant funding, amounting to some €60 million in 2011, for a range of programmes and supports for young people. These include the Youth Service Grant Scheme, the Special Projects for Youth Scheme, the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Funds, the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, Youth Information Centres, the European Youth in Action Programme and Gaisce — the President's Award. The programmes and services are delivered by some 1,100 staff and a volunteer base of over 60,000 and are availed of by some 400,000 children and young people. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs also has an important role in addressing educational disadvantage. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) operates under the aegis of the Department and is responsible for the Education Welfare Service (EWS), the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) programmes, all of which are major components of the DEIS initiative. This integrated support service draws on the skills, expertise and knowledge of the three services which includes 408 HSCL Coordinators, 254 SCP project workers and 93 EWS staff, to deliver better outcomes for children, families, and schools. The SCP, which has a funding allocation this year of over €30 million, supports 124 projects and related initiatives linked to 472 primary and 225 post-primary schools and supports some 38,000 children and young people at risk of early school leaving.

The Family Support Agency has also been brought under the aegis of my Department and funds a network of 107 Family Resources Centres to provide a range of support services for families living in disadvantaged communities. Finally, one of the key developments and priority areas for my Department, will be the establishment of the new Child and Family Support Agency. An expert Task Force has been established to plan and oversee the arrangements for the Agency which I hope to see established in 2013. I believe the new cohesive structures which

are envisaged for the future delivery of services, for children and families, will be a very important development and will result in improved effectiveness of the delivery of services and the provision of supports, in particular to children from vulnerable families.

### Health Service Allowances

297. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if and-or when an application for a primary medical certificate is likely to be considered in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40715/11]

357. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if or when mobility and motorised transport allowance might be paid in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40735/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 297 and 357 together.

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

### Health Services

298. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health when an appointment will be granted to a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40383/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply

### Medical Cards

299. **Deputy Michael McCarthy** asked the Minister for Health when a decision will issue on a medical card appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; the reason for the delay in dealing with the appeal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40386/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### Nursing Home Accommodation

300. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a list of all public nursing homes with fewer than 50 beds; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40392/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Health Services

301. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a list of all public nursing homes he intends to close next year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40393/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As the Deputy is aware it is a matter for the Health Service Executive to deliver services both nationally and locally within its budget; and overall health policy priorities in line with the overall resources

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available to it. The HSE is facing challenges in respect of all services in 2012, and in the case of Community Nursing Units these include challenges regarding staffing, funding and the age/structure of the units. In this context the Department and HSE are working together regarding the 2012 National Service Plan. Should there be concern for the future of any unit, the HSE will engage fully in a local consultation process with all stakeholders before any decision is taken.

Furthermore under the provisions of regulations under the Health Act, 2007, the HSE must provide the Health Information and Quality Authority with 6 months notice of the Unit closure. I would like to reassure the Deputy that in the case of closure of a Community Nursing Unit, every effort will be made to ensure that the transition process will be managed professionally for the residents with a view to minimising disruption and to ensure that they can be accommodated elsewhere in line with their wishes. In addition, no resident will be placed at a financial disadvantage from any closure.

### Departmental Expenditure

302. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Health the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40404/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The Gross Current Vote for my Department in 2011 is €331.610m, of which €241.552m was spent to the end of November, leaving €90m unspent at that date. The current projection is that there will be a surplus of at least €40m on the Vote in the current year which will be surrendered to the Exchequer, and will contribute towards the cost of the Supplementary Estimate approved for the Health Service Executive on 7th December.

This surplus can be attributed to a number of factors:

*Hepatitis C Compensation Subheads*

*Subhead D, Inquiries and Miscellaneous Legal Fees and Settlements*

There is a projected surplus of some €4-5m on this subhead this year. Subhead D provides for statutory and non-statutory enquiries and miscellaneous legal fees and settlements. Given the fluctuating nature of legal cases and settlements, the Department cannot be certain when a case may settle, and any unspent funds at the end of the year are surrendered to the Exchequer. To date in 2011, there have been a number of large payments made (€2.6m and €3.7m), with a total of €14m spent from the subhead to date, almost all of which relate to clinical negligence claims. Legal cases can run for some years, and acceptance of a settlement can be required at short notice. Demands on the subhead are determined by the number of legal cases in process at any given time, but given the uncertain nature of legal cases there is a need for some flexibility with this subhead.

*Administrative Budget*

The Administrative Budget is projected to be €4m in surplus in 2011. €1m of this relates to a provision made in Subhead A.7 in relation to a proposed consultancy in relation to VHI. A further €1.5m approximately is on other non-pay subheads, such as training, cleaning, office machinery and supplies etc. The remainder of the surplus is attributable to the non filling of vacancies as a result of the moratorium on recruitment, and reduced levels of overtime.

### *Grants to Health Agencies*

It is anticipated that there will be savings of approximately some €11m in relation to Grants to Health Agencies. The main agencies showing surpluses are the Health Research Board and the Health Information and Quality Authority, with small surpluses on some of the other directly funded agencies.

There is also a projected underspend of €6.2m on the Gross Capital Vote of €16.091m, €1.5m of which was approved for a Capital carryover into 2012.

### **Health Services**

303. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if he will increase the hours in home help in respect of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 3. [40414/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### **Accident and Emergency Services**

304. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if there are any figures on the number of VHI patients that have used the accident and emergency departments over the past year. [40432/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The HSE has informed my Department that the information sought by the Deputy is not collected.

### **Health Services**

305. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health the dental treatment cover provided to a person (details supplied) in County Cork aged 75 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40444/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

### **Hospital Services**

306. **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** asked the Minister for Health if there are any proposals to change the level 3 status of Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, County Galway, under the acute hospitals programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40447/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

307. **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** asked the Minister for Health his proposals to enhance the diagnostic service at Roscommon Hospital; if appropriate funding will be put in place; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40448/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### **Health Service Staff**

308. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Health if his Department or the Health Service Executive is considering changing the recruitment timeline for intended stroke unit at

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Cork University Hospital; if there will be any delay establishing the unit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40458/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Health Services

309. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Health when a decision is expected on the submission by the national paediatric working group which outlines a business case for paediatric diabetes services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40461/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Long-Term Illness Scheme

310. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons with diabetes that are expected to benefit from his decision to grant free access to general practitioner services to persons on the long-term illness scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40462/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** There are approximately 35,500 persons with diabetes that receive medicines under the Long Term Illness Scheme.

311. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that parliamentary questions on medical cards for constituents are not always responded to by the Health Service Executive; the procedures he has put in place to ensure a full and proper response to members questions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40479/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** To streamline the processing of medical cards the HSE implemented its decision to centralise the processing of all new applications and renewals of medical cards at the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) in Dublin from the 1st of July this year.

After the centralisation of the service PCRS reported that they were receiving approximately 20,000 applications a week. PCRS estimate that 80% of complete applications are processed within 15 working days.

In June of this year PCRS circulated an information bulletin to all Oireachtas members. As part of the bulletin members were provided with details of how information on medical cards could be obtained outside of the PQ process. The information provided included: PCRS contact names; a dedicated phone number; a dedicated fax number; and a dedicated email address; and details on how to access information through the online enquiry form *www.medicalcard.ie*.

Providing the above service does not lessen the HSEs requirement to respond in a timely manner to Parliamentary Questions. The Executive is very aware of its obligations in this regard and attempts to answer all questions referred to it as quickly as possible. There is regular liaison between my Department and the HSE on this matter.

If the Deputy has queries in respect of specific Parliamentary Questions on medical cards I would ask that he provide me with the details and I will follow it up with the HSE.

### **Mental Health Services**

312. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health if he will ensure that the female open unit in St. Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman, Dublin, is not amalgamated with the female high security unit for the proposed four week period from the middle of December to the middle of January 2012; if he will ensure that best medical practice is maintained either through overtime or by providing additional temporary staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40484/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** The transfer of patients referred to by the Deputy is in respect of 5 patients moving from an open unit to a low secure ward; the transfers are taking place following appropriate clinical assessment. However, it is I believe highly regrettable that it is necessary to amalgamate the two units in question over the Christmas period, and I completely understand the distress caused by the decision. It is clear, given the current shortage of psychiatric nursing staff in Dublin North West Mental Health Services, that the HSE has been left with no option but to devise a contingency arrangement so as to ensure both patient safety and continuity of services. However, I have been assured that this is purely a temporary measure and Unit 3B will reopen on the 16th January next, if not earlier.

I have concerns that because of the mature age profile of its staff, the moratorium on recruitment has impacted disproportionately on the mental health service. This is an issue that is already the subject of discussions between officials of my Department and the HSE, and I intend to pursue this matter further to achieve an appropriate result in order to ensure the quality and safety of our mental health services into the future.

### **Consultancy Consultants**

313. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40508/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I am assuming that the Deputy's question relates to public relations work carried out by consultancy companies.

No money was spent on public relations work in 2010. Information in respect of 2011 is currently being collated within my Department and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as it is available.

### **Prescription Charges**

314. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the 50 cent charge for medicines and prescription items; if there are any groups exempt from having to pay these charges, including persons suffering from a long-term illness; if there any plans to remove this charge; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40531/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** Medical card holders are required to pay a 50c charge for medicines and other prescription items supplied to them by community pharmacists, subject to a cap of €10 per month for each person or family. Charges are not payable in respect of items supplied under the Long Term Illness Scheme. Prescription charges do not apply to children in the care of the HSE or to methadone supplied to patients participating in the Methadone Treatment Scheme.

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Prescription charges result in savings to the Health Service Executive of approximately €27 million annually. Despite the very difficult budgetary situation, the Government has ruled out an increase in prescription charges.

### **Ministerial Appointments**

315. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40552/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The information requested by the Deputy is currently being collated and will be forwarded to him as soon as it is available.

### **Ambulance Service**

316. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if he will ascertain from the Health Service Executive the criteria for the allocation of calls to private ambulances for patients who have private medical insurance and are located in HSE facilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40564/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### **Hospital Services**

317. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health if comparisons are available among Ireland, the UK, France and Germany for the average length of stay, in bed-days, for patients admitted to hospital with CAD, COPD and CHF; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40567/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** I am examining the issue of available data and I will be in further contact with the Deputy as soon as it becomes available.

### **National Drugs Strategy**

318. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health the progress of the new national substance misuse strategy; when this document will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40591/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The report of the National Substance Misuse Strategy Steering Group is close to completion. I expect to receive proposals in the coming months and I will then brief my colleagues in Government on these.

### **Drugs Task Forces**

319. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40592/11]

320. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40593/11]

321. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40594/11]

322. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40595/11]

323. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40596/11]

324. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40597/11]

325. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40598/11]

326. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40599/11]

327. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40600/11]

328. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40601/11]

329. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40602/11]

330. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40603/11]

331. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40604/11]

332. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40605/11]

333. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40606/11]

334. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40607/11]

335. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40608/11]

336. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40609/11]

337. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40610/11]

338. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40611/11]

339. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40612/11]

340. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40613/11]

341. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40614/11]

342. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide details of funding allocated by him to a drugs task force (details supplied) to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40615/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 319 to 342, inclusive, together.

More than €30 million has been made available to Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces this year for community-based drugs initiatives and the allocation to each Drugs Task Force is set out in the table below. The allocation in respect of Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force includes an additional €116,000 in respect of a project which transferred from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the latter half of the year.

Local Drugs Task Forces	2011 Allocation
	€
Ballyfermot	1,608,413
Ballymun	1,209,976
Blanchardstown	1,152,227
Bray	1,612,114
Canal Communities	1,600,987

Local Drugs Task Forces	2011 Allocation
	€
Clondalkin	1,456,832
Cork	1,617,730
Dublin 12	1,148,145
Dublin North East	1,259,256
Dun Laoghaire	949,137
Finglas Cabra	959,818
North Inner City	2,428,391
South Inner City	2,215,434
Tallaght	1,281,356
Totals	20,499,816
<i>Regional Drugs Task Forces</i>	
East Coast	872,716
Mid-West	1,533,540
Midlands	870,581
North East	1,010,546
North West	784,597
North Dublin City & Co.	846,574
South East	1,160,794
South Western	870,592
Southern	1,059,956
Western	720,104
Total	9,730,000
Overall Total	30,229,816

343. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a breakdown of funding to a drugs task force (details supplied); the amount that is spent on salaries and administration; the amount that is spent on projects; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40616/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** The 2011 funding allocation to the Drugs Task Force referred to by the Deputy is €1,600,987. This allocation supports 32 community based drugs initiatives. A comprehensive breakdown of the funding by salary, administration and programme costs is not readily available. I will arrange to have this information forwarded to the Deputy.

344. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health the current role of local and regional drugs task forces; if this role will change under the new national substance misuse strategy; if the number of drugs task forces will change; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40617/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** The role of Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces is to assess the extent and nature of the drug problem in their areas and co-ordinate action at local level in order to ensure a targeted response to the drug problem in local communities. With a view to strengthening their effectiveness, I have initiated a review of Drugs Task Forces and the National Drugs Strategy structures under which they

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operate. In this regard, I have consulted with the key stakeholders on the future direction and role of Drugs Task Forces and this will inform the development of reforms in this area. The recommendations of a Steering Group on a National Substance Misuse Strategy will be published in the New Year. Proposals in regard to a Strategy are likely to be considered by Government in the Spring and any consequences for Drugs Task Forces arising from these will be considered at that stage.

### **Drugs Task Forces**

345. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a breakdown of any reduction in funding from him to drugs task forces for 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40618/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** The allocations to the Drugs Task Forces for 2012 are still under consideration and will be notified as soon as possible.

### **General Practitioner Services**

346. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health the amount of money that was paid to general practitioners for general medical services and medical card patients in 2011; if this will be reduced in 2012 and by how much; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40619/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** The HSE's Primary Care Reimbursement Services (PCRS) is responsible for the payment of fees and allowances to GPs who are contracted by the HSE to provide services under the General Medical Services (GMS) Scheme. Details of the total amount of fees and allowances paid to GPs under the GMS Scheme in 2011 will not be available to my Department until 2012.

In 2010, GPs were paid approximately €436 million in fees and allowances under the GMS Scheme. This compares with approximately €441 million in 2009. It should also be noted that the number of persons with a medical card or a GP visit card has greatly increased in recent years. Since the start of 2010, the number of medical card holders has increased by 216,098 to a total of 1,694,658 as at 1st November 2011. In the same period, the number of GP visit card holders increased by over 29,000 to 127,538.

Under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) Act 2009, an 8% reduction in a range of GP fees and allowances was introduced in 2009, which effected full year savings in the region of €34 million. Further reductions to a range of fees and allowances were introduced in 2010, which are expected to result in full year savings in the region of €44 million in 2011. Under FEMPI legislation, the Minister for Health is required to carry out a review of the operation, effectiveness and impact of the amounts and rates fixed under regulations each year. The 2011 review is currently being undertaken and the Minister for Health will shortly determine if any further changes to GP fees and allowances are required at this time.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme**

347. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding a fair deal application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if the payment will be back dated. [40622/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Hospital Procedures

348. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) in County Cork is still waiting for their hip replacement operation, since August 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40632/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The management of hospital services generally, including outpatient waiting lists, is a matter for the Health Service Executive and the individual hospitals concerned. Therefore, the Executive is the appropriate body to consider the particular case raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the case investigated and to reply directly to the Deputy.

### Medical Cards

349. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Health the amount of drugs in the past year that have been removed off the medical card payment scheme and the drugs payment scheme; if he will provide a list of the drugs and the manufacturers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40643/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** Products were removed from the list of reimbursable items over the past year for the following reasons:

- product discontinuations by suppliers
- products for which marketing authorisations are no longer in place
- products which are supplied through hospitals and not supplied in the community

Over the past year 251 drug items were removed from the list and 521 drug items were added to the list. All additions and deletions to the list are published on the website of the HSE's Primary Care Reimbursement Service ([www.pcrs.ie](http://www.pcrs.ie)). The list is updated on a monthly basis.

### Nursing Homes Support Scheme

350. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite an application for fair deal nursing home scheme funds in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40648/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

351. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite an application for fair deal nursing in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40649/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Health Service Staff

352. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Health if he will state the proportion of management to other staff that have resigned or been replaced in the HSE; the number and

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grade of employment of employees in the HSE that were previously employed by the health boards and the proportion of those that are in meaningful employment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40651/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** The following table shows the whole-time equivalent number of staff by grade category employed in the health sector from the end of 2004 to October 2011. As the table shows, the Management/Administration, and total employment across all grades, was at its highest at December 2007. Since then, management/administration has reduced by almost 2,000, or 11%. This compares to a reduction in numbers of 6.7% for the total health sector. This reduction has been achieved through the policy of not replacing Management/Administration staff who retire, and the Voluntary Redundancy and Voluntary Early Retirement schemes at the end of 2010, which were targeted at Management/Administration and General Support grades in the health sector.

At December 2004, just before the establishment of the HSE, management/administration comprised 16.4% of health sector employment. This had reduced to 15.4% at October 2011.

	WTE	WTE	WTE	Reduction		Proportions	
	Dec-04	Dec-07	Oct-11	Dec 07 to Oct 11		Dec-04	Oct-11
Medical/Dental	7,013	8,005	8,281	276	3.5%	7.1%	8.0%
Nursing	34,313	39,006	35,769	-3,237	-8.3%	34.8%	34.4%
Health & Social Care Professionals	12,830	15,705	16,178	473	3.0%	13.0%	15.5%
Management/Administrative	16,157	18,043	16,062	-1,981	-11.0%	16.4%	15.4%
General Support Staff	13,771	12,900	10,546	-2,355	-18.3%	13.9%	10.1%
Other Patient & Client Care	14,640	17,846	17,228	-618	-3.5%	14.8%	16.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,723</b>	<b>111,505</b>	<b>104,065</b>	<b>-7,440</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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353. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if he will confirm that the required staff for a facility in County Kerry (details provided) will be made available [40671/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### Hospital Services

354. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health his views on the impact in recent years on demand for publicly funded health services arising from persons relinquishing private medical insurance; if he expects further pressure on the public health system in 2012 arising from likely private medical insurance increases; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40675/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** It is difficult to predict with certainty the likely impact of any reduction in the uptake of private health insurance (PHI) on the demand for public hospital services. Much depends on the numbers of people who reduce the level of cover offered by their PHI plans, and on the numbers who might stop purchasing PHI altogether.

There is no doubt that public hospital services will face an extremely challenging year. The current economic environment and the need to reduce public expenditure on health services will make difficult for hospitals to meet all of the needs of patients. However, the decision to raise more funding through additional charges for private care in public hospitals offers some assistance in this regard. The income from private charges will help reduce the extent to which services for public patients would otherwise be negatively affected.

I am committed to ensuring the best possible service to public patients in our acute hospitals. While the year ahead will be difficult, I believe that a well managed system will lead to most effective service for all patients. The work of the SDU will be important in this regard.

The SDU was established in June with the key aim of unblocking access to acute services by improving patient journeys through the system. The SDU is working closely with the HSE, building on existing initiatives, including the Clinical Care Programmes.

As a priority the SDU is working with the HSE to put in place a systematic approach to eliminate excessive waiting in emergency departments. On scheduled care the priority is to address waiting times for in-patient and daycase treatment. The NTPF in partnership with the SDU are currently working with hospitals to ensure that by the end of 2011 no one will be waiting longer than 12 months for inpatient and day case treatment.

The SDU is establishing an infrastructure based on information collection and analysis, hospital by hospital, so that we will know what is actually happening in real time. This will allow us to begin to embed performance management in the system, to build capacity and capability, to create and sustain improvements and to lay the foundations for a new accountability framework.

The work of the SDU, together with implementation of the Clinical Care Programmes in the HSE, will help to improve the efficiency of our hospitals and ensure that, within the level of resources available, the maximum number of patients are treated.

Date	VHI	Quinn	Aviva	RMUs	Total	% Population
Sep-08	1,539,248	490,378	162,489	88,593	2,280,708	51.50%

Date	VHI	Quinn	Aviva	RMUs	Total	% Population
Sep-09	1,441,853	507,018	227,236	88,867	2,264,97	50.80%
Sep-10	1,377,031	476,768	284,843	88,119	2,226,761	49.50%
Sep-11	1,246,105	458,061	382,290	86,962	2,173,418	47.40%

### Departmental Funding

355. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if a service (details supplied) in County Kerry will be financially assisted by him; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40687/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** Under the HSE's National Cancer Control Programme (HSE-NCCP), cancer surgery and diagnosis are undergoing a process of consolidation into eight centres (and one satellite centre), while radiation oncology services are provided in a limited number of centres. Consequently, patients may need to travel for treatment. There are a number of systems of support in place for these patients including the HSE-NCCP's Travel2Care scheme. The HSE is also currently reviewing its policy in relation to eligibility for non-ambulance based transport services in order to ensure that a consistent policy is adopted nationally for these services.

356. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if a service (details supplied) in County Kerry will be adequately financed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40691/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply

*Question No. 357 answered with Question No. 297.*

### Medical Cards

358. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if and when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40737/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Róisín Shortall):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### Hospital Accommodation

359. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health if he has an estimate for the number of acute hospital inpatient beds that will be closed as a result of the cuts to the health budget in 2012. [40755/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** There are some 13,000 acute hospital beds, including some 1,800 day beds, in the Irish public acute hospital system. The exact number available for use at any one time varies according to a number of factors, including planned levels of activity, refurbishment and infection control. Beds are also closed to control expenditure because, like all other public agencies, hospitals have to operate within budget.

The criteria for counting bed closures and methods vary between hospitals. Instead of having a debate about the exact number of beds that are judged to be open or closed at any one time, I believe we must concentrate on getting the best possible services for patients from the budgets

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available to us. This means we need to focus on how beds are used, on the throughput of patients, on reducing length of stay to international norms and on having as many procedures as possible carried out as day cases rather than inpatient work.

The work of the SDU, together with implementation of the Clinical Care Programmes in the HSE, will help to improve the efficiency of our hospitals, allowing us to treat as many patients as possible within budget. I believe that pursuing efficiencies through these means will be a far more productive approach than debating the number of beds open or closed at any one time.

The emphasis for the HSE in 2012 will continue to be to make the most effective use of acute bed capacity through shorter length of stay, increased rates of day-of-surgery admission and more day surgery. In this way the acute hospital system can ensure that, within the level of resources available, it facilitates the maximum number of patients with safe, effective and efficient care.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme**

360. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Health the number of persons admitted to long-term care in private nursing homes, Health Service Executive and voluntary units in the past five years; the sum in charges due to the HSE arising from this number; the amount paid and the amount outstanding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40756/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

### **Health Service Contracts**

361. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Health the number of copies of each issue of the Health Service Executive magazine, *Health Matters*, distributed; the amount it costs to print each issue; the amount it costs to produce each issue, including copy costs and photography costs; if the HSE has put out tenders to produce the magazine more cheaply in the past three years; the company that has the tender to print same; the costs within the contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40759/11]

**Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

### **Disabled Drivers**

362. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if a decision not to grant a disabled person parking card to a person (details supplied) in County Carlow will be reversed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40451/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Disabled Persons Parking Permits are issued by two organisations, the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) and the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI). The criteria under which these organisations process applications for permits are set out broadly in legislation and in more detail through Terms and Conditions for the Disabled Parking Scheme agreed between these organisations and my Department. The processing of individual applications within these criteria is a matter for the IWA and the DDAI. My Department has no role in the processing of such applications. The IWA and the DDAI are not State Agencies, and as such do not come under the governance of my Department.

However, as part of the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme, both organisations have an appeals process in place for people whose applications for a Permit have been refused. In the case to which the Deputy refers, I would advise the applicant to avail of the appeals process provided by the IWA.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

363. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the total allocated budget for his Department in 2011 and the actual outturns in each of his Department subheads at the end of 2011. [40409/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The expenditure provisions for my Department are set out in the Revised Estimates Volume, Vote 32 as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. My Department's Gross allocation for 2011 is €2,357m with an additional €5m carryover from 2010 for Grants for Sporting Bodies and the Provision of Sports and Recreational Facilities.

My Department's total Gross expenditure to the end of November was €1,636m. My Department is actively monitoring its expenditure in accordance with the Estimates and Budgetary processes. It is normal that a high proportion of annual expenditure takes place towards the end of the year.

### **Road Network**

364. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the position regarding the proposed development of the N2-A5 road project; the likely time scale for the construction of this road; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40427/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The A5 project was discussed at the North South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting on 18th November 2011. At the plenary meeting, Ministers noted that the provision of further funding by the Irish Government for the A5 road is being deferred. However it was noted that the Irish Government will provide £25m per annum in 2015 and in 2016 towards the project.

It was also noted that the relevant departments will now prepare a new funding and implementation plan for the project for agreement at the next NSMC Transport meeting with endorsement at the next NSMC Plenary meeting.

### **State Airports**

365. **Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport when he expects to receive the consultant's report on the future of the three State airports; when he will outline his plans for Cork Airport; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40457/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** I received the report on Options for the Future Ownership an Operation of Cork and Shannon Airports in the last number of days. I will carefully consider the consultants' analysis and recommendations before bringing proposals to Government in the New Year.

### **Sports Funding**

366. **Deputy Dominic Hannigan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans for investment in water polo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40470/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The provision of funding to sports organisations is a matter for the Irish Sports Council. I have referred the question to them for direct reply. I would ask the Deputy to contact my office if a reply has not been received within ten days.

### Consultancy Contracts

367. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the names of all external public relations and consultancy persons and organisations used by his Department for the years 2010 and 2011; the amount paid to each, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40513/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following tables.

Year	Consultancy Person	Amount
2010	Noel Travers	€1,282.50

Year	Organisation	Amount
2010	Goodbody Corporate Finance Consortium	Costs paid by Dublin Airport Authority (DAA)
	Booz & Co.	€738,267.46
	Goodbodys	€32,438.63
	Phoenix Safety	€1,781.50
	PA Consulting Group	€6,413.00
	Braemar Howells Ltd	€1,431.21
	Consultavia	€75,142.90
	Version 1	€56,534
	MentecPlus	€118,457
	Core	€63,991

Year	External Public Relations	Amount
2011	Montague Communications	€4,828

Year	Consultancy Person	Amount
2011	Indecon	€54,813.00
	Noel Whelan	€1,476.20
	Noel Travers	€2,057
	Conor Feeney	€2,752.75
	Remy Farrell	€7,562.50
	Deloitte	€12,288.20

Year	Organisation	Amount
2011	Deloitte	€42,350.00
	Booz & Company	Invoice awaited
	Contractauditline	€9,494.40
	FPM/DKM	€60,000
	FGS	€23,958
	Emptum Consultancy Service	€1,197.90
	Consultavia	€21,406.76
	Ed Mc Conville and Associates	€1,200
	Mr Liam Furlong	€11,210.65
	Version 1	€36,370
	MentecPlus	€119,422
	Core	€120,131

### Public Transport

368. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if a request will be acted upon by Bus Éireann (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40535/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The provision of bus shelters is a matter for Bus Éireann in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority. I have referred the Deputy's question to the company for direct reply. Please inform my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

### Departmental Expenditure

369. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport when the value for money audit will be produced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40542/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly):** I have received reports on the Value for Money and policy Review of the RTP as well as on the Local Integration Transport Studies (LITS). It is proposed to publish both reports together shortly in the context of plans for the future of the RTP as well as to achieve better efficiency through integration of Exchequer funded transport services. The issues at stake do not just involve my Department but other Departments and agencies also, and as such require careful consideration.

### Ministerial Appointments

370. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of new committees, advisory groups or new positions in general that have been put in place since he was appointed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40557/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** I have set up no new committees, advisory groups or new positions since I took up office.

### Taxi Regulations

371. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport when

[Deputy Michael Healy-Rae.]

the report on reform of the taxi industry will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40558/11]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly):**

The regulation of the taxi industry, including issues relating to enforcement activities, is a matter for the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the Taxi Regulation Act, 2003. I have arranged for the Deputy's specific request to be sent to the NTA. If you do not get a response within ten working days please advise my private office. I hope to submit the final report of the taxi review group to Cabinet for consideration at an early date.

**Road Network**

372. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if additional funding will be made available to local authorities to assist in repairing the damage caused to regional and local roads as a consequence of the severe weather to date in 2011; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [40563/11]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads in its area, is a statutory function of each road authority in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993. Works on such roads are a matter for the relevant local authority to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants.

My Department does not set aside funding in its budget to cover expenditure resulting from severe weather. Instead, local authorities are provided with flexibility, where possible, to amend their Specific Improvement Grants Programme or their Restoration Improvement Programme to accommodate remedial works. As you will be aware, the initial selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded from these State grants is a matter for each local authority, and it is open to local authorities to prioritise these works and revise their applications should they wish to do so.

The 2011 regional and local road grant allocations have now been allocated and there are no further funds available at this time from which an additional allocation could be made.