

## Written Answers.

---

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

---

*Questions Nos. 1 to 3, inclusive, answered orally.*

### Regeneration Projects

4. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for the regeneration of rural towns and villages (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19896/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Ireland's towns and villages are the focus of the social, commercial and civic life of their wider communities. Research conducted by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) has, however, shown that rural towns have felt the impact of the economic challenges of recent years more acutely than cities and larger urban centres. This significant deterioration of many small towns and villages throughout the country is clearly visible in the form of empty shops, abandoned buildings, vacant lands and a generally poor environment to live in or visit. Targeted action is needed to arrest this decline and instead harness the regeneration potential of our towns and villages to support a now recovering economy.

The introduction of a new scheme to support town and village regeneration is part of a concerted effort to support the development of rural towns and villages, not only as a component of a broader approach to rural development but also to improve the environment of rural dwellers in a way that will increase their quality of life and simultaneously enhance their potential to support potential economic activity in their area in the future.

I will shortly be launching the 2016 Town and Village Renewal scheme, which will be delivered by local authorities in conjunction with local communities and development organisations. The type of projects to be funded under this initiative will primarily be a matter for the local authorities to identify in partnership with their communities. However, the overall intention of the funding would be to focus on increasing the attractiveness of the town or village as a local commercial and social centre, enhancing its environment and tackling minor physical infrastructural deficits and land assembly issues. The 2016 scheme will be strategically focused on the rural towns and villages that require assistance to stimulate new development and regeneration locally. It will specifically target small towns and villages with populations of 5,000 or less.

*Questions Nos. 5 to 13, inclusive, answered orally.*

### Arts Funding

14. **Deputy Mick Barry** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to restore the cuts that were made to the arts budget and increase funding further to 0.3% of gross domestic product; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19892/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

I understand that the figures quoted by the Deputy are from a Council of Europe project called *Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*. I understand that many European countries are not included in the figures, including ten EU member states. The data for the Compendium project are provided by independent researchers and it is not a standardised system for collection of statistics.

I further understand that Compendium itself warns that data provided by the researchers are not comparable across countries because each researcher includes different elements in the definition of culture and these elements are reflected in the figures for public expenditure. For example, local authority expenditure on the arts, artists, exemption tax relief, expenditure on public service broadcasting and the Irish language are all examples of elements not included in the Council of Europe figures for Ireland but included in the figures for some other countries.

Expenditure on the arts in Ireland comes from multiple sources, both public and private. I understand that the CSO does not produce national statistics that capture the totality of this expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The issue of a definition of culture and of capturing public expenditure on culture is one that was discussed in the public consultation process held for the purpose of developing Ireland's first national Cultural Policy Framework, *Culture 2025*. As I have previously stated, I do consider that further research on this issue is warranted in the context of *Culture 2025*.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups, which I established, and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

### **Broadband Service Provision**

15. **Deputy Ciarán Cannon** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her role in rolling out broadband to rural communities; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19853/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The National Broadband Plan aims to conclusively address Ireland's connectivity challenges, by ensuring that every premises in the country has access to high speed broadband services. This is being achieved through measures to incentivise and accelerate industry investment, and an ambitious investment programme by the State, in areas where industry will not invest.

The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources's Department is respon-

sible for advancing the procurement process to select a winning bidder or bidders for the contract, which will comprise one or two lots, as set out in the national broadband plan intervention strategy. It is expected that a contract or contracts will be awarded by June 2017.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to measures to assist in the roll-out of the rural broadband network once a contract is awarded. In this regard, I will establish a number of local/regional broadband taskforces, working with Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Offices, LEADER Groups and other relevant agencies. The taskforces will help accelerate the broadband network build in rural Ireland, by ensuring that there are no local barriers to deployment and by identifying priority areas for rollout. To this end, they will also develop Rural Digital Strategies, which will include proposals for regional digital hubs.

I will also meet with each Local Authority Chief Executive over the coming period to reinforce the importance of the rollout of broadband. I will be asking them to prioritise actions to overcome any possible barriers and to ensure there will be no unnecessary delays to the rollout of this vital infrastructure to rural communities.

### **Waterways Issues**

16. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for the increased development of blueway trails such as the Shannon-Erne blueway; her views on how these trails can be utilised to attract visitors to rural counties; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19856/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Waterways Ireland has been actively progressing the development of Blueways as a means to attract new visitors to use the waterways and in response to the growth in demand for recreational activities such as walking, canoeing, cycling and stand up paddle boarding.

The first Blueway was launched in October 2014 on the Shannon and it has been very successful. It links Drumshanbo with Carrick-on-Shannon and comprises a 16.5km paddling trail, a 10km walking trail and a 5km cycle trail. The 10km Camlin River paddling loop is also in operation.

The Shannon-Erne Blueway, which I had the privilege of officially opening on 28 May 2016, links Leitrim Village with Belturbet, Co Cavan and provides a 70km series of paddling journeys, 25kms of walking trails and 8kms of cycling trails. There are also plans to upgrade a further 8kms this year. Based on existing monitoring of visitor usage, Waterways Ireland expects that 100,000 people will use the Shannon-Erne Blueway over the next year.

Further development on the Shannon which is planned for 2016 includes:

- A 20km trail from Carrick-on-Shannon to Boyle;
- A 50km trail from Carrick-on-Shannon to Lanesborough, and
- A 30km looped trail around Lough Allen.

On the Royal Canal and Grand Canals, 45kms and 21kms of towpath trails have been developed respectively. Plans for upgrading the remaining towpaths on these canals are at varying stages and Waterways Ireland is working with various stakeholders, including the local authorities, LEADER groups, the National Transport Authority and the National Trails Office, to progress these developments.

On the Barrow Navigation, Waterways Ireland plans to submit proposals to upgrade the Barrow towpath to the relevant planning authorities shortly. This will enhance the 112kms of off-road trackway from Lowtown in Co. Kildare to St Mullins in Co Carlow.

Clearly, the development of Blueways presents valuable opportunities for rural communities to attract more visitors. Their value lies not only in the recreational opportunities that they offer but also in their potential to stimulate local businesses and regenerate local areas. Blueways also provide an effective model for partnership between the private, community and voluntary sectors and relevant State bodies.

I am strongly of the view that the new configuration of my Department will offer significant opportunities for enhanced partnership on these matters and I look forward to working with my colleague, Minister of State Michael Ring, to that end.

*Question No. 17 answered orally.*

### **Commemorative Events**

18. **Deputy Colm Brophy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when Richmond Barracks in Dublin 8 will open for tours to the public; her views on the potential tourism benefits; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19874/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Government is supporting a number of flagship capital projects for the 1916 centenary year, which, combined, will create a lasting legacy of 1916 that will, I believe, be of continuing interest to the public into the future.

One of these ‘permanent reminder’ projects involved the restoration and adaptation through a Dublin City Community Partnership of two buildings that were part of Richmond Barracks - in particular the building where the 1916 leaders were interned and court-martialled. It also includes the creation of an exhibition and interpretive space and will be a great amenity for the public and the local community as a modern heritage site. The project is managed by Dublin City Council via two structures - the Dublin City Council Steering Group and the Richmond Barracks Advisory Committee.

The project was completed on schedule and the new centre was officially launched on 2 May 2016 by the Lord Mayor of Dublin to coincide with the centenary of the first court martial of the 1916 Rising leaders.

As I informed the Deputy in my reply to his Question No 59 of 1 June 2016, Dublin City Council will be responsible for the day to day management of the building. However, I understand that the facility is now open to the public and will also be available for various events, including small-scale conferences. There are scheduled tours each day, with all information being made available at [www.richmond Barracks.ie](http://www.richmond Barracks.ie).

Richmond Barracks is a new tourism product. Focussed and targeted marketing will be key to raise awareness of the facility to ensure that it generates appropriate footfall. The Ireland 2016 Project Office within my Department will continue to work closely with colleagues in Dublin City Council and the OPW to ensure maximum publicity for this initiative.

### **Hedge Cutting Season**

19. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding hedge cutting; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19897/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts 1976, as amended, prohibits the cutting, grubbing, burning or destruction of vegetation, with certain strict exemptions, from 1 March to 31 August.

Following a review of Section 40, which involved, inter alia, consideration of submissions from interested parties, I announced proposals in December 2015 to introduce legislation to allow for managed hedge cutting and burning at certain times within the existing closed period on a pilot two year basis. The legislation required to allow for these pilot measures was included in the Heritage Bill 2016, which was published in January 2016 and subsequently completed Second Stage in Seanad Éireann.

Steps are in hand to reintroduce the Heritage Bill into Seanad Éireann at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, the existing provisions relating to Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts are still in operation.

### **National Monuments**

20. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the health and safety requirements that prevented the Lord Mayor of Dublin from visiting the site of the national monument in Moore Street, Dublin 1; and her views that the Lord Mayor should have been afforded the opportunity to visit this site. [19868/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Since works were suspended, the only access to the national monument buildings, which are a construction site, has been by construction professionals with the requisite health and safety training for the purposes of essential maintenance and monitoring.

There are a number of potential health and safety issues associated with the site and its layout that render it unsuitable for other visitors while works were suspended, or indeed while the current interim works approved by the High Court are in progress. These include significant elements of temporary support works, underpinning of existing structures to maintain temporary stability, uneven walking surfaces, awkward access and layout and restricted circulation within the site. There are also legal obligations with regard to responsibility for the safety of any and all persons who may enter on to it.

In the circumstances, access will generally have to remain limited to construction personnel until such time as it is confirmed that the site may be opened to other visitors.

### **Commemorative Events**

21. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to Parliamentary Question No. 177 of 18 November 2015, the outcome of her Ireland 2016 project team’s exploration of options on a proposal to erect a memorial in O’Connell Street, Dublin 1, dedicated to the role of women in Ireland’s struggle for independence; and her plans for such a memorial. [19873/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My officials are working closely with Dublin City Council to finalise a proposal to commemorate the

role of women in the Easter Rising. I will announce details of this in the coming weeks.

### Arts Funding

22. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will create an arts capital fund modelled on the sports capital fund to ensure improved long-term funding for the arts. [19862/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I announced a new €9 million investment scheme for arts and cultural centres to run over the next three years, focussed on enhancing the existing stock of such centres around the country. The funding is being made available as part of the Capital Investment Framework 2016-2021.

My Department's scheme will target investment at a range of different facilities and will be broken down into three streams as follows:-

- The refurbishment and enhancement of existing purpose-built arts and cultural facilities, with maximum grants of €300,000. Eligible facilities would include arts centres, theatres, galleries, museums, artists' studios and creative spaces (Stream 1).

- Significant improvements to a smaller number of key facilities. Ideally, projects seeking this stream of funding would have financial support from the relevant local authority. Grants of up to €2 million may be offered under this stream (Stream 2).

- Smaller grants of up to €20,000 for community or voluntary organisations operating in facilities, which have not been purpose-built (Stream 3).

It is my priority to target investment at the enhancement of existing cultural facilities.

My Department is finalising the guidelines and application forms in relation to the scheme, which I intend to open for applications shortly.

### Arts Funding

23. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to increase funding for the arts to the European Union average of 0.6% of gross domestic product; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19850/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

I understand that the figures quoted by the Deputy are from a Council of Europe project called *Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*. I understand that many European countries are not included in the figures, including ten EU member states. The data for the Compendium project are provided by independent researchers and it is not a standardised system for collection of statistics.

I further understand that Compendium itself warns that data provided by the researchers are not comparable across countries because each researcher includes different elements in the definition of culture and these elements are reflected in the figures for public expenditure. For example, local authority expenditure on the arts, artists, exemption tax relief, expenditure on public service broadcasting and the Irish language are all examples of elements not included in the Council of Europe figures for Ireland but included in the figures for some other countries.

Expenditure on the arts in Ireland comes from multiple sources, both public and private. I understand that the CSO does not produce national statistics that capture the totality of this expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The issue of a definition of culture and of capturing public expenditure on culture is one that was discussed in the public consultation process held for the purpose of developing Ireland's first national Cultural Policy Framework, *Culture 2025*. As I have previously stated, I do consider that further research on this issue is warranted in the context of *Culture 2025*.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups, which I established, and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

## Cultural Policy

24. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she and her Department expect to be in a position to continue to utilise events of a cultural and heritage nature to promote the national image at home and abroad with particular reference to the need to generate increased interest in such matters among young persons; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19889/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The full range of investment which my Department makes right across the Arts and Heritage sectors makes a significant contribution to our national image. Much of this investment is also of huge interest and benefit to young people, for example, investment in museums and cultural centres, in creative activity as funded through the Arts Council and through Irish film.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* recalls how our arts and culture were highlighted during the successful 1916 Commemorations, and how they were seen to be intrinsic to the Irish State itself. Those elements of the *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme* which focused on schools and young people were particularly successful in capturing the imagination.

On the international stage, my Department through Culture Ireland supports Irish artists to present their work worldwide. This serves to raise the global awareness of the strong reputation of the Irish arts sector, develop new audiences abroad for Irish artists and highlight Ireland as a country with a strong creative sector.

Culture Ireland supported Irish artists in over 300 events in 2015, winning high profile awards and critical recognition and seen by a live audience of approximately 3 million audience members with a further 6.5m million online/radio/television viewers. It is expected a similar number of events will be supported in 2016, in addition to a further 130 events funded under the 'I Am Ireland' programme. A special focus around St Patrick's Day, a key period for raising the profile of Ireland globally, saw over 80 events in 16 countries supported in 2016..

My Department, together with the Arts Council and Heritage Council, also continues to

support local events and festivals throughout Ireland, all of which contribute to promoting our national image.

In relation to young people, the Arts in Education Charter has been a landmark development in relation to the promotion of arts education and arts in education in Ireland. The Charter is an initiative of my Department and the Department of Education and Skills, working in association with the Arts Council. My Department is involved in ongoing liaison with the Department of Education and Skills on the implementation of the Arts in Education Charter objectives. The *Programme for a Partnership Government* also recognises the Charter as providing an unprecedented opportunity for children and young people to engage in a proactive and meaningful way with arts in education in Ireland and commits to its implementation.

All of these initiatives are important in promoting our national image, both at home and abroad, and in generating increased interest in cultural matters among our young people.

### **Commemorative Events**

25. **Deputy Hildegarde Naughton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she has assessed the success and impact of the State's commemorative events held throughout the Easter period; if attendance figures are available for the various events; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19886/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** A large number of events took place over the Easter weekend as part of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, all of which were very well attended by guests and members of the public alike.

The military parade and ceremony past the GPO on Easter Sunday saw approximately 4,500 guests attending - predominantly relatives of those who took part in the 1916 Rising - as well as many thousands of citizens participating right along the parade route. Easter Monday saw the largest public history and cultural event ever staged in Ireland, with more than 500 free talks, exhibitions, music, theatre, debates and performances across a number of venues and zones in Dublin City Centre. Official estimates indicate that over 1 million people were present to participate in and enjoy these two events alone.

Feedback from members of the public and the media clearly indicated the very positive engagement of citizens with the commemorative events, as well as the extent to which they felt a great sense of national pride and respect during this historic time.

The Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme is a year-long initiative, with a huge diversity of programmes and events running throughout 2016. While a large number of the key events took place around the Easter period, the Programme will continue through the remainder of 2016 and there are many exciting and innovative programmes and initiatives planned, including a large number of activities at local level. I am confident that our citizens will continue to engage with the Programme over the coming months.

I have asked my officials to assess the approach that should be adopted to appropriately gauge the impact of the Centenary Programme, as we move towards the conclusion of the year's events, and this work will be advanced in the coming period.

### **Departmental Bodies**

26. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht fur-



ther to Parliamentary Question No. 208 of 23 June 2016, the membership of the expert committee; its terms of service; how she made these appointments; when the committee will complete its report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19838/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** A discussion document on *Culture 2025* was published in August 2015. The drafting of that document was informed by input from a colloquium of cultural stakeholders organised by my Department in association with the Royal Irish Academy on 25 May 2015. An Expert Group was then established to provide feedback and advice at key points during the consultation and drafting process of the *Culture 2025* Framework Policy. The membership of the Expert Group was largely based on the membership of the colloquium, together with a representative of the then Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the Chair of the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers. This Expert Group has broad representation across arts and cultural interests. A list of the current members of the Group is attached for circulation with the Official Report. It should be noted that attendance and representation varied at meetings.

While the Expert Group is providing advice and guidance, it should be noted that the proposed Policy Framework is being developed directly by my Department. My Department is also assisted by a smaller Steering Group made up of a subset of the wider Expert Group.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly. Any future role for the Expert Group will be considered following the conclusion of the process leading to the publication of *Culture 2025*.

#### Culture 2025: Membership of Expert Group

Name	Position
Feargal Ó Coigligh (Chair)	Assistant Secretary, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Kevin Lonergan	Principal Officer, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Professor Ciaran Benson	Emeritus Professor of Psychology, UCD, former Chair of the Arts Council
Dr Sandra Collins	Director, National Library of Ireland
Pat Cooke	Director, MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management, UCD
Professor Michael Cronin, MRIA	Centre for Translation & Textual Studies, DCU
Professor Mary Daly	President, Royal Irish Academy
Martin Drury	Formerly of the Arts Council
Sarah Glennie	Director, Irish Museum of Modern Art
Lorelei Harris	Head of Arts & Cultural Strategy, RTÉ
Andrew Hetherington	Director, Business to Arts
Kerry McCall	Institute of Art, Design & Technology, and National Campaign for the Arts
Mary McCarthy	Director National Sculpture Factory, Cork, Chair of Culture Ireland, Board Member of IMMA
Professor Declan McGonagle	Former Director, NCAD

Name	Position
Helen Shenton	Librarian & College Archivist, TCD
Dr Mary Shine Thompson	Lecturer in English, DCU, and Chair, Encountering the Arts Ireland
Willie White	Artistic Director, Dublin Theatre Festival
Angela McAllister	Representative of the then Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Northern Ireland
Traolach Ó Fionnáin	Chair of the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers
Páid Ó Neachtain	Oifigeach Gaeilge, Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe

### Commemorative Events

27. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of her plans for a famine memorial in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin 11; and her further plans to assign a fixed memorial day to commemorate the Great Famine, given that this tragedy has played a part in shaping Ireland and much of the world. [19869/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The National Famine Commemoration will take place on September 11th in Glasnevin Cemetery. As in previous years, the ceremony will include the unveiling of a permanent memorial at the site of the commemoration. Meetings between officials from my Department and the Glasnevin Trust in relation to both the arrangements for the commemoration itself and the memorial are ongoing.

With regard to a fixed memorial day, the National Famine Commemoration Committee has previously discussed the issue of a fixed date for the commemoration and is of the view that flexibility regarding the date is preferable. This flexibility allows space to adapt to the demanding schedules faced by the President and An Taoiseach with a view to their leading the official representation at the annual National Famine Commemoration ceremony whenever possible, and also to allow for any particular circumstances that may arise from time to time around the arrangements.

I am satisfied that the retention of flexibility in relation to the date of the commemoration does not detract from its key aim, which is to have a fitting national ceremony to remember and show respect for all those who died or suffered loss during the Great Famine. In fact, this flexibility facilitates the commemoration being held in the most appropriate context each year, maximising the quality of the programme and the levels of public attention it receives. In the circumstances, I have no plans to designate a fixed date for the National Famine Commemoration.

### Stráitéisí Ranna

28. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cad iad na pleananna atá aici maidir leis na greasáin Ghaeltachta a chur ar bun. [19881/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Mar atá a fhios ag an Teachta, tá forfheidhmiú na Straitéise 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge áirithe go sonrach mar sprioc i gClár an Rialtais Rannpháirtíochta nua. Aithnímid a thábhachtaí

agus atá an Ghaeilge mar chuid shainiúil dár n-oidhreacht agus dár gcultúr. Chuige sin, tá an Rialtas tiomanta do chur i bhfeidhm na Straitéise chun go dtiocfaidh méadú ar líon na ndaoine a úsáideann an Ghaeilge ina saol laethúil agus go mbeidh áit níos feiceálaí ag an teanga i sochaí an lae inniu.

Bhí an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge cúig bliana ar an bhfód ag deireadh na bliana an-uraidh. Tá cur i bhfeidhm an phróisis pleanála teanga faoi Acht na Gaeltachta 2012 i gcoilár chur i bhfeidhm na Straitéise. Trí phleananna teanga a ullmhú agus a fheidhmiú ag leibhéal an phobail sa Ghaeltacht, tabharfar an deis faoin bpróiseas do gach pobal Gaeltachta chomh maith le Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltacht agus líonraí Gaeilge a bheith ag an roth stiúrtha mar a bhaineann sé le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge ag leibhéal an phobail fud fad na Gaeltachta.

Tá dul chun cinn suntasach déanta maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an phróisis go dtí seo:

- Tá allúntas €400,000 curtha ar fáil agam i mbliana do Údarás na Gaeltachta chun cabhrú leis na heagraíochtaí atá roghnaithe sna Limistéir Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta lena gcuid pleananna teanga a ullmhú; is ionann sin agus ardú 100% thar an allúntas a bhí curtha ar fáil anuraidh, nó in 2014 go deimhin.

- As an bhfiche sé Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta atá aitheanta faoin Acht, tá tús curtha le hullmhú pleananna teanga in ocht gcinn déag díobh agus é i gceist go ndéanfaidh an tÚdarás dul chun cinn suntasach maidir le tús a chur leis an bpróiseas san ocht limistéar pleanála eile idir seo agus deireadh na bliana.

- Tá eagrán uasdátaithe de na *Treoirlínte Pleanála Teanga*, a d'fhoilsigh mo Roinn i dtús báire in 2014, curtha ar fáil. San eagrán nua seo, tugtar cur síos ar an gCóras Faisnéise Geografaí (GIS) atá forbartha agus curtha ar fáil ag mo Roinn le gairid mar áis bhreise tacaíochta do na heagraíochtaí atá agus a bheidh i mbun pleananna a ullmhú agus a chur i bhfeidhm faon bpróiseas.

- Ina theannta sin ar fad, beidh an tÚdarás agus Foras na Gaeilge, de réir mar a bhaineann sé leo, ag dul i mbun oibre ar an talamh ar bhonn céimneach maidir leis na Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta a bhunú. Cheana féin, tá allúntas €40,000 curtha ar fáil agam d'Fhoras na Gaeilge chun cabhrú le dhá ghrúpa (Leitir Ceanainn agus Cathair na Gaillimhe) pleananna teanga a ullmhú agus obair i dtreo aitheantas mar Bhaile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta a bhaint amach. Lena chois sin, tá tús curtha ag Foras na Gaeilge leis an bpróiseas mar a bhaineann sé le líonraí Gaeilge, is é sin, ceantair a bhfuil bunmhais chriticiúil bainte amach acu maidir le tacaíocht pobail agus Stáit don Ghaeilge. Tá allúntas €45,000 curtha ar fáil agam d'Fhoras na Gaeilge chun cabhrú le trí ghrúpa (Muintir Chrónáin Teo, An Clár as Gaeilge agus Gaeilge Locha Riach) pleananna teanga a ullmhú agus obair i dtreo aitheantas mar Líonra Gaeilge a bhaint amach.

Tuigim gur ag obair i gcomhar lena chéile is fearr a bhainfidh muid torthaí fóna amach chun an oidhreacht bheo seo a thabhairt ar aghaidh don chéad ghlúin eile. Sa tréimhse amach romhainn, beidh an Rialtas agus mo Roinn féin ag obair go dícheallach leis na páirtnéirí go léir, ag leibhéal an Stáit agus an phobail, chun na spriocanna atá leagtha amach sa Straitéis Fiche Bliain don Ghaeilge a chur i gcrích.

### Údarás na Gaeltachta Expenditure

29. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the oversight she has of State assistance in respect of a factory (details supplied); and to inform Dáil Éireann of any concerns of the State agencies under her aegis relating to the operation of this business. [19888/16]

51. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the support which was made available to a factory (details supplied); if she reviewed State funding under the aegis of her Department in recent times; and if she is aware of difficulties in the operation of this business. [19887/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 29 and 51 together.

I have been informed by Údarás na Gaeltachta that, on 28 February 2014, the Board of Údarás na Gaeltachta granted the company referred to by the Deputy the following supports to set up and develop its business:

- The provision of up to 4,127 square metres of space by way of standard lease at an annual rent of €16.14 per square metres. The terms of the lease were subject to standard review.

- Payment of a rent reduction grant of €66,609 or 50% of the annual cost, whichever is the lesser, for years 1 and 2 on 4,127 square metres of space.

- Payment of an employment grant of not more than €190,000 (€10,000 per job) in respect of 19 full-time qualifying jobs.

- Payment of a training grant of not more than €30,000 towards the cost of implementing an agreed training programme in accordance with the Training Aid Guidelines (TAGS) as laid down by the Commission of the European Union.

- Payment of a consultancy grant of not more than €10,000 or 50% of costs, whichever is the lesser, according to the grants scheme.

The company in question is currently leasing a building from an tÚdarás since October 2014.

To date, a total of €170,000 in employment grants and €41,631 in rent subsidy grants has been paid to the company by an tÚdarás. During 2015 the company had 23 full-time employees. However, during the period November 2015 to end of February 2016, that figure was gradually reduced to zero. I am advised that currently the company has no full-time employees.

Údarás na Gaeltachta have also informed me that they are aware that:

- the company is not trading;
- there is no electricity in the building; and
- the sorting machinery for its operations has been removed from the building.

I understand from an tÚdarás that the company is currently removing materials that were stored in the building. This is being carried out under the direction of the local authority in question and Údarás na Gaeltachta, having regard to the terms of the permit it has from the local authority and its lease agreement with an tÚdarás. I also understand that issues arising in regard to the grant agreement between the company and Údarás na Gaeltachta are being followed up by the legal department of an tÚdarás.

### **Public Sector Staff Data**

30. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the reduction in the number of persons employed directly and indirectly as a result of Government

cuts to the funds channelled through her Department in the past five years. [19861/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I am advised that over the course of the period, June 2011 to end December 2014, my Department was required to reduce numbers under the Employment Control Framework limits for Civil Servant and Public Servant numbers set by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. There was also a moratorium on staff recruitment over this period.

The number of staff employed by my Department, and the bodies under its aegis, from its establishment in June 2011 to 31 March 2016 are outlined in the following table.

Date	Civil Servants employed in Department of Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht	Public Servants employed in the bodies under the aegis of the Department
June 2011	645	1183
31/12/2011	635	1128
31/12/2012	606	1041
31/12/2013	597	985
31/12/2014	600	959
31/12/2015	582	964
31/03/2016	573	959

Arising from the additional Departmental responsibilities announced by An Taoiseach on 6 May 2016, my Department has recently increased in size. The number of staff currently employed in my Department is 607.

### Film Industry Development

31. **Deputy Kate O'Connell** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps she will take to support the film sector; the benefits arising from the increase in the section 481 tax relief; her views on the success of a number of Irish films in recent times; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19848/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Irish Film Board has primary responsibility for the support and promotion of film-making in Ireland, in respect of both the indigenous sector and inward productions. Its aim is to help filmmakers to make Irish films, and provide production and development loans for features, television programmes, animation projects, documentaries and short films. The Board supports and promotes the Irish screen industries at major international markets and festivals, promotes inward investment, the use of Ireland as a location for international production and provides support for companies filming in Ireland. The Film Board also liaises with IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland in terms of maximising joint opportunities for promotion of Ireland as a location for film productions. Examples of this could be seen during Ireland's success at the Oscars this year and the promotional activity around the shooting of Star Wars in Ireland.

Film making in Ireland is also supported by the Section 481 film tax credit system, which incentivises film investment in Ireland. This incentive was enhanced in Budget 2016, when the cap for eligible expenditure on film projects was increased from €50 million to €70 million.

Clearly, funding across the public service was severely impacted by the economic crisis, including the funding that could be provided for investment in culture and the arts. Since my initial appointment as Minister with responsibility for the arts, I have succeeded in securing

increased funding for the sector year on year. The allocation to the Irish Film Board in 2016 at almost €14.5 million shows an increase of 3.6% from last year. I am pleased that I have already been able to provide some additional support to the Film Board this year, with additional current funding of €500,000. This increased investment will help to maximise the benefits brought about by the enhancement of the Section 481 film tax credit system to which I have referred.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains an ambitious agenda of priorities in relation to achieving a stable, sustainable and secure funding model for the arts in line with improvements in the economy and the public finances. The Programme also contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve. I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

### **Post Office Network**

32. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on the sustainability of the post office network into the future; the actions she will take to secure this; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19840/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Michael Ring):** It is Government policy that An Post should remain a strong, viable company in a position to provide a high quality postal service and maintain a national network of customer-focused post offices in the community. The post office network plays an important role in serving the needs of business and domestic customers alike. However, the postal sector is undergoing significant change, with migration towards electronic communications resulting in core mail volume decline year on year.

In recognition of the changing commercial environment, the previous Government established the Post Office Network Business Development Group, the remit of which was to examine the potential from existing and new Government and commercial business that could be transacted through the post office network. Mr Bobby Kerr was appointed as the independent chairman of the group and he brought a depth of knowledge and experience in identifying and developing business opportunities for the post office network.

The final report of the group, which was published in January of this year, details 23 recommendations - with network renewal, a basic payment account and motor tax being the three key actions. The final report recommended that An Post should, following appropriate consultation with postmasters and others, review and amend the five-year strategy for the post office network.

A number of working groups have also been established, including a network renewal implementation group, which is being independently chaired by Mr Bobby Kerr. This group is examining the number and spatial distribution of branches, branch modernisation, the streamlining of products and services, postmaster payments and contracts and training and qualifications for post office employees. An Post and the Irish Postmasters Union, IPU, are members of the group, which is of fundamental importance to the long-term future of the network. While good progress has been made to date, the group's work remains on-going.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to acting on the recommendations of the final report, including supporting the implementation of a basic payment account and enabling the payment of motor tax through the post office network. Responsibility for implemen-

tation of the recommendations in the final report has recently transferred to my Department, along with a number of staff with expertise on the matter.

I recently met with Mr Kerr with a view to finalising a timeframe for the conclusion of the work of the network renewal implementation group and the implementation of the recommendations, which will refresh, renew and reinvent the Post Office Network and ensure its sustainability into the future.

### **Arts Promotion**

33. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to request information from the chief executive of each local authority on whether it currently employs an arts officer; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19899/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Arts Council provides support to local authorities directly for arts programmes and in this regard details of all local authority arts officers are available on the Arts Council website at [www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Local-Arts/Links/](http://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Local-Arts/Links/).

### **Arts Funding**

34. **Deputy Mick Barry** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will implement an increase in arts funding to 0.3% of gross domestic product as sought by the National Campaign for the Arts; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19891/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

I understand that the figures quoted by the Deputy are from a Council of Europe project called *Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*. I understand that many European countries are not included in the figures, including ten EU member states. The data for the Compendium project are provided by independent researchers and it is not a standardised system for collection of statistics.

I further understand that Compendium itself warns that data provided by the researchers are not comparable across countries because each researcher includes different elements in the definition of culture and these elements are reflected in the figures for public expenditure. For example, local authority expenditure on the arts, artists, exemption tax relief, expenditure on public service broadcasting and the Irish language are all examples of elements not included in the Council of Europe figures for Ireland but included in the figures for some other countries.

Expenditure on the arts in Ireland comes from multiple sources, both public and private. I understand that the CSO does not produce national statistics that capture the totality of this expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The issue of a definition of culture and of capturing public expenditure on culture is one that

was discussed in the public consultation process held for the purpose of developing Ireland's first national Cultural Policy Framework, *Culture 2025*. As I have previously stated, I do consider that further research on this issue is warranted in the context of *Culture 2025*.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups, which I established, and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

### Arts Promotion

35. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will urgently begin preparation of a global arts forum for Ireland, similar to the structure of the Global Irish Economic Forum, to highlight our indigenous talent and map a strong and healthy future for arts and culture at home and abroad. [19865/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My Department through Culture Ireland supports Irish artists to present their work worldwide. This serves to raise the global awareness of the strong reputation of the Irish arts sector, generate new career opportunities for Irish artists and develop new audiences abroad for Irish artists.

My Department continues to work with the Global Irish Network which has to date made many significant achievements in relation to highlighting Ireland's creativity on the world stage. I consider that this is the most appropriate vehicle in which to highlight the achievement of Irish creativity – as part of a wider cross sectoral partnership. Most notable in terms of this collaborative approach have been *Irish Design 2015*, with which my Department had a significant engagement in relation to the international programme, and the *Imagine Ireland* programme in 2011.

*Imagine Ireland*, launched following the strategic focus on culture at the first Global Forum in 2009, was a special year-long initiative by Culture Ireland, showcasing Irish arts and culture in the US throughout 2011. Its objectives to help rebuild Ireland's reputation, renew the unique cultural relationship between Ireland and America, showcase a new generation of contemporary Irish creative talent, build long-term US market share and opportunities for the Irish cultural sector and creative industries, expand the reach of Irish culture to new US audiences and provide a strategic platform to promote Irish tourism, trade, investment and innovation were largely achieved.

This model of supporting major arts initiatives internationally continues this year with the *I am Ireland* programme – the international arts element of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme which includes over 550 separate performances and exhibitions with a special focus in key territories - United States, Great Britain, Canada and Australia. This programme reflects that interest in Irish artistic excellence continues to grow internationally and recognises that this centenary year offers a unique opportunity to build on Ireland's cultural connections and share the talents of Irish artists through many special and diverse events around the world.

I am satisfied that following the success of these initiatives that a global forum for the arts is best achieved through the broad based Global Irish Network.

### National Countryside Recreation Strategy



36. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on how the rural walks scheme can be used to attract visitors and boost tourism in rural counties; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19846/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Michael Ring):** The permissive access model currently used as part of the implementation of the National Countryside Recreation Strategy for the development of greenways and walkways in Ireland has led to the successful delivery of over 880 walking, cycling, and equestrian trails, which are all listed on the Irish Trails Register maintained by the National Trails Office of Sport Ireland.

Figures produced by Fáilte Ireland demonstrate that, in 2014, close to 1.2 million overseas visitors coming to Ireland engaged in hiking/walking. This is an increase of 451,000 visitors on the 2013 figures. The total spent in the Irish economy by those visitors in 2014 was in the region of €915 million, an increase of some €265 million on the 2013 expenditure. These figures do not include visitors or related spend in the economy by domestic visitors engaging in hiking or walking.

These statistics demonstrate that hiking and walking on all trails, not just those covered by the Walks Scheme, are contributing to the Irish economy in attracting overseas visitors. The statistics also show how important the Walks Scheme is as its aim is to maintain and develop all of its walks to ensure a positive visitor experience for those using the walks, citizens and visitors alike.

The Walks Scheme is a maintenance-based payment scheme for landholders who maintain sections of trails that traverse their lands. The scheme is administered by 16 Local Development Companies on behalf my Department. There are currently 39 National Way Marked Ways and other Priority Loops covered by the scheme.

There is a commitment in *A Programme for a Partnership Government* to expand the Walks Scheme and I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes. I am convinced that such an expansion would boost the number of high quality walks available to citizens and visitors alike, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the walking experiences available throughout Ireland.

### **Rural Development Policy**

37. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her proposed and current plans to resolve the regional, economic and demographic imbalance in the State. [19859/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** As announced by An Taoiseach at the launch of the *Programme for a Partnership Government* in April 2016, I have been charged with the development of an Action Plan for Rural Ireland, which will utilise a similar framework to the very successful Action Plan for Jobs.

It is intended that the Action Plan will draw on the commitments in the *Programme for a Partnership Government*, the recommendations in the report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) and the Charter for Rural Ireland, as well as other Government programmes and policies that have influence on the sustainable development of rural areas. The aim of the Action Plan will be to identify a series of time-bound actions with specific and measureable outputs and coordinate the implementation of those actions with a

view to ensuring that all areas of Ireland are supported equally and facilitated in their development into the future.

Work has already begun on formulating the Action Plan and it is intended that it will be published in a format similar to the Action Plan for Jobs. A regular and structured reporting mechanism will be put in place and progress reports will be delivered to the Cabinet Committee on Regional and Rural Affairs, chaired by An Taoiseach.

I hope to be in a position to launch the Action Plan before the end of 2016.

### **Heritage Sites**

38. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plan to pursue more applications for United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation world heritage status for more national landmarks (details supplied). [19863/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Ireland's current World Heritage Tentative List has come about from a very comprehensive, thorough and inclusive process undertaken by a panel of Irish and international heritage experts specifically appointed for that purpose. The process included full public consultation and an in-depth review of all proposed candidate sites.

In the meantime, my Department has engaged with local authorities and local groups from the areas with proposals on the Tentative List to gauge the extent of the support available to advance the proposals and to clarify the work and resources required for that purpose. The fundamental requirement is that each site must be capable of demonstrating Outstanding Universal Value to UNESCO.

Technical evaluations have been produced for each of the six sites forming part of the Royal Sites serial nomination which are currently being reviewed by experts. My Department is examining a draft of the Burren evaluation document which will be completed as quickly as possible to allow the evaluation itself to proceed. In the case of the Historic City of Dublin proposal, this is being advanced by Dublin City Council and my Department is represented on the Steering Committee

The next steps will involve developing Management Plans for each site (a UNESCO requirement) and the designation of core and buffer zones in each case. At each stage local consultation is required. This process will also have to take into account the fact that some sites will be managed by the Office of Public Works, others by local authorities and that two monuments on the Royal Sites list are privately owned. Another - Eamhain Macha in Armagh - is in Northern Ireland. The culmination of these steps will be the creation of the full nomination documents for each site for submission to UNESCO.

I am committed to supporting the current proposals in every way that I can but the process is a lengthy one and all of the work at every stage must be supported and developed from the local level up with stakeholder buy-in and commitment at each and every stage. While this adds to the timescale, it is infinitely preferable than a top down approach that fails to engage with local communities. It also ensures a far better chance of best care and support for the protection and preservation of these sites into the future.

39. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta cad a cheapann an tAire faoi thuarascáil bhliantúil an Choimisinéara Teanga agus faoi na fadhbanna atá léirithe inti. [19857/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** I gcomhréir le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 faoinar bunaíodh Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, tá an Coimisinéir Teanga neamhspleách i gcomhlíonadh a fheidhmeanna. Cuireann an Coimisinéir Teanga tuarascáil maidir le gníomhaíochtaí a Oifige faoi bhráid an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta, Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta gach bliain le leagan faoi bhráid gach Tí den Oireachtas.

Leagadh Tuarascáil Bhliantúil an Choimisinéara Teanga don bhliain 2015 faoi bhráid Thithe an Oireachtais ar an 24 Meitheamh 2016 agus tá cur síos inti ar ghníomhaíochtaí éagsúla na hOifige le linn 2015, lena n-áirítear líon na ngearán agus na n-imscrúduithe ar déileáladh leo, obair faireacháin ar scéimeanna teanga, cúrsaí cumarsáide, cúrsaí airgeadais agus riaracháin agus nithe gaolmhara eile.

Díríonn an Coimisinéir Teanga aird ina thuarascáil ar nithe eile freisin, ina measc an gá a fheiceann sé le forálacha áirithe d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 a leasú agus le córas struchtúrtha chun poist le riachtanais Ghaeilge sa tseirbhís phoiblí a aithint agus a líonadh.

Go luath tar éis mo cheapacháin mar Aire Stáit do Ghnóthaí Gaeltachta, thapaigh mé an deis labhairt leis an gCoimisinéir Teanga maidir leis na féidearthachtaí éagsúla a chuideodh le bonn níos láidre a chur faoi sholáthar seirbhísí Stáit i nGaeilge do shaoránaigh an Stáit. Beidh mé ag scrúdú na bhféidearthachtaí seo sna míonna amach romhainn d'fhonn moltaí sonracha a thabhairt chuig an gCoiste Rialtais ar na hEalaíona, an Ghaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht, atá bunaithe faoi chathaoirleacht an Taoisigh.

### Departmental Budgets

40. **Deputy Kate O'Connell** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the percentage of her budget in 2016 that is allocated to the arts and culture sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19847/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** In 2016, the Arts, Culture and Film programme of my Department will account for the highest proportion of my Department's Vote at 49% (€188m) of the total allocation. This relates to the new configuration of my Department, including rural and regional affairs.

### Hare Coursing Regulation

41. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's reports of the injuries to and deaths of hares at live coursing meetings; and how she will address the illegal taking of hares for the hare trade. [19871/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Under the terms of the Wildlife Acts, licences are required by the Irish Coursing Club, covering their affiliated coursing clubs, if they wish to capture or tag hares for use at regulated hare coursing meetings.

It is a licence condition that a qualified veterinary surgeon should be in attendance during all

coursing meetings and that a signed report on the general health of the hares, and on any injuries or deaths of hares that occur during the meeting, should be submitted to my Department. In the event of a hare dying while in the care of the coursing club, the veterinary surgeon will examine the hare, determine the cause of death and consider if a post mortem is necessary.

A very high proportion of the hares captured for hare coursing are, in fact, returned to the wild each year - an average of 99% of the hares used at hare coursing meetings have been returned to the wild over the past four hare coursing seasons.

There is an Open Season for the hare species, which extends from 26 September to 28 February of the following year and which allows for the hunting of hares. My Department is aware of the prevalence of illegal hare hunting around the country and successful prosecutions have been taken in recent years by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department relating to such illegal hunting. All incidents of illegal hare hunting should be reported to An Garda Síochána or to the National Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department.

### Rural Development Plan

42. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans for rural and regional development; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19879/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** As announced by An Taoiseach at the launch of the *Programme for a Partnership Government* in April 2016, I have been charged with the development of an Action Plan for Rural Ireland, which will utilise a similar framework to the very successful Action Plan for Jobs.

It is intended that the Action Plan will draw on the commitments in the *Programme for a Partnership Government*, the recommendations in the report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) and the Charter for Rural Ireland, as well as other Government programmes and policies that have influence on the sustainable development of rural areas. The aim of the Action Plan will be to identify a series of time-bound actions with specific and measureable outputs and coordinate the implementation of those actions with a view to ensuring that all areas of Ireland are supported equally and facilitated in their development into the future.

Work has already begun on formulating the Action Plan and it is intended that it will be published in a format similar to the Action Plan for Jobs. A regular and structured reporting mechanism will be put in place and progress reports will be delivered to the Cabinet Committee on Regional and Rural Affairs, chaired by An Taoiseach.

I hope to be in a position to launch the Action Plan before the end of 2016.

### Cuanta agus Céanna

43. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta ó aistríodh an cúram ar ais chuig a Roinn maidir le síneadh a chur ar chéibh Inis Oírr. [19878/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Tá sé socruithe go gcuirfeadh ciste an Rialtais don ché ar Inis Oírr ar fáil trí mo Roinn. Mar is eol don Teachta, rinneadh léirmheas ar Vóta mo Roinne, mar atá sonraithe san Imleabhar Meastachán Athbhreithnithe leasaithe do 2016, ag an Roghchoiste ar Chúrsaí Ealaíon,

Oidhreachta, Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta ar 5 Iúil 2016. Beidh sé i gceist ag mo Roinn bualadh leis na hoifigigh cuí i gComhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe go luath chun an obair seo a chur chun tosaigh.

### Foireann Roinne

44. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Maurice Quinlivan** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta an dtabharfaidh sí na sonraí maidir leis an laghdú atá tagtha ar líon na foirne i Roinn na Gaeltachta le deich mbliana anuas. [19876/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Tuigtear dom go raibh 68 oifigeach sannta do Rannóg na Gaeltachta nuair a bunaíodh mo Roinn ar an 2 Meitheamh 2011. Is é 53 an líon oifigeach atá sannta do Rannóg na Gaeltachta faoi láthair. Déantar athbhreithniú leanúnach ar an leibhéal foirne i bhfianaise riachtanais ghnó atá ag teacht chun cinn, mar atá le feiceáil i bpróiseas pleanála mo Roinne don fhórsa oibre.

### Údarás na Gaeltachta

45. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta céard iad a cuid tuairimí maidir le héifeachtacht agus straitéis Údarás na Gaeltachta faoi láthair. [19858/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Is mian liom a rá go soiléir nach nglacaim in aon chor le líomhaintí a rinneadh le déanaí maidir le staid reatha Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Maidir le cúram fiontraíochta an Údaráis, is cinnte gur éirigh leis an eagraíocht infheistíocht shubstaintiúil a mhealladh chun na Gaeltachta thar na blianta. Tá sé thar a bheith tábhachtach a chinntiú go leanfar leis an iarracht sin chun pobal labhartha na Gaeilge a choinneáil sa Ghaeltacht. Mar shampla, tuigim go raibh leibhéal na bpost a cailleadh in 2015 ar an leibhéal is ísle ar an taifead, rud a léiríonn an obair fhiúntach atá ar siúl ag an Údarás chun bonn seasmhach a choimeád faoin fhostaíocht sa Ghaeltacht.

Is ábhar sásaimh é freisin gur éirigh leis an Údarás 533 post a chruthú anuraidh agus go raibh 215 duine breise fostaithe i gcuideachtaí an Údaráis sa Ghaeltacht ag deireadh na bliana 2015 i gcomparáid leis an bhliain roimhe sin. Bhí 7,869 post i gcliantchuideachtaí an Údaráis ag deireadh na bliana. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an Údarás 500 post nua a chruthú sa Ghaeltacht in 2016.

Maidir leis an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge, tá cur i bhfeidhm an phróisis pleanála teanga faoi Acht na Gaeltachta 2012 i gcroílár chur i bhfeidhm na Straitéise sa Ghaeltacht. Tá dul chun cinn suntasach déanta ag an Údarás maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an phróisis sin go dtí seo. As an bhfiche sé Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta atá aitheanta faoin Acht, tá tús curtha le hullmhú pleananna teanga in ocht gcinn déag díobh agus é i gceist go ndéanfaidh an tÚdarás dul chun cinn suntasach maidir le tús a chur leis an bpróiseas san ocht limistéar pleanála eile idir seo agus deireadh na bliana. Ní miste dom a rá go bhfuil allúntas €400,000 curtha ar fáil agam i mbliana don Údarás chun cabhrú leis na heagraíochtaí atá roghnaithe sna Limistéir Pleanála Teanga Ghaeltachta lena gcuid pleananna teanga a ullmhú; is ionann sin agus ardú 100% thar an allúntas a bhí curtha ar fáil anuraidh, nó in 2014 go deimhin.

Is féidir liom a dheimhniú go leanfaidh mo Roinn féin agus an tÚdarás ag obair as lámha a

chéile chun an leas is fearr is féidir a bhaint as na hacmhainní atá ar fáil ar mhaithe le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta sa todhchaí.

### Arts Funding

46. **Deputy Catherine Connolly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to bring funding for the arts in line with the European standard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19898/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

I understand that the European standard referred to by the Deputy is derived from a Council of Europe project called *Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*. I understand that many European countries are not included in the figures, including ten EU member states. The data for the Compendium project are provided by independent researchers and it is not a standardised system for collection of statistics.

I further understand that Compendium itself warns that data provided by the researchers are not comparable across countries because each researcher includes different elements in the definition of culture and these elements are reflected in the figures for public expenditure. For example, local authority expenditure on the arts, artists, exemption tax relief, expenditure on public service broadcasting and the Irish language are all examples of elements not included in the Council of Europe figures for Ireland but included in the figures for some other countries.

Expenditure on the arts in Ireland comes from multiple sources, both public and private. I understand that the CSO does not produce national statistics that capture the totality of this expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The issue of a definition of culture and of capturing public expenditure on culture is one that was discussed in the public consultation process held for the purpose of developing Ireland's first national Cultural Policy Framework, *Culture 2025*. As I have previously stated, I do consider that further research on this issue is warranted in the context of *Culture 2025*.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups, which I established, and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

### Leader Programmes

47. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of the Leader programme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19839/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I am pleased to note that I will launch the LEADER programme at an event in Virginia, Co. Cavan,

tomorrow morning. My Department has issued funding agreements to local action groups in 21 of the 28 sub-regional areas designated under the LEADER programme and I expect that most, if not all, of these local action groups will be in a position to finalise their respective agreements at this event.

The delivery of LEADER will commence immediately in these areas and the local action groups can begin receiving applications starting from Monday morning. I am aware that a large amount of work has been on-going behind the scenes in each area since the closure of the old LEADER programme, aided with funding from my Department, and I expect that these groups should be able to hit the ground running in terms of receiving and approving applications.

I am also confident that Funding Agreements will issue in the remaining 7 LEADER sub-regional areas in the coming weeks as the local action groups provide the additional information and clarifications requested by the Independent Selection Committee established to review and select the strategies submitted in each area. Indeed, the Independent Selection Committee is meeting today to review progress and will meet again in early August to facilitate the finalisation of strategies.

There is also the possibility of an appeal in two of the competitive areas where more than one strategy was submitted and that process must be allowed to run its course before a Funding Agreement can issue. I can assure the Deputy that funding agreements will issue in all of these remaining areas as a matter of urgency, once all of the outstanding issues have been resolved.

In conclusion, I am pleased to note that LEADER funding can now begin to flow to communities throughout Ireland and I look forward to providing funding to the many fine LEADER projects that will undoubtedly emerge in the coming months and years.

### **Proposed Legislation**

48. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of the Heritage Bill 2016; if there will be a change to the closed period for hedge cutting in 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19845/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts 1976, as amended, prohibits the cutting, grubbing, burning or destruction of vegetation, with certain strict exemptions, from 1 March to 31 August.

Following a review of Section 40, which involved, inter alia, consideration of submissions from interested parties, I announced proposals in December 2015 to introduce legislation to allow for managed hedge cutting and burning at certain times within the existing closed period on a pilot two year basis. The legislation required to allow for these pilot measures was included in the Heritage Bill 2016, which was published in January 2016 and subsequently completed Second Stage in Seanad Éireann.

Steps are in hand to reintroduce the Heritage Bill into Seanad Éireann at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, the existing provisions relating to Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts are still in operation.

### **Arts Centres**

49. **Deputy Tom Neville** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps she will take to ensure that arts and culture centres are supported; and if she will make a state-

ment on the matter. [19842/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I announced a new €9 million investment scheme for arts and cultural centres to run over the next three years, focussed on enhancing the existing stock of such centres around the country. The funding is being made available as part of the Capital Investment Framework 2016-2021.

My Department's scheme will target investment at a range of different facilities and will be broken down into three streams as follows:-

- The refurbishment and enhancement of existing purpose-built arts and cultural facilities, with maximum grants of €300,000. Eligible facilities would include arts centres, theatres, galleries, museums, artists' studios and creative spaces (Stream 1).

- Significant improvements to a smaller number of key facilities. Ideally, projects seeking this stream of funding would have financial support from the relevant local authority. Grants of up to €2 million may be offered under this stream (Stream 2).

- Smaller grants of up to €20,000 for community or voluntary organisations operating in facilities, which have not been purpose-built (Stream 3).

It is my priority to target investment at the enhancement of existing cultural facilities.

My Department is finalising the guidelines and application forms in relation to the scheme, which I intend to open for applications shortly.

### Arts in Education Charter

50. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to ensure the better integration of the arts into education and broaden the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics into science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics; to expand the ambition and resourcing of the arts in education charter; and to continue to work with the Department of Education and Skills to further enhance the position of arts subjects within the curriculum at primary and secondary level. [19864/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** While the provision for arts in the education system is primarily a matter for the Department of Education and Skills, I am firmly committed to continuing the work of the ongoing partnership between that Department, my own Department and the Arts Council, in line with the *Arts in Education Charter*. In this regard, I am pleased that the *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the continued implementation of the *Arts in Education Charter*.

The work of the two Departments and the Arts Council in implementing the Charter is achieved largely through existing structures, such as education centres and Education and Training Boards. My Department provides a small amount of funding under the Charter to assist with its implementation, for example, in relation to the funding of artists to assist in the Teacher Artist Partnership Initiative. In 2015, the Arts in Education Portal was launched and this now serves as an effective key communications and information channel for both education and arts sectors.

As recently as last April, a very successful inaugural National Arts in Education Day was held in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, with over 200 attendees from both education and artistic fields.



In terms of direct support for the arts, this is primarily a matter for the Arts Council operating under the provisions of the Arts Act 2003. The Arts Council's ten-year strategy *Making Great Art Work (2016-2025)* places specific emphasis on the need to plan and provide for children and young people. The strategy also commits to working to achieve full implementation of the *Arts in Education Charter*.

The Arts Council contributes funding to a number of organisations to assist in the delivery of Arts in Education projects in schools. These include Poetry Ireland's Writers in Schools Scheme, where writers and storytellers visit both primary and post-primary schools.

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

### **Rights of Way Registration**

52. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the actions she has taken in recent times to encourage farmers to participate in the roll-out of walking trails and to ensure farmers are adequately protected from any claims for compensation from persons who traverse their land; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [18456/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Michael Ring):** The majority of Ireland's trails and walking routes are permissive access routes that have been developed with the agreement of private landowners, both public and private. This consensus approach is underpinned by the principle of mutual respect between landowners and recreation users, with the acceptance of the rights of landowners regarding access to their land and the need of recreation users to have reasonable access to the countryside.

Unless a public right of way exists, access to any land in private ownership is at the discretion of the landowner and the extent to which access by members of the public to that land is permitted is within the control of the landowner.

Currently, my Department administers the Walks Scheme, which is a maintenance-based scheme whereby participating landholders receive modest payments to maintain sections of National Way Marked Ways and other priority walks that traverse their lands. The number of participants on the Scheme currently stands at 1,908 with a total of 39 trails covered by the Scheme. Payments to participants on the Scheme will be in the region of €1.8m in 2016.

There is a commitment in *A Programme for a Partnership Government* to expand the Walks Scheme and I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes. I am convinced that such an expansion would boost the number of high quality walks available to citizens and visitors alike, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the walking experiences available throughout Ireland.

The National Trails Office of Sport Ireland has responsibility for trail standards and for trail inspections. These inspections are carried out by inspectors and a detailed report compiled. Once a recreational trail has been inspected and approved, it becomes accredited and can be listed on the Irish Trails Register, [www.irishtraile.ie](http://www.irishtraile.ie), which is maintained by the National Trails Office. There are currently 886 trails listed.

An insurance policy is held by the National Trails Office, which indemnifies all landowners and occupiers whose property or land is crossed or adjoins a 'recreational trail', once that trail has been inspected and approved by the National Trails Office. The cover extends to liability attaching to the land or property owner arising from a user of the 'recreational trail' sustaining

accidental bodily injury or property damage when on the land of the owner for recreational or leisure activities connected with the designated 'recreational trail'.

The Occupiers Liability Act 1995 already provides significant protection to landowners, but the upfront costs of successfully defending a claim can be significant. My Department is currently considering the introduction of a National Indemnity Scheme which would indemnify private landowners against claims from recreational users for injury or damage to property. Discussions are at an advanced stage and I am hopeful that a scheme can be agreed in a number of pilot areas before the end of 2016.

### **Film Industry Development**

53. **Deputy Colm Brophy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to improve supports to the Irish film sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19875/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Irish Film Board has primary responsibility for the support and promotion of film-making in Ireland, in respect of both the indigenous sector and inward productions. Its aim is to help filmmakers to make Irish films, and provide production and development loans for features, television programmes, animation projects, documentaries and short films. The Board supports and promotes the Irish screen industries at major international markets and festivals, promotes inward investment, the use of Ireland as a location for international production and provides support for companies filming in Ireland. The Film Board also liaises with IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland in terms of maximising joint opportunities for promotion of Ireland as a location for film productions. Examples of this could be seen during Ireland's success at the Oscars this year and the promotional activity around the shooting of Star Wars in Ireland.

Film making in Ireland is also supported by the Section 481 film tax credit system, which incentivises film investment in Ireland. This incentive was enhanced in Budget 2016, when the cap for eligible expenditure on film projects was increased from €50 million to €70 million.

Clearly, funding across the public service was severely impacted by the economic crisis, including the funding that could be provided for investment in culture and the arts. Since my initial appointment as Minister with responsibility for the arts, I have succeeded in securing increased funding for the sector year on year. The allocation to the Irish Film Board in 2016 at almost €14.5 million shows an increase of 3.6% from last year. I am pleased that I have already been able to provide some additional support to the Film Board this year, with additional current funding of €500,000. This increased investment will help to maximise the benefits brought about by the enhancement of the Section 481 film tax credit system to which I have referred.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains an ambitious agenda of priorities in relation to achieving a stable, sustainable and secure funding model for the arts in line with improvements in the economy and the public finances. The Programme also contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve. I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

### **Hare Coursing Regulation**

54. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of breaches of coursing licence conditions the National Parks and Wildlife Service recorded during the 2015 and 2016 coursing seasons; and if she is providing sufficient resources to monitor and oversee coursing. [19872/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My Department issued licences under the Wildlife Acts to the Irish Coursing Club, covering their affiliated coursing clubs, to capture and tag hares for use at regulated hare coursing meetings for the 2015/16 coursing season, which extended from the end of September 2015 to the end of February 2016.

Regional staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of my Department attend coursing meetings, as resources allow, to monitor compliance with the conditions of the licences. Staffing requirements for the NPWS, as with all other areas of my Department, remain the subject of on-going consideration in light of the overall business needs of my Department and within the pay framework approved for 2016.

Notwithstanding current staffing constraints, NPWS officials monitored some 16 meetings during the 2015/16 season. Arising from the reports of these meetings, I am aware that a number of issues have been raised with the Irish Coursing Club. These matters will be further discussed at a meeting between officials of my Department and the Irish Coursing Club in the coming weeks.

### **Built Heritage Investment Scheme Funding**

55. **Deputy Ciarán Cannon** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding streams available for heritage buildings and protected structures; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19854/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Financial support is being provided by my Department through a number of structured schemes for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings.

I launched a new €2 million scheme - the Built Heritage Investment Scheme - for the repair and conservation of protected structures on 21 October 2015. This scheme is operating in 2016, via the local authorities, on the same model as the very successful Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme, which ran in 2014. It is expected to support in excess of 330 projects across the country and to create employment in the conservation and construction industries, while helping to regenerate urban and rural areas. The scheme for this year is now fully allocated.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures, in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. This fund, which has an allocation of over €900,000 and will support 57 projects nationally in 2016, is administered through the local authorities and seeks to encourage the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and to help to secure the preservation of protected structures which might otherwise be lost. Funding for 2016 has now been fully allocated.

No decision has been made on the allocation of funding to these schemes for 2017, which will be subject to the normal budgetary processes. The Conservation or Heritage Officer in the relevant local authority will be able to advise regarding funding available for conservation works to structures on the Record of Protected Structures and it is advisable for interested parties to remain in contact with their local authority on an ongoing basis.

My Department is also providing €350,000 of funding to the Office of Public Works (OPW) in 2016 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. OPW undertakes the care and maintenance of national monuments in my ownership or guardianship (of which there are approximately 750). My Department's National Monuments Service works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of the built heritage. It is a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports annually having regard to competing priorities for limited resources. The Council recently awarded funding of over €880,000 to 171 heritage projects nationwide under its 2016 Heritage Management Grant Scheme. Further details of grant schemes available from the Heritage Council can be found at [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie).

### Cultural Policy

56. **Deputy Mick Barry** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to report on work being done in her Department to deliver the Culture 2025 strategy. [19893/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Considerable progress has been made in drafting the first National Cultural Policy - *Culture 2025*. This followed a major public consultation process in 2015, including a national cultural workshop held in October at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Work by my Department, the expert steering group and a wider expert committee continued on the document in early 2016 and is currently on-going. This expert committee has broad representation across arts and cultural interests.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. As I have stated previously, this first such policy will be a living document and will form the basis of an on-going dialogue with all who are interested in cultural policy. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups which I established and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

### Cultural Policy

57. **Deputy Mick Barry** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to publish a draft of the Culture 2025 strategy. [19894/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Considerable progress has been made in drafting the first National Cultural Policy - *Culture 2025*. This followed a major public consultation process in 2015, including a national cultural workshop held in October at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Work by my Department, the expert steering group and a wider expert committee continued on the document in early 2016 and is currently on-going. This expert committee has broad representation across arts and cultural interests.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025*

as a priority. As I have stated previously, this first such policy will be a living document and will form the basis of an on-going dialogue with all who are interested in cultural policy. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups which I established and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

### **Arts Funding**

58. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to develop musical education and make instruments available to young persons and the general population through facilitating schools, youth groups and libraries in enhancing their music resources and the provision of access to musical training and instruments for the benefit of local communities. [19866/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My Department funds the Music Capital Scheme, which is designed to assist individuals and groups to purchase musical instruments and is administered by the Music Network on behalf of my Department. Further details in relation to the Music Network and its schemes are available at [www.musicnetwork.ie](http://www.musicnetwork.ie).

In addition to this initiative, my Department provides funding to Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, the largest organisation in the State involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music. Comhaltas operates various educational programmes in music, song and dance in all parts of Ireland where people of all ages are given the opportunity of developing their artistic abilities.

The Arts in Education Charter has been a landmark development in relation to the promotion of arts education and arts in education in Ireland. The Charter is an initiative of my Department and the Department of Education and Skills, working in association with the Arts Council. Among other initiatives, the Charter has led to the development of the Arts in Education Portal, which provides a resource where artists and teachers can be supported and inspired.

Other relevant initiatives include Music Education Partnerships in association with Music Generation and funding and support provided by the Arts Council. It should be noted that music education in schools is the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister for Education and Skills.

### **Easter Rising Commemorations**

59. **Deputy Bríd Smith** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht how the State paid a sum of €5 million to purchase 14 to 17 Moore Street, Dublin 1, including details of the valuation process of the properties and details of recipients of said moneys; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19852/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The cost of the acquisition of Nos. 14-17 Moore Street (and part of No. 18) by the State amounted to €4m. The purchase from the previous owner was effected with the assistance of the National Asset Management Agency and the €4 million consideration was arrived at in the normal commercial manner. Half the purchase price was paid to NAMA in 2015 and the balance is due to be paid in the current year.

The decision to acquire the national monument at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street for the State was because of its association with, and key role in, the events of Easter 1916 and in recognition of its significant historical value in that context.

### Arts Funding

60. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the controls she has in place to ensure that each regional and demographic segment of Irish society has its fair share of arts funding. [19860/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Most of the Government's funding for the arts is allocated to the Arts Council. The Council is statutorily independent in its funding decisions. However, the Arts Council is aware of the issues regarding geographical and demographic access and in this regard the Arts Council Strategy (2016–2025), *Making Great Art Work*, sets out how it will lead the development of the arts in Ireland over the next decade. This contains five priority areas as follows:- the Artist; Public Engagement; Investment Strategy; Spatial and Demographic Planning and Developing Capacity.

Information on the Arts Council's funding schemes, funding decisions and reasons for those decisions is available for each county through its decisions database on its website.

My Department has a role in providing capital funding for Arts and Cultural centres. In this regard, I announced a new €9 million investment scheme for arts and cultural centres to run over the next three years, focussed on enhancing the existing stock of such centres around the country. My Department is finalising the guidelines and application forms in relation to the scheme, which I intend to open for applications shortly. The guidelines will allow for geographical issues to be taken into consideration in final decision making.

### Programme for Government

61. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to Parliamentary Question No. 69 of 1 June 2016, if she has carried out further research to assess Ireland's level of expenditure on culture as a percentage of gross domestic product, given that she has expressed doubts regarding the figures put forward by the compendium project; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19835/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

I understand that the figures quoted by the Deputy are from a Council of Europe project called *Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*. I understand that many European countries are not included in the figures, including ten EU member states. The data for the Compendium project are provided by independent researchers and it is not a standardised system for collection of statistics.

I further understand that Compendium itself warns that data provided by the researchers

are not comparable across countries because each researcher includes different elements in the definition of culture and these elements are reflected in the figures for public expenditure. For example, local authority expenditure on the arts, artists, exemption tax relief, expenditure on public service broadcasting and the Irish language are all examples of elements not included in the Council of Europe figures for Ireland but included in the figures for some other countries.

Expenditure on the arts in Ireland comes from multiple sources, both public and private. I understand that the CSO does not produce national statistics that capture the totality of this expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

The issue of a definition of culture and of capturing public expenditure on culture is one that was discussed in the public consultation process held for the purpose of developing Ireland's first national Cultural Policy Framework, *Culture 2025*. As I have previously stated, I do consider that further research on this issue is warranted in the context of *Culture 2025*.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* commits to the publication of *Culture 2025* as a priority. My Department is continuing to consider inputs on the draft document from the Steering and Expert Groups, which I established, and I expect to forward a draft for consideration to the relevant Oireachtas Committee shortly.

## Heritage Sites

62. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she and her Department continue to support, maintain, preserve and promote heritage sites throughout the country with particular reference to the need to ensure that nothing is lost that can be preserved for future generations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19890/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My role, as Minister, with regard to the protection and management of our architectural heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation, as are the role of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners as regards heritage assets.

Under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, my Department has established and maintains the Record of Monuments and Places, which affords legal protection to over 120,000 recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the State. Anyone proposing works to a monument that is included in the Record of Monument and Places must give my Department two months prior notice before works can start.

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

My Department has a number of measures at its disposal to facilitate the maintenance and restoration of major historical or cultural sites. As Minister, I am the owner or guardian under the National Monuments Acts of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites and in such cases there is a statutory duty to maintain the national monument. Such maintenance is undertaken by the Office of Public Works (OPW). Local authorities are responsible under the National Monuments Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are owners or guardians.

My Department is also providing €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2016 to assist in the

conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. OPW undertakes the care and maintenance of national monuments in my ownership or guardianship (of which there are approximately 750). My Department's National Monuments Service works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

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

Under Section 54 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, a planning authority may add to or delete from its record of protected structures, a structure, a specified part of a structure or a specified feature of the attendant grounds of a structure. Such a structure, specified part of a structure, or specified feature remains on the record of protected structures until such time as the planning authority deletes it. Provision is made in the Act for the carrying out of works to protected structures either by way of planning permission or on the foot of a declaration received from a planning authority that certain works that would not materially affect the character of a structure are exempted development. There is a duty of owners and occupiers to protect structures from endangerment. Where structures become endangered or unauthorised development has been or is being carried out, the planning authority has the powers to take appropriate action.

There is a number of ways in which my Department acts in respect of possible heritage sites/buildings deemed to be at risk. One of these is the receipt of applications for funding for the repair, conservation, preservation or safeguarding of protected structures, sites or monuments. Financial support is being provided by my Department through a number of structured schemes for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings.

I launched a new €2 million scheme - the Built Heritage Investment Scheme - for the repair and conservation of protected structures on 21 October 2015. This scheme will operate in 2016, via the local authorities, on the same model as the very successful Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme, which ran in 2014. It is expected to support in excess of 330 projects across the country and to create employment in the conservation and construction industries, while helping to regenerate urban and rural areas. The scheme for this year is now fully allocated.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures, in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. This fund, which has an allocation of over €900,000 and will support 57 projects nationally in 2016, is administered through the local authorities and seeks to encourage the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and to help to secure the preservation of protected structures which might otherwise be lost. Funding for 2016 has now been fully allocated.

### **Programme for Government**

63. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on the campaign to have a Government Department which is dedicated solely to arts, culture and heritage, and the concerns of many persons on the perceived downgrading of this portfolio;



and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19834/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I confirmed on Tuesday this week that the name of my newly reconfigured Department was approved by Government as the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The new name reflects the broader remit of the reconfigured Department, which retains all of the responsibilities of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with additional responsibility for a wide range of programmes relating to rural and regional affairs and development.

The creation of a larger Department, with a wider remit, will not in any way diminish the importance of arts and culture within Government. On the contrary, a larger Department with wider responsibilities, will bring greater weight to bear in promoting the importance of arts and culture right across Government. The wider brief of rural and regional affairs sits well with the commitment in the *Programme for a Partnership Government* to strengthen the role of arts and heritage at local level, including by building stronger links with local development groups.

This is also coupled with the commitment in the *Programme for a Partnership Government* to progressively increase funding to the arts as the economy continues to improve. In 2016, the Arts, Culture and Film programme of my Department will account for the highest proportion of my Department's Vote at 49% (€188m) of the total allocation. This reflects the fact that the arts are essential to the well-being of our society and that a thriving arts and cultural sector makes a hugely positive contribution to the Irish nation in general.

### Departmental Legal Cases

64. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to publish all advice from the Attorney General and any other State and semi-State body or agency which informed her decision to appeal the historic landmark decision of a High Court Judge (detailed supplied) to designate the Moore Street battlefield site in Dublin 1 as a national monument; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19849/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The case is due before the Court of Appeal again tomorrow for a directions hearing. As the matter is *sub-judice*, and in accordance a longstanding rule of the Dáil with regard to advice sought or received from the Attorney General, I am advised that it would not be appropriate to release the legal advice I have received in this instance. The advice is also covered by legal professional privilege.

### Visa Applications

65. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the status of an application by a person (details supplied) for a visa; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20109/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the application was approved and granted by the Irish Visa Office in New Delhi. The documents along with the visa were returned to the applicant on 27 June, 2016.

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

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

In addition, applicants may themselves e-mail queries directly to the INIS Visa Office (visa-mail@justice.ie).

### **Garda Recruitment**

66. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality if she supports a request (details supplied) for the urgent recruitment of two community gardaí in County Wicklow; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20133/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the Deputy will appreciate, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the distribution of resources, including personnel, among the various Garda Divisions and Districts, and I as Minister have no direct role in the matter. Garda management keep this distribution of resources under continual review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that the optimum use is made of these resources.

I have been informed that there are 15 dedicated Community Gardaí assigned to the Wicklow Garda Division. The distribution of Gardaí and Community Gardaí throughout the Division on the 31 May 2016, the latest date for which figures are readily available, is set out in the following table.

Of course, it is the case that all Gardaí have a role to play in addressing community policing issues as and when the need arises. In that sense, community policing involves far more than a single unit within An Garda Síochána, a point highlighted by the Garda Inspectorate in their third report entitled "Policing in Ireland - Looking Forward" in which they stated that community policing is a fundamental policing philosophy and that there is a strong foundation for it in Ireland.

The Programme for a Partnership Government recognises that community policing is the embodiment of An Garda Síochána, providing a means of recognising that every community – both urban and rural – has its own concerns and expectations. It commits the Government to ensuring a strong and visible police presence throughout the country in order to maintain and strengthen community engagement, provide reassurance to citizens and deter crime. Key to achieving this goal is the commitment in the Programme to continue the ongoing accelerated Garda recruitment programme with a view to increasing Garda numbers to 15,000 as well as doubling the Garda Reserve and increasing the number of civilian staff so as to free-up Gardaí for front-line policing. Community policing, and all other Garda activities, will undoubtedly benefit from the resources now coming on stream through the accelerated Garda recruitment programme.

The Garda Commissioner's Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021, published on 9 June 2016, places a strong emphasis on developing and supporting the community policing ethos of the organisation and enhancing the current delivery model so that Gardaí spend more time in the community, gaining public confidence and trust and providing a greater sense of security. I welcome in particular the proposal to establish local Community Policing Teams (CPTs) headed by an Inspector and made up of Gardaí from across a range of areas to work

with the community to prevent and detect crime. The CPTs will take proactive measures to prevent crime from happening in the area. This will entail a combination of crime prevention advice, targeting and disrupting criminals through operations and patrols, and where possible diverting people from committing crime. I also welcome the proposal to establish Community Safety Fora in every District comprising local Gardaí, local communities and key stakeholders. The implementation of these initiatives has started and will be rolled out nationwide.

### WICKLOW GARDA DIVISION 31 May 2016

DISTRICT	STATION	Comm Gardaí	TOTAL
	BALTINGLASS	1	34
	BLESSINGTON	1	22
	CARNEW		4
	DUNLAVIN		2
	SHILLELAGH		1
BALTINGLASS	TINAHELY		2
		BALTINGLASS Total	65
	BRAY	7	116
	ENNISKERRY		3
	GREYSTONES	2	26
BRAY	NEWTOWN- MOUNTKENNEDY		3
		BRAY Total	148
	ARKLOW	4	33
	ASHFORD		9
	AUGHRIM		2
	AVOCA		2
	RATHDRUM		4
	ROUNDWOOD		3
WICKLOW	WICKLOW		43
		Wicklow Total 15	96
		WICKLOW DIVI- SION TOTAL	309

### Private Security Authority Membership

67. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality when she will put the arrangements in place to appoint the new Private Security Appeals Board; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20328/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The Private Security Appeal Board (PSAB) is an independent body established under the Private Security Services Act 2004, as amended, to consider appeals against decisions of the Private Security Authority. The PSAB is, in accordance with provisions of the 2004 Act, independent in the performance of its functions. I wish to inform the Deputy that the necessary arrangements are currently in train to appoint a new Board following the expiration of the term of appointment of the previous Appeal Board.

## **Garda Misconduct Allegations**

68. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality if she will establish a commission of investigation into Garda Síochána conduct prior to the death of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20403/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The particular case to which the Deputy refers was amongst those considered under the Independent Review Mechanism established for the independent review of certain allegations of Garda misconduct, or inadequacies in the investigation of certain allegations. Following an examination of the case referred to in the Deputy's question by one of the counsel appointed to the Independent Review Mechanism, I received a recommendation of the outcome of that review. A letter setting out the outcome and recommendation was issued to the complainant last December. The recommendation made by counsel was that I should take no further action in this case. I should mention, however, that my predecessor referred aspects of this particular case to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and I understand that investigation has not concluded.

It is important that a number of facts are clearly understood in relation to the Independent Review Mechanism.

Firstly, counsel were independent and it was open to them to make any recommendation that they saw fit. Furthermore, I have repeatedly emphasised that the Independent Review Mechanism was not a Commission of Inquiry or Investigation and it was not designed to make findings. Its purpose was to triage the allegations to see whether further action was needed and what that action would be. In the present case their recommendation was that no further action should be taken.

It is also important that I emphasise, yet again, that appropriate steps were taken to ensure that nothing arose which might in any way have detracted from the integrity of the review mechanism, including issues of conflict of interest. Arrangements were put in place to ensure that if there was any conflict, or potential conflict, the conflicted counsel not only was not involved in the particular complaint, but also was not aware of which counsel was reviewing it. This is normal professional conduct and there were sufficient counsel on the Panel to ensure the practicality of this. Whatever steps were necessary in this regard were taken to ensure there was no conflict of interest.

I should also mention that a civil action has been initiated against the State in respect of issues raised in the complaint. In the circumstances it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on any particulars of this matter.

## **Immigration Policy**

69. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality when she will open the dedicated facility to accommodate persons who have been detained for immigration related matters; if she is aware of and her views on the criticisms that the Council of Europe, Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment has in its successive reports on Ireland (details supplied); if she has opened the facility mentioned; the details of its staff, including their qualifications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20169/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am aware of the recommendation of the Council of Europe, Committee for the Prevention of Tor-

ture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment on this matter and steps are being taken to address the issues raised.

I should point out that the Garda National Immigration Bureau, who has responsibility for removals from the State of non-nationals, makes every effort to keep the period of detention to a minimum and to return the person concerned on the next available flight. In general, detention is used sparingly in relation to immigration related matters. Where possible, persons are served with a notice under section 14 of the Immigration Act 2004 which provides for the issue of a written instruction setting out reporting and residence conditions to a non-national who does not have permission to be in the State. This is used in certain low risk cases as an alternative to detention prior to return. Persons held on immigration related matters, including those with deportation orders are, unless the subject of a conviction, in general kept apart from convicted persons while in detention and are treated the same as remand prisoners and are subject to the same regime and receive the same privileges as this grouping.

Section 78 of the International Protection Act 2015 inserts a new section 5 into the Immigration Act 1999 which includes a provision permitting a person to be detained for up to 12 hours in facilities at the port from which he or she is to be returned, thus further reducing the need for detention in a prison or Garda station.

Plans are being progressed for the provision of a dedicated immigration detention facility at Dublin Airport. I am informed that plans for the facility have been drawn up and agreement reached with the Office of Public Works and the Dublin Airport Authority for the necessary re-development work to be carried out. This redevelopment will be completed as soon as possible within the next 12 months and will replace the existing Garda Station at the airport, provide office accommodation for Gardaí and civilians as well as providing a modern detention facility.

### **Residency Permits**

70. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 64 and 65 of 28 June 2016, if she is aware that the European Court has held that a member state may not plead internal circumstances such as resources in order to justify a failure to comply with obligations and time limits resulting from community law; her plans to address the delays in issuing certificates of applications for residence permits for family members of European citizens as a result; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20172/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I can assure the Deputy that the primary consideration of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department is to process applications for residence permits by family members of EU citizens exercising free movement rights in compliance with the requirements of Community law.

It is important, however, to put the scale and complexity of the applications on hands and the current operating environment into perspective. As set out in my response to the Deputy on 28 June, a range of actions have been taken by INIS to address the difficulties that have arisen in this area due to the unprecedented increase in applications since 2014, including the allocation of additional resources and ongoing overtime. Arising from this strategy, over 3,000 applications have been processed in the first six months of this year. This represents a 45% increase on the number of applications processed over the same period in 2015. However, with such an unprecedented growth in applications it is inevitable that there will be significant pressures and processing times will be impacted.

I would also remind the Deputy that INIS has serious concerns that a significant number of applications are indicative of potential abuse of the Common Travel Area (CTA). In that regard, the process demands detailed robust investigation and fair procedures. While INIS is committed to processing applications with the objective of achieving the highest possible level of efficiency for applicants, this must be balanced with safeguarding the integrity of the operation of the CTA and the State's immigration system.

### **Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal**

71. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality if the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal is fully staffed and working at full capacity to review claims and appeals. [20187/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I can inform the Deputy that I expect the process of making appointments to the Tribunal to be finalised in the near future.

### **Mortgage Arrears Proposals**

72. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality to support proposals to issue a moratorium on house repossessions; her plans to establish a special court to deal with the issue of mortgage arrears and mortgage debt; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20248/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the Deputy will know, the commitments in the Programme for Government, including those relating to mortgage arrears, are under active consideration by the Government as part of the Government's housing strategy. An action programme will be announced in the coming weeks.

The Deputy will be aware that the proposal for a moratorium on house repossessions was included in the range of recommendations in a recent Report of the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness. The recommendation was that, subject to the advice of the Attorney General, the Government should introduce legislation for a moratorium on home repossessions until such time as the Government's proposals in relation to housing and homelessness are in place. I can confirm that this recommendation, together with the Committee's other recommendations, is being considered by the Government in the context of the formulation of its action plan.

The Deputy will be aware from my response to question 28 of 22 June that the Government is already preparing a range of measures to support people in mortgage arrears. In particular, intensive work has been done on preparing a new scheme to provide distressed homeowners with access to independent legal and financial aid and advice to help resolve their mortgage arrears. Intensive work on implementing this Aid and Advice Scheme has been under way across Government Departments and other relevant bodies. This work has been led by my Department and by the Department of Social Protection, with the participation of the Insolvency Service Ireland, the Legal Aid Board, the Citizens' Information Board and the Money and Budgeting Service (MABS). It builds on a network of Dedicated Mortgage Arrears Advisers established in MABS offices across the country which was announced in December 2015.

MABS will act as a single gateway to the new Scheme for those who are deep in debt and at risk of losing their homes due to mortgage arrears. MABS advisers will advise these borrowers

on options for returning to solvency and remaining in their homes as far as possible. This may involve obtaining financial advice from a Personal Insolvency Practitioner or accountant and legal aid and advice from a solicitor. The Scheme will also provide for support for insolvent borrowers in repossession proceedings under a new 'duty solicitor' service operated by the Legal Aid Board. Work on implementation is almost complete and I expect the Scheme to become operational in the near future.

### **Garda Deployment**

73. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the number of full-time gardaí in the Garda Síochána's Tipperary division; the number due to retire in 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20249/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the Deputy will appreciate, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the distribution of resources, including personnel, among the various Garda Divisions and Districts, and I as Minister have no direct role in the matter. Garda management keep this distribution of resources under continual review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that the optimum use is made of these resources.

I have been informed that there are 351 Gardaí assigned to the Tipperary Garda Division. The distribution of Gardaí throughout the Division on the 31 May 2016, the latest date for which figures are readily available, is set out in the following table. I have requested the Commissioner to indicate if any of these members are work sharing and I will write to the Deputy when this information is to hand.

I have also been informed that there are 20 members of An Garda Síochána eligible to retire in the Tipperary Division in 2016 as at 5 July. It is important to note that the number of Gardaí eligible for retirement is not an indicator of the number of Gardaí who will actually retire in a particular year. Members of An Garda Síochána who joined the organisation prior to 1 April 2004 may retire on full pension once they have served for at least 30 years and they have reached 50 years of age. Members of An Garda Síochána who joined the organisation on or after 1 April 2004 may retire on full pension once they have served at least 30 years and have reached 55 years of age. All Gardaí must retire when they reach 60 years of age.

As the Deputy will be aware, when the financial crisis hit, the Government of the time introduced a moratorium on recruitment and the four year National Recovery Plan, published in 2010, envisaged a steady reduction in Garda numbers. Thankfully, in a recovering economy, we were able to reopen the Garda College in September 2014, and a total of 851 Garda trainees have been recruited with a further 300 planned to be recruited during the remainder of this year. So far 534 of the new Garda trainees have attested as members of An Garda Síochána and have been assigned to mainstream uniform duties nationwide with another 150 more planned to attest in November. Of these, 16 newly attested members have been assigned to the Tipperary Garda Division.

I can assure the Deputy that projected departures from An Garda Síochána are kept under continuing review and the level of recruitment adjusted as necessary in order to achieve the desired strength of An Garda Síochána. I am advised, based on a thorough analysis of the data, that the Garda authorities project retirements overall this year to be around the 300 mark with similar projections for the coming years. Taking account of the projected retirements for this year and the number of new recruits who will attest I expect Garda numbers to reach the 13,000 mark by the end of this year. We must, I believe, endeavour to make more rapid progress than

this to reach our target of 15,000 and I am engaging with my colleague, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, in relation to increasing the planned annual intake this year and in coming years.

**Tipperary Garda Division 31 May 2016**

DISTRICT	STATION	Gda	Sgt	Insp	Supt	C/Supt.	TOTAL
	ARD-FINNAN	1					1
	BALLYPO-REEN	1					1
	CAHIR	41	7	1			49
	CASHEL	10	2				12
CAHIR	CLOGHEEN	1					1
	CAHIR Total	54	9	1			64
	CARRICK-ON-SUIR	14	1				15
	CLONMEL	40	9	1	1		51
	FETHARD	1					1
	KILSHEELAN	1					1
CLONMEL	MULLINAHONE	1					1
	CLONMEL Total	57	10	1	1		69
	BORRISO-KANE	2	2				4
	CLOUGH-JORDAN	1					1
	LORRHA	1					1
	MON-EYGALL	1					1
	NENAGH	32	5	1	1		39
	NEWPORT	10	1				11
	PORTROE	1					1
	ROSCREA	15	1				16
NENAGH	TOOMEVARA	1					1
	NENAGH Total	64	9	1	1		75
	BALLINGARRY SOUTH	1					1
	BORRISO-LEIGH	1					1
	KILLENAULE	3	1				4
	TEMPLEMORE	21	1				22
	TEMPLETUOHY	1					1
THURLES	THURLES	61	10	2	1	1	75
	THURLES Total	88	12	2	1	1	104



DISTRICT	STATION	Gda	Sgt	Insp	Supt	C/Supt.	TOTAL
	CAP-PAWHITE	1					1
	GOLDEN	1					1
TIPPER-ARY	TIPPERARY TOWN	29	7		1		37
	TIPPERARY Total	31	7		1		39
	Tipperary Division Total	294	47	5	4	1	351

### Asylum Applications

74. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the procedure to be followed to facilitate an application for refugee and asylum status for a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20271/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** If the person whose details were supplied has made an application for asylum or subsidiary protection in the State, the Deputy will be aware that it is not the practice to comment on such applications until they have fully completed the protection process. This is in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) which provides for the protection of the identity of protection applicants.

### Residency Permits

75. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the extent to which options are available to persons (details supplied) to obtain leave to remain or otherwise facilitate their application for residency given that they have established relationships and have integrated with the local community; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20272/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that if the persons concerned have made applications for asylum or subsidiary protection in the State, the Deputy will be aware that it is not the practice to comment on such applications until they have fully completed the protection process. This is in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) which provides for the protection of the identity of protection applicants.

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

### Residency Permits

76. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality

the current and potential residency status of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20273/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that if the person concerned has made an application for asylum or subsidiary protection in the State, the Deputy will be aware that it is not the practice to comment on such applications until they have fully completed the protection process. This is in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) which provides for the protection of the identity of protection applicants.

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

### **Immigration Status**

77. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality if she will facilitate an extension of time within which a person (details supplied) can make an application to renew a stamp 4 due to the difficulties in obtaining relevant documentation. [20274/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the person concerned held an immigration permission which expired on 24 June, 2016.

I am generally aware that foreign nationals living in the State can encounter difficulties in the area of obtaining or renewing passports particularly when there is no embassy or consulate here to assist. As you will appreciate, the conditions under which a national passport is issued or renewed is essentially a matter between the citizen and the national government.

As the current immigration permission of the person concerned has expired, they should apply for renewal of this permission with the Garda National Immigration Bureau and provide evidence that they have been in contact with their embassy for consular assistance.

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

### **Residency Permits**

78. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the means whereby persons (details supplied) can regularise their residency status; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20275/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am in-

formed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that the persons concerned are the subject of Deportation Orders signed on 21 June 2016. These Orders require the persons concerned to remove themselves from the State and remain outside the State.

However, if new information or circumstances have come to light, which has a direct bearing on their case, and which have arisen since the original Deportation Order was made, there remains the option of a request that I use my discretion, pursuant to Section 3(11) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) to revoke the Deportation Orders. However I wish to make clear that such a request would require substantial grounds to be successful. In the mean-time, the Deportation Orders remain valid and in place. The enforcement of the Deportation Orders remain a matter for the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

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

### **Naturalisation Applications**

79. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the procedure to be followed to facilitate naturalisation for a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20276/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** As the person referred to by the Deputy will be eighteen years of age next September it will be open to her to apply for a certificate of naturalisation using the Form 8 application, which is the appropriate application form for a certificate of naturalisation by a person of full age.

Section 15 of the Act provides that the Minister may, in her 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 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 further total residence in the State amounting to four years
- intend in good faith to continue to reside in the State after naturalisation
- 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.

It is open to any individual to lodge an application for citizenship if and when they are in a position to meet the all the statutory requirements. An on-line residency calculator is available on the website *www.inis.gov.ie* which may be of assistance in establishing if the residency requirements are met.

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

### **Residency Permits**

80. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the current and expected position in respect of residency for persons (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20278/16]

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

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

A minor child of the persons concerned is the subject of a separate asylum or subsidiary protection application in the State. The Deputy will be aware that it is not the practice to comment on such applications until they have fully completed the protection process. This is in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) which provides for the protection of the identity of protection applicants.

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

### **Charities Regulation**

81. **Deputy Jim O'Callaghan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the number of staff employed by the charity regulator per annum since its establishment; the operating costs per annum; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20293/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The regulation of the charity sector is a priority for this Government. The Charities Regulatory Authority (also known as the Charities Regulator) was established as an independent agency on 16 October 2014 and is responsible for the registration and regulation of all the charities active in

this country. The key areas of work of the Regulator include registration and award of charitable status, annual reporting, compliance and investigations, charity services and providing a public register and statistical information on the charity sector.

When the Charities Regulatory Authority was established in October 2014, there were ten staff working in this area. This has since been increased to 23 members of staff and the budget for 2016 provides for this to increase further to 36. I am determined to make sure that the Authority has the necessary staff and financial resources available to achieve its goals. The Charities Regulator was allocated a significant increase in its pay budget for 2016 to allow for the full complement of staff required to ensure that the full range of provisions contained in the Charities Act 2009 could be commenced as soon as possible. A budget of €2.665 million has been allocated to the Regulator for 2016, compared to a budget of €1.419 million for 2015, an increase of 88%. This increased funding is facilitating recruitment of additional staff in key areas including policy development, registration and reporting, compliance and investigations and communications. My Department, together with the Public Appointments Service, is working to put in place the full complement of staff and I expect these staff to be in place in the coming weeks and months.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

82. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20306/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The result of the recent referendum in the United Kingdom marks the beginning of a new phase which will include a negotiated withdrawal from the EU by the UK that is expected to take place over two years once article 50 is invoked. As the Deputy will be aware, no decision has been taken yet at EU level as to how the negotiations will be structured. The modalities of these negotiations will affect the resources to be assigned to the process and this will be decided in due course.

Work has already been undertaken in my Department in order to manage the Department's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union at strategic and operational levels. Early in 2016 an initial risk analysis of the UK's potential departure was carried out by my Department and a number of issues identified.

The implications of the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union has been placed on the agenda of the Department's Management Board as a standing item to be considered each week. The Department's International Policy Division has been assigned responsibility for coordinating the Department's work as it relates to the EU-UK matters. The Division is headed-up by an Assistant Secretary and comprises a team in Dublin and a team based in the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU in Brussels consisting of 11 Officers. In addition six senior officers from each of the key areas in the Department (who are in turn supported by relevant staff) have been selected to make up a cross Divisional working group to focus on the key negotiating issues. There are over 700 instruments relating to Title V measures on the EU legislative database. The working group has narrowed this down to approximately 200 measures that will require further examination and this work is now underway.

The work within the Department on this issue is coordinated with other Departments through the Department of the Taoiseach.

**Departmental Reports**

83. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by her Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20350/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I wish to inform the Deputy that it has not been possible to provide the information required in the time available. The information will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as it is to hand.

**Departmental Expenditure**

84. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the total photography costs per annum for her Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within her Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20380/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** The total photography costs per annum paid by my Department from the date of my appointment as Minister on the 8th May 2014 to the 30th June 2016 are as follows:

May to December 2014 - €553.50

January to December 2015 - €1,222.62

January to June 2016 - €833.35

I can inform the Deputy that photographic services are only used by my Department where necessary and consideration is always given to the costs involved when sourcing such services. A tender framework is in place and used to procure these services when required. The list of occasions when photographers were engaged and the associated costs are as follows:

Occasion	Photographer	Cost
Appointment of Chief Executive Designate to Charities Regulatory Authority	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€123.00
First Board Meeting of the Charities Regulatory Authority	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€275.52
Promote Safety on Fireworks Night	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€154.98
Sub-total May to December 2014		€553.50
International Women's Day	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€120.54
Website and other Department publications	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€516.60
Website and other Department publications	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€585.48

Occasion	Photographer	Cost
Sub-total January to December 2015		€1,222.62
Annual Justice Conference 15th January	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€231.98
Launch of Prison Culture Report	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€464.94
Promote Women in Justice	Maxwell Photography Ltd	€136.43
Sub-total January to June 2016		€833.35

### Public Relations Contracts Data

85. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by her Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20395/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** My Department has not incurred any costs in relation to the provision of public relations services from the date of my appointment on the 8th May 2014 to the 30th June 2016.

It is my Department's policy to use in house resources as much as possible and to restrict the use of external groups to a minimum.

### Mortgage Debt

86. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality her plans to legislate where one party to a joint mortgage is not engaging with the bank and making it impossible for the other party to renegotiate manageable terms with the provider, where one party is entitled to be treated as a single borrower from the other party under the 2013 code of protection on mortgage arrears to allow for a long-term restructure; if the restructuring of the mortgage contract without the consent of one party is currently not legislated for and if this needs to be addressed urgently, in particular in a certain case (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20428/16]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald):** I am aware of the complex issue raised by the Deputy's question.

As the Deputy will be aware, matters related to mortgage lending fall within the policy responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Finance. I understand that the Minister for Finance has received an identical question from the Deputy on this issue, to which he will be responding today.

### Irish Water Funding

87. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Finance for details of the treatment of the debt portion of the Irish Water capital programme, for each of the years 2015 to 2021, in terms

of how it impacts on the State's debt to gap ratio, and the calculation of the expenditure benchmark and fiscal space available to the Government in each of those years. [20246/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I presume that the "debt portion of the Irish Water capital programme" mentioned by the Deputy in his question refers to the direct borrowing undertaken by Irish Water from commercial sources. As Irish Water is classified in General Government, this commercial borrowing is included in the General Government Debt (GGD). By end 2015, Irish Water's commercial borrowings increased General Government Debt by about 0.4% of GDP. Under Irish Water's business plan, this is forecast to increase to about 0.6% of GDP by 2021.

The source of funding for Irish Water's capital programme has no impact on the calculation of the expenditure benchmark and fiscal space available to the Government in the period 2017-2021.

Furthermore the calculation of the net fiscal space remaining in table A2, Annex 1 of the Summer Economic Statement 2016 includes the full impact of Irish Water's planned expenditure, including its capital programme. The principal impact this expenditure has on the calculation is its inclusion each year in the general government expenditure base used to estimate fiscal space in the coming year.

### **Mortgage Debt**

88. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to legislate where one party to a joint mortgage is not engaging with the bank and making it impossible for the other party to renegotiate manageable terms with the provider, where one party is entitled to be treated as a single borrower from the other party under the 2013 code of protection on mortgage arrears to allow for a long-term restructure; if the restructuring of the mortgage contract without the consent of one party is currently not legislated for and if this needs to be addressed urgently, in particular in a certain case (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20323/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The Deputy is correct that the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) provides that in the case of joint borrowers who notify the lender in writing that they have separated or divorced, the lender should treat each borrower as a single borrower under this Code (except to the extent that an action requires, as a matter of law, the agreement of both borrowers).

It is also the case, however, that in general both parties to a joint mortgage are jointly and severally liable for the debt. There would be real difficulties with permitting a mortgage to be restructured to the potential detriment of a party to it, albeit a party who may not be engaging, without their consent. Such a scenario could potentially give rise to injustice for the person who was not party to the agreement between the bank and the other party.

I am informed by the Central Bank that while the CCMA requires that joint borrowers who are separated or divorced should be treated as single borrowers, the Central Bank is limited in what it can prescribe in this area, particularly where an action requires, as a matter of law, the agreement of both borrowers. The CCMA requires that all cases must be handled sympathetically and positively by the lender, with the objective of at all times assisting the borrower to meet his/her mortgage obligations. It is, therefore, desirable that the lender make every effort to engage with both borrowers with a view to arriving at a sustainable restructure outcome that is acceptable to both parties.



**Fiscal Data**

89. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance his estimate of the revised net fiscal space that would arise in each of the years 2017 to 2021 in the event of real gross domestic product growth for each of the years 2016 to 2021 being 1%, 2% and 3% less than currently forecast; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20330/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Estimates of fiscal space based on the expenditure benchmark are unaffected by changes in actual GDP. Instead, the relevant input is the estimate of the potential growth rate of the economy, as estimated by the European Commission each Spring.

The rationale for this is simple: budgetary policy should not be pro-cyclical. In other words, fiscal space should not increase when there is a cyclical improvement in the economy and, similarly, fiscal space should not reduce when there is a cyclical downturn.

Fiscal space would be affected in the event that the potential (or trend) growth rate of the economy was to slow, i.e. there is a permanent slowdown in the pace at which the economy can grow without generating inflationary pressures.

A reduction in the trend growth rate of 1 per cent each year over the next five years relative to the baseline forecast set out in the Stability Programme would reduce the expenditure benchmark reference rate (i.e. the average potential growth rate calculated over a ten-year period) by an average of 0.6 pp per annum.

On this basis, if the potential growth rate for each of the years 2016 to 2021 is 1, 2 and 3 per cent less than currently forecast, the impact on fiscal space is outlined in the following table.

Net fiscal space remaining €bns	2017*	2018	2019	2020	2021
Baseline SPU	1.0	1.2	3.0	3.1	3.0
1% annual decrease in potential growth rate	1.0	0.8	2.6	2.6	2.5
2% annual decrease in potential growth rate	1.0	0.5	2.1	2.2	2.0
3% annual decrease in potential growth rate	1.0	0.2	1.7	1.7	1.6

\* No change to 2017 potential growth rate as it is frozen on the basis of Commission Spring 2016 estimates

These estimates should be treated with caution and are subject to revision, given that a number of simplifying assumptions must be made in order to provide these estimates. For instance, the assumption is made that the MTO is still achieved in 2018. Furthermore, these estimates are based on total expenditure remaining unchanged. It is, of course, difficult to envisage that a 2-3 per cent lasting shock to the potential growth rate would not have further impacts on other

inputs into the Expenditure Benchmark calculation.

### **Insurance Costs**

90. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance his views that insurance premium increases in areas apart from motor insurance may be linked to core underwriting losses and an environment of very low investment returns; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20402/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Differing reasons have been put forward by various interested parties to explain Ireland's current increasing insurance costs. The Central Statistics Office has reported that the cost of insurance premiums increased significantly in the past twelve months with a 35.5% increase in motor car insurance and dwelling and health insurance up by 9.9% and 6.5% respectively.

Reasons often presented include the increased level of insurance claims and the increasing value of compensation awards. Others highlight that the highly competitive nature of the domestic market for non-life insurance in recent years has begun to impact on firms' underwriting profitability with underwriting losses reported in 2014 for a number of high-impact firms.

The Central Bank of Ireland has a statutory responsibility to ensure firms assess risks appropriately and offer insurance at a price that adequately takes into account the conditions prevailing in the market such as increasing claims costs. This ensures firms have the ability to pay all policyholders' claims without recourse to public or consumer funds. The Central Bank does not have a statutory role in relation to setting premium prices.

In its Macro-Financial Review for the first half of 2016 which was published on 14th June and is available on the Central Bank of Ireland's website [www.centralbank.ie](http://www.centralbank.ie), the Central Bank highlights a number of issues facing the non-life insurance sector. These include the impact of the low interest rate environment that has resulted in a fall in investment income which historically was used to offset underwriting losses. The Central Bank believes that investment income will continue to decline as proceeds from maturing assets are reinvested in lower yielding assets. The Report concludes that the domestic non-life insurance sector continues to face a difficult operating environment with all of the high-impact firms reporting underwriting losses in 2015 primarily due to current challenges in the Irish motor market. It also notes that the risk-sensitive regulatory framework, Solvency II, which came into effect on 1 January 2016, should strengthen insurers' resilience.

I am informed by the Central Bank that the decline in returns on investments through low interest rates has been a key theme in its engagement with the insurance industry for a number of years and forms a key part of its supervisory engagement with individual firms. The Opinion on Supervisory Response to a Prolonged Low Interest Rate Environment published by the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) in February 2013 required all National Competent Authorities to intensify the monitoring and supervision of insurance and reinsurance undertakings with exposure to the risks posed by a low interest rate environment.

To examine the issues affecting the cost of insurance in more detail and to assess what the options are for the Government, I have established a task force in my Department to undertake a Review of Policy in the Insurance Sector. This Task Force will be chaired by Minister of State Eoghan Murphy. The work of the task force includes an examination of the issues debated during the Dáil Private Member's Motion of the 8th and 9th of June 2016. The work is being undertaken in consultation with the Central Bank of Ireland, other Government Departments,

Agencies and interested bodies. The aim of this work is to identify the factors contributing to the increasing cost of insurance, and to recommend measures to improve the functioning and regulation of the insurance sector in Ireland, identifying the issues that can be addressed on a more immediate basis and those that need more long-term policy implementation.

This work will be completed over the coming months.

## Tax Code

91. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to bring the group thresholds for capital acquisitions tax closer into line with each other, such that childless persons are not discriminated against relative to peers with children in regard to bequeathing their estates. [20405/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) is the overall title for gift and inheritance tax.

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

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

- **Group A: tax free threshold €280,000** applies where the beneficiary is a child (including adopted child, stepchild and certain foster children) or minor child of a deceased child of the disponer. Parents also fall within this threshold where they take an inheritance of an absolute interest from a child.

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

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

Transfers and inheritance between spouses are not subject to CAT.

Where a person receives gifts or inheritances in excess of their relevant tax free threshold, CAT at a rate of 33% applies on the excess over the tax free threshold.

As with all tax areas capital acquisitions tax (CAT), including issues such rates of tax, tax-free thresholds, reliefs and exemptions, is kept under review. As part of Budget 2016 I raised the Group A tax-free threshold applying to gifts and inheritance from parents to their children from €225,000 to €280,000. This represented an increase of about 25%. I did this in recognition of the improving state of the public finances and of the concerns expressed to me by people making and receiving gifts and inheritances, particularly in a context of rising property prices.

I indicated at the time that I saw the change to the Group A tax- free threshold in the last Budget as the start of a process. The extent to which increases in the various tax-free thresholds for CAT purposes, can be accommodated in the future will depend, among other things, on the continuing economic recovery and the competing choices for limited resources. The Deputy will be aware of the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to work with the Oireachtas to raise the Group A CAT tax-free threshold (including all gifts and inheritances from parents to their children) to €500,000.

## Financial Services Sector

92. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Finance his views on correspondence regarding mortgages (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20162/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The matter of whether or not a borrower is permitted to rent out their principal private residence without the lender's permission is a matter of contract between the lender and the borrower, which may be provided for in the terms and conditions of the loan agreement. I, as Minister for Finance, have no role in the commercial decisions of individual banks. I have also been informed that the Central Bank has no remit in the commercial decisions of lenders in this regard.

Nonetheless, where a consumer is unhappy with the service they have received from a firm which is regulated by the Central Bank, they are entitled to make a complaint directly to the firm concerned.

Subject to the exclusions set out in Central Bank's Consumer Protection Code 2012 (the Code), the Code applies to the regulated activities of regulated entities operating in the State.

Chapter 10 of the Code sets out the procedures and timelines for regulated firms dealing with customer complaints. If the consumer is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they can refer the matter to the Financial Services Ombudsman. The Financial Services Ombudsman investigates, in an impartial and independent manner, complaints from individual customers and small businesses who have unresolved disputes with financial service providers which are regulated by the Central Bank.

I would also add that the protections of the Central Bank's Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears may apply if the borrower is in arrears or pre-arrears and the property is the only residential property in the State owned by the borrower.

Finally, I would encourage borrowers in difficulties to avail of independent advice. Organisations such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) provide a national, free, confidential and independent service. MABS have offices throughout the State and advisors available to help individuals address their particular circumstances.

## Departmental Expenditure

93. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the fees or any other form of remuneration paid to a company (details supplied) by his Department in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20243/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** No fee, or any other form of remuneration, was paid by my Department to the company referred to in each of the past ten years.

The company seconded four individuals to my Department on a *pro bono* basis for parts of 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016.

## Corporation Tax Regime

94. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Finance if he or his Department have completed an assessment on the implications of the United Kingdom's reduction in corporation

tax rate to 15%; his views on same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20290/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I am aware of media comments from the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer earlier this week regarding a move by the UK to a corporation tax rate of less than 15%. This announcement is not surprising given that the UK had previously announced a cut to 17% by 2020. There appears to be no timeframe set for this further reduction and we will have to wait and see the details when they emerge, for example whether the rate cut is to be paid for by compensating base broadening measures. My Department will of course examine any such proposals when the details are available.

At 12.5%, Ireland has one of the most competitive and stable headline corporate tax rates in the OECD. I believe that Ireland's long-term commitment to the 12.5% rate ensures that we remain highly competitive and supports Ireland's ability to attract and retain investment from around the world. Our competitive rate of corporation tax has been an important part of our industrial policy since the 1950s, and has attracted real and substantive operations to Ireland since then.

In a recent research paper, commissioned by the Department of Finance as part of a Joint Research Programme with the ESRI, entitled "Corporate Taxation and Foreign Direct Investment in EU Countries: Policy Implications for Ireland", the Economic and Social Research Institute examined the extent to which Ireland and the UK are perceived as similar alternatives with respect to factors that determine the location choice of foreign affiliates.

The Report found that:

- Over and above the effect of corporate tax rates, a number of other location characteristics are found to significantly increase countries' chances of being chosen as a location for FDI, including market size, access to the European Single Market, low production costs, high R&D capacity, as well as cultural and geographical proximity relative to investors.

- EU and non-EU investors value location characteristics differently. Investors from outside the EU are mainly seeking access to the European Single Market and are more likely to choose locations with low corporate tax rates. Intra-EU investments are more likely to be located in countries where the corporate tax is high but where they benefit from other local advantages such as low production costs.

The research concludes that in addition to maintaining a competitive corporate tax rate, Ireland's attractiveness to FDI would benefit from policies aimed at maintaining cost competitiveness and enabling further R&D investment.

## **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

95. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20302/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** My Department has been preparing for the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership for a considerable period of time and this has included the establishment of inter-divisional structures and committees. Senior officials from my Department also participate in the Inter-departmental Group on EU-UK issues which is chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach. Following the outcome of the referendum, consideration of the staffing and structures is being reviewed to ensure that the Depart-

ment is fully equipped to deal with the policy issues arising.

### IBRC Liquidation

96. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the cost of the special liquidation of IBRC to date; and the estimated final cost. [20337/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The costs associated with the Special Liquidation from the 7th February 2013 to 31st December 2015 were €179,560,000 (net of rebates). Of this, €95,470,000 related to fees for work carried out by KPMG SL Team and KPMG migration, €32,501,000 to A & L Goodbody Solicitors and €18,969,000 to Linklaters Solicitors for legal work carried out. There were other professional advisors costs that amounted to €18,017,000 for this period and other legal advisors costs were €14,603,000.

The Special Liquidators agreed the following rebates which are included in the figures outlined above:

Special Liquidators	€
KPMG	€5,000,000
A & L Goodbody	€2,706,000
Linklaters	€261,000
Total rebates	€7,967,000

A summary of the Special Liquidation fees to 31 December 2015 can be found on page 61 of the latest progress update report which can be found on the Department of Finance website: [http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/Progress%20update%20report\\_31%20Dec%202015\\_0.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/Progress%20update%20report_31%20Dec%202015_0.pdf).

I am advised by the Special Liquidators that it is not possible for them at this time to confirm or estimate the final cost of the liquidation as there remains a number of tasks in the liquidation to be completed including the on-going management of over 350 legal cases, the completion of the creditor adjudication process, the work with the Commission of Investigation, the management of the remaining loan book and the realisation of all remaining assets.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

97. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20346/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table.

Company	External Consultant Report	Cost	Year	Published
Red C	SME Lending Survey October 2015 - March 2016	€58,979.00	2016	Published - June 2016**

Company	External Consultant Report	Cost	Year	Published
Dr Don Thornhill	Review of Local Property Tax	Nil	2015	Published - October 2015
ESRI	Tax breaks and the residential property market	€30,677.43	2015	Published - October 2015
IBFD	Spillover analysis of the effects of the Irish tax system on the economies of developing countries	€94,678.00	2015	Published - October 2015
Indecon	Review of marine taxation	€106,887.00	2015	Published - October 2015 <sup>^</sup>
Red C	SME Lending Survey May 2015 - October 2015	€58,979.00	2015	Published September 2015**
John Martin	Assessment of special regeneration areas for the Living City Initiative	€2,500.00	2015	Not published. Used as input to the decisions made on the special regeneration areas. The details of these areas were published when the Living City Initiative was launched.

Questions - Written Answers

Company	External Consultant Report	Cost	Year	Published
Antaris Consulting	The provision of a review of the current Health and Safety Arrangements within the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The final objectives are to update the Health and Safety Management Systems within both Departments in order to build on existing Health and Safety culture and practices within both Departments	€16,113.00	2015	Published internally - December 2015
Red C Research & Marketing Ltd	SME Lending Survey November 2014 - April 2015	€58,978.50	2015	Published - April 2015**
Indecon	Cost benefit analysis of Irish Agri-taxation measures and international benchmark against other Agri-taxation incentives	€103,689.00	2014	Published - October 2014
Seamus Coffey	Effective rates of corporation tax in Ireland	€4,900.00	2014	Published - April 2014
ESRI	Importance of tax policy in the location choices of multinationals	€30,750.00	2014	Published - October 2014



Company	External Consultant Report	Cost	Year	Published
ESRI	Research Programme on funding for Small, Medium Enterprises	€122,833.96	2014	Published - October 2014
Ernst & Young	The historical development and international context of the Irish corporate tax system	€6,150.00	2014	Published - October 2014
Red C Research & Marketing Limited	SME Lending Survey April-October 2014	€58,978.50	2014	Published - November 2014**
Red C Research & Marketing Limited	SME Lending Survey October-March 2014	€58,978.50	2014	Published - June 2014**
MKF Property Services	Review of existing facilities management processes	€28,720.50	2014	Published - June 2014
PMCA Economic Consulting	Assistance and Analysis in the Preparation of the Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020	€49,043.00	2013	Final report submitted to the Department of Finance on 6 December 2013. It was not published because it was commissioned to provide evidence-based economic analysis as an input to the MTES. This analysis is reflected in the text of the MTES.
Crowe Horwath	Report to Department in respect of a survey of R&D Active Companies 2013	€36,850.80	2013	Published

Questions - Written Answers

Company	External Consultant Report	Cost	Year	Published
Indecon	Ex ante cost benefit analysis of proposed Living City Initiative	€28,290.00	2013	Published
Red C Research & Marketing Limited	SME Lending Survey October-March 2013	€59,593.50	2013	Published**
Red C Research & Marketing Limited	SME Lending Survey April-September 2013	€58,978.50	2013	Published**
Mercer (Ireland) Limited	Remuneration Review of Covered Institutions	€146,370.00	2013	Published
Deloitte & Touche	External Review of the Compilation of General Government Debt Statistics	€ 61,553.00	2012	Published
BDO and Amárach	(a) Survey of audio-visual producers (b) Review on international review of audio-visual state supports	€64,575.00	2012	Published
Grant Thornton	Assessment of Credit Review Office	€31,807.80	2012	Published
Mazars	SME Lending Survey October-March 2012	€60,885.00	2012	Published**
Mazars	SME Lending Survey April-September 2011	€52,453.50	2011	Published**
Red C Research & Marketing Limited	SME Lending Survey April-September 2012	€61,438.50	2012	Published**
Charles River Associates	Acquisition by AIB of EBS Building Society	€50,000.00	2011	Published

\*\*Reimbursed by AIB & Bank of Ireland

^50% of the cost of the review was paid by the other members of the Marine Review Steering Group, namely the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

This table does not include costs associated with the Department's research programme with the ESRI on Taxation and the Macroeconomy.

### Departmental Expenditure

98. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office, inclusive of costs incurred from the use of the ministerial allowance, in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department. [20376/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** In response to the Deputy's question, there have been no photography costs incurred by my Department since my appointment as Minister for Finance to the 32nd Dáil.

The Department's policy regarding the booking of photographers is to follow the relevant public procurement guidelines and procedures.

### Public Relations Contracts Data

99. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Finance to provide a list, broken down per annum, on the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20391/16]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan):** I take it that the Deputy is referring solely to external public relations and not to advertising that would be incurred by my Department in the normal course of business, such as entries into telephone directories, the placing of advertisements in national newspapers, recruitment advertising, etc.

No new Public Relations firms have been employed in my Department since my coming into office in May 2016. However, an ongoing contract which commenced in October 2015 is currently drawing to a close, details below:

Year	Use of external Public Relations Firms	Appointment
2015 - 2016	Following a Government decision in May 2015, Carr Communications were engaged to provide public relations consultancy expertise and work with stakeholder Departments and agencies on the development of a communications campaign to encourage greater engagement of borrowers in mortgage arrears.	Carr Communications was the successful tenderer following a public procurement exercise.

The Department's policy regarding employing external groups is to follow the relevant public procurement rules and procedures.

### **Teacher Recruitment**

100. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will consider lifting the moratorium on the appointment of year heads in secondary schools, which would be seen as a positive move by teachers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20116/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** When the moratorium on the filling of posts of responsibility was introduced in 2009, the Government exempted Principal and Deputy Principal posts in all primary and post-primary schools. These posts continue to be replaced in the normal manner. The impact of the moratorium was therefore limited to the Assistant Principal and Special Duties posts of responsibility.

There are limited alleviation arrangements in place for schools that are acutely affected by the impact of the moratorium at Assistant Principal level. These arrangements are mainly focused at post-primary level. However, it is fair to say that before the moratorium, notwithstanding the fact that one out of every two teachers held a management allowance the workload issue and the pressures on Principals and Deputy Principals existed.

It is widely accepted that the quality of school leadership is a key determinant of school effectiveness and the achievement of good learning outcomes. Indeed international research indicates that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning. Therefore my Department, in consultation with the representative school management bodies has commenced an exploration of the opportunities to support school leaders and how their needs might be addressed.

The recently established Centre for School Leadership (CSL) is a collaboration between my Department and the representative professional bodies for school principals. It has been created to offer professional and practical support to schools leaders. This support structure for leadership teams in schools will attempt to ensure that school leaders have opportunities to access, share and create knowledge and experience within their leadership roles.

The work of the Centre draws on best international practice and research in the professional development of school leaders. Priorities for the Centre include a new postgraduate qualification for aspiring school leaders, a mentoring programme for newly appointed school principals, coaching support for serving principals who are facing new challenges in the role, a review and alignment of leadership programmes with Department standards and the development of a quality assurance framework for leadership provision.

In addition my Department will shortly publish *Looking at Our School 2016*, a quality framework for schools which is designed to support the efforts of teachers and school leaders, as well as the school system more generally, to strive for excellence in our schools.

In Budget 2016 and as part of the 2,260 additional teaching posts announced in that budget, 250 posts were provided to second level schools to enable Deputy Principals to be freed from teaching time and be more fully available for leadership in schools. Thus with effect from 01 September 2016, second level schools with over 400 students will receive an allocation that will bring those schools in line with the schools that have over 500 pupils where the Deputy Principal is fully freed up for leadership in the school. A pro rata allocation of additional hours to support school leadership will also be provided to the schools with 400 or fewer students enrolled.

## Autism Support Services

101. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the specific provision made for children with autistic spectrum disorders and the number of places available in autistic spectrum disorder units in mainstream schools and in special schools at primary level and at secondary level in Cork city and county, by school, in tabular form. [20322/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Deputy will be aware that this Government is committed to ensuring that all children with Special Educational Needs, including those with autism, can have access to an education appropriate to their needs, preferably in school settings through the primary and post-primary school network.

Such placements facilitate access to individualised education programmes which may draw from a range of appropriate educational interventions, delivered by fully qualified professional teachers, with the support of Special Needs Assistants and the appropriate school curriculum.

There are approximately 14,000 students with ASD in the school system.

- 63% are educated in mainstream classes
- 23% are educated in special classes in mainstream primary and post-primary schools; and
- 4% are educated in special schools.

We now have the highest level of Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support, Resource Teaching allocations and Special Class provision that we have ever had, which will ensure that children with special educational needs including Autism can continue to participate in education and be supported in a manner appropriate to their needs.

I recently announced that from September next 12,900 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) will be available for allocation to primary and secondary schools, which is 860 more posts, or a 7% increase in the number of posts over which were available last year. In total, the number of SNA posts available has increased by almost 22% from 10,575 posts, available in 2011. About 69% of all students with ASD access SNA support.

In addition, there are currently over 11,800 learning support and Resource Teacher posts in mainstream primary and post-primary schools providing additional teaching support to pupils with special educational needs. About 25% of all resource teaching posts are allocated for ASD.

In respect of children with ASD who cannot be accommodated in mainstream education, they may be enrolled in special classes or special schools where more intensive and supportive interventions are provided.

The Deputy will be aware 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 to schools to support students with Special Educational Needs, including Autism.

It is also the role of the NCSE to make appropriate arrangements to establish special classes in schools in communities where the need for such classes has been identified.

Special classes within mainstream schools are intended for children who, by virtue of their level of Special Educational Needs, cannot reasonably be educated in a mainstream class setting, but who can still attend their local school in a special class with a lower pupil–teacher ratio of 6:1 at primary level and 6:1.5 at post-primary level, and also have Special Needs Assistant

support normally amounting to 2 SNAs for a class of 6 children.

Progress in developing this network has been significant and in addition to the special school placements there are currently over 1,000 special classes throughout the country at primary and post-primary level of which 765 are for children with Autism.

The NCSE recently published a list of special classes for the 2016/17 school year. In total there will be 1,153 special classes available next year, which is an increase of over 100% in the number of special classes which were available in 2011, which was 548.

The NCSE has advised that for the coming school year there will be 127 early intervention classes, 525 primary ASD classes and 237 post-primary ASD classes, which represents an increase of approx. 16% on 2015/16 classes for children with autism.

Of these there will be 145 ASD classes in Cork City and County, including 24 Early Intervention Classes for children who are not yet school going age, 80 primary school classes and 41 at post-primary level in mainstream schools. 18 of these classes are new classes due to open in September 2016, 11 in primary schools and 7 in post-primary schools. This will result in the provision of 144 places in early intervention classes, 480 places for primary school pupils and 246 places for post-primary pupils.

Details of all special classes for children with special educational needs, including those in Cork City and County, are available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie) in county order, with new classes identified.

### **School Admissions**

102. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will respond to correspondence previously sent to him by a person (details supplied) regarding the State education system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20406/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The correspondence to which the Deputy refers relates to school admissions and religious instruction in schools.

I can advise the Deputy that a reply to the correspondent is currently being prepared.

The position in relation to school admissions is that parents can choose which school to apply to and where the school has places available the pupil should be admitted. However, in schools where there are more applicants than places available a selection process may be necessary. This selection process and the enrolment policy on which it is based must be non-discriminatory and must be applied fairly in respect of all applicants. However, this may result in some pupils not obtaining a place in the school of their first choice.

In relation to any amendments to section 7(3)(c) of the Equal Status Act, it is acknowledged that any change to the Equal Status Act would be extremely difficult as this is a hugely complex area legally, constitutionally, and in other ways.

As the Deputy may be aware, the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills, is to consider the complex issues raised by the Labour Party's proposed amendment to section 7(3)(c) of the Equal Status Act as set out in their recently published Private Members Bill. The Government proposed and the Dáil agreed that this Bill proceed to second stage after these hearings are held.

This will allow parents, children, patrons and other stakeholders to have their say. Taking

time to consider this complex issue in the relevant Oireachtas Committee, in the same way that all government legislation is subject to pre-legislative scrutiny, will ensure that the right balance can be struck between competing rights and that there would be no unintended consequence that would create an adverse impact on the schools of minority denominations.

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to publish new School Admissions legislation taking account of current draft proposals and addressing issues including publication of school enrolment policies, an end to waiting lists, introduction of annual enrolment structures, and transparency and fairness in admissions for pupils and their parents.

In this regard, I can advise that the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 will be published this week. The Bill will bring tangible benefits to all parents. The Bill will oblige all schools to admit pupils where there are available places. It is important to note that 80% of schools are not oversubscribed.

In relation to the teaching of religion in schools, under the Constitution and in accordance with Section 30 of the Education Act 1998, parents have a right to have their children opt out of religion classes if they so wish.

The manner in which any school ensures that the right to opt out of religion classes is upheld is a matter for the school concerned. Each individual school must determine the particular arrangements which are most appropriate in its individual circumstances having regard to local issues such as available space, supervision requirements and how the school concerned organises classes etc.

The new Education (Admission to Schools) Bill will include a specific requirement that school enrolment policies must include details of a school's arrangements for any students who do not wish to attend religious instruction. I believe this is an important measure which will help ensure transparency from the outset as to how a school will uphold the rights of parents in this regard.

A follow-up paper to Report of Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was published in 2014. The paper outlines good practice and options for promoting diversity in all schools and encourages school authorities to engage in consultation with stakeholders and to review their policies and practices on an ongoing basis to ensure that they remain suitable for the school population that they serve. One of the areas to be examined by schools relates to the scheduling of religion classes, and the paper gives an overview of different types of arrangements that schools can put in place in this regard. This is an area I plan to keep under review.

The Programme for Government also reflects the Government's objective of strengthening parental choice and further expanding diversity in our school system. The desire of parents for diversity in education is primarily being pursued by increasing the number of non-denominational and multi-denominational schools with a view to reaching 400 by 2030. This represents a significant increase in the current rate of delivery of multid denominational schools. The Government is committed to working with all stakeholders to progress this as a priority. Since 2011 new schools are generally only established in areas of demographic growth. My Department uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to identify where the pressure for school places will arise.

When it is decided that a new school is required to meet demographic needs in an area, the Department runs a separate patronage process to decide who will operate the school. It is open to all patrons and prospective patrons to apply for patronage of the school under this process and the level of parental preference for each patron is key to decisions in relation to the outcome of the process.

Since 2011, all 24 new primary schools that have opened have been multi-denominational. In 2015/2016 a total of 108 primary schools are multi-denominational.

### **School Accommodation**

103. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he is aware of the over-crowded classroom situation at a school (details supplied); if he will provide funding to enhance the school environment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20424/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I can confirm that my Department considered an application for additional accommodation from the school referred to by the Deputy. My Department advised the school that due to competing demands on my Department's capital budget imposed by the need to prioritise the limited funding available for the provision of additional school accommodation to meet increasing demographic requirements and where an additional teacher is being appointed, that it was not possible to provide grant aid for additional accommodation.

I understand that the school has operated as a two teacher school for several years and that enrolment numbers do not warrant the appointment of an additional teaching post.

The school recently submitted further correspondence to the Department relating to the matter. The correspondence will be considered and a response will be provided to the school authority.

### **Third Level Admissions Entry Requirements**

104. **Deputy Michael D'Arcy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason for declining a person (details supplied) under the HEAR and DARE grant schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20426/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) scheme is a third-level admissions scheme operated by a number of higher education institutions which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third-level admissions scheme for students with a disability which is also operated by a number of higher education institutions.

Admissions under both the HEAR and DARE schemes are regulated by the institutions themselves. Each higher institution determines its own admission policy in relation to HEAR and DARE, the number of places they reserve for HEAR and DARE and the allocation of those places.

In the case of the student referred to by the Deputy, your request should be directed to the Irish Universities Association (IUA) who coordinate the HEAR and DARE schemes for participating higher education institutions.

### **Corporate Governance**

105. **Deputy Frank O'Rourke** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the procedures



in place, in view of the emphasis his Department has on new corporate governance guidelines for agencies under his remit, to ensure persons deemed to be debtors are not actively engaged in the management of such agencies while such debts are not discharged; the procedures in place to notify his Department of any such debtors who are members of boards under his aegis; if debtors are currently on boards under his aegis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20215/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** My Department's oversight of corporate governance for agencies is informed by the stipulations of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reforms Code of Practice for State Agencies.

Additionally the Standards in Public Office Commission operates a supervisory role under the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995, as amended by the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, to underpin oversight of accountability in Irish public life.

The tax clearance provisions of the Standards in Public Office Act 2001 apply to persons appointed to "senior office", i.e. to a designated position of employment or to a designated Board membership in a public body under the 1995 Ethics Act, in relation to which the remuneration is not less than the lowest remuneration of a Deputy Secretary General in the civil service. All persons appointed to a designated Board membership "senior office" must provide to the Standards in Public Office Commission not more than nine months after the date on which he or she is appointed:

- a tax clearance certificate that is in force and was issued to the person not more than nine months before, and not more than nine months after, the appointment date; or

- an application statement that was issued to the person and was made not more than nine months before, and not more than nine months after, the appointment date; and

- a statutory declaration, made by the person not more than one month before, and not more than one month after, the date of appointment, that he or she, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, is in compliance with the obligations imposed on him or her by the Tax Acts and is not aware of any impediment to the issue of a Tax Clearance Certificate.

#### Investigations

Board members and employees in public bodies can be subject to an investigation by the Standards Commission, either where it considers it appropriate to do so, or following a complaint, or where there is contravention of the tax clearance requirements.

*Question No. 106 withdrawn.*

### School Curriculum

107. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to provide new courses in State examinations to increase the information and communications technology skills of students; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20244/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Programme for a Partnership Government includes an undertaking to further accelerate the Digital and ICT agenda in schools by including a coding course for the Junior Cycle and introducing ICT/Computer Science as a Leaving Certificate subject.

The Programme for Government commits to a range of new subjects, and this is something

I will be keen to expand on over the coming years.

The new Framework for Junior Cycle allows for the introduction of short courses. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has in this context developed short courses in Coding and Digital Media Literacy for use by schools. Transition Year students have access to a module called 'Having Fun with Computer Programming and Games' and, under the ICT Action Plan, this is being expanded nationally. I have also asked the NCCA to provide advice on the introduction of Computer Science as a Leaving Certificate subject.

The revision of Leaving Certificate Applied Maths is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that computers will be used as a learning tool in aspects of the programme. Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) are also significant components in the syllabuses of Technology and Design and Communication Graphics. The focus in schools currently is on using ICT as a tool in learning guided by the ICT curriculum framework developed by the NCCA. This is supported by digital content on the Scoilnet website, by professional development programmes for teachers and by investment in ICT infrastructure. All post-primary schools are now connected to a 100Mbps broadband service, providing for improved integration of ICT in learning.

The development of skills is key to successful learning and this is highlighted in the new Framework for Junior Cycle. All of the 8 key skills in the Framework highlight the use of digital technology right across the junior cycle. The use of 'technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner' is one of the statements of learning that inform the programme being offered by schools. The use of ICT will permeate the experiences of all Junior Cycle students as the new Framework is implemented.

### **European Globalisation Fund**

108. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the latest estimated final expenditure for each of the three European Globalisation Adjustment Fund programmes currently in operation, in tabular form. [20247/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** As the Deputy will be aware it is difficult to accurately forecast final expenditure on EGF programmes as public beneficiary bodies generally fund the cost of EGF measures from national budgets and subsequently submit expenditure declarations/claims during and more often following completion of the programmes. The average expenditure across the 7 previous Irish EGF programmes was 60% of the programme allocations. Assuming a similar outcome, the estimated final expenditure on the 3 more recent programmes is shown in the table.

The Andersen Ireland EGF programme ended on 16 May 2016 and my Department will submit a final report and expenditure statement to the European Commission by 16 November 2016. My Department had provided the Deputy with an estimated expenditure of some €900,000 as at March 2016. Since then my Department has written to the Commission regarding proposed budgetary amendments to reflect expected additional expenditure across some headings, possibly leading to an overall spend nearer to €1.5m. In this regard, my Department has requested the public beneficiary bodies to submit their expenditure declarations this month following which the final expenditure will become clearer.

The Lufthansa Technik Airmotive Ireland EGF programme ends on 19 September 2016 with a final reporting date of March 2017. No further estimate update has been undertaken by

my Department in relation to this programme, since that provided in April at which time expenditure of €1.5m was estimated.

Similarly, in relation to the PWA International EGF programme which ends on 19 June 2017, my Department has not undertaken any estimate of final expenditure.

Programme	EGF application	Estimated Final Expenditure(60%)
Andersen	€2,502,000	€1,501,000
Lufthansa	€4,151,264	€2,490,000
PWAI	€737,156	€442,000

### Departmental Funding

109. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he intends to introduce a scheme of grants for health and safety works in schools, including works on car parks, bus turning bays and so on; if so, when is this likely to be announced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20280/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** As the Deputy will be aware, funding is prioritised under my Department's 6 year school capital investment programme towards the delivery of major school projects to provide the essential mainstream school accommodation needed to meet demographic demands. Whilst the works referred to are eligible to be considered for funding under the Summer Works Scheme, a specific funding allocation for this measure is not contained in the capital programme. As the Deputy is also aware, a commitment in relation to this measure is contained in the Programme for Government. It is my intention therefore that this matter will be considered in the context of the mid-term review of the capital infrastructural programme.

### UK Referendum on EU Membership

110. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20300/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Government has a Contingency Framework in place which maps the key issues that will be most important to Ireland in the coming weeks and months. My Department participated fully in and contributed to the preparation of that Framework for the education sector. The Government has published a summary of the key actions that will be taken to address the contingencies arising from the UK's decision to leave the EU.

As part of this contingency planning, a number of existing structures are in place and will be employed to manage the process on a whole-of-government basis. They include the Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs and the Senior Officials Group that supports it. The Department of the Taoiseach chairs an Interdepartmental group of senior officials that has been meeting regularly to examine the bilateral and national interests affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. My Department is represented on this Group. The work of this group will now be scaled up and intensified.

At Departmental level, Management Boards are making the appropriate arrangements to ensure the operation of Department-wide oversight and stakeholder engagement. A senior official in my Department has already been tasked to coordinate work in this area, including representation on the Inter-Departmental group, and is being supported by the Management Board and his own team and by contributions from across the Department as needed on all aspects of contingency planning and analysis. As such, structures are in place to progress work on the Department's response and to prepare for any negotiations that may be required.

The preparation, analysis and planning work will proceed now and in the coming weeks and months the issues identified in my Department's area will be further analysed and actions developed as necessary to meet the challenges as they arise. The question as to whether as to whether additional structures and resources are required will also be considered.

### Consultancy Contracts

111. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills to provide all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011, in tabular form and per annum; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report; and the publication date. [20344/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Details of all consultancy payments made by the Department for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 are available on my Department's website <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Financial-Reports/Expenditure-on-Consultancy/>. Information in relation to consultancy expenditure is compiled annually in respect of the previous year. Details for the year 2016 will not be available until Quarter 1, 2017.

### Departmental Expenditure

112. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; and if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department. [20374/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The following tabular statement contains details of photography costs incurred at my Department since I came to office. My Department adheres to appropriate procurement guidelines when engaging the use of photography services.

Occasion	Photographer	Cost Breakdown			Total Cost
		Net	Vat	Gross	

10 June 2016 - Photography for awards to recipients under the Non-mainstream Music Education Bursary Scheme 2016	Maxwell Photography	406	93.38	499.38	
03 June 2016 - Photography for announcement regarding Action Plan for Disadvantaged Schools	Maxwell Photography	420	96.6	516.6	
					1015.98

### Public Relations Contracts Data

113. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20389/16]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** In relation to my Department's policy for the engagement of external expertise, such engagement is considered where the issues involved require expert skills or capabilities that are not available within the Department. Any such engagement is done in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Finance "Guidelines for the Engagement of Consultants and other External Support by the Civil Service".

The following table provides details of external public relations firms engaged by the Department since January 2016.

Year	Name of Firm	Purpose
2016	Carr Communications	Interview board training & interview skills training
2016	Zoo Digital D2	ToolTip Skills to Work website pop-up installation
2016	Carr Communications	To provide professional advice on communications support to develop an information campaign on reform initiatives in the second level school system

2016	Carr Communications	Communications/interview skills training and Communications workshop
2016	Career Zoo	Cost of stand space at Career Zoo, IFSC

### Local Authority Rates

114. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans to introduce a new business rates model. [20191/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes in accordance with the details entered in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation under the Valuation Acts 2001-2015. The levying and collection of rates are matters for each individual local authority.

The principle of local authorities levying rates based on an independent valuation is well established and I have no plans to change this. However, the legislative basis for the levying of rates is spread over a number of enactments, some dating back to the 19th century. I have asked my Department to develop proposals for the preparation of a consolidated Rates Bill to modernize and consolidate the legislation in this area.

### Local Authority Functions

115. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if it has been drawn to his attention that at a meeting of Sligo County Council held on 2 November 2015 a motion (details supplied) was unanimously adopted; if it has further been drawn to his attention that when the proposed draft county development plan was presented by the chief executive to the elected members of Sligo County Council on 27 June 2016, no map or list of rights of way was included in the draft; the action a council can take when a chief executive refuses to implement a decision of the council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20115/16]

116. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he is aware that at a meeting of Sligo County Council held on 27 June 2016 to consider the proposed draft Sligo county development plan a motion (details supplied) was adopted; the action he will take to ensure Sligo County Council complies with the Planning and Development Act; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20132/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 115 and 116 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, the making and varying of a development plan is a reserved function of the elected members of the planning authority for the area.

My Department's Circular Letter of October 2012 to all planning authorities sets out their statutory obligations under Section 7 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, in relation to the mandatory objective in development plans for the preservation of public rights of way. The Circular Letter also outlines that planning authorities should avail of the development plan variation process, as appropriate, where a statutory development plan review is not

imminent.

In this regard, it is a matter for Sligo County Council to implement such policies in the context of their development plans. As a statutory consultee, my Department, on receipt of the draft Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 from Sligo County Council, will provide the planning authority with advice and comments, as appropriate, on the draft development plan and which may refer to matters relating to rights of way.

My Department acknowledges the progressive adoption by planning authorities of this mandatory objective since 2012 and will continue to keep implementation of this objective under review, including giving consideration to the need for the issuing of any reminders to planning authorities in this regard, in light of the approaches being adopted in meeting this objective.

### **Local Authority Housing Mortgages**

117. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will increase the income limit for families who have dependent children who apply for house purchase loans under Statutory Instrument No. 408 of 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20135/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The standard annuity mortgage available from local authorities is targeted at lower income first time buyers. The relevant terms and conditions applying to local authority housing loans are set out in the following regulations – the Housing (Local Authority Loans) Regulations 2012 – available at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/si/408/made/en/print>.

To support local authorities in operating their housing loan schemes in a consistent and efficient manner, the Housing Agency provides a central underwriting service to local authorities. The credit underwriting process considers the impact that family circumstances may have on the loan applicant's capacity to make loan repayments. The final decision on loan approval is a matter for the relevant local authority and its credit committee on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the relevant statutory Credit Policy that underpins the scheme and aims to ensure prudent lending.

I will continue to keep the operation of the local authority housing loan schemes under review. I have no immediate plans to amend the income limits set out in the Regulations.

### **Pyrite Remediation Programme**

118. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of properties which entered into the pyrite remediation scheme with category 2 diagnosis following visual inspection from an engineer, and where the diagnosis was later reversed to category 0 following sample core testing prior to remediation taking place, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20325/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Damien English):** The pyrite remediation scheme, which was first published by the Pyrite Resolution Board in February of 2014, was developed having regard to the relevant provisions of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 and the recommendations set out in the Report of the Pyrite Panel (June 2012). The full conditions for eligibility are set out in the scheme. It is a condition of eligibility under the scheme that an application to the Board must

be accompanied by a Building Condition Assessment, carried out by a competent person in accordance with I.S. 398-1:2013 Reactive pyrite in sub-floor hardcore material – Part 1: Testing and categorisation protocol, indicating a Damage Condition Rating of 2.

As set out in the scheme, each application must first be validated by the Pyrite Resolution Board which involves an assessment of the application against the relevant eligibility criteria, and may include an audit of the Building Condition Assessment. Following validation, the application is referred to the Housing Agency for the assessment and verification stage which involves confirmation that the damage recorded in the Building Condition Assessment in respect of a dwelling is attributable to pyritic heave. Damage verification may be based on an individual dwelling or on associated dwellings. Associated dwellings may be verified on the basis of comparable damage and/or earlier tests with similar results.

My Department understands from the Pyrite Resolution Board that no dwellings have been excluded from the pyrite remediation scheme following the completion of the assessment and verification stage by the Housing Agency.

### **Pyrite Remediation Programme**

119. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he can provide the number of homes remediated under the clause contained in Part 3, section 17, exceptional circumstances, (3) of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20326/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Damien English):** The pyrite remediation scheme is a scheme of “last resort” and is limited in its application and scope. The full conditions for eligibility under the scheme are set out in the scheme which is available on the Board’s website (*www.pyriteboard.ie*). The scheme is applicable to dwellings which are subject to significant damage attributable to pyritic heave established in accordance with I.S. 398-1:2013 - Reactive pyrite in sub-floor hardcore material – Part 1: Testing and categorisation protocol. In this regard, it is a condition of eligibility under the scheme that an application to the Board must be accompanied by a Building Condition Assessment with a Damage Condition Rating of 2.

A total of five dwellings which had a Damage Condition Rating of 1 when their Building Condition Assessments were first completed have now progressed to a Damage Condition Rating of 2; these dwellings have now been included in the pyrite remediation scheme.

While dwellings with Damage Condition Ratings of 1 do not qualify under the scheme, some may be considered in accordance with the exceptional circumstance provisions set out in section 17 of the Act. As matters currently stand, no dwellings have been included in the pyrite remediation scheme under the exceptional circumstances provisions of the Act.

### **Pyrite Remediation Programme**

120. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if the cost of remediation per unit and remediation per phase has increased as a result of inflation in the construction sector; if he will provide comparative costings, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20327/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Gov-**



**ernment (Deputy Damien English):** The Pyrite Resolution Board, with the support of the Housing Agency, is responsible for the implementation of the pyrite remediation scheme. In general terms, the cost of pyrite remediation is largely dependent on the dwelling type, the number of units in a project, the floor area of the dwellings, the depth of hardcore in the units and the presence or otherwise of under-floor heating systems. Against this background, remediation costs can vary significantly and may not always be directly comparable across projects. While my Department monitors overall expenditure under the scheme, the costs associated with individual projects are determined by on-going competitive procurement processes which fall within the remit of the Housing Agency.

In this regard, dwellings which have been included in the pyrite remediation scheme are grouped into projects in order to secure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of the funds available to the scheme. For each project, a specific programme is developed to facilitate the execution of the remedial works which, in many cases, is carried out on a phased basis. The programme commences with the appointment of an engineer to survey the dwellings, prepare remedial works plans and the tender documents necessary to procure a works contractor to remediate the dwellings in the project. The procurement of the engineer is undertaken in accordance with national procurement guidelines and EU procurement regulations. A framework panel, comprising a list of engineers already qualified to carry out this type of work, has been established by the Housing Agency for this purpose.

On completion of the remedial works plans, a separate tendering process is undertaken to engage a works contractor to remediate each of the dwellings in the project in accordance with their remedial works plans. The procurement of the works contractor is also undertaken in accordance with public procurement rules. Similar to the position with regard to the appointment of the engineer, a framework panel, comprising a list of works contractors already qualified to carry out this type of work, has been established by the Housing Agency from which tender proposals are received.

Remedial works are carried out by the successful works contractor in accordance with the remedial works plans and I.S. 398-2: 2013: Reactive pyrite in sub-floor hard core material – Part 2: Methodology for remediation works. The engineer will undertake inspections at critical points during the process in order to issue the Certificate of Remediation in accordance with Annex B of I.S. 398-2: 2013.

### **Waste Disposal Charges**

121. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding bin charges; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20329/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Pay-by-weight charging has the potential to radically change our thinking and behaviour in relation to waste and has been shown to drive waste prevention and better segregation, and indeed ultimately lower costs for many households who manage their waste more efficiently.

This type of charging system:

- is in accordance with the polluter pays principle, and will ensure a more environmentally sustainable approach to the management of waste in Ireland; and
- will result in job creation as a result of the processing of increasing quantities of recycling

and organic waste.

Since the waste industry began releasing its pricing plans in relation to the nationwide roll-out of pay-by-weight charging at the start of June, the Government has highlighted its concerns regarding the reported escalation of waste bills for some customers from July, particularly in relation to proposed increases in service charges.

The Government secured an agreement with all major waste collection companies to freeze charges, so that customers pay no more than they are currently paying for waste collection over the next 12 months for the same level of service. As Minister I cannot comment on individual cases but my Department is continuing to engage with the waste industry regarding issues around the changes to the pay by weight regime.

### **Waste Tyre Disposal**

122. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the commencement date for a new end-of-life waste tyre compliance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20334/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** We have a serious problem with waste tyres in Ireland. In discussions prior to the adoption of the 2007 Tyre Regulations, it was made clear that this was the last opportunity for the tyre industry to embrace environmental compliance and take responsibility for the waste it produces. If the required improvement did not happen, it was made clear to the tyre industry that the system would be reviewed and replaced with a full Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) model.

As part of a wider review of producer responsibility arrangements completed in 2014, the structural and environmental effectiveness of all aspects of the current system for managing waste tyres was assessed. The results of this examination were stark. The report, published for consultation in November 2013 and in final form in April 2014, found:

- A non-compliance rate with the Tyre Regulations of 46%,
- A lack of consistent and accurate data,
- That the current system was not tracking data flows well, and
- Between 25% and 50% of waste tyres were not accounted for with widespread illegal dumping.

There will be no new tyre tax or levy under the new system. Consumers already pay a disposal fee to their tyre retailer whenever they buy a new tyre. The model that I am introducing will formalise a charge that tyre retailers already apply but which does not currently go towards the cost of managing the waste in all cases, as it is supposed to. It is absolutely right and fair to provide a system that ensures it is properly directed in the future so that the consumer does not pay twice: once at the point of purchase and again when the taxpayer has to meet costs incurred by local authorities for the clean-up of illegally dumped tyres.

Repak ELT replaced TRACS as the sole compliance scheme for tyres as of 1 November 2015. Repak have a long and successful track record under existing producer responsibility arrangements in the packaging area and have been instrumental in making Ireland a top EU performer in this waste stream. The new system will provide a sustainable and environmentally

focused system for the management of waste tyres. Like existing systems for waste tyres elsewhere in the EU and for all other waste streams in Ireland, this system will respect the producer responsibility approach and be based on the polluter pays principle. These are long-standing environmental principles which are reflected in both European and domestic legislation.

My Department is currently drafting regulations to underpin the new Tyres and Waste Tyres Compliance Scheme and the intention is that these regulations will come into effect from 1 January 2017, which will also be the commencement date for the full PRI Scheme.

### **Local Authority Housing**

123. **Deputy John Lahart** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his plans for the existing complex of flats on Dominick Street, Dublin 1, including if he will refurbish them or have them demolished, given his announcement on 29 June 2016 of the development of 72 units of social housing and community facilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20399/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I was pleased to announce the provision of €22m to Dublin City Council last week, for the construction of 72 new social housing units on the east side of Dominick Street in Dublin 1. This new development will allow for the re-housing of some 50 households from the existing west side blocks on Dominick Street and will create 22 new units for households from the Council's housing lists, as well as providing community facilities.

The future approach to the existing west side blocks is, in the first instance, a matter for Dublin City Council. I am supportive of the re-development of this area and my Department will work with the Council when it has developed proposals for the future of those blocks.

### **Building Regulations Application**

124. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government his views on economical ways to create homes (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20412/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Damien English):** The Building Regulations 1997 to 2014 set out the minimum statutory requirements applicable to the design and construction of new buildings, extensions to existing buildings as well as for material alterations and certain material changes of use to existing buildings and are divided in 12 parts (classified as Parts A to M). Technical Guidance Documents (TGDs) are published to accompany each of the parts and provide guidance indicating how the requirements of that part can be achieved in practice. These TGDs can be freely accessed on my Department's website at <http://www.environ.ie/housing/building-standards/tgd-part-d-materials-and-workmanship/technical-guidance-documents>.

Part D of the Building Regulations deals with Materials and Workmanship and stipulates that all works are to be carried out with proper materials and in a workmanlike manner. It defines proper materials as those materials which are fit for the use for which they are intended and for the conditions in which they are to be used.

The regulations do not prescribe the use of particular products but establish minimum performance requirements that the building or the construction works must achieve. It is open to

any contractor to use prefabricated panels and other types of innovative products provided that they can demonstrate that the building complies with Part D and all other relevant parts of the Building Regulations.

In the context of social housing provision, local authorities must comply with the relevant EU and domestic legislative and policy requirements as outlined under the national and EU public

procurement regulations and the Capital Works Management Framework published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. My Department understands that the Office of Government Procurement is currently developing a Rapid Delivery Housing procurement Framework which will be available to any local authority wishing to procure rapid delivery housing for pressing accommodation needs.

Separate to procurement requirements, local authorities are also responsible for ensuring that housing units are designed and constructed in accordance with all relevant regulatory requirements including building control, fire safety and planning requirements.

I am satisfied that the procurement arrangements in place allow for the consideration of innovative products and systems wherever reasonable and appropriate. All procurement opportunities which receive 50% or more of their funding from public funds are advertised openly on *www.etenders.gov.ie*.

While my Department has a role in funding social housing projects, it has no role in relation to the procurement or management of individual projects; these are matters for the relevant contracting authorities.

### **Housing Assistance Payments Administration**

125. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he is aware of any processing or system impediments that might accelerate the risks of single persons or families going into homelessness while awaiting the processing of housing assistance payment, HAP, applications; the support systems he has put in place to monitor this and support families; his views on the impact of processing waiting times and gaps of up to three weeks in provision of HAP supports when customers are transitioning from rent supplement systems to HAP systems; how this is recorded; the efforts made to streamline the process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20168/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I am not aware of any delays in relation to the processing and management of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) applications.

Limerick City and County Council is providing a central transactional shared service to all local authorities operating the HAP scheme. The shared service centre, which is the primary administrative support to HAP local authorities, is responsible for a range of functions including monthly payments to landlords and the collection of weekly differential rent from tenants and provides a range of efficiencies to the operation of the scheme.

My Department closely monitors the operation of HAP and maintains regular contact with the pilot local authorities in order to learn from their experience of the scheme, and to address operational issues as they arise. In the case of households transferring from the rent supplement scheme to the HAP scheme, the Shared Service Centre, local authorities and the Department of Social Protection work closely together to ensure that there is no gap in support for any house-

hold. A priority for the local authority and Department of Social Protection is clear communication with the relevant households and landlords.

I am satisfied that the HAP scheme is operating well, with more than 10,700 households currently in receipt of housing support under the scheme.

### **Planning Issues**

126. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 119 of 19 May 2016, the current status of the situation at a location (details supplied), where an unfinished shopping centre has been the subject of protracted hearings involving the council, the National Asset Management Agency and other third parties; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20214/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** As I indicated in replies to previous Parliamentary Questions tabled on this matter, the management of the development concerned is primarily a matter for Kildare County Council in the first instance, and I have no function in the matter.

However, I understand from Kildare County Council that the securing of a satisfactory conclusion to the development of the site in question has been a particular focus of the Council's efforts over the last number of years. On foot of arbitration procedures, Kildare County Council recently successfully completed an agreement with one of two site owners, relating to the provision of roads infrastructure to service the town centre site. The arbitration case relating to the second site owner remains to be heard by the Property Arbitrator, the hearing of which is not scheduled to take place until April 2017, due to the Property Arbitrator's caseload. In parallel with these arbitration cases, the Council has also been involved in ongoing discussions with the owner of the town centre site, and his agents, with a view to advancing development of the site as early as possible.

With relevant processes underway involving NAMA and arbitration, it would be inappropriate for me as Minister to become involved or make any further comment on the matter.

### **Waste Disposal Charges**

127. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if it is within the terms of the price freeze agreed by the Government with waste companies for a company (details supplied) to demand that customers who wish to stay on their existing plan and not transfer to pay-by-weight, have €199 credit in their accounts by 1 August 2016, despite those customers having already paid an annual service charge at the beginning of the year to cover all of 2016. [20242/16]

129. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he is aware of the actions of a waste company (details supplied) and his proposed actions to ensure that the company is honouring the agreement reached between his Department and waste companies with regard to charges; the steps he will take to ensure that this company honours the agreement that was reached; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20285/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 127 and 129 together.

The Government secured an agreement with all major waste collection companies to freeze charges, so that customers pay no more than they are currently paying for waste collection over the next 12 months for the same level of service.

I have also been clear that the operation of the price freeze by the industry will be closely monitored, indicating that, if there was evidence of the agreement being breached, I would look at whether further legislative measures were necessary to enforce it. In this regard, my Department met with representatives of the waste industry earlier this week and will continue to liaise with operators as necessary with regard to the consistent implementation of the agreement.

### Irish Water Funding

128. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to provide a breakdown for each of the years 2015 to 2021, of the Irish Water capital programme funding, broken down by equity and debt portions in nominal and percentage terms. [20246/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government(Deputy Simon Cooney):** The following table provides details of Irish Water’s capital investment programme, as presented in Irish Water’s Business Plan 2014 - 2021 as well as the level of capital contribution from the State in the period to 2016.

Funding of Irish Water	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals 2014 - 2021
Capital Programme:	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Capital Investment Plan (Core Infrastructure)	343	391	522	533	595	777	728	806	4,694
Metering	220	277	77						574
Irish Water Programme	28	13	2						43
LA Balance Sheet	53	150							203
Total Capex	644	831	601	533	595	777	728	806	5,514
Funded by									

Funding of Irish Water	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals 2014 - 2021
- Capital Contribution/ Equity from Government	239	222	184						

Equity contributions in this period [2017-2021] will be subject to budgetary decisions.

- The balance is funded by a mix of debt and income from operations, with the investment programme for the period from 2017 subject to future review by the CER, and Government funding being subject to future budgetary decisions.

Note: The capital contribution provided by Government for Irish Water in respect of 2015 was paid to Irish Water in 2014.

*Question No. 129 answered with Question No. 127.*

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

130. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how they will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20301/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** A senior official has been nominated to oversee my Department's input to management of the national response to the outcome of the UK referendum on withdrawal from the European Union. That input is managed primarily through the participation of my Department in the work of both the Interdepartmental Group of senior officials which is addressing bilateral and national interests affected by a UK withdrawal, and the Senior Officials Group which supports the Cabinet Committee on European Union Affairs. Both the Interdepartmental Group and the Senior Officials Group are convened and chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach.

Management of the bilateral and national interests affected by a UK withdrawal is a matter of absolute priority and relevant members of staff are engaged on the issues involved on an ongoing basis. I am satisfied that the Management Board in my Department will continue to ensure, having regard to the discussions at the Interdepartmental Group of senior officials and the work of the Cabinet Committee, that appropriate arrangements on Department-wide oversight and action are in place.

### **Departmental Reports**

131. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March, 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20345/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The information requested is set out in the following table and reflects the transfer of functions from my Department to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2011	ARUP Consulting Engineers	Study in respect of provision of fire detection and alarms systems in dwellings.	Not intended for publication. It is a technical report, to inform work in the Department.	€29,935
2011	Barrow Archaeological Services	Archaeological reports on Met Éireann site at Valentia.	The report is not intended to be published as it is a technical report relating to a site on Valentia Island where Met Éireann is building an Air Monitoring Facility.	€1,210
2011	Building Research Establishment Ltd	Retrofitting Code of Practice.	Published March 2014.	(1) €21,190
2011	Certification Europe Ltd.	Compost Quality Assurance Scheme.	Published October 2012.	€139,142
2011	Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan, Trinity College Dublin	Review of the Homeless Strategy 2008-2013.	Published November 2012.	€6,000
2011	Housing & Sustainable Communities Ltd.	Toolkit for Local Authorities on regeneration.	Not intended for publication. This was a report intended to provide assistance to Local Authorities in drawing up proposals for the regeneration of their areas.	€12,300



Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2011	Indecon	Regulatory Impact Analysis of proposed regulations for household food waste.	Published June 2012.	€24,725
2011	Malachy Walsh & Partners	EIS Screening Report for site at Valentia.	The report is not intended to be published as it is a technical report relating to a site on Valentia Island where Met Éireann is building an Air Monitoring Facility.	€6,336
2011	Marine Institute	Marine Strategy Framework Directive (1) Initial Assessment; (2) Development of a Monitoring Programme; and (3) Development of a Programme of Measures necessary to achieve Good Environmental Status in Irish Marine Waters.	(1) Initial Assessment - the technical report was published on the Department's website in Q2 2013 and the summary report was published in Q4 2013. (2) Monitoring Programme – sent to the EU Commission in April 2015. (3) Drawing up of programme of Measures to be completed early July 2016.	(2) €2,676,479
2011	Murtagh & Partners	Review of Dublin Region Homelessness Services and Funding in 2011.	Published October 2011.	€27,800

Questions - Written Answers

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2011	National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)	Audit reports for ISO9001:2008 in 2011 and 2012.	Not intended for publication.	€6,699
2011	Price Waterhouse Coopers	Independent assessment on establishment of National Water Utility.	Irish Water - Phase 1 report and appendices published January 2012. Implementation Strategy published December 2012.	€179,584
2011	Pyrite Panel	Report of the Pyrite Panel - Independent report to provide options for the Minister to deal with the pyrite problem.	Published July 2012.	€22,719
2011	RPS Group	Provision of expertise concerning Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment techniques for the evaluation and revision of Regional Waste Management Plans.	No formal document due for publication. The work comprises principally advice, guidance documents and technical expertise.	€45,223
2011	Secretariat to the National Economic and Social Council of Ireland	Analysis on national climate policy.	Interim report released October 2012; final report released in February 2013.	Nil
2011	SKM Enviro	Irish Recycled Plastic Waste Arisings Study.	Published September 2011.	€37,566
2011	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2011 Report.	Published April 2012.	€61,077

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2011	White Young Green	Annual Dust Impact Assessment Report (2011) at the Former Irish Steelworks Site, Haulbowline, Cobh, Co. Cork.	Published March 2012.	(3 ) See footnote
2012	AECOM	Cost optimal study for non-domestic buildings.	Published March 2013.	€53,517
2012	DKM Economic Consultants	Review of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.	Published July 2013.	€39,690
2012	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)	Analysis of Property Tax Options - a report to the Interdepartmental Expert Group on Property Tax.	Published December 2012.	€60,280
2012	Fehilly Timoney & Company	Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice - Feasibility Study.	Published July 2013.	€55,289
2012	Flynn Furney Consultants Ltd.	Environmental Management Services re: review of CEMP at Valentia Site (Method Statement).	The report is not intended to be published as it is a technical report relating to a site on Valentia Island where Met Éireann is building an Air Monitoring Facility.	€3,167

Questions - Written Answers

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2012	Glas Ecology	Environment Management Plan (Breeding Chough and Peregrine Survey, Valentia Island, Co. Kerry).	The report is not intended to be published as it is a technical report relating to a site on Valentia Island where Met Éireann is building an Air Monitoring Facility.	€4,920
2012	Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Review of leasing model.	Date of publication to be decided.	€1,937
2012	Indecon	Feasibility study on a Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme.	Published November 2012.	(4) €42,706
2012	Inter-Departmental Group	Design of a Local Property Tax – Report of the Inter-Departmental Group.	Published December 2012.	Nil
2012	Mr. Hendrik W van der Kamp	Independent Evaluation of the Planning Review Report 2012.	Published January 2013.	€12,096
2012	Mr. Seamus Woulfe SC	Review of the management by the Department of an application by Wicklow County Council for loan approval in respect of the compulsory purchase of land at Charlesland, Co. Wicklow - Phase 1.	Published March 2012.	€19,680

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2012	Mr. Seamus Woulfe SC	Review of the compulsory acquisition of land by Wicklow County Council at Charlesland, Co. Wicklow - Phase 2.	Published April 2013.	€49,200
2012	Munster Archaeology	Report on archaeological investigation/survey of Met Éireann site at Valentia.	Not Intended for publication. Report for internal use only.	€47,289
2012	Padraic Thornton Planning & Environmental Consultancy	Preparation of EIA Guidelines.	Published March 2013.	€7,200
2012	RPS Group	Review of the Producer Responsibility Model in Ireland.	Final report published in July 2014.	€292,306
2012	RPS Group	All Island Used Tyre Survey.	Published March 2013.	(5) €17,673
2012	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2012 Report.	Published April 2013.	€58,271
2012	Version 1	Evaluation of ICT Disaster Recovery configuration and capability.	Not intended for publication.	€9,363
2013	AP Env Econ Limited/National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Ireland's Environmental Data: Inventory, Assessment and Next Steps.	Published April 2014.	€35,178

Questions - Written Answers

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2013	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)	Affordability aspects of the provision of water services in Ireland and subsequent analysis.	Published in May 2014 as Appendix 2 and Appendix 5 of the "Report of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Affordability Measures".	€57,655
2013	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) & University College Cork (UCC)	Technical support for the purposes of advising Government on the proposed 2030 EU Framework for Climate and Energy Policies.	This report was published in June 2015 as part of the consultation on the National Mitigation Plan to transition Ireland to a low carbon economy by 2050.	€67,768
2013	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) & University College Cork (UCC)	Technical support on developing low carbon sector roadmaps for Ireland.	The project relates to technical support, with no formal document due for publication.	€107,552
2013	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Article 29(2) Report on Progress on Implementation of the EC (Good Agriculture Practices for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2010.	Published April 2014.	Nil
2013	Garrett Fennell Solicitor	Independent Review of the registration arrangements for Architects under the Building Control Act 2007.	Published on the Department's website.	Nil (report produced on a pro-bono basis)

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2013	Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Review of CALF assessment process.	Date of publication to be decided.	€11,675
2013	Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Business Process Design of the Housing Assistance Payment.	Date of publication to be decided.	€54,938
2013	Indecon	Assessment of Potential Merits of New Initiative re Purchase of Local Authority Houses by Existing Tenants.	Not intended for publication.	Nil (report produced on a pro-bono basis)
2013	KW Research & Associates	NTACC Research into why Travellers leave Traveller-specific accommodation.	Published on the Department's website April 2014.	€11,938
2013	RPS Group	Public consultation process on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and producing a report.	Published November 2013.	€9,000
2013	SLR Environmental Consulting (Ireland) Ltd/National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Wind Energy in Ireland: Building Community Engagement and Social Support.	Published July 2014.	€50,451
2013	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2013 Report.	Published June 2014.	€52,014

Questions - Written Answers

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2013	Userneeds	Usage survey on the Met Éireann website.	Not intended for publication - this was a report volunteered to Met Éireann by the survey company on a 'sample' basis.	Nil - provided as a 'free sample'
2014	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)	Socio-Economic Impact of a nuclear accident in the UK.	The intention is that the report will be published, but the specific date is not yet known.	€79,950
2014	Glas Ecology	Environment Management follow up Report (Breeding Chough and Peregrine Survey, Valentia Island, Co. Kerry).	The report is not intended to be published as it is a technical report relating to a site on Valentia Island where Met Éireann is building an Air Monitoring Facility.	€1,599
2014	Institute of Public Administration (IPA)	Peer review of Met Eireann's Operational and Strategic Review.	This report is not intended for publication.	€4,920
2014	MacCabe, Durney Barnes	Independent Planning Review.	Published December 2015.	€94,521
2014	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment - Netherlands (RIVM)	Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish Context.	Published June 2016.	(6) See footnote
2014	National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)/National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Environmental Policy Integration: Case Studies Research.	Report is being considered by NESC Council.	€38,222



Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2014	National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)/National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Sustainable Urban Development.	Published July 2015.	€25,465
2014	Padraic Thornton Planning & Environmental Consultancy	Independent Review of Draft S31 Directions in Westmeath.	Published May 2014.	€5,000
2014	Patricia Thornton Tom Philips Associates	Independent Review of Draft S31 Directions in Limerick.	Published August 2014.	€4,151
2014	Ricardo-AEA	NSMC Residential Solid Fuel Study.	Published March 2016.	(7) €39,739
2014	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2014 Report.	Published July 2015.	€52,014
2014	University College Cork (UCC)/National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	Review of Environmental Social Policy Literature.	Published July 2015.	€4,305
2015	AECOM	Additional cost optimal calculations for domestic and non-domestic buildings.	Published February 2015	€33,683
2015	Behaviour & Attitudes Ltd.	Market Survey to determine weather forecast consumption behaviour of the Irish public.	Not intended for publication. Extracts may be published in the future.	€19,865
2015	Deloitte	Business Case Review for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).	Date of publication to be decided.	€28,939

Questions - Written Answers

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2015	DKM Economic Consultants	Household Waste Management Costs in Ireland.	Publication to be considered.	€10,763
2015	Dr. Dagmar Stengel	Best practice in relation to the sustainable exploitation and management of intertidal seaweed resources.	Not intended for publication.	€14,391
2015	Independent Review Group	An Bord Pleanála - Organisational Review.	Published March 2016.	€18,760
2015	IT Executive Focus	Review of the Structure and Delivery Model of the ICT Services for the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.	Not intended for publication.	€55,289
2015	MartinPlan Consulting	To consider the implications of the C-50 judgment in the context of waste water discharge licensing and to make any necessary recommendations.	Not expected to be published.	€1,750
2015	Mazars Consulting	Independent Review of Homeless Services (2015).	Published on the Department's website January 2016.	€27,075
2015	Rory Mulcahy, Senior Counsel	Review Report in relation to Certain Planning Matters in respect of Donegal County Council.	Issue of publication to be considered following completion of report.	€0

Year Commissioned	Consultant/Author etc.	Name/Description of Report/Review/Study	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Amount Spent Since March 2011
2015	RPS Group	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) services on the National Mitigation Plan.	Draft for public consultation due November 2016.	(8) €22,610
2015	Steering Group on Fire Safety Review (Chaired by Martin Riordan)	Review of Fire Safety arrangements in multi-unit developments where concerns arise regarding non-compliance with statutory requirements.	Date of publication to be decided.	€34,905
2015	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2015 Report.	Expected to be published July 2016.	€49,077
2016	Des Johnson	Independent Review of Draft S31 Direction in Louth.	Published February 2016	€3,000
2016	Des Johnson	Independent Review of Draft S31 Direction in Kildare.	Published in June 2016.	€0
2016	Tobin Consulting Engineers	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System - 2016 Report.	Expected to be published July 2017.	€24,589

(1) The contract was in conjunction with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Total cost of the study is €169,302 (inclusive of VAT). My Department's contribution was €21,190 (inclusive of VAT) with the balance met by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (i.e. €148,112 inclusive of VAT).

(2) The Initial Assessment report, monitoring programme and programme of measures each arise from a broader process connected with Ireland's obligation to implement the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The work primarily consists of a determination of the status of Ireland's marine waters, the measures necessary to achieve, or maintain, the required Good Environmental Status by 2020 and a programme to monitor this. The preparation of a draft Initial Assessment (under Art. 8 of the MSFD), including proposals for Good Environmental Status (Art. 9) and for draft Environmental Targets (Art. 10), is underpinned by a suite of monitoring measures to measure the maritime environment against these targets (Art. 11).

Where human activities are preventing these targets from being met, a Programme of Measures to mitigate the effect of these activities, or halt them as appropriate (Art. 13), is currently being finalised.

(3) My Department previously provided funding to Cork County Council to support the production of an annual Dust Impact Assessment Report at the former Irish Steel site at Haulbowline Island. Following a Government Decision in June 2011, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine assumed the lead role in relation to the remedial works necessary to be undertaken on the site. Accordingly, funding provided to Cork County Council for the annual Dust Impact Assessment Report 2011 and subsequent years is a matter for the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

(4) This report was co-funded by my Department and the Private Residential Tenancies Board. The cost to my Department of €42,706 represents 50% of the total cost.

(5) Survey jointly commissioned and funded by the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland and my Department.

(6) The cost of this project was €66,950 and was met in full by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

(7) This report was commissioned by my Department under the auspices of the North-South Ministerial Council and in conjunction with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. The cost was evenly split and the final charge to my Department was €39,739.

(8) The Report will cost €90,440 in total (including 23% VAT) and is being co-funded on an equal share basis by the Departments of Transport, Energy and Agriculture.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

132. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office, inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance, in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20375/16]

133. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal Departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20390/16]

**Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 132 and 133 together.

My Department has not engaged the services of any photographer or external PR firm since I came to office.

My Department's Press Office generally provides photographic services when required. However, if external photography services are required, they are obtained in line with the Whole-of-Government Optional Framework for Photography Services, details of which are

available from the Office of Government Procurement.

### **Social Insurance**

134. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of small farmers making tax returns; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20336/16]

137. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of small farmers making tax returns; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20335/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 134 and 137 together.

Self-employed workers, including farmers, whose annual income exceeds €5,000 are liable to pay PRSI at the class S rate of 4%, subject to a minimum annual payment of €500. Similar to other self-employed workers, farmers pay PRSI, along with income tax and USC, with their annual return using Revenue's self-assessment system. The payment of the annual class S PRSI payment by self-employed workers means that 52 paid contributions are awarded to their social insurance record in respect of that contribution year.

Where farmers and other self-employed workers earn less than €5,000 in a particular contribution year, they are not liable to pay PRSI. To protect their social insurance record they may opt to pay voluntary contributions, subject to satisfying the qualifying conditions. To become a voluntary contributor, a person must have paid at least 520 weeks PRSI in either employment or self-employment and apply within 12 months of the contribution year in which they were last paid PRSI. The voluntary contribution payment for the self-employed is a single flat rate annual payment of €500, which results in 52 paid contributions being awarded to their social insurance record in respect of that contribution year. The majority of people paying voluntary contributions are former self-employed workers. Full details of the voluntary contribution scheme are provided on the Department's website [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) and are also available from the Citizens Information Board (CIB).

The system of PRSI for employees differs, in that it applies on a weekly and not annual basis. In general, employees are liable to pay PRSI at 4% on weekly earnings in excess of €352, which is deducted at source and remitted through the PAYE system. In addition, their employers pay PRSI at 8.5% for weekly earnings between €38 and €376 and at the rate of 10.75% where weekly earnings exceed €376. Paid contributions are only awarded to employees' social insurance record for each week they have been in insurable employment.

Employees also have the opportunity of applying to pay voluntary contributions in respect of weeks for which they are not working and for which no paid contribution is awarded to their social insurance record, subject to satisfying the qualifying conditions. Voluntary contributions for employees are based on their income in the previous year and the rate of payment depends on the nature of their employment. For most former employees, voluntary contributions are payable at rate of 6.6%, subject to a minimum annual payment of €500.

### **Family Income Supplement Applications**

135. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of an application by a person (details supplied) under the family income supplement scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20110/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** A claim for Family Income Supplement (FIS) was made by the person concerned on 17th June 2016.

My department has assessed the family income in this case, based upon the evidence available, and has decided that the assessable family income exceeds the prescribed income limit for the relevant family size. Therefore, the claim for FIS has been disallowed and the person in question was notified on 3 July 2016 of this decision, the reasons for it and of their right of review and appeal.

I know that you have been in contact with staff in my office who are looking into this query for you. They will reply once they are in a position to do so.

### **Carer's Allowance Applications**

136. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of an application by a person (details supplied) under the carer's allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20131/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Carer's Allowance (CA) is a social assistance payment made to persons who are providing full-time care and attention to people who have a disability such that they require that level of care and who satisfy a means test.

A person can be considered to be providing full-time care and attention where they are engaged in employment, self-employment or on training courses outside the home for a maximum of 15 hours per week, provided that they can show to the satisfaction of a deciding officer that adequate care has been provided for the care recipient in their absence.

The person concerned was refused CA in 2015 as she was working outside the home for more than 15 hours per week. This decision was upheld on appeal.

The person concerned re-applied on 8 February 2016 and her application was again refused as she was working over 15 hours per week.

When the person concerned provided evidence to show that she was reducing her hours of employment to a maximum of 15 hours per week from 1 July 2016, CA was awarded to her with effect from the date the hours were reduced.

The first payment is due to issue to the person's nominated bank account on 7 July 2016 and she was notified of these details on 28 June 2016.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

*Question No. 137 answered with Question No. 134.*

### **Family Income Supplement Payments**

138. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of the payment of arrears under the family income support scheme to a person (details supplied). [20404/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The person concerned reapplied for family income supplement (FIS) and was awarded from 9 June 2016 to 7 June 2017 at a weekly supplement of €81.00.

7 July 2016

This FIS claim was then suspended with effect from the 6 July 2016 as the person concerned was absent from work due to illness and receiving illness benefit (IB) from the 20 May 2016.

FIS may be paid in conjunction with IB for a maximum of 6 weeks.

FIS may be re-instated at the original rate awarded when the person in question resumes work after illness and provided that they continue to satisfy the FIS condition of working at least 38 hours per fortnight.

In order to ensure there is no delay in reinstatement of FIS payment, the person in question should contact FIS section when they have submitted their final medical certificate, stating the date they are fit to resume work, to IB Section, Store Street, Dublin 1.

I trust that this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Domiciliary Care Allowance Appeals**

139. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Social Protection to expedite an appeal by a person (details supplied) under the domiciliary care allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20423/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal by the person concerned was registered in that office on 16 June 2016. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When these papers have been received from the Department, the case in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral appeal hearing.

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

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Invalidity Pension Applications**

140. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of an application by a person (details supplied) under the invalidity pension scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20427/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The person concerned has been awarded invalidity pension with effect from the 12 May 2016. Payment will issue to her nominated account on 21 July 2016. Any arrears due from the 12 May 2016 to 20 July 2016 (less any overlapping social welfare payment and/or outstanding overpayment) will issue in due course. The person in question was notified of this decision on 06 July 2016.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Rent Supplement Scheme**

141. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Social Protection if he has considered the omission of the N7 region from the amended rent supplement limits announced from 1 July 2015; if he will reconsider the assessment of such to include the N7 region where the road passes through the most deprived areas in Kildare, namely, Naas, Newbridge, County Kildare, Monasterevin and so on (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20161/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The increased rent limits under the rent supplement scheme, as announced last week, were introduced with effect from Friday, 1 July 2016. Supports in relation to housing and the provision of financial supports, including the rent supplement scheme currently supporting some 54,000 recipients at a cost of €267 million in 2016, are a key priority as evidenced by the early implementation of this Government commitment.

The rent limit review sets maximum rent limits in line with market rents which have generally been benchmarked at the 35th percentile of agreed rents as registered with the Residential Tenancies Board. Each county's major urban area was used to establish an appropriate benchmark for the county's prevailing maximum rent limit. In the case of Kildare, excluding the towns of: Maynooth; Leixlip; Celbridge; and Kilcock, the major urban centre selected for this county as the main benchmark in establishing maximum rent limits was Naas. The Deputy referred to other market areas in county Kildare namely, Newbridge, Monasterevin and by extension Kilcullen, which have lower rental pricing than Naas, and are covered under the county Kildare limits. The rent limits in county Kildare have increased by a weighted average of 19%.

Higher rent limits continue to be provided for the areas of Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge and Kilcock where the rental price differential remains. A weighted average increase was applied to the rents in these areas of 25%, reflecting the market conditions.

The combination of the increased rent limits and the ongoing flexibility and discretionary increases provided by my Department's Community Welfare Service staff, in addition to the supports provided under Threshold's Tenancy Protection Service (available in Kildare), will continue to provide stability for tenants.

### **Invalidity Pension Appeals**

142. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of an appeal by a person (details supplied) under the invalidity pension scheme. [20204/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an oral hearing of the appeal of the person concerned took place on 29 June 2016 and that the Appeals Officer is now considering the appeal in the light of all of the evidence submitted, including that adduced at the oral hearing. The person concerned will be notified of the Appeals Officer's decision when the appeal has been determined.

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

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Disability Allowance**



143. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Social Protection if the carer's benefit income of one spouse is reckonable in the means test in respect of the other spouse's disability allowance application. [20205/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath):** Disability allowance is a means-tested scheme and the way means are assessed is laid down in social welfare legislation. The assessment of income is dealt with under Part 2 of Schedule 3 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005. I can confirm that no statutory social welfare payment, including carer's benefit, being received by a spouse/civil partner/ cohabitant is assessed as income.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Supplementary Welfare Allowance Eligibility**

144. **Deputy Mick Barry** asked the Minister for Social Protection if he will reconsider the decision not to grant a person (details supplied) assistance in crèche fees under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme. [20206/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** In accordance with Departmental guidelines, Crèche Supplement applications can only be considered, in exceptional circumstances, in respect of children attending a community crèche.

This application for a Crèche Supplement was disallowed because the person concerned was applying for a payment for their child to attend a privately-run crèche and the scheme applies to community crèches only.

The person concerned appealed the disallowance and the decision was upheld on appeal. There is no reason to reconsider the application because the decision was upheld on appeal.

The Department has identified two community crèches in the vicinity that can reasonably be accessed by the person concerned from their present address. It is open to them to apply for a Crèche Supplement in respect of a local community crèche.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Back to Education Allowance**

145. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding contributions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20223/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) is designed to support jobseekers to undertake second chance education. A person wishing to pursue a course of study under BTEA must satisfy a number of conditions such as age and in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment for a specified period of time amongst others.

The period for which a person is required to be on a jobseeker's payment is 234 days (which is equivalent to 9 months if signing full-time). However, a person who receives statutory redundancy - and who has an entitlement to a qualifying social welfare payment immediately prior to commencement of an approved course of study - may have immediate access to the BTEA.

BTEA is designed as one of the key State support to address the obstacles to re-entering the labour market for customers on long term social protection payments. It should not be considered as providing a universal form of support to engage in education - such supports are provided by SUSI under the Department of Education and Skills.

The conditions under which the BTEA operate are designed to ensure that they address the objective of supporting our longer term social welfare customers into employment and it is not envisaged that the current arrangements will be modified.

I hope this clarifies the issue for the Deputy.

### **Jobseeker's Allowance Applications**

146. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Social Protection the measures in place to ensure that all those normally employed in schools as secretaries, cleaners and caretakers with moneys from funding sources including the ancillary services grant are enabled to apply for and receive social protection payments and entitlements in a timely and swift manner during periods of temporary lay-off, such as during school holidays; if such workers must go through the normal application process; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2023/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** A jobseeker's payment is paid for days of unemployment where the person is not in receipt of holiday pay for those days and where they also satisfy the conditions of the scheme.

School educational sector workers, who are employed on a temporary basis and who have previously been in contact with the Department, are issued with a repeat jobseeker's application form and holiday form in advance of the school holiday periods. This advance process facilitates an efficient service to these customers and allows for speedy processing of their claim when the period of unemployment actually arises. However, it is important to note that educational sector workers are still required to sign on for each period of unemployment.

In general, there is no delay in processing jobseeker benefit claims in Intreo Centres if the relevant claim application forms and supporting documentation are completed, as required by the customer in a timely manner. On average, a jobseeker's benefit claim is decided within one week of application.

### **Disability Allowance Applications**

147. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Social Protection the status of an application by a person (details supplied) under the disability allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2023/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** I confirm that the department is in receipt of an application for disability allowance from the above named person on 23 June 2016. 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 processing time for individual disability allowance claims may vary in accordance with their relative complexity in terms of the three main qualifying criteria, the person's circumstances and the information they provide in support of their claim.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

## **Disability Allowance Applications**

148. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social Protection if a claim by a person (details supplied) under the disability allowance scheme was registered with his Department in May 2015. [20240/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** I confirm the department received an application for disability allowance (DA) on 8 June 2015. In order to determine the circumstances of the person concerned, his file was forwarded to his local Social Welfare Inspector (SWI). A decision on his entitlement to DA will be made on receipt of the Social Welfare Inspector's report.

The person concerned will be notified directly of the outcome.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

## **Pension Provisions**

149. **Deputy Noel Rock** asked the Minister for Social Protection if he will reinstate and back date a pension to a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20245/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The state pension transition and contributory claims of the person concerned have been reviewed. Based on this review, the person has been awarded a pro-rata state pension (transition) with effect from 1 September 2010, (on retirement) in accordance with EU legislation. The person concerned has also been awarded a pro rata state pension (contributory) with effect from their 66th birthday. These decisions are based on the person's combined social insurance records comprising full-rate Irish contributions, modified rate Irish contributions and UK contributions.

A notification detailing the above decisions has issued to the person concerned, together with a copy of the insurance records relied upon by the Department. All due arrears of pension have been issued. If there are additional periods of insurable employment which are not shown on the record provided, the person concerned should contact the Department's State pension (contributory) section, College Road, Sligo, providing documentary evidence of the employments concerned.

In addition, the Department is currently examining possible compensation entitlement due to any loss of purchasing power, arising from the delay in awarding the correct pension entitlement. On completion, the person concerned will be notified of the outcome without delay.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

## **Jobseeker's Allowance Appeals**

150. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection when he will issue payment to a person (details supplied) under the jobseeker's allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20270/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The person concerned is currently in receipt of a weekly jobseekers payment of €232.70. This is in payment with effect from the 23rd of May 2016 when he made his most recent claim for jobseekers allowance at

Blanchardstown Intreo Centre. The amount payable includes his own personal rate of €188.00 weekly plus the appropriate child dependent payments for a person in his circumstances.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised that a jobseeker's allowance appeal by the person concerned, in relation to his previous jobseekers allowance claim, was referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing.

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

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Work Placement Programmes**

151. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Social Protection if he will extend the time a person may stay on the Tús work placement initiative scheme from one year, particularly where participants are unlikely to obtain work from private sector employers due to either social issues or other reasons; his views that forced unemployment has a very detrimental effect on a person's health, leading him or her generally to visit the doctor more frequently, take more medicine and suffer from higher morbidity; his further views that it would be a positive step forward to assist persons who are unlikely to obtain employment to stay engaged with work; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20279/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Tús, the community work placement initiative was set up to provide short-term, quality work opportunities for those who are unemployed for more than a year. Tús is designed to break the cycle of unemployment, and maintain work readiness, thereby improving a person's opportunities of returning to the labour market. For this reason, eligibility is confined to those in receipt of a jobseeker's payment. These provisions are to ensure a highly targeted approach for those in danger of falling into long-term unemployment. While Tús is intended to help long-term unemployed people re-enter the active workforce, they are not full-time sustainable jobs.

Tús was introduced and the numbers on other schemes expanded as a direct response to the growth in the level of unemployment during the financial crisis. As the economic recovery takes hold and the overall level of unemployment falls, the Department recognises the need to adapt these schemes to the changing circumstances, opportunities and needs of jobseekers and others.

International literature regularly questions the effectiveness of work programmes in general as effective activation tools, citing concerns regarding the duration of programmes, proximity to the labour market, absence of job search, possibility of lock-in effects and poor outcomes in terms of employment among others. In order to be effective, research points to the need for any such schemes to be temporary and should not become a disguised form of subsidised permanent employment.

Furthermore, extending the period of participation on Tús beyond one year for current participants would reduce the number of placements available to other people who are long-term unemployed. The existing 12-month placement period on Tús is considered adequate at present to meet the objectives of the initiative whilst also ensuring that as many unemployed people as possible are able to benefit from it.

With the ongoing welcome reductions in the live register, a review of work schemes, including Tús, will be necessary to ensure that the number and nature of schemes and the conditions governing participation continue to be appropriate. I will be considering all of these issues over the coming months.

I hope this clarifies the issue for the Deputy.

### **Carer's Allowance Applications**

152. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Social Protection if a decision has been made on an application by a person (details supplied) under the carer's allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20286/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The application for carer's allowance in respect of the person concerned was awarded on 22 June 2016 and the first payment issued to the person's nominated post office on 30 June 2016.

Arrears of allowance due from 10 March 2016 have also issued to the post office for payment.

The person concerned was notified of these details on 22 June 2016.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

153. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20308/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Staff in the EU and International section of the Department of Social Protection, in addition to their role in supporting the Department on EU and International matters generally, manages the social protection implications for Ireland of the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union. This role involves liaising with colleagues both across the Department and in other departments as required. The Department is also a member of cross Departmental Group chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach on this matter.

The Department's EU and International section is headed by an Assistant Secretary and is staffed by a Principal Officer, three Assistant Principal Officers including one based in the Permanent Representation in Brussels, three Higher Executive Officers, one Executive Officer and two Clerical Officers. A sub-group of the Department's Management Board is in place to report on this matter to the Management Board and the Secretary General who has overall responsibility for the operations of the Department.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

154. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Social Protection to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011, in tabular

form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20352/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in tabular form.

Reports commissioned by Department of Social Protection since March 2011

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Social Welfare Appeals Office – Research on Insurability Issues & Access to Legal Resources	Mel Cousins & Associates	2011	2011	€7,744
Report on electronic access to GRO Records for genealogy research	John Grenham	Apr-2011	Internal Management Report	€3,557
Investigation of odour/smells, Belmullet Local Office	Wright Environmental Services	Apr-2011	Internal Management Report	€1,699
Investigation of odour/smells, DSP Cobh	Employment Health Advisors Ltd	May-2011	Internal Management Report	€2,023
Development & implementation of the National Employment & Entitlements Service	Accenture	June-2011	Aug-2011	€186,563
Report on Pension Charges in Ireland	PWC	Oct-2011	Oct-2012	€61,500
Social Inclusion Forum – Conference Report	Aidan Lloyd	Nov-2011	Aug-2012	€1,500
2012				
FÁS IS Applications Systems Review	Accenture	Jan-2012	Internal Management Report	€44,772

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Analysis & Measurement of Poverty & Deprivation 2012:1. Work & Poverty in Ireland: An Analysis of CSO Survey on Income & Living Conditions 2004-2010 (2012 annual report)2. Technical Paper on Poverty Indicators – [Appendix C of Report of the Review of the National Poverty Target]3. Implications of Income Pooling & Household Decision-Making for Poverty & Deprivation (2012 technical paper)	ESRI	Jan-2012	1. Dec-2012. Oct-2012. Oct-2013	€81,230
Review of Irish Pensions Policy	OECD	Jan-2012	Apr-2013	€130,000
Actuarial Review of the Social Insurance Fund	KPMG	Feb-2012	Jun-2012	€153,750
Evaluation of JobBridge (National Internship Scheme)	Indecon International Economic Consultants	Apr-2012	Apr-2013	€59,555
Developing system architecture for the National Employment & Entitlements Service	Compass Point	June-2012	Internal Management Report	€4,600

Questions - Written Answers

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Risk assessments regarding reception areas [Arklow, Tallaght, & Kings Inn, Dublin Local Offices]	Nifast	June-2012	Internal Management Report	€1,845
Air Quality Investigation, Ballymun Local Office	Wright Environmental Services	Aug-2012	Internal Management Report	€3,644
Air Quality Investigation, Áras Mhic Dhiarmada	Wright Environmental Services	Aug-2012	Internal Management Report	€3,383
Report on Pension Priority Order	Mercer	Sep-2012	Feb-2013	€18,450
Contracted Employment Service Model	Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion	Nov-2012	Internal Management Report	€140,989
2013				
Mobile Applications Opportunity Exploration	Accenture	Feb-2013	Internal Management Report	€33,388
Social Inclusion Forum – Conference Report	Aidan Lloyd	Mar-2013	Sep-2013	€1,500
Health & Safety Review of DSP premises, Upper Gardiner St, Dublin 1	CPL Training Ltd, trading as Nifast Health & Safety Training	Apr-2013	Internal Management Report	€1,100
Diet Supplement Diet Costings Update	Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute	Apr-2013	Sep-2013	€4,000



Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Analysis & Measurement of Poverty & Social Exclusion (AMPSE) 2013 programme: 1. Social Transfers & Poverty in Boom & Recession (for 2013 annual report) 2. Indicators of Economic Strain in the Great Recession (for 2013 technical paper)	ESRI	June-2013	1. Dec-2013 2. Apr-2014	€67,979
Auto Enrolment & Applicability to Ireland (Pensions)	TOR Financial Consulting Ltd.	Mid-2013	Internal Management Report	€9,900
A Review of In-work Supports for the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare	Mel Cousins & Associates	July-2013		€10,000
Delivery of Administrative Profiling Models to Identify those at Risk of Labour Market Disadvantage	ESRI	July-2013	June-2014	€33,745
Report on Organisation Development	Axiom Consultants	Sept- 2013	Internal Management Report	€122,692
Advisory report on implementation of European Youth Guarantee in Irish circumstances	Organisation for Economic co-operation & Development (OECD)	Sept- 2013	Jan-2014	€50,000
Evaluation of the Youth Guarantee Pilot	Franklin Research Ltd	Oct- 2013	Jan 2015	€20,000*

Questions - Written Answers

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Evaluation Research (Back to Education Allowance)	ESRI	Nov-2013	Internal Management Report	€24,809
Survey Air quality in Nutgrove Local Office	Wright Environmental Services	Nov-2013	Internal Management Report	€2,900
Social Welfare Appeals Office – Research into Revising Decisions	Mel Cousins & Associates	Dec -2013	Internal Management Report	€2,400
2014				
Social Inclusion Forum – Conference Report	Aidan Lloyd	Mar-2014	Dec-2014	€1,650
Analysis & Measurement of Poverty & Social Exclusion 2014 programme: 1. Transitions into and out of household joblessness using CSO SILC data 2. Measuring Irish joblessness: The SILC and LFS data sources	ESRI	Q1-2014	1. Sept-2015 2. May-2015	€80,000
Security Partner Services - IT Forensics	Deloitte	Mar-2014	Internal Management Report	€2,398
Confidential Forensic Services	Rits	Apr-2014	Internal Management Report	€2,340
Confidential Forensic Services	Rits	Apr-2014	Internal Management Report	€4,201
Identification & containment of malicious software	Deloitte	Apr-2014	Internal Management Report	€15,699

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Assessment for Application Lifecycle Management	Microsoft Ireland	May-2014	Internal Management Report	€22,586
Ex-ante Evaluation to support the preparation of the Operational Programme for the European Fund for the Most Deprived 2014-2020	Mel Cousins & Associates	July-2014	Internal report required by EU Regulation (EU) No 223/2014	€16,000
Microfilm Condition Report	Martin Bradley, Archives and Records Management Consultant	Nov -2014	Internal Management Report	€1,691
Report on the effectiveness & efficiency of the guidance model used during Youth Guarantee Pilot	NUI Maynooth	Nov-2014	Internal Management Report	€14,145*
Survey Air quality in Waterford Intreo	Wright Environmental Services	Dec- 2014	Internal Management Report	€6,863
2015				
Review of the EmployAbility (Supported Employment) Service	Indecon International Economic Consultants	Jan-2015	Review complete December; Publication date to be decided	€59,280
Policy and practice report: Key lessons learned from the Ballymun Youth Guarantee Project	NUI Maynooth	Jan-2015	March 2015	€11,135*
Evaluation of the Disability Activation Project	Indecon International Economic Consultants	Feb-2015	November 2015	€29,520

Questions - Written Answers

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Confidential Forensic Services	Rits	Mar-2015	Internal Management Report	€11,480
Windows Tablet PC Hardening Review (Limited Scope)Windows Laptop PC Hardening Review (Limited Scope)Windows Phone Device Hardening Review (Limited Scope)	Deloitte	Mar-2015	Internal Management Report	€4,151
Project coordination of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Work Positive Framework	Sharon Gallagher	Mar- 2015	To be determined following completion of the review	€3,000
Social Inclusion Forum – Conference Report	Aidan Lloyd	Mar-2015	Q3 2016	€1,650
Confidential Information Security Report	Deloitte	July-2015	Internal Management Report	€7,749
Technical review of rent supplement under the Equal Status Acts.	Mel Cousins & Associates	July -2015	Internal Management Report	€18,000
Jobseeker Customer Satisfaction Survey	W5 Marketing Intelligence Ltd	Aug-2015	Q1 2016	€71,463

Report	Name of Consultants	Commissioned	Publication Date	Cost €
2011				
Analysis & Measurement of Poverty & Social Exclusion 2015 Programme:1. Changes in social risks by life-cycle group2. Developing a multi-dimensional quality of life indicator	ESRI	Q3 2015Q3 2015	Q3 2016Q4 2016	€80,000
Evaluation of the Suitability, Effectiveness and Relevance of the JobBridge Activation Programme	Indecon International Economic Consultants	Sept - 2015	Q3 2016	€134,895
Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Activation Reforms	ESRI	Oct - 2015	Q1 2017	€118,315
External quality assessment of DSP Internal Audit under the D/PER Internal Audit standards 2012	EisnerAmper Ireland	Nov-2015	Internal Management Report	€5,535
Confidential Information Security Reports	Grant Thornton	Dec- 2015	Internal Management Report	Not yet fully determined

\* EU Funded Reports

### Departmental Expenditure

155. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Social Protection the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20382/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** Photography services are used,

in conjunction with some press releases and conferences, to communicate my Department's initiatives, schemes and services to customers and to the regional and national media. In 2015 photography services were used for the occasions as set out in the following table.

The procurement of these photography services is carried out in accordance with national and EU procurement procedures and since March 2012, my Department has been procuring photography services under the Framework Agreement established by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in February 2012.

Full details of the Framework are available online via the National Procurement Services contract list at [www.procurement.ie](http://www.procurement.ie).

None of the costs incurred are from the use of the Ministerial Allowance.

Year: 2015	Details	Photographer	Cost (€)
24 Apr 2015	Tánaiste meeting with French Prime Minister in Leinster House	Mac Innes Photography	€246.32
28 Sep 2015	Launch of Jobs Week	Maxwell Photography	€413.28
11 Nov 2015	Launch of Intreo in Galway	Joe Travers Photography	€175.00
		2015 Total	€834.60

### Public Relations Contracts Data

156. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Social Protection to provide in tabular form, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms by his Department since he came into office; the external public relations firms used; to outline the internal departmental policy on employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20397/16]

**Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Leo Varadkar):** It is the policy of the Department of Social Protection that its Press Office deals with all media queries and public relations matters. My Department's policy is to use in-house resources as much as possible and to restrict the use of external public relations firms to a minimum. Since my appointment as Minister for Social Protection on 6 May this year, my Department has not employed any external public relations firms.

### Human Rights Issues

157. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware that on 15 June 2016, at the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, representatives of the office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Commissioner Federica Mogherini, confirmed that due to the worsening human rights situation in Egypt Ms Mogherini is now making public statements on individual cases; and if he has asked the Commissioner to make a public statement on the case of a person (details supplied), given that he is the only citizen of an EU member state who is in an Egyptian prison, especially now that the person's trial has been postponed for the fourteenth time. [20175/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** All actions taken in this case are considered in the context of the Government's clear strategy, which is focused on two core objectives. First, to see this citizen released by the Egyptian authorities so that he can return to his family and his studies in Ireland as soon as possible, and, second, to provide every possible consular support for his welfare while he remains in detention.

Regarding the specific reference to the intervention of an EEAS representative in the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights on 15 June, I am aware through my officials that the EEAS representative highlighted the statements made in recent months by the HRVP spokesperson on the human rights situation in Egypt. Individual cases, including that of this citizen, have been regularly raised with the Egyptian authorities at all levels.

All of the sustained and focused actions that have been taken by the Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and our Embassy in Cairo throughout this case have been aimed at furthering our clear and well-established objectives, and importantly, avoiding any action that could be counterproductive or detrimental to this citizen's interests.

There has been sustained engagement at a variety of levels between the Irish Government and our partners in the European Union on this citizen's case.

Our focus has been on securing and maintaining the support of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini and that channel continues to be very helpful.

I have engaged extensively with the EU High Representative who – at my request - has personally raised this citizen's case with the Egyptian Government. I corresponded with her most recently on 6 June and will be in contact with her again in the coming days.

### **Human Rights Issues**

158. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has met with the family and legal team of a person (details supplied); if he has met with the Egyptian ambassador to Ireland; and if he will now request a presidential decree under Law 140 from the President of Egypt, Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, to ensure the person is released from prison and returned here immediately, given that the person's trial has been postponed. [20176/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I can assure the Deputy that securing this citizen's return home to Ireland has been and continues to be a top priority for the Government.

The Irish Government is pursuing every avenue to secure the release of this citizen and will continue to bring all of our influence to bear on his behalf through all appropriate channels. Significant resources continue to be deployed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, both in Cairo and in Dublin, in the provision of comprehensive consular assistance to both this citizen and his family.

I and my Government colleagues are extremely disappointed at the news of a further delay in the trial of this citizen. This latest delay is a particular source of concern and frustration for the citizen and his family and we fully share their sense of frustration. I met with this citizen's father and sister on Tuesday 28 June, in advance of the hearing, to reaffirm our continued commitment to securing his release.

A further meeting between the family and my officials took place on Friday, 1 July, where

the latest developments were reviewed and options for future action, including a new application under Presidential Decree 140, were considered. The Irish Government intends to lend its full support to a further request for release under the Presidential decree/Law 140, and will continue to work in support of these efforts. I further met with members of the Halawa family today (7 July 2016) before and after a parliamentary debate on this consular case.

My own concerns and that of the Government about this delay have been conveyed directly to the Egyptian Government. I met with the Ambassador of Egypt last Thursday and asked that she convey to her authorities in Cairo my disappointment and frustration at this further postponement of the trial. The Taoiseach spoke by phone with President el-Sisi on Monday last, 4 July, to convey the Government's concerns directly to the President and to renew our call for this citizen to be released. He again met members of the Halawa family today (7 July 2016).

All actions taken in this case are considered in light of the Government's clear objectives: first, to see this citizen released by the Egyptian authorities so that he can return to his family and his studies in Ireland and, second, to provide consular support for his welfare while he remains in detention. The considered approach and sustained action that has been taken by the Taoiseach, Ministers and by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to date in this case has been to further these objectives, and most importantly to avoid any action that could be counterproductive or detrimental to his best interests.

In addition to engagement with the Egyptian authorities, the Government also frequently engages with other states who have had citizens in similar situations, with our European and international partners represented in Egypt, and with the European Union. I have engaged extensively with High Representative Ms Federica Mogherini, who has raised this case with Foreign Minister Shoukry. The Taoiseach has also discussed this citizen's detention at the highest level with President el-Sisi on three occasions, and those lines of communication remain open. The Egyptian Government is in no doubt about the Irish Government's position and our desire to see our citizen released as soon as possible.

Ultimately, any decision to release this citizen will be made solely by the Egyptian authorities. Irrespective of any views regarding the fairness or appropriateness of any detention abroad, the reality is that where an Irish citizen is charged with an offence under the law of a foreign country, it is the foreign law that applies and it is the relevant foreign court which decides matters such as bail and release.

Officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, both in Dublin and in Cairo, remain in ongoing contact with the citizen's family. They will continue to engage appropriately with the Egyptian authorities, will remain resolute in seeking to protect the interests of this Irish citizen, and will do all possible to achieve a positive outcome. They also liaise closely with his Egyptian legal team and have attended all trial hearings to date. The Department also undertakes regular consular visits to him in prison, and the most recent visit took place on Sunday last, 3 July.

## **EU Agreements**

159. **Deputy Paul Murphy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his position on the European Union-Swiss bilateral negotiations; if he supports the Commission's suspension of research grants to Swiss universities and the suspension of the ERASMUS student exchange programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2021/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** In a referendum



held on 9 February 2014, Swiss citizens voted by a very narrow margin to accept a proposal to introduce quotas and restrictions on migrants, the vast majority of whom are EU nationals. The referendum outcome has potentially far-reaching implications for EU-Switzerland relations, not least because any new Swiss legislation introducing quotas on immigration by EU citizens would be incompatible with the existing EU-Switzerland Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons which has been in place since 2002.

Last month, the Swiss Parliament made ratification of Protocol III (extending the EU-Swiss Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons to Croatia) contingent on securing a satisfactory outcome to the discussions with the EU in relation to Switzerland's 2014 initiative on "mass immigration".

The opening of the Swiss labour market to Croatia was part of a deal permitting Switzerland to take part in the European research and development programme Horizon 2020 and the Erasmus exchange programme. The EU has always made clear that there is a close link between Swiss participation in Erasmus and the Protocol, as the programme is closely linked to the free movement of persons (exchange of researchers and students). Given the circumstances arising from the February 2014 vote, the EU and the Swiss authorities agreed to suspend on-going negotiations on Swiss participation in Erasmus. Until the current difficulties are resolved, Switzerland will not participate in Erasmus on an equal footing with Member States as initially envisaged, but will rather enjoy the same status as other third countries (as a "Partner Country").

For its part the EU refuses to entertain any negotiation on the principle of the Free Movement of Persons, a position Ireland fully supports.

### **Foreign Conflicts**

160. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the status of the South China Sea islands and the process of member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states for handling ownership disputes there; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20254/16]

161. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the status of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20255/16]

162. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he is aware of issues regarding freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; if this dispute is ongoing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20256/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 160 to 162, inclusive, together.

I am aware of ongoing tensions in the South China Sea, including those relating to freedom of navigation. The situation in the South China Sea, through which a significant amount of world trade passes each year, is of interest to Ireland, as a small open economy. We therefore closely monitor the ongoing developments in the region. Ireland, together with our EU partners, is committed to maintaining a legal order for the seas and oceans based upon the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This includes the maintenance of freedom of navigation.

Ireland, together with our EU partners, does not take a position on the individual claims in the South China Sea. However, we are concerned at the potential for a dangerous escalation of

tensions in the area in question. It is our strong wish to see these disputes resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, and we urge the parties involved to refrain from actions that could lead to increased tensions in the region.

ASEAN and China adopted the Declaration on the Conducts of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002. After a series of discussions, ASEAN and China adopted the Guidelines to implement the DOC in July 2011. They have committed to a range of principles, which include: building, maintaining and enhancing mutual trust and confidence; exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities; and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Furthermore, the Parties to the DOC agreed to working towards the eventual realisation of a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea (COC), on the basis of consensus. Ireland, together with our EU partners, supports the full implementation of the DOC, and looks forward to a swift conclusion of the talks on a COC, which will further support a rules-based regional and international order.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

163. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has met the First Minister, Ms Arlene Foster, and the Deputy First Minister, Mr. Martin Mc Guinness, since the result of the referendum on a British exit from the European Union; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20257/16]

164. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has met British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Ms Theresa Villiers, since the result of the referendum on a British exit from the European Union; if they have discussed matters that concern the island of Ireland, such as implications for trade and Border controls; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20258/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 163 and 164 together.

I have been actively engaged with both the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government since the results of the recent UK-EU referendum became known. On the Friday when the result was announced I spoke with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the First and deputy First Ministers and the leaders of the Northern Irish political parties.

Last Wednesday, the Secretary of State and I convened the Quarterly Review Meeting of the Fresh Start and Stormont House Agreements, which was attended by the First and deputy First Ministers and the Northern Ireland Justice Minister and at which the referendum result was discussed. In addition to the Review Meeting, I held a separate bilateral meeting with Secretary of State Villiers during which we discussed the issue, as I did in meetings with the SDLP leader and the leader of the Alliance Party.

The referendum outcome was also on the agenda at Monday's NSMC Plenary hosted by the Taoiseach at Dublin Castle. My Cabinet colleagues and I participated together with the Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive led by the First and deputy First Ministers.

During the NSMC Plenary, there was a detailed discussion on the potential impact of the UK referendum result to leave the EU. At the meeting, the NSMC agreed on ten specific areas where there would be joint planning and engagement. Furthermore, the economy and trade; Northern Ireland and British Irish relations; the Common Travel Area; and the EU were highlighted as the four priority areas where implications arise as result of the referendum vote.

The NSMC Plenary followed on from last week's Quarterly Review Meeting of the Fresh

Start and Stormont House Agreements and my separate bilateral meeting with Secretary of State Villiers. Naturally the outcome of the UK referendum on the EU was a key element of these meetings and I took the opportunity to assure all those present of the priority the Government attaches to the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland in the aftermath of the referendum.

I emphasised the necessity and importance of working together in the best interests of the people on this island. I reiterated the Government's commitment to work in support of stability, reconciliation and prosperity in Northern Ireland. In this regard the Government will use its influence with our EU partners to seek to persuade them of the need for specific arrangements which protect the key gains of the peace process on this island – a process to which the EU has already made a key contribution. In addition I outlined that the Common Travel Area and cross-border EU funding, are key priorities for the Government in the period ahead.

I am very conscious of the deep concerns and anxiety that have arisen for many people across the community in Northern Ireland about the referendum outcome. The fact that the majority within Northern Ireland who voted to remain now face their preference being set aside as a result of the overall result across the UK raises profound issues.

In this regard, in my bilateral meeting with Secretary of State Villiers we agreed that the Good Friday Agreement remains the foundation for the two Governments' approach to Northern Ireland. The EU referendum result does not in any way diminish the centrality of the Good Friday Agreement or the requirement of both the British and Irish Governments to uphold it. As a co-guarantor of the Good Friday and succeeding Agreements, the Irish Government is determined that its institutions, values and principles – including the right to be British or Irish or both - will be fully protected.

Furthermore, I noted that any future arrangements will not exclusively be determined by the wishes of the Irish Government, the British Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. They will also be influenced by the wider negotiations between the UK and the EU of 27 remaining Member States. One of the challenges, therefore, will be for Ireland to use its influence with our EU partners to persuade them of the need for specific arrangements which protect the key gains of the peace process on this island.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

165. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has completed an assessment of the implications for the North-South bodies since the result of the referendum on a British exit from the European Union, particularly on those bodies that receive European Union funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20259/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** At the Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) which was held in Dublin Castle on Monday 4 July 2016, Government and Northern Ireland Executive Ministers had a detailed discussion on the potential impact of the UK Referendum vote to leave the EU. The Council agreed that the implications of the referendum decision on North South cooperation should be explored in detail for all sectors. In order to optimise joint planning and engagement on key issues arising following the UK referendum result, the NSMC agreed to work together to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge as regards the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.

The Council agreed that a full audit will be undertaken in all NSMC sectors, which include the six North South Bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd., to identify the possible impacts, risks, opportunities and contingencies arising in the phases preceding and following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. It was also agreed that Ministers North and South at their forthcoming NSMC Sectoral meetings will consider the strategic and cross-cutting issues arising and that final priorities will be agreed by the next NSMC Plenary in November for both pre-negotiation and negotiation phases.

All of the North South Bodies are testament to the benefit of working together for mutual benefit, and in the light of the Referendum result it will be important that the Northern Ireland Executive and the Government continue to fully support the work of the Bodies.

The North South Bodies are playing a continuing and central role in our economic recovery, with Tourism Ireland driving record tourism numbers to this island and InterTradeIreland building vital exporting capacity among our small and medium enterprises, the mainstay of the all-island economy. Another North South Body, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), is the Managing Authority for various EU Programmes.

At the NSMC Plenary meeting the Council re-iterated the joint commitment of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to the successful implementation of the EU's PEACE and INTERREG programmes, and agreed that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Northern Ireland Finance Minister will consider the issue of securing the ERDF funding for PEACE and INTERREG, including through engagement with the European Commission.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

166. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20303/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** From the moment the British Prime Minister David Cameron first proposed a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in 2013, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has worked closely with the Department of the Taoiseach on this important strategic issue for Ireland. Work is underway to ensure that capabilities and resources are put in place to manage the complex process of a UK exit from the EU.

I am happy to set out the resources which are in place in my Department as of today. Within my Department, lead responsibility for the UK-EU relationship lies with Ireland, UK and Americas (IUKA) Division, within which there is a dedicated British-Irish Relations Unit currently staffed by five officers. This Unit works very closely with colleagues in the wider IUKA Division, especially those colleagues focused on Northern Ireland. Supporting and sustaining peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland is a key priority for my Department and protecting the interests of Northern Ireland will be a crucial element of our approach to any negotiations regarding the UK's departure from the EU.

The Department also has a Policy Planning Unit which was established in 2014 and has provided policy analysis to the IUKA Division. In addition, there is also an intra-Departmental contact group on the UK-EU relationship, comprising senior officials across all of our relevant

units.

In terms of Irish offices abroad focused on the UK-EU relationship, I would list in particular the Embassy of Ireland in London, the Consulate General of Ireland in Edinburgh, our offices in Belfast and Armagh, and the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union in Brussels. Missions across the EU and further afield are all working on this issue, especially as the expected UK exit process approaches.

I would also add that seven diplomatic officers of the Department are seconded to the European Union Division in the Department of the Taoiseach, while two diplomatic officers are seconded to the International and EU Relations Division of the Department of Finance.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

167. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to provide in tabular form and per annum all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March, 2011; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20347/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** This Department is responsible for two votes - Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs and Trade) and Vote 27 (International Cooperation).

My Department commissions external expertise where highly specialised skills are not available within the Department and in particular where ongoing independent evaluation of programmes and projects is required. During the course of their engagements, these consultants/experts may prepare reports and other documentation for the Department.

In-depth analysis of issues by external experts has informed - and continues to inform - my Department's policies, allowing for a more targeted use of resources and greater accountability in the allocation of budgets.

These services are procured by open competitive tendering processes in accordance with EU and national rules and comply with the overall value for money objective of the Department.

Separately, a low number of consultancies are occasionally engaged directly by our Missions abroad from time to time.

The following tables set out the request details of external reports commissioned by the Department since March 2011.

Questions - Written Answers

	Commission	Experts/Consultants	Report/Subject	Cost (€)	Date of publication
2011		Kevin Moore	Support to the Governments of Zambia and South Africa to develop Special Economic Zones for the promotion of inward investment and employment	17,861	Not Applicable – see footnote*
2011		Paul Sheane	Support to the Governments of Zambia and South Africa to develop Special Economic Zones for the promotion of inward investment and employment	9,965	*
2011		Stefanie Meredith	Review of Irish Aid Support for Product Development Partnerships in developing countries	10,100	*
2011		Samia Saad	Review of Irish Aid Support for Product Development Partnerships in developing countries	9,198	*

2011		Paud Murphy	Development Education Reviews - to examine the current funding support and engagement in each of the priority areas identified in the Development Education strategy (primary, post primary, third level, adult, community and youth work)	9,064	*
2011		80:20	Development Education Reviews - to examine the current funding support and engagement in each of the priority areas identified in the Development Education strategy (primary, post primary, third level, adult, community and youth work)	9,870	*
2011		Eilis Murray	Development Education Reviews - to examine the current funding support and engagement in each of the priority areas identified in the Development Education strategy (primary, post primary, third level, adult, community and youth work)	6,068	*

Questions - Written Answers

2011		ISOS	Development Education Reviews - to examine the current funding support and engagement in each of the priority areas identified in the Development Education strategy (primary, post primary, third level, adult, community and youth work)	42,247	*
2011		Bernard McLoughlin	Review of the Irish Aid Centre, Dublin	6,143	*
2011		Cathal Higgins	Preparation of a report on the programme of education sector budget support towards school infrastructural development in Karamoja region and skills development in the oil sector (Uganda)	5,000	*
2011		Mike Williams	Review of Humanitarian Programme Plan for Irish Aid	18,742	*
2011		Humanitarian Policy Ltd	Review of Security Policy & Practice among Irish Aid Humanitarian Partners	33,930	*
	2012	Mike Williams	Evaluation of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation	12,247	July 2013
	2012	PA Consulting Group	Evaluating the value of the economic relationship between the United Kingdom and Ireland	73,083	July 2013



	2012	Cathy Roche	Review of the Our World Awards 2005-2011	6,300	*
	2012	Everywhere Consulting	Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Humanitarian Hub at Shannon Airport	40,584	*
	2012	Fintan Farrelly	Review of the Irish Aid Strategic Environmental Partnership Programme	6,000	*
	2012	Mike Williams	Review of Misean Cara	15,099	*
	2012	Pham Quang Hoa	Local consultancy contract 'Review of P135 infrastructure projects funded by Irish Aid'	5,453	*
	2012	IOD Parc	South Africa Country Strategy Programme 2008-2012 Final Report	73,256	January 2013
	2012	Itad	Evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy Programme 2008-2012	143,886	May 2013
	2013	Peter McEvoy	Evaluation of a number of Organisations funded by the Emigrant Support Programme(ESP)	13,075	July 2013
	2013	Wright Consultancy Ltd	Gender Equality Audit	14,000	*
2013		Mary Jennings	Review of HRD (Human Rights and Democratisation) Scheme Irish Aid Palestine	15,500	*

Questions - Written Answers

2013		Bronagh Hinds & Karen McMinn Consultants	Report on the implementation of Ireland's National Action Plan on UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security	20,811	June 2013
2013		ASTEC Global Consultancy Ltd	Review of Irish Aid Financial Policies and Procedures	44,493	*
2013		Gareth Williams	Review of Financial and Programme of the Camara Education Programme	20,000	*
2013		John Geraghty	Review of University College Cork's Programme of Technical Support Internships for Food Security	7,568	*
2013		Natural Research Institute	Review of Irish Aid Support to Fair and Ethical Trade Initiatives	19,292	*
2013		Pham Quang Hoa	Review Programme 135 (for Ethnic Minorities) of Irish Aid funded infrastructure projects	5,588	*
2013		IOD Parc	Evaluation of Irish Aid's Sierra Leone Strategy Paper, 2011-2013	77,907	August 2014

2013		Mokoro	Evaluation of Ireland's Support to Timor Leste, 2001-2014	85,203	August 2014
	2014	Tierney & Associates, Risk & Governance Consultants	Audit of grants awarded under Emigrant Support Programme	19,934	*
2014	Hogan Lovells, Washington	Review of tax, social insurance and health obligations and other conditions of service in respect of locally-recruited staff members at our missions in the United States	57,756	*	
2014	Gallup Korea (Korea Gallup Poll Co. LTD)	Working Holiday Agreement Report	7,217		March 2015
2014	Andy Pollak	Review of Irish Aid support for Initial Teacher Education	11,564	*	
2014	ADETEF	OECD DAC EVALNET Study on Collaborative Partner- Donor Evaluation Work	25,000	*	
2014	Tran i Ngoc Diep	Local input into Review of Irish Aid scholarship programmes	1,502	*	
2014	Tom Collins	Feasibility Study - Celebrating and Sustaining Ireland's relationship with Africa	5,000	*	
2014	ITAD Limited	Mid Term Review of the Civil Society Support Programme	68,135	*	
2014	David Goodman Payne	Review of Irish Aid Civil Society Facility in Vietnam	8,589		On-going

Questions - Written Answers

2014	Cathy Gaynor/ Niamh O'Grady/Gill Roe	Evaluability Assessment of the Programme of Strategic Cooperation	43,200	*
2014	Willis Risk Services (Ireland) Limited	Consultancy for insurance policy report and tender documentation for the Rapid Response Corps	5,000	*
2014	Mekong Dev Research Institute	Impact assessment of Irish Aid funded infrastructure projects under P135 in 2011 & 2012	43,912	*
2014	Karen McMinn	Report and final review on the implementation of Ireland's National Action Plan on UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security	9,750	2015
2014	Mokoro	Evaluation of Irish Aid's Uganda Country Strategy Paper 2010-2014	113,739	*
2014	ASM (B) Ltd	Payroll System Audit	11,636	*
2015	ASM	Audit of grants awarded under Emigrant Support Programme	€9,800	*
2015	Peter McEvoy	Professional Services for the appraisal of Irish Aid fellowship Training Programme	16,560	*
2015	Coffey International Development Ltd	Review of the Irish Aid Programme Grant Mechanism	23,588	*

2015	Tran i Ngoc Diep	Local input into scoping study to explore Ireland's cooperation in the agriculture & agribusiness sector under the IDEAS programme	4,442	*
2015	Johnny O 'Regan	Organisational Assessment of Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice	4,400	*
2015	ASM	The provision of audit services to examine grants awarded under the ESP	14,700	*
2015	Mazars	ICT Audit	27,552	*
2015	Crowleys DFK	Payment System Audit	19,004	*
2015	Saferworld	Conflict Analysis input to the Embassy of Ireland Country Strategy Paper(CSP) development process - Uganda	15,450	*
2015	Dr Cornelius Chipoma	Review of the education Sector programme in the context of Irish Aid Zambia 2013-2017 CSP - Zambia	3,738	*
2015	Charles Abola	Review of Irish Aid support to Acholi Education initiative (AEI) - Zambia	12,000	*
2015	Firetail Ltd	Evaluation of the MVIWATA Strategic Plan 2010-2014 - Tanzania	21,450	*
2015	Centre for Social Research	Review of Irish Aid's support of the Forum from Women's Educationalist – Uganda Chapter(FAWEU)	18,942	*

Questions - Written Answers

2015	Wilberforce MUHWANA	Design of the Quality Education Component for the Development of the Country Strategy Paper 2016 - 2020	14,400	*
2015	Transparency international	Consultancy to assess the current Governance and Management status of institutions in Education Sector to appraise Performance, and propose Recommendations to improve Accountability and Transparency	15,362	*
2015	Stephens Moore	Audit and Verification of Grants awarded to the Platform for Social Protection Zambia for 2013 and 2014	31,550	*
2015	Ann Nolan	Review of the Irish Aid – HSE collaboration - 2015	6,300	October 2015
2015	Sebastian Kevany	Review of Irish Aid-CHAI (Clinton Health Access Initiative) Partnership 2011-2015	9,000	November 2015
2015	Ms Mpala Nkonkomalimba	Mid Term Review Process Irish Aid Zambia Country Strategy 2013-17	6,300	*
2015	Kate Bridges	Review of Partners Logic Models/ theories of change-Zambia	6,680	November 2015
2015	Mr Isaac Ngoma	Mid Term Review Public Financial Management (PFM) Assessment - Zambia	5,000	November 2015

2015	Lahluva Consultores	Annual Planning Report of G19 and Government of Mozambique and Assessment of Irish Aid Annual Comm to GBS - Mozambique	24,000	March 2016
2015	OPTIMOZ	Facilitation & Capability Strengthening for Niassa Provincial Leadership Team re Design of Niassa Provincial Strategic Framework for the PEN – 2027 - Mozambique	25,000	November 2015
2015	OPTIMOZ	Capability Assessment and Initial Facilitation of Planning Exercise for Niassa Provincial Leadership Team 2017-27 - Mozambique	4,900	October 2015
2015	Option Consultancy Services Ltd	Review of Social Accountability Approaches in Health	12,872	January 2016
2016	Right to Change	Planning of Irish Aid Country Strategy Programme Tanzania 2017-2022	13,974	*
2016	Grant Thornton	Audit Services	100,000	*
2016	REEV Consult International	Evaluation of the CSF and the Partnership Fund	25,000	*
2016	Kevin Carroll	Irish Aid Tanzania end of CSP Review	17,250	*
2016	Muriel Visser	Phase III Evaluation of Ireland's Development Cooperation Programme - Vietnam 2011-2015	17,500	*
2016	Emmanuel Sulle	Land Rights Scoping Study / Consultancy	7,500	*

Questions - Written Answers

2016	Ishihaka Mwandalima	Gender Based Violence scoping study	3,750	*
2016	McQuillans	Accounting, Audit and Financial Services	6,240	*
2016	PWC	Internal audit of Embassy, and external audit of selected projects/programmes	75,000	*
2016	Dr Cornelius Chipoma	Review of the Irish Aid Zambia Education programme	9,000	*
2016	Luiz Genedio Mendes Jorge	Review of the Supreme Audit Institution's report and opinion on the State Accounts 2014	4,800	*
2016	Southern Cross Consulting	Review of Embassy of Ireland's approach to Fellowship in Tanzania	11,430	*
2016	Byrne Wallace	Professional Health service advice	3,500	*
2016	Willis Towers Watson	Study of Compensation Levels - Locally engaged staff in diplomatic missions (USA)	3,150	*
2016	Mercer International	Study of Compensation Levels - Locally engaged staff in diplomatic missions (Irish Aid)	13,200	*
2016	Eamon Brehony, Alais Nakuyukuyo Morindat	Review of Irish Aid support to Pastoralism in Tanzania	10,450	*
2016	Centre for Law and Democracy	Analysis of anti corruption legislation in Tanzania	2,670	*
2016	ASM	Accounting, audit and financial services	40,000	*



2016	CASE International	Consultancy to evaluate the Civil Society Fund	49,800	*
2016	Ingrid Obery	Review of partner results and internal capacity building on results based Management	25,000	*
2016	Caoimhe Hughes	Review of Annual Reports of Programme Grant Partners	4,000	*

\*This report commissioned by the Department is an internal management report and not for publication.

### Departmental Expenditure

168. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the total photography costs, per annum, for his Department since he came to office, inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance, in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy in his Department regarding the booking of photographers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20377/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** My Department only avails of the services of external photographic agencies where it is warranted, in particular, for major events and State occasions. This is a service which my Department provides so that the media can easily and freely avail of photography where their own staff photographers cannot be fully accommodated. Events such as the visit of Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall in May resulted in positive coverage of Ireland.

In September 2011, my Department led a collaborative advertised tender process for the procurement of a multi-supplier competitive framework of photographic service providers. This is now available for use by all Government Departments. Details of the framework arrangements and the photographers used are posted on the National Procurement Service website: [www.procurement.ie/suppliers/contracts/1298](http://www.procurement.ie/suppliers/contracts/1298). The purpose of this framework is to ensure Departments' compliance with EU procurement rules and to ensure value for money by having a competitive process for photographic assignments.

In addition, my Department now makes greater use of in-house resources for photography, including, for example, at the Irish-Africa Economic Forum last October.

The total cost of photography already to my Department billed (a small number of bills have yet to be received) for events which took place over the period in question is:

May 6 – July 5 events	Cost €
Missions:	
Embassy Beijing Promotional Blown Up Photos	180.00
HQ:	

Grangegorman Cemetery 1916 Commemorative Event	947.10
Travelwise Leaflet Launch	843.78
Photograph of new Cabinet	14.00
Prince of Wales Visit	1,421.74
Our World Award Sligo	184.50
Launch of Irish Aid Awards	427.25
Our World Awards Dublin	740.46
Our World Awards Limerick	200.00
TOTAL:	€4,958.83

### Public Relations Contracts Data

169. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to provide in tabular form, per annum, the use of external public relations firms by his Department since he came into office; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy on employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20392/16]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** A table containing the information follows. My Department has not incurred expenditure on external public relations services since my entry into office in May 2016. The expenditure in question has rather arisen in the context of specific initiatives under Ireland's overseas development programme for which we have from time to time commissioned companies with a public relations and communications background to provide other professional services such as project management, logistics and event management.

DHR Communications has been contracted to manage and administer grants to journalists reporting on international development issues under the Simon Cumbers Media Fund (SCMF) and to manage and administer annual Africa Day celebrations.

The SCMF involves managing three funding rounds each year, including the annual SCMF student competition. This typically involves the following activities:

- Convening national and regional information workshops;
- Managing and administering the application process;
- Organising the judging process
- Providing detailed feedback to all applicants;
- Processing grant payments and keeping detailed administrative and financial records;
- Maintaining and updating the SCMF website.

It should be noted that expenses paid to third parties account for approximately 30% of the total paid to DHR for managing and administering the Simon Cumbers Media Fund. This includes costs associated with maintaining and updating the SCMF website, facilitating the judging process and raising awareness of the Fund among journalists. DHR was awarded a two-year contract in April 2015 following a competitive tendering process.

Following a further competitive tendering process, DHR was also engaged to plan, manage and execute a national Africa Day 2016 flagship event in Dublin. Like annual Africa Day

events held over successive years, this incorporated musical entertainment and cultural activities aimed principally at family audiences. DHR's role involved the administration of a small grants scheme for regional events which they managed on behalf of the Department in partnership with a number of local authorities. DHR also worked to raise public awareness of the Africa Day events, including through the use of social media and the Africa Day website. This work represented a very minor element of the overall project and was conducted in close cooperation with my Department's communications office.

In relation to the expenditure on Africa Day, expenses paid to third parties accounted for between 70% and 80% of the total costs listed in the table. This included expenditure on security, sanitation, venue set-up, health and safety matters and small grants to facilitate the participation of community groups.

The following table sets out the payments to DHR since May 2016.

**Project/Event**

DHR Communications –Africa Day	€151,861.20
DHR Communications –Simon Cumbers Media Fund	€ 8,047.34

**Public Sector Staff Recruitment**

170. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if it is common practice for Civil Service recruitment panels to be automatically disbanded after two years, resulting in candidates having to reapply for the same panel despite having attended interviews and moved up in position on the panel; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20400/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** As the Deputy will be aware, in general, selection competitions within the Irish Civil Service take place by way of:

- competitions confined to particular Departments (Internal promotion) or
  - from competitions open to candidates from all Departments (Interdepartmental promotion)
- or
- from open competitions to all eligible candidates including members of the public.

Candidates who are successful at a competition are ranked in order of merit and are placed on panels to await appointment when and if a vacancy arises. Recruitment and promotions are made on the basis of an agreed method of sequence. Sequences vary for each grade and usually involve a combination of open, interdepartmental and internal panels. Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position.

The duration of Interdepartmental and Internal panels are generally agreed at the beginning of each campaign, extensions may be agreed provided there are objective reasons for doing so, but it is the norm that panels will finish at the agreed time.

The rationale for limiting panels are twofold. Firstly it gives people on the panel an opportunity to be recruited or promoted. Secondly, it ensures that panels are not left in place for long periods with no opportunity for others to compete.

Other factors determining the use and duration of panels would be determined by a number of factors including demand, required skills and workforce planning, with reference to their pay budgets.

### **Heritage Sites**

171. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the status of a castle (details supplied) where a guided service should be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20407/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Seán Canney):** Every consideration has been given to the request to provide a Guide Service at Carrigafoyle Castle, Ballylongford, Co. Kerry. However, for reasons previously outlined, the Office of Public Works is not in a position to provide this service and is satisfied that the existing access arrangements adequately facilitate those who wish to visit the site.

### **Office of Public Works Staff**

172. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the Office of Public Works plans to employ general operative and maintenance positions in counties Sligo and Leitrim; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20408/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Seán Canney):** The Office of Public Works (OPW) employs permanent and seasonal general operative and maintenance staff in counties Sligo and Leitrim, on an ongoing basis, in the areas of drainage maintenance and National Monuments site maintenance. There are no current plans for additional recruitment to those positions.

Notices of open OPW recruitment competitions are available on the Recruitment section of [www.opw.ie](http://www.opw.ie) and are advertised in the national and local press, as appropriate.

### **Public Sector Expenditure**

173. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to provide a breakdown of the savings made in each relevant sector of the Irish economy since the introduction of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009, 2013 and 2015; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20235/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** As recently outlined in the Summer Economic Statement, between 2008 and 2014 Departmental gross voted expenditure decreased by €8 billion as successive Governments sought to bring the public finances under control, exit the EU-IMF Programme and re-establish market access. Difficult decisions in areas including social welfare, health, capital and public sector pay and pensions were taken at a time of increasing demand for services in many areas.

Of this, savings related to public service pay and pensions under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009-2013 contributed €2.2 billion to the fiscal adjustment. The impact of these measures is now being ameliorated through the operation of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2015 which implements the Lansdowne Road Agreement at a full year cost of €844 million by 2018 with additional provisions providing for

a similar programme of reductions in the impact of the Public Service Pension Reduction at a full-year cost of €90m in 2018.

The Annual Review of the operation and effectiveness of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts was laid before the Oireachtas last week and can be found here:

<http://www.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Annual-review-and-report-to-the-Houses-of-the-Oireachtas-by-the-Minister-for-Public-Expenditure-and-Reform-under-section-12-of-the-Act-2016.pdf>.

### **Public Sector Pay**

174. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the steps he will take to address the low starting pay in the public service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20250/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** Recruitment data from the Public Appointments Service and the overall growth in public service numbers indicates that starting pay rates in the Public Service are, in general, market competitive. Moreover analysis of public service pay band data available to the Department shows that some 93% of all public service staff are on salary points in excess of €25,000 per annum.

Under the terms of the Lansdowne Road Agreement (LRA) the process of restoring public service pay has commenced with the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2015 delivering a three year programme at a full year cost of €844m in 2018. Importantly, the Lansdowne Road Agreement is progressively weighted towards pay restoration for lower paid public servants. It makes provision for increases in gross pay in 2016 for those on pay up to €31,000 and in 2017 for lower and middle income public servants, namely those on pay up to €65,000. For any public servant whose annualised salary is below €24,001 they benefited from an increase in gross pay of 2.5% from 1 January 2016. For those on annualised salaries between €24,001 and €31,000 they benefited from an increase in gross pay of 1% from 1 January 2016. For all those on annualised salaries up to €65,000 there will be a flat rate increase in gross pay of €1,000 from 1 September 2017. Additionally, all public servants will benefit from the Pension Related Deduction (PRD) measures contained in the Lansdowne Road Agreement which will benefit all affected public servants by up to €733 in 2016 and €1,000 in 2017. However, through the operation of the tax code, lower paid public servants will benefit proportionately more from the PRD measures.

The combined impact of these measures, for example, on a public servant on a salary of €25,000 will be an additional €1,875 over the duration of the Agreement a 7.5% increase.

The Agreement is also flexible enough to allow for the concerns of recent recruits to the public service to be addressed in a negotiated way and in return for work place reform to drive greater productivity in the public service, as has already been agreed with representative bodies of one group of public servants.

The Programme for Government also states that the Government will establish a Public Service Pay Commission to examine pay levels across the public service including any issues relating to new entrants' pay. The precise structure of such a commission and the technical aspects as to how it will operate have yet to be decided upon and will require broad consultation, including engagement with staff representatives as was committed to in the Lansdowne Road Agreement.

## **Flood Prevention Measures**

175. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the status of the Enniscorthy flood defence scheme in County Wexford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20251/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Seán Canney):** The River Slaney (Enniscorthy) Flood Relief Scheme is currently being progressed by Wexford County Council with funding provided by the Office of Public Works. The current position is as follows -

The detailed design phase for both the new bridge installation and flood defences is underway. The required comprehensive surveying to inform the detailed design is being carried out. Ecology surveys commenced on site in Feb 2016 and are ongoing. Traffic surveys were completed in March 2016. Topographic & Bathymetric surveys were carried out on site during April & May 2016. The Archaeological survey of the river bed was completed in May 2016. The Invasive Species survey was completed in June 2016.

Site investigations works commenced on site in June 2016 and will continue in the town centre, along the river bed and river banks, and in the adjacent roads and footpaths throughout July. This work requires the drilling of boreholes and the excavation of trial pits and trenches to identify existing ground conditions and the location of underground services.

It is hoped to hold a public display of the proposed works later in 2016, and to submit the proposed scheme for formal Confirmation or approval by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and commence the procurement process for a works contractor in late 2016 with a view to construction commencing in the first half of 2017.

## **Public Sector Pay**

176. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the savings provided for in budget 2011 achieved by implementing the new pay grades for public servants entering the system on 1 January 2011; the savings that were made in each of the years 2012 to 2015 since the policy was implemented; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20262/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** I refer the Deputy to my reply to PQ Ref: 19514/16 of 5 July.

## **Ministerial Meetings**

177. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he has recently met the Garda Representative Association; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20291/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** While I have not formally met with the Garda Representative Association officials of my Department have participated in all discussions with the Association on the issue of the Lansdowne Road Agreement alongside those of the Department of Justice & Equality.

## Capital Expenditure Programme

178. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the status of capital expenditure in 2016; if it is on target; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20292/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** Net capital issues at the end of June 2016 amounted to €1.148 billion, which falls short by €43m (3.6%) of profiled expenditure of €1.191 billion. The end-June 2016 issues figure compares to €1.054 billion for the same period last year and, therefore, represents an increase of €94 million or 8.9%.

Capital issues to date represent 31.1% of the total net capital estimate (€3.693 billion) for the year with €2.546 billion remaining to be spent. This is supplemented with capital carryover of some €111.8 million from 2015. For the same period last year, issues of €1.054 billion accounted for 31.8% of the 2015 net cumulative issues figure of €3.318 billion.

The Deputy will understand that variance between profiled and actual expenditure can arise over the course of the year reflecting a broad range of factors impacting on individual capital spending programmes and projects. At this point in time, it is currently expected that actual and profiled expenditure will be aligned in overall terms at end-year.

## Public Sector Pensions

179. **Deputy Jim O’Callaghan** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he has considered changes to the pension arrangements for public servants in civil partnership or same-sex marriage arrangements given the recent preliminary European Court of Justice findings in relation to a case (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20294/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** My role as Minister in the field of pensions relates to issues affecting the civil and public service. The civil service operates Contributory Pension Schemes which provide benefits to spouses and/or children of deceased scheme members. In summary, when a member dies after retirement, a spouse’s pension of up to one-half of the former member’s pension is payable. Dependent children are also entitled to a child’s pension.

Same sex married couples are afforded the same benefits under the Civil Service Schemes and the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, as married couples of the opposite sex. The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 extended the benefits provided to spouses under pension schemes to civil partners and the Marriage Act 2015 gives effect to the referendum on marriage equality.

The opinion of the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice referred to by the Deputy is being studied within my Department.

## UK Referendum on EU Membership

180. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland’s response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams

in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20307/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** My Department is currently reviewing the arrangements that will need to be put in place to respond to the United Kingdom decision to leave the European Union.

In advance of the Referendum the Department had engaged in planning for the eventuality that there would be a vote to leave. In particular, it took part in the work of the Interdepartmental Group on EU/UK relations which was convened by the Department of the Taoiseach, and it contributed to the risk assessment conducted by that Department. Actions relating to my Department are included in the Government's Contingency Framework, a summary of which was published immediately following the Referendum result. In addition, the implications of a vote to leave were considered by the Department's Management Board prior to the Referendum and the issue was included in the Department's risk register.

In light of the outcome of the Referendum, the matter will continue to be reviewed by senior management, and the Department will continue to take part in the work of the Interdepartmental Group. Negotiations are unlikely to commence for some months, however, and the arrangement to be out in place to respond to the vote will need to take account of how these proceed.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

181. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report; and the publication date. [20351/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** In response to the Deputy's question the following table outlines the total amount spent on external consultancy reports commissioned by my Department since 2011.

Name of Report	Costs	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Name of External Consultant
Independent verification of savings arising under the Public Service Agreement	€35,819	June 2011	MKO Partners Ltd
Report on Reasons Behind Voter Behaviour in the Oireachtas Inquiry Referendum 2011	€41,043	January 2012	Red C Research and Marketing Ltd.
Independent verification of savings arising under the Public Service Agreement	€31,586	13 June 2012	Grant Thornton
Capacity and Capability Review of Central Procurement Function	€30,750	6 September 2012	Accenture



Name of Report	Costs	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Name of External Consultant
ICT-MF Executive Assessment	€30,750	November 2012	Innovation Value Institute, NUIM
Independent verification of savings arising under the Public Service Agreement	€24,206	3 July 2013	Grant Thornton
Debt Management Final Report	€135,514	Published 24 July 2014	BearingPoint
Report of a Consultation with Civil Society Representatives and Citizens on Ireland's Participation in the Open Government Partnership	Funding of €25,735.25 was provided to Transparency International Ireland in 2013 following a competitive tender process to support a public consultation with civil society and the preparation of a report of their recommendations and proposals for potential inclusion in Ireland's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan.	Published on 2 October 2013	Transparency International, Ireland
Open Data project: Best Practice Handbook Data Audit Report Roadmap for Open Data Evaluation Framework Open Data Publication Handbook	€19,188	July 2014	Insight Centre for Data Analytics, NUI Galway
Development of Training & Organisation Development	€22,900	Internal report	Baker Tilly Ryan Glennon. Trinity House, Charleston Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Value for Money Report of Dublin Castle's Conference Facilities	€4,674	Qtr 3, 2014	Newmarket Consulting

Questions - Written Answers

Name of Report	Costs	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Name of External Consultant
Fund Structuring Services Agreement for Social Housing and Energy Efficiency in Ireland	€26,767	5 November 2014	European Investment Bank
Baseline Report Single Pension Scheme	€24,900	9 December 2014	Mr Seamus O'Dwyer
Civil Service Disciplinary Code Review (action identified under Civil Service Renewal Plan)	€23,985	June 2015	Clarion Consulting
Debt Management Final Report	€135,514	July 2015	BearingPoint
Comparative Report on European National Identification Numbers	€37,500	Publication pending the completion of the work of the PPSN review Group	Hans Graux of time. lex CVBA, Brussels, Belgium
Provision of legal expertise to assist and advise the Department in the preparation of Guidance to Public Bodies under section 21(3) of the protected Disclosures Act 2014	€12,500	Provision of legal expertise only. Not for publication.	Lauren Kierans BL
Analysis of Business Processes for European Structural and Investment Funds and Development of a Detailed Specification for EU Structural Funds 2014-2020	€46,371	Publication pending the completion of the work of the Dovetail Group	Dovetail
Options for the next National Lottery licence	€615	Internal report	Davy Corporate Finance
Recommendations to DPER for Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme	€23,917	November 2015	JBA Consulting

Name of Report	Costs	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Name of External Consultant
Business case to deliver a new shared service model to deliver learning and development for the Civil Service external expert advice sought to assess the costs, benefits, risks and implications associated to the components elements of the new model	€106,063	Report is not published yet	Knowledge Pool as part of CAPITA Consulting
Building Strategic HR in the Civil Service	€8,000	Internal report	McGrath Associates
PeoplePoint: Optimal Resourcing Review reflecting present and future organisational requirements	€49,200	Internal report	Equita Consulting
River Ilen (Skibbereen) drainage scheme: environmental impact statement recommendations to DPER	€12,417	January 2016	Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers
OGP ICT Category Strategies (8 in total)	€153,000	January 2016 Internal report	Accenture
Public Service Spend & Tendering Analysis for 2014	€98,400	Pending approval	Accenture
Strategic Market Assessment Phase 1	€200,010	Internal report	Deloitte
Strategic Market Assessment Phase 2	€484,450	Internal report	Deloitte
Strategic Market Assessment Phase 3	€189,757	Internal report	Deloitte
eInvoicing Recommendation Report	€160,327	TBC	KPMG

Name of Report	Costs	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Name of External Consultant
Review of environmental impact statement of the Bandon River (Bandon) drainage scheme including recommendations	€7,196	March 2016	CAAS Limited
Research and recommendation on a fit for purpose HR model/structure for the NSSO	€21,000	April 2016	Sile O'Donnell
Payroll Shared Services operational review	€44,280	June 2016	Deloitte
A critical review of the applicability of the performance related remuneration approach to the Irish Public Service	€15,375	July 2016	Institute of Public Administration
Capacity and Capability Review of Central Procurement Function	€30,750	September 2016	Accenture

### Departmental Expenditure

182. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20381/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** In response to the Deputy's question the following table outlines photography costs incurred by my Department since 2011. I can confirm that the engagement of service providers by my Department operates within the parameters of value for money and where possible every effort is made to minimise costs. In line with stated Government policy, all public bodies must use a competitive process for the purchase of any goods and services, whatever the value.

Event/Occasion	Name of Photographer	Breakdown of Costs	Total Cost
----------------	----------------------	--------------------	------------

Irish Presidency EU-PAN HRWG/IPSG meeting	Fennell Photography	Event photographer per hour: €75Medium resolution image: €10Vat@13.5%: €19.55	€104.55
Irish Presidency EUPAN Directors General meeting	Fennell Photography	Event photographer per hour: €75Medium resolution image: €10Vat@13.5%: €19.55	€104.55
Public Service Excellence Awards 2012	Maxwell Photography	Photographer hired to take photographs of the award recipients and provide copies for them	€811.52
ONE HR Learning and Development Strategy 2015-2017	Marc O'Sullivan Photography	There is no further breakdown	€369
Implementation of Action 13 Civil Service Renewal Plan	Steven Langan t/a City Headshots	Services provided to illustrate a range of civil servants at work in different roles to inform "Pride in the Civil Service" project and the first Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards supporting employee reward and recognition as part of the implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan	€1,500
Official opening event for the OGP Offices at Spencer Dock	Noel Hillis Photography	First hour on site: €130Additional half hour: €50Post production and supply of set of images: €40	€220

### Public Relations Contracts Data

183. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal Departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20396/16]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** In response to the Deputy's question the services of a public relations firm have not been engaged by my Department since its formation in 2011.

### Leader Programmes Data

184. **Deputy Jim Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she collates data relating to start-up businesses that receive Leader funding and the outcome of these ventures; the number of start-ups supported in each of the years 2011 to 2016 to date; the number of these that are still actively trading; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20409/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The following table details the number of enterprises assisted with LEADER funding each year under the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013.

Specific data as regards start-up businesses was not recorded centrally under the previous programme. However, the IT system being developed for the new LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 will capture specific details regarding start-up businesses that receive LEADER funding and the result of the investment provided to these businesses.

Output Achieved	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total 2009 -2015
Enterprises assisted under Rural Development Programme (LEADER)	1,349	1,644	1,347	2,478	1,964	800	9,582

### Rural Development Programme Funding

185. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the amount of money spent on Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas projects, by county, in each year from 2014 to 2016 to date; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20289/16]

202. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to provide a breakdown of all Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas programme funding in 2015; the allocation for 2016 and the expenditure in 2016 to date; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20228/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 185 and 202 together.

Initiatives that have emerged from the work of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) include the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) pilot

initiative in 2015, the forthcoming Town and Village Renewal Scheme and further smaller schemes administered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

The following table details the funding per county allocated under the REDZ pilot initiative in 2015, which addressed one of the CEDRA recommendations. There has been no expenditure in 2014 or to date in 2016.

County	2015
Carlow	€50,000
Clare	€184,500
Cork	€119,000
Donegal	€250,000
Galway	€207,500
Kerry	€217,600
Kildare	€112,000
Kilkenny	€142,500
Laois	€50,000
Leitrim*	€250,379
Limerick	€192,000
Longford	€150,000
Louth	€300,000
Mayo	€225,000
Meath	€75,000
Monaghan	€75,000
Offaly	€172,500
Roscommon	€75,000
Sligo	€150,000
Tipperary	€375,000
Waterford	€209,688
Westmeath	€125,000
Wexford/Carlow	€50,000
Wicklow	€56,000
TOTAL	€3,813,667

\* *Figure includes a cross-county project (Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford & Cavan)*

Due to the success of the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) pilot scheme in 2015, I will shortly announce details of a follow-up REDZ scheme to facilitate the initiation of new REDZ projects. The REDZ funding will focus on initiatives that will create and develop an environment that supports economic development in the relevant areas.

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme, which I will also launch shortly, has an allocation of €5 million for 2016. €4 million will be disbursed directly through the scheme, with the remaining €1 million allocated for disbursement by the Western Development Commission. Details in this regard will be finalised shortly.

There were also a number of smaller schemes administered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine that were allocated €1 million in 2015, including a North/South Social Farming initiative (SoFAB) a local artisan food markets initiative and an initiative to support rural female entrepreneurs called ACORN.

## Natural Heritage Areas Designation

186. **Deputy Catherine Martin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht why she is proposing to de-designate 46 raised bog natural heritage areas, given the importance of protecting and restoring peatlands, including raised bogs for protecting biodiversity, for mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, and for preventing and mitigating flooding, in a highly cost-effective fashion, as demonstrated by the Environmental Protection Agency funded Bolland project, leading to large-scale peatland restoration projects in other countries in European Union and further afield. [20157/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The *Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network* was published in January 2014. It sets out a series of measures to ensure that Ireland meets its obligations under the EU Habitats Directive to maintain or restore raised bog habitat to favourable conservation status, as well as its obligations under the EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive relating to the regulation of turf cutting on natural heritage areas, whilst at the same time avoiding unnecessary impacts on the traditional rights of landowners and users and minimising the cost to the State of compensation payments.

The review concluded that Ireland could more effectively achieve conservation of threatened raised bog habitat through focused protection and restoration of a reconfigured network. This will entail:

- The phasing out by 1 January 2017 of turf-cutting on 36 existing natural heritage areas, which will remain designated - this includes 7 sites to be divided, with part to be conserved and part de-designated;
- The complete de-designation of 46 natural heritage areas - including the relevant areas of the 7 sites to be divided - where it has been judged that their contribution to the attainment of the national conservation objective for raised bog is expected to be marginal and/or restoration would be prohibitively expensive for the conservation benefits achieved. Domestic turf-cutting may continue on these sites, while larger scale or commercial turf cutting will continue to be regulated through other consent systems; and
- The designation as natural heritage areas of 25 currently undesignated raised bogs, which are in public ownership or where there is reduced turf cutting pressure, so as to compensate for the loss of habitat within the sites where it is proposed that turf cutting can be allowed to continue.

The review clearly sets out that the newly configured network will have considerable advantages over the current natural heritage area network. While the review proposes the de-designation of a number of natural heritage areas, this will be more than balanced by the proposed designation of new natural heritage areas.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* includes a commitment to publish the new legislation to de-designate the natural heritage areas in question within the first 100 days of Government. The drafting of this legislation has now been approved and the General Scheme of the Bill has been referred for consideration by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht.



187. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cathain a bheidh sonraí uile sheirbhís Aer Árann réitithe ag an Aire. [20158/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Mar is eol don Teachta, rinneadh athbhreithniú sa bhliain 2014 ar riachtanas na seirbhíse aeir seo, i gcomhréir le Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh. Cuireadh tuarascáil chuimsitheach faoi bhráid mo Roinne a chlúdaigh an tréimhse ó 2003 go 2013.

Rinneadh measúnú sa tuarascáil sin ar leibhéal agus ar threocht na gcostas don tseirbhís aeir agus ar an gcomhréireacht idir an oibleagáid seirbhíse poiblí agus riachtanais forbartha eacnamaíochta an réigiúin.

I measc nithe eile, léiríodh sa tuarascáil go raibh caiteachas bliantúil mo Roinne ar an tseirbhís aeir tar éis méadú faoi 136% le linn na tréimhse athbhreithnithe, cé gur fhan líon na bpaisionéirí a bhí á n-iompar mórán mar a chéile. Ar an mbunús sin, dúradh sa tuarascáil go raibh sé riachtanach breathnú ar roghanna éagsúla chun luach níos fearr a fháil ar airgead don Státchiste.

Is sa chomhthéacs sin a d'ullmhaigh mo Roinn, i gcomhar leis an Oifig um Sholáthar Rialtais, an t-Iarratas ar Thairiscintí atá faoi chaibidil. Ar ndóigh, thug mo Roinn faoin obair seo in 2015 chomh maith ach, de bharr éiginnteacht faoi stádas infhaighteachta Aerfort na Gaillimhe do thréimhse an chonartha, cuireadh deireadh leis an bpróiseas áirithe sin.

Sa phróiseas tairisceana atá ar siúl ag mo Roinn faoi láthair, is é Aerfort na Mine amháin atá luaite mar phointe imeachta ar an mórthír. Tá mo Roinn, i láthair na huaire, ag iarraidh teacht ar chomhaontú le bainistíocht na saoráidí sin a chuimseoidh rochtain ar na saoráidí mar aon leis an leibhéal táillí a bheidh iníoctha. Ní mór do mo Roinnse, ar ndóigh, na rialacha maidir le tras-fhóirdheonú agus stát-chabhair a shásamh sa phróiseas seo uile.

Tá spriocdháta de 15 Iúil 2016 leagtha síos chun tairiscintí bheith faighte don tseirbhís aeir. Ar ndóigh, murar féidir teacht ar chomhaontú le húinéir Aerfort na Mine roimh an spriocdháta sin, ní bheidh ar chumas mo Roinnse dul ar aghaidh leis an próiseas tairisceana.

### **Natural Heritage Areas Designation**

188. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if turf cutters will be allowed to cut turf on a bog (details supplied); if it will be granted de-designation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20113/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I recently announced that the drafting of legislation to provide for the de-designation of 46 raised bog natural heritage area sites has now been approved and the General Scheme of the Bill has been referred for consideration by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht.

The site referred to in the Deputy's Question is a raised bog special area of conservation. It is not a natural heritage area which is scheduled for de-designation. Therefore, the restrictions on turf cutting on raised bog special areas of conservation, including on the site referred to in the Deputy's Question, will not be affected by the proposed de-designation of the natural heritage areas in question.

In the context of the finalisation of the National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan, my Department is considering the available options for turf cutters in terms of relocation to non-designated bogs and the utilisation of the relevant provisions of the EU Habitats Directive.

Under article 6.3 of the Directive consent could only be given to cut turf on a raised bog special area of conservation where it can be shown that such cutting will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site. Under article 6.4 of the Directive consent could only be given to cut turf on a raised bog special area of conservation for imperative reasons of overriding public interest and where no alternatives exist.

Given the clear scientific evidence of the negative impact of turf extraction on raised bogs, it will only be possible to utilise the provisions of article 6.3 in a small number of cases. Similarly, the flexibility provided for under article 6.4, if required, will only be applicable to a small number of sites.

I am advised that, as my Department has identified a suitable relocation site for turf cutters from the special area of conservation site referred to by the Deputy, this site is not one of those sites for which the utilisation of article 6.3 or article 6.4 of the Directive is being considered.

### **Arts Promotion**

189. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she and her Department continue to encourage the development and promotion of the arts with particular reference to the maximisation of employment opportunities arising therefrom; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20117/16]

197. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which the arts and heritage sectors continue to generate employment throughout the country; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20125/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 189 and 197 together.

The nature of employment within the arts and heritage sectors encompasses a wide range of activities, from theatre and music to archaeology and tourism. It may also embody the industrial creative sectors, including audio-visual production.

My primary role is to support artists and the creative industries in Ireland using the mechanisms available to me across Government on common initiatives such as the Action Plan for Jobs.

In relation to assisting employment in the arts, I believe the most appropriate way to do this is to encourage the expansion of arts and cultural activity. Since my initial appointment as Minister with responsibility for the arts, I have secured increased funding for the sector year on year.

The *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve and to invest further in our heritage. I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

### **Film Industry Promotion**

190. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

the extent to which she and her Department continue to encourage internationally the use of Ireland as a film location with obvious beneficial economic implications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20118/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Irish Film Board is the national development agency for Irish filmmaking and the Irish film, television and animation industry. The Board supports and promotes the Irish screen industries at major international markets and festivals, promotes inward investment, the use of Ireland as a location for international production and provides support for companies filming in Ireland. The Film Board also liaises with IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland in terms of maximising joint opportunities for promotion of Ireland as a location for film productions. Examples of this could be seen during Ireland's success at the Oscars this year and the promotional activity around the shooting of Star Wars in Ireland. In terms of the film industry in general the *Programme for a Partnership Government* contains a very important commitment to work to progressively increase funding to the arts, including the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board, as the economy continues to improve.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be engaging with my colleagues in Government and with the Oireachtas to seek to advance this commitment in the context of the forthcoming estimates and budgetary processes.

My Department's investment will also help to maximise the benefits brought about by the Government's enhancement of the Section 481 film tax credit system, including the decision to increase the cap for eligible expenditure on film projects to €70 million, as announced as part of Budget 2016.

### Arts Promotion

191. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if support from philanthropists continues to be available towards the support of the arts and possibly the retention of paintings or other objets d'art, which might be deemed to be a loss to the national heritage if disposed of outside of this jurisdiction; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20119/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** A scheme for the payment of tax by means of donation of heritage items continues to operate under the terms of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

Section 1003 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 is a scheme of tax relief for the donation of heritage items to the National Collections. Under the scheme, heritage items that are considered outstanding examples of their type and that are pre-eminent in their class, whose export from the State would constitute a diminution of the accumulated cultural heritage of Ireland, or whose import into the State would constitute a significant enhancement of the accumulated cultural heritage of Ireland, and which are considered suitable additions to the accumulated heritage of the State, may be donated to an approved body and 80% of the market value of the item(s) is then offset against the current tax liability of the donor. There is a ceiling of €6 million in respect of the value of donations which may be made under the terms of the scheme in a calendar year.

The approved bodies are:

- The National Archives

- The National Gallery of Ireland
- The National Library of Ireland
- The National Museum of Ireland
- The Irish Museum of Modern Art
- The Crawford Art Gallery Cork

### **Heritage Sites**

192. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which various at risk heritage sites and buildings continue to be protected; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20120/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My role, as Minister with regard to the protection and management of our architectural heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation, as are the role of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners as regards heritage assets.

Under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, my Department has established and maintains the Record of Monuments and Places, which affords legal protection to over 120,000 recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the State. Anyone proposing works to a monument that is included in the Record of Monument and Places must give my Department two months prior notice before works can start.

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

My Department has a number of measures at its disposal to facilitate the maintenance and restoration of major historical or cultural sites. As Minister, I am the owner or guardian under the National Monuments Acts of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites and in such cases there is a statutory duty to maintain the national monument. Such maintenance is undertaken by the Office of Public Works (OPW). Local authorities are responsible under the National Monuments Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are owners or guardians.

My Department is also providing €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2016 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. OPW undertakes the care and maintenance of national monuments in my ownership or guardianship (of which there are approximately 750). My Department's National Monuments Service works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

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

deal with development proposals affecting them and to seek to safeguard their future.

Under Section 54 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, a planning authority may add to or delete from its record of protected structures, a structure, a specified part of a structure or a specified feature of the attendant grounds of a structure. Such a structure, specified part of a structure, or specified feature remains on the record of protected structures until such time as the planning authority deletes it. Provision is made in the Act for the carrying out of works to protected structures either by way of planning permission or on the foot of a declaration received from a planning authority that certain works that would not materially affect the character of a structure are exempted development. There is a duty of owners and occupiers to protect structures from endangerment. Where structures become endangered or unauthorised development has been or is being carried out, the planning authority has the powers to take appropriate action.

There is a number of ways in which my Department acts in respect of possible heritage sites/buildings deemed to be at risk. One of these is the receipt of applications for funding for the repair, conservation, preservation or safeguarding of protected structures, sites or monuments. Financial support is being provided by my Department through a number of structured schemes for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings.

I launched a new €2 million scheme - the Built Heritage Investment Scheme - for the repair and conservation of protected structures on 21 October 2015. This scheme will operate in 2016, via the local authorities, on the same model as the very successful Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme, which ran in 2014. It is expected to support in excess of 330 projects across the country and to create employment in the conservation and construction industries, while helping to regenerate urban and rural areas. The scheme for this year is now fully allocated.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures, in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. This fund, which has an allocation of over €900,000 and will support 57 projects nationally in 2016, is administered through the local authorities and seeks to encourage the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and to help to secure the preservation of protected structures which might otherwise be lost. Funding for 2016 has now been fully allocated.

### **Architectural Heritage**

193. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department is engaged in the restoration of major historical or cultural sites throughout the country at present; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20121/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** My role, as Minister with regard to the protection and management of our architectural heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation, as are the role of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners as regards heritage assets.

Under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014, my Department has established and maintains the Record of Monuments and Places, which affords legal protection to over 120,000 recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the State. Anyone proposing works to a monument that is included in the Record of Monument and Places must give my Department two months prior notice before works can start.

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

My Department has a number of measures at its disposal to facilitate the maintenance and restoration of major historical or cultural sites. As Minister, I am the owner or guardian under the National Monuments Acts of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites and in such cases there is a statutory duty to maintain the national monument. Such maintenance is undertaken by the Office of Public Works (OPW). Local authorities are responsible under the National Monuments Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are owners or guardians.

My Department is also providing €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2016 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. OPW undertakes the care and maintenance of national monuments in my ownership or guardianship (of which there are approximately 750). My Department's National Monuments Service works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

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

Under Section 54 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, a planning authority may add to or delete from its record of protected structures, a structure, a specified part of a structure or a specified feature of the attendant grounds of a structure. Such a structure, specified part of a structure, or specified feature remains on the record of protected structures until such time as the planning authority deletes it. Provision is made in the Act for the carrying out of works to protected structures either by way of planning permission or on the foot of a declaration received from a planning authority that certain works that would not materially affect the character of a structure are exempted development. There is a duty of owners and occupiers to protect structures from endangerment. Where structures become endangered or unauthorised development has been or is being carried out, the planning authority has the powers to take appropriate action.

There is a number of ways in which my Department acts in respect of possible heritage sites/buildings deemed to be at risk. One of these is the receipt of applications for funding for the repair, conservation, preservation or safeguarding of protected structures, sites or monuments. Financial support is being provided by my Department through a number of structured schemes for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings.

I launched a new €2 million scheme - the Built Heritage Investment Scheme - for the repair and conservation of protected structures on 21 October 2015. This scheme will operate in 2016, via the local authorities, on the same model as the very successful Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme, which ran in 2014. It is expected to support in excess of 330 projects across the country and to create employment in the conservation and construction industries, while helping to regenerate urban and rural areas. The scheme for this year is now fully allocated.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures, in both pri-

vate and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. This fund, which has an allocation of over €900,000 and will support 57 projects nationally in 2016, is administered through the local authorities and seeks to encourage the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and to help to secure the preservation of protected structures which might otherwise be lost. Funding for 2016 has now been fully allocated.

### **Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme**

194. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which full and-or final settlement has been achieved in respect of displaced turf cutters in County Kildare arising from the application of SACs and NHAs; and if any further issues that remain outstanding are being addressed in this context [20122/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** 174 applications under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme for raised bog special areas of conservation have been acknowledged by my Department in respect of Mouds Bog and 60 applications in respect of Ballynafagh Bog in County Kildare. A total of 475 annual payments, 187 turf deliveries and 38 once-off incentive payments have been made in respect of the applications received from Mouds Bog and 124 annual payments, 20 turf deliveries and 15 once-off incentive payments have been made in respect of the applications received from Ballynafagh Bog. 78 applicants from Mouds Bog and 23 applicants from Ballynafagh Bog have expressed an interest in relocation to a non-designated bog.

Discussions are on-going with qualifying applicants from Ballynafagh Bog with a view to relocation to a non-designated bog in close proximity.

Due to the issues involved in terms of a relocation site for turf cutters from Mouds Bog, my Department, in consultation with turf cutter interests, has been considering whether consent could be given to cut turf on this site under article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive. Under article 6.3 of the Directive consent could only be given to cut turf on a raised bog special area of conservation where it can be shown by rigorous scientific investigations that such cutting will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

The *Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network*, which is available to download from my Department's website at <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/Publications>, provides detail on future arrangements regarding turf cutting on each of the 75 current raised bog natural heritage areas.

Carbury Bog natural heritage area in County Kildare is one of the natural heritage areas which is to remain designated as a natural heritage area arising from the review.

I recently announced that the drafting of legislation to provide for the de-designation of 46 raised bog natural heritage area sites has now been approved and the General Scheme of the Bill has been referred for consideration by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht. Hodgestown Bog natural heritage area in County Kildare is one of those scheduled for de-designation arising from the review.

### **Arts Funding**

195. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

the extent to which her Department continues to provide funding for the arts at local and community level, directly or indirectly; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20123/16]

196. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department directly or through bodies under her aegis continues to support various festivals or cultural events organised annually or on a once-off basis throughout the country; the amount of such support provided in the past three years to date under specific headings directly, through the Arts Council or other bodies; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20124/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 195 and 196 together.

Most of my Department's arts and culture budget is allocated to the agencies under its remit. Within these allocations, the Arts Council is the primary State agency for funding the arts. Details of the Council's funding decisions can be found on its website at the following link [www.artscouncil.ie/Who\\_we\\_funded/](http://www.artscouncil.ie/Who_we_funded/).

Direct funding from my Department for arts primarily relates to capital funding for individual projects, as well as the promotion of Irish arts and culture abroad through Culture Ireland. A small number of summer schools and similar events receive funding from my Department. Details of these are on my Department's website at [www.ahg.gov.ie](http://www.ahg.gov.ie).

In addition, my Department's support for commemorative events can cover many artistic and cultural responses to the Decade of Commemorations. This year in particular the *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme* is providing a rich and inclusive diversity of events both nationally and internationally, to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

*Question No. 197 answered with Question No. 189.*

### **Waterways Issues**

198. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she and her Department either directly or through Waterways Ireland have reached agreement with traditional canal dwellers and canal recreational users with regard to draft proposals to increase the costs to traditional users; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20126/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** As I stated in my reply to Question No. 149 from the Deputy on 1 June 2016, provisions to amend the Canals Act 1986 in order to allow for the subsequent making of bye-laws to regulate boating on the canals and to manage the use of the canals are contained in the Heritage Bill 2016. The proposed changes would allow Waterways Ireland to make new bye-laws to proactively manage the Royal and Grand Canals, as well as the Barrow Navigation.

The Heritage Bill 2016 passed its Second Stage reading in Seanad Éireann on 20 January 2016 and is included in the Government Legislation Programme which was published on 8 June 2016. I have requested that this Bill would proceed to the Committee Stage in the Seanad as soon as possible.

Deputies and Senators will have the opportunity to consider the implications of this Bill as it passes through the various stages of enactment. In regard to the making of bye-laws subsequent to the enactment of the Heritage Bill, I would be pleased to afford interested Deputies and



Senators an opportunity to discuss the proposals with me prior to making a final decision on the introduction of the bye-laws.

### **Departmental Funding**

199. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will approve a grant to a club (details supplied) to allow the club commence works; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20210/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Seán Kyne):** An application for capital funding in the case referred to by the Deputy was received in my Department on the 20th May 2016. The application is currently being evaluated by my Department and will be considered in the context of other applications and funding available under the scheme. This has been explained to the applicant.

### **Ministerial Responsibilities**

200. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the reason the Government increased the total number of Ministers without assigning a single one with exclusive responsibility for the arts, heritage and the Gaeltacht; how arts policy priorities will now be implemented in the revised departmental structure; and her views on the 13,000 plus persons who have already joined an online campaign to see the full Department of the Arts reinstated. [20216/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I confirmed on Tuesday this week that the name of my newly reconfigured Department was approved by Government as the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The new name reflects the broader remit of the reconfigured Department, which retains all of the responsibilities of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with additional responsibility for a wide range of programmes relating to rural and regional affairs and development.

The creation of a larger Department, with a wider remit, will not in any way diminish the importance of arts and culture within Government. On the contrary, a larger Department with wider responsibilities, will bring greater weight to bear in promoting the importance of arts and culture right across Government. The wider brief of rural and regional affairs sits well with the commitment in the *Programme for a Partnership Government* to strengthen the role of arts and heritage at local level, including by building stronger links with local development groups.

This is also coupled with the commitment in the *Programme for a Partnership Government* to progressively increase funding to the arts as the economy continues to improve. In 2016, the Arts, Culture and Film programme of my Department will account for the highest proportion of my Department's Vote at 49% (€188m) of the total allocation. This reflects the fact that the arts are essential to the well-being of our society and that a thriving arts and cultural sector makes a hugely positive contribution to the Irish nation in general.

### **Leader Programmes Funding**

201. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the

cost of restoring Leader funding to the level that was originally allocated under the 2007 to 2013 rural development programme, by county, in tabular form; the amount of moneys expended to date, by county to date under the 2014 to 2020 rural development programme; the 2016 allocation for Leader funding and total expenditure to date, by county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20227/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The original allocation for the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 was just short of €400 million (see Table 1). The LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 will provide €250 million in financial resources to support the development of sustainable rural communities (see Table 2).

LEADER funding for the 2007-2013 programming period was not allocated based on county boundaries but to individual Local Action Groups on completion of the Local Development Strategy process. The allocations were revised in 2013 when the EU co-financing rate changed due to the financial downturn, resulting in a decrease in the overall programme allocation.

€35 million had been allocated to the LEADER 2014-2020 programme for this year. The expenditure incurred to date under the programme in 2015 and 2016 relates to funding for Preparatory Support for the preparation of Local Development Strategies (see Table 3).

**Table 1 – Local Action Group Allocations 2007 – 2013**

Local Action Group	Original Allocation	Revised Allocation
Avondu Blackwater Partnership Ltd.	€9,057,810	€7,563,093
Ballyhoura Development Ltd.	€11,673,519	€18,832,677
Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd	€8,878,177	€7,619,278
Cavan-Monaghan LEADER	€12,035,118	€10,235,403
Cill Dara Ar Aghaidh Teo	€12,282,448	€10,642,073
Clare Local Development Company Ltd.	€14,028,529	€16,175,841
Co. Kilkenny LEADER Partnership	€11,523,729	€13,587,910
Co. Wicklow Community Partnership	€11,135,560	€9,128,172
Co. Sligo LEADER Partnership Company Ltd	€10,888,673	€9,791,787
Comhar na nOileáin Teoranta	€4,642,415	€7,218,571
Donegal Local Development Company Ltd.	€12,831,901	€12,693,035
Fingal LEADER Partnership Co.	€7,766,780	€6,488,129
FORUM Connemara Ltd.	€9,668,965	€7,925,982
Galway Rural Development Company	€15,257,985	€12,512,676
Inishowen Development Partnership	€8,286,143	€7,410,663

Local Action Group	Original Allocation	Revised Allocation
IRD Duhallow Ltd.	€10,315,943	€12,852,160
Laois Community and Enterprise Dev	€10,993,608	€9,564,731
Leitrim Integrated Development Co Ltd	€10,845,497	€10,332,659
Longford Community Resources Ltd	€8,714,110	€7,198,679
Louth LEADER Partnership	€8,839,815	€7,265,162
Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Co.	€10,751,894	€9,663,562
Meath Community Rural and Social Dev.	€12,748,771	€15,139,043
North East Kerry LEADER Partnership Teo	€10,558,882	€9,267,641
North Tipperary LEADER Partnership	€9,708,008	€12,917,884
Offaly Integrated Local Dev Co. Ltd.	€11,520,489	€10,856,445
Roscommon Integrated Development Company	€12,838,021	€11,230,957
South and East Cork Area Dev Ltd.	€10,641,494	€10,600,928
South Kerry Development Ltd.	€12,370,667	€10,341,450
South Tipperary Local Development Co Ltd	€11,106,187	€12,515,649
South West Mayo Development Company Ltd	€12,150,007	€10,820,318
Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd.	€10,558,519	€11,486,013
West Cork Development Partnership Ltd.	€14,601,149	€13,481,280
West Limerick Resources Ltd	€9,997,751	€9,091,221
Westmeath Community Development Ltd	€10,987,060	€9,015,451
Wexford Local Development	€12,515,565	€11,919,814
Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta*	€17,278,809	€3,371,751
Overall Total	€399,999,998	€376,758,090

\*Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta (MFG) went into liquidation in 2012

**Table 2 – LEADER Allocations 2014 – 2020**

Sub Regional Area	Programme Allocation
Rural Dublin	€6,370,438.43
Kildare	€5,261,600.01

Questions - Written Answers

Sub Regional Area	Programme Allocation
Meath	€6,903,123.57
Wicklow	€6,336,549.00
Carlow	€6,416,803.43
Kilkenny	€7,791,572.91
Wexford	€9,840,140.56
Tipperary	€10,103,443.28
County Waterford	€7,522,796.18
County Cork	€13,938,823.22
Kerry	€10,219,868.29
Clare	€8,920,224.65
County Limerick	€9,276,593.96
County Galway	€12,195,883.61
Mayo	€11,121,431.88
Roscommon	€8,852,659.22
Louth	€6,101,862.01
Leitrim	€5,998,474.74
Sligo	€7,655,647.81
Cavan	€8,522,285.84
Donegal	€12,913,877.86
Monaghan	€7,592,719.51
Laois	€7,124,586.86
Longford	€7,597,623.07
Offaly	€8,036,763.90
Westmeath	€7,384,206.22
Total	€220,000,000.00

**Table 3 –Expenditure by County 2015 – 2016**

COUNTY	Total Payments 2015-2016
CARLOW	€20,000.00
CAVAN	€50,000.00
CLARE	€83,335.54
CORK	€215,240.20
DONEGAL	€57,594.44
DUBLIN	€55,000.00
GALWAY	€75,000.00
KERRY	€16,343.70
KILDARE	€50,000.00
KILKENNY	€57,295.00
LAOIS	€32,882.38
LEITRIM	€25,000.00
LIMERICK	€22,187.00
LONGFORD	€30,000.00
LOUTH	€28,000.00
MAYO	€119,238.12

COUNTY	Total Payments 2015-2016
MEATH	€40,000.00
MONAGHAN	€58,296.00
OFFALY	€30,000.00
ROSCOMMON	€58,212.61
SLIGO	€15,000.00
TIPPERARY	€20,000.00
WATERFORD	€75,427.28
WESTMEATH	€25,602.22
WEXFORD	€15,000.00
WICKLOW	€35,793.81
TOTAL	€1,310,448.30

*Question No. 202 answered with Question No. 185*

### UK Referendum on EU Membership

203. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20296/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Issues relating to how the recent UK referendum could impact on the work of my Department, and on the sectors for which it is responsible, are being managed at a senior level by my Department's Corporate Division. There are no staff in my Department exclusively dedicated to these matters at present as the volume of work arising does not warrant the assignment of staff on a whole-time exclusive basis.

In parallel with this, an inter-Departmental Group on UK-EU relations has been established, chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach, with members drawn from all Government Departments and a number of other bodies such as the Central Bank. My Department participates fully in the work of that Group.

I can assure the Deputy that I will be keeping these matters under active review, in close consultation with my Department's Management Board.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

204. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by her Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20340/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The details requested by the Deputy in respect of the nine reports commissioned by my Department since its establishment in June 2011 are set out in the following table. Contracts for the provision of services are not included.

Questions - Written Answers

The “*Review of PSO Air Service for the Aran Islands*” was published in May 2014. The “*Updated Business Case for Restoring the Ulster Canal from Lough Erne to Clones*” and the “*Cost Benefit Analysis of the National Gallery Redevelopment Project*” are published on the Department’s website. The remaining reports have not been published.

For completeness, I wish to bring to the Deputy’s attention that the University of Birmingham was commissioned in 2010 by the then Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, prior to the establishment of my Department, to undertake a review relating to peatlands. The resulting report, “*Review of Archaeological Survey and Mitigation Policy relating to Bord na Móna Peatlands*” was published in June 2013 and the associated costs of €34,337 were met by my Department.

I would also point out that my Department also commissions engineering or environmental experts from time to time to provide technical reports on specific issues, as required. While the providers of these services are consultant engineers, environmental consultants or may describe themselves in other such terms, their work is not classified as consultancy services and is not funded from my Department’s Administrative Budget.

Commissioned	Company	Title of Report	Cost €
2011	Avia Solutions	Review of financial submissions relating to the Public Service Obligation Air Service for the Aran Islands	6,300
2012	Bonnar Keenlyside	Review of Dublin Contemporary 2011	10,959
2013	Dorgan Associates	Cost Benefit Analysis of National Archives Development Plan	12,669
2013	Dorgan Associates	Cost Benefit Analysis of National Gallery Redevelopment Project	12,731
2013/2014	Dorgan Associates	Examination of capital incentives to promote investment in film studio infrastructure	6,765
2014	EY	Review of PSO Air Service for the Aran Islands	41,795
2014	Fitzpatrick Assocs	Updated Business Case Restoring the Ulster Canal from Lough Erne to Clones	15,191
2014	The VAT Practice	Advisory service on UK VAT	2,963

Commissioned	Company	Title of Report	Cost €
2015	Public Affairs Ireland (PAI)	Review of Management Structure and Ireland (PAI) Grading of Senior Management Posts within Údarás na Gaeltachta	17,617

### Departmental Expenditure

205. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the total photography costs per annum for her Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within her Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20370/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Details of annual photography costs incurred by my Department since my appointment in July 2014 are set out in the following table. The total costs involved were €1,168 for that period in 2014, €15,489 for 2015 and €9,473 to date in 2016.

The hiring of photographers for Ministerial or Departmental events is dependent on a number of factors, including the nature of the engagement, the expected level of media interest and the national/regional scope of the subject. At all times, value for money is a critical consideration in the context of the booking of photographers.

Occasion	Photographer	Cost €
2014		
Photocall with winner of Herald Archangel Edinburgh Festival 2014	Maxwell Photography	486
Launch of Ireland 2016 commemorative programme at G.P.O.	Maxwell Photography	482
Photographs of Minister and two Ministers of State for official Departmental use	Philip Fitzpatrick Photography	200
2015		
European Heritage Heads-Forum 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting in Dublin Castle	Con Brogan	200
Launch of the High Island Monograph	Con Brogan	150
Visit to Cartoon Saloon in Kilkenny	Dylan Vaughan Photography	271
Event to commemorate the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, Glasnevin Cemetery	Lensmen	554

Questions - Written Answers

Occasion	Photographer	Cost €
Launch of Culture Ireland supported artists attending Edinburgh International Festivals	Lensmen	258
Launch of Culture Ireland I AM IRELAND 2016 programme	Maxwell Photography	503
John Redmond commemoration	Maxwell Photography	138
Launch of Ireland 2016 Commemorative Programme	Maxwell Photography	861
10th Anniversary of Culture Ireland	Maxwell Photography	103
Dublin launch of Venice Artist Biennale 2015	Maxwell Photography	637
Moore Street – meeting with Lord Mayor and traders	Maxwell Photography	362
Photography for Who-DoesWhat Website	Maxwell Photography	327
Annual Famine Commemoration and related events	Paul Faith	781
Spanish Armada Find Sligo	Piccell8 Ltd	450
Teach an Phiarsaigh Cultural and Exhibition centre, Rosmuc, Connemara / Global and Diaspora Programme (2 separate events)	Reg Gordon	960
Photography for Who-DoesWhat Website	Tain Bo Media Teo	148
Launch of the High Island Monograph	Con Brogan	150
Local Authorities CEOs and Ireland 2016 Coordinators meeting Royal College of Surgeons	Lensmen	689
Launch of the High Island Centenary Programme, Collins Barracks	Big O	300
2016 Children's Consultations	Maxwell Photography	258
2016 Community Participation video And Photography, Thurles	Big O	615
Local Authorities Ireland 2016 County Plans	Big O	1,920



Occasion	Photographer	Cost €
2016 events: Announcement of Arts Council Bursaries, Áras an Úachtaráin, Delivery of first Flags for Schools, Launch of Youth Imagination Programme Strand, Schools Supplement launch, Local Authority Co-ordinators, Monaghan, Photography for Ireland Launch of An Teanga Beo Programme Strand IMMA	Big O	4,379
Additional funding support for 2016 by IPB	Big O	475
2016		
Launch of design phase for archives storage in National Archives	Conor McCabe	431
Launch of website of compensation claims for property losses during 1916 Rising	Conor McCabe	431
Commemorating Women of 1916	Conor McCabe	431
2016 Post Primary Schools Flag Ceremony	Robbie Reynolds	553
Launch of Action Plan for Historic Houses	Lorraine Teevan	310
EU Language Jobs Announcements, RHA Gallery	Maxwell Photography	395
Centre of Excellence for EU Irish Language Careers meeting with Minister of State	Andrew Downes	250
Moneen Cave Excavation	Thorsten Kahlert	1,300
Ireland 2016 Peace Proms	Big O	400
Wreath Laying at South Dublin Union, Easter Monday	Big O	212
State Ceremonial for Women of 1916	Maxwell Photography	775
2016 - Last Flag for School Delivery, Tallaght Hospital	Maxwell Photography	689
2016 - images for Participating Children and Staff	Maxwell Photography	499
2016 - Liberty Hall (additional images)	Maxwell Photography	138

Occasion	Photographer	Cost €
Opening screening of 1916 Documentary, National Concert Hall	Maxwell Photography	590
Synchronised Wreath Layings in three locations, Easter Monday	Maxwell Photography	691
State Ceremonial for Irish Citizen Army	Maxwell Photography	1,378

### Public Relations Contracts Data

206. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by her Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20385/16]

**Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** No external public relations firms have been employed by my Department since my appointment in July 2014.

### Health Services Provision

207. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding diabetes sufferers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20108/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy):** As the Deputy's questions relate to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### Health Services Staff Recruitment

208. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Health if the Health Service Executive has plans to ensure an Ehlers-Danlos syndrome specialist is in place in any hospital here. [20112/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy):** As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### Health Services Provision

209. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health to provide funding for the

care of a person (details supplied); if he will accept the opinion of the person's professional care team and make an immediate decision to support the person as there is no other options in this case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20127/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Medicinal Products Availability**

210. **Deputy John Halligan** asked the Minister for Health why certain required medical items are no longer available on prescription under the medical card scheme (details supplied); if he will consider providing these items once again through prescriptions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20324/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As the particular issue raised relates to an individual case, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to you. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Medicinal Products Prices**

211. **Deputy Tom Neville** asked the Minister for Health his proposals to deal with the cost of medicines for persons under the medical card scheme at the point of when the medication is dispensed, that is, charges due for them at the point of purchasing the medication; if he will address the issue of the costs of prescription medications; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20333/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the General Medical Services scheme, medical card holders are entitled to free approved prescribed medicines, subject to a prescription charge of €2.50 per item, with a monthly cap of €25 for each person or family.

The prescription charge is a matter which I intend to consider in the context of the implementation of the Health commitments in the Programme for Government and having regard to the funding available to facilitate such measures.

### **Health Services Staff Recruitment**

212. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Health when the Health Service Executive will fill a post (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20410/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on this matter. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Health Services**

213. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health the range and level of services and treatment in the County Dublin area for adults with dyspraxia. [20411/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** As the Deputy’s question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, the Deputy can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### **Health Services Provision**

214. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Health the status of the appointment of a person (details supplied) in Louth and Meath disability services; and if he will renew the contract. [20413/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

215. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) will receive an appointment. [20414/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Alcohol Sales Legislation**

216. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health his views on a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20415/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy):** The Public Health (Alcohol) Bill remains a priority for this Government. The Bill is part of a suite of measures agreed on foot of the recommendations in the Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy. The Government approved the publication of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill and the introduction of the Bill in the Houses of the Oireachtas on 8 December 2015. The Bill completed Second Stage in the Seanad on 17 December 2015 and I expect that it will commence Committee Stage early in the next term.

### **Autism Support Services**

217. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of the impending disbandment of the specialist, cross-functional autism spectrum disorder team in Waterford city; the reasons behind this; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20416/16]

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

The particular issue raised by the Deputy is a service matter for the HSE. Accordingly I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with the HSE.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme**

218. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of a situation where persons who are in nursing homes under the nursing homes support scheme, fair deal, are being charged additional flat social charges beyond the agreed contribution, regardless of their means as assessed as part of the contribution; his views on the impact that this has on families and persons with already limited means; if he will act to ensure that persons are not charged unfairly beyond the contribution they are already making as part of the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20418/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** The Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) is a system of financial support for people who require long-term nursing home care. Participants contribute to the cost of their care according to their means while the State pays the balance of the cost.

The NHSS covers the cost of the standard components of long-term residential care which are:

- Nursing and personal care appropriate to the level of care needs of the person;
  - Bed and board;
  - Basic aids and appliances necessary to assist a person with the activities of daily living;
- and
- Laundry service.

A person's eligibility for other schemes, such as the medical card scheme or the drugs payment scheme, is unaffected by participation in the NHSS or residence in a nursing home.

Although the NHSS covers core living expenses, residents can still incur some costs in a nursing home, e.g. social programmes, newspapers or hairdressing. In recognition of this, anyone in receipt of financial support under the NHSS retains at least 20% of their income. The minimum amount that is retained is the equivalent of 20% of the State Pension (Non-Contributory). An operator should not seek payment from residents for items which are covered by the NHSS, the medical card or any other existing scheme.

Part 7 of the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013 stipulates that the registered provider of the nursing home must agree a contract in writing with each resident on their admission to the nursing home. This contract must include details of the services to be provided to that resident and the fees to be

charged. Residents should never be charged fees which are not set out in the contract. The Department of Health and the HSE are not a party to such contracts which are concluded between each resident and their nursing home.

Registered providers of nursing home care are obliged to provide an accessible and effective complaints procedure. Concerns about additional charges should in the first instance be taken up with the nursing home provider. The Office of the Ombudsman can examine complaints about the actions of a range of public bodies and, from 24 August 2015, complaints relating to the administrative actions of private nursing homes. The Office of the Ombudsman normally only deals with a complaint once the individual has already gone through the complaints procedure of the private nursing home concerned.

The Review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme, published in July 2015, looked at the issue of additional costs in private nursing homes and made the following recommendations:

- Nursing homes should have a published fee schedule showing all the costs associated with being a resident.

- Consideration should be given to introducing a new provision under the scheme to prohibit the levying of additional charges for any service or facility from which residents can not readily opt out without penalty while remaining as residents of that facility, or in which they cannot participate because of their level of dependency.

- Consideration should be given to including in the price contracts with facilities, details of what additional charges are proposed, of the opt-out arrangements that exist for residents and confirmation that residents will not be charged for extra services that they cannot participate in because of their dependency or lack of capacity.

An Interdepartmental/Agency Working Group has been established to progress the recommendations contained in the Review. A specific date has not been set for the Group to conclude its work, but it is in the process of reporting on its progress to date to the Cabinet Committee on Health. This will be done shortly, in line with the Committee's own scheduling requirements.

## **Health Services**

219. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health his views on correspondence (details provided); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20420/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

## **Mental Health Services Provision**

220. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health why there are no primary care psychology services for children in north County Dublin and why no child has been seen by Swords Mater child and adolescent mental health services from the routine waiting list in the last two years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20422/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up

the matter with them.

### **Health Services Staff**

221. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of proposals by the Health Service Executive to relocate administrative positions based in Kells, County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20425/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on this matter. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

222. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the status of an appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20160/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland**

223. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the current funding to the Nursing and Midwifery Board; the current staff complement; the proportion by which each category has changed over the past five years; his plans to provide additional resources to assist the board in tackling the large backlog of registration applications; the numbers of applications in the current backlog; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20173/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) is a self funding independent body with the responsibility to ensure that it has the financial capacity to undertake all its legal obligations. The NMBI's income from 2012 to 2016 is as set out below and is funded largely by the annual retention fee:

- 2012 : 6.9m;
- 2013 : 6.7m;
- 2014 : 8.7m;
- 2015 : 8.3m (estimate);
- 2016 : 8.8m (estimate).

On 28 May 2015, the Minister for Health approved the proposal for the provision of interim funding for the NMBI through a process undertaken as part of the Lansdowne Road Agreement. It was agreed to maintain the Annual Retention Fee (ARF) of nurses at €100 for the duration of the Agreement (2015-2018). Maintaining the ARF at €100 rather than the required €150 leaves a significant shortfall in the budget of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). This shortfall has implications for the full implementation of the Nurses and Midwives Act

2011 (NMA 2011). The Department of Health agreed to provide appropriate capital funding while working with the Board to ensure its financial plans are realistic and cost effective. The Department also undertook to provide, if required, upfront Exchequer funding of developmental costs, once properly justified and validated, until the expiry of the Lansdowne Road Agreement. The funding from the Exchequer is therefore contingent on the Board implementing a cost containment plan agreed with the Department of Health.

The number of staff in the NMBI currently stands at 51.3 WTE (comprising 22.6 permanent; 11.7 contract and 17 agency). Since end July 2015, the Department has sanctioned the filling of 25 posts, the majority of which are existing posts that became vacant when staff left the organisation. The information in relation to the staff changes over the last 5 years is an operational matter and as such, it is appropriate that it should be dealt with by the NMBI. I have referred that aspect of the Deputy's question to the NMBI for attention and direct reply. If you have not received a reply from the NMBI within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

With regard to registration, there were 1,947 open cases on 31 May 2016. In this regard, many of the applications received are incomplete whereby documents remain outstanding and therefore the matter cannot be progressed to review/assessment stage until these are received. In addition, many applicants do not fully complete their application form fully therefore leading to delays in progressing an application through the system.

Summary details regarding number of nurse/midwife registrations is provided in the following table.

Date	Received	Registered	Adaptation/assessment/ap-titude decisions issued	files closed
2015	2534	1039	625	1494
1/1/16– 31/5/16	1650	593	681	244

Please note that the Board has taken a decision to close files in respect of applicants who did not submit the required documentation within one year – this period was reduced to a six month timeframe for applications submitted on or after 1st March 2016.

The NMBI fully recognises the challenges being experienced by health service employers in the public and the private sector and NMBI is meeting and liaising with employers to address the registration issues. NMBI is also liaising with a large number of recruitment agencies on a daily and weekly basis to support the recruitment and registration process. Senior NMBI staff are also endeavoring to explore the best ways of improving the efficiency of the existing process, whilst still maintaining the standards of education and professional competence required to enable registration. A new streamlined application form and information booklet was also launched earlier this year.

Various measures including enhanced website functionality, additional staff appointments and ongoing process improvement work by NMBI staff is assisting in making headway in the management of the increasing volumes of applications received by NMBI to facilitate new nurses and midwives entering the Irish health system as quickly as possible without compromising standards. At the end of 2015, the timeframe for assessment of applications once all required documentation had been submitted was 90 days. As of 31st May 2016, this had been reduced to 45 days.



## **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland**

224. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the current average waiting time is for processing registration applications at the Nursing and Midwifery Board in weeks; the representations he has received about tackling the delays which exist; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20174/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I would like to advise the Deputy that I and my predecessor, Leo Varadkar have received 86 representatives in relation to nurse registration issues in 2015 and 13 representations to date in 2016.

Officials of my Department have contacted the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) in relation to the Deputy's Question. The response from the NMBI is set out below.

Once all relevant documentation on a nurse or midwife's application is received the file is assessed by the NMBI. At the end of 2015, the timeframe for assessment of applications once all required documentation had been submitted was a maximum of 90 days. As of 31 May 2016, this had been reduced to a maximum of 45 days. Currently, there are no EU applications awaiting assessment.

It should be noted that most applicants from non-EU countries are not eligible for direct registration with the NMBI as their education programmes do not meet NMBI requirements and standards for such programmes. The usual outcome for such applications is a 'decision letter'. This specifies that the applicant must successfully complete an Aptitude Test or a period of Adaptation and Assessment as a prerequisite to registration. Once an applicant get the decision letter, he/she must apply for the Aptitude Test or the period of Adaptation and Assessment. Once successfully completed, they then progress to registration by the NMBI.

The NMBI fully recognises the challenges being experienced by health service employers in the public and the private sector. The NMBI is meeting and liaising with employers on a regular basis to address the registration issues. The NMBI is also liaising with a large number of recruitment agencies on a daily and weekly basis to support the recruitment and registration process. Feedback from recruitment agencies in recent months has been very positive and recognises the improvements that have been made by NMBI. Senior NMBI staff are also endeavoring to explore the best ways of improving the efficiency of the existing process, whilst still maintaining the standards of education and professional competence required to enable registration. A new streamlined application form and information booklet was also launched earlier this year.

Various measures including enhanced website functionality, additional staff appointments and ongoing process improvement work by NMBI staff is assisting in making headway in the management of the increasing volumes of applications received by NMBI to facilitate new nurses and midwives entering the Irish health system as quickly as possible without compromising standards.

## **Mental Health Services Provision**

225. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Health his plans to relocate the south Kildare child and adolescent mental health services team from Athy to Kildare town; when this move is expected to be finalised; if there any impediments to the move; if so, his plans to address them; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20188/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Mental Health Services Data**

226. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Health the number of admissions, by town, to the south Kildare child and adolescent mental health services. [20189/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If you have not received a reply within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Accident and Emergency Departments**

227. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of the 20% increase in the number of persons presenting at the emergency department of Mayo University Hospital in 2016; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20192/16]

228. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware that the Health Service Executive has confirmed that attendance at Mayo University Hospital emergency department is almost double what the facility was built to deal with (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20193/16]

229. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health his plans to resolve the problems at Mayo University Hospital (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20194/16]

230. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health the efforts being made by the Health Service Executive to reduce the pressure at Mayo University Hospital.; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20195/16]

231. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health the factors the Health Service Executive management has claimed are contributing to the overcrowding at Mayo University Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20196/16]

233. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health his plans for both the present and future of Mayo University Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20198/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 227 to 231, inclusive, and 233 together.

Pressures on EDs have been rising, as the population is both growing and ageing. ED attendances have been significantly higher this year, particularly in the peak winter period of Quarter 1. To date, the HSE has reported an average increase in ED attendances of nearly 6% compared with the same period last year.

However, overall this year so far, we have seen a decrease of just over 7% in the number of patients who have had to wait on a trolley, in comparison with the same period in 2015.

While ED attendances at Mayo University Hospital have been almost 10% higher year to date, we have seen a decrease of approximately 8% in the number of patients waiting on trolleys, in comparison with the same period in 2015.

Patient experience times at end May 2016 show that nationally 71% of patients complete their episode of care in ED within 6 hours and 85% within 9 hours of registration. In this regard Mayo University Hospital is performing better than average with 75% within 6 hours and 91% within 9 Hours.

The ED at Mayo Hospital was originally designed for 20,000 presentations per year; however, in 2015, Mayo saw 35,515 people. The Programme for a Partnership Government has committed to progress a new ED facility for University Hospital Galway, which will reduce pressure on EDs across the Saolta Group, including at Mayo University Hospital.

In January of this year the Primary Care Centre in Castlebar commenced participation in the Primary Care Ultrasound Project, which will increase access to diagnostic facilities in the Mayo region, and reduce pressure on Mayo University Hospital.

Several national initiatives such as: the ongoing work of the ED Taskforce and SDU; the 2016-2018 Winter Initiative, the national review of bed capacity; and the review of the hours of service of Medical Assessment Units, are intended to alleviate ED pressures at all hospitals, including Mayo.

### **Community Care Provision**

232. **Deputy Lisa Chambers** asked the Minister for Health if reductions in community care supports will be restored due to the fact that the Health Service Executive has claimed that such reductions are negatively impacting on delayed discharge from Mayo University Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20197/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** The HSE's National Service Plan for 2016 provides for a target of 10.4 million Home Help Hours to support about 47,800 people. It also provides for 15,450 Home Care Packages and 130 Intensive Home Care Packages for clients with complex needs. A further 60 clients with dementia will be supported with co-funding from Atlantic Philanthropies under the Irish National Dementia Strategy.

Home support services across the country are being stretched by demands from more people, and for more hours at times outside of core hours, in the evenings and at weekends, all of which cost more. Activity in the first quarter of 2016 was ahead of the same period last year as efforts continued to alleviate pressure on the acute hospital system.

I am delighted that the Government has been able to respond to this demand by providing an extra €40 m for home care in 2016. This will ensure that the home support services provided in 2015 are maintained and that the rate of service allocation can be maintained during the summer months. €10 m of this money has been ring fenced for home care as part of the new winter initiative. The targets for 2016 will be reviewed in light of these additional resources.

*Question No. 233 answered with Question No. 227.*

### **Disability Services Provision**

234. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health to outline the services available in County Louth for persons with spinal cord injuries; the community rehabilitation provision that exists in County Louth; the rehabilitation service that exist here for persons with spinal cord injuries who are on ventilation treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20199/16]

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

With regard to Neuro-rehabilitation services, the Programme for Partnership Government places a particular focus on publishing a plan for advancing Neuro-rehabilitation services in the community. Currently a steering group led by the Health Service Executive Social Care Division has drafted an implementation framework for the National Policy & Strategy for Neuro-rehabilitation services, which will guide and oversee the reconfiguration and development of Neuro-rehabilitation structures and services at national and local level.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### Hospital Appointments Status

235. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health to set out the status of a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20201/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### Respite Care Services Provision

236. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health if respite care will be reinstated in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20203/16]

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

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, the Deputy can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### **Cancer Incidence**

237. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Health to set down the number of persons diagnosed with sarcoma here on an annual basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20207/16]

238. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Health to set down the number of sarcoma specialists employed in the health service here; his plans to extend this service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20208/16]

239. **Deputy Micheál Martin** asked the Minister for Health to explain the way in which sarcoma services in St. Vincent's University Hospital are funded; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20209/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 237 to 239, inclusive, together.

Approximately 220 cases of sarcoma are diagnosed in Ireland every year. These include bone and soft tissue sarcomas.

Sarcoma can occur in many parts of the body and so it is treated by a variety of medical professionals, across surgery, medical oncology and radiation oncology services. Thus, many consultants and other medical personnel are involved in the treatment of patients with sarcoma, but none are working specifically as designated sarcoma specialists. It is intended to increase, in line with available resources, the number of consultant medical oncologists working in the eight designated cancer centres to meet demand.

Funding for the sarcoma service in St. Vincent's University Hospital comes from the general budget allocation for the hospital.

### **Medical Aids and Appliances Applications**

240. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health to set out the status of an application by a person (details supplied) for equipment from the Health Service Executive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20213/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As the particular issue raised relates to an individual case, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to you. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Home Care Packages**

241. **Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire** asked the Minister for Health to outline the provisions available for persons under 65 years of age to access a home care package in the case of exceptional needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20219/16]

242. **Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire** asked the Minister for Health to outline the supports that exist for persons with locked in syndrome or related conditions; the way in which the care of such persons at home is managed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20220/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 241 and 242 together.

The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

In the 2016 National Service Plan, the Health Service Executive's (HSE's) priority is to protect the level of services provided in 2015 and to provide 1.3 million hours of Personal Assistant services and 2.6 million hours of Home Support to over 2,000 adults with a disability.

As the Deputy's questions relate to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### **Health Services Staff**

243. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Health to outline his views on the reason the national recruitment service national social worker professionally qualified panel removed a person (details supplied) from the panel because the person turned down a position because of an inability to take it up at that particular time for personal reasons; and if the person can now be reinstated to the panel. [20221/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on this matter. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

244. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health to set out the status of

an appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20229/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, *A standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014*, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Services**

245. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health to outline his plans to relocate the regional orthodontic unit, located at University Hospital Waterford; if this is linked with the potential development of a second catheterisation laboratory; if the relocation of the orthodontic unit is necessary for the construction of the second catheterisation laboratory; the timeframes for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20236/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** In accordance with the Programme for a Partnership Government, an independent clinical review of the need for a second cardiac catheterisation laboratory at University Hospital Waterford is underway and is expected to be concluded shortly. No decisions will be made pending the finalisation of that review.

### **Cross-Border Co-operation**

246. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the location of the 135 community first responder groups currently operating across the State; the funding that has been allocated to each of these groups each year for the past three years; the level of cross-Border co-operation that exists between these groups in Border counties with similar groups in the North; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20238/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

247. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Health the status of the case of a person (details supplied) including when the person will receive an appointment. [20239/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The scheduling of appointments for patients is a matter for the hospital to which the patient has been referred. Should a patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he or she should take the matter up with the consultant and the hospital involved. In relation to the specific case raised, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Disability Services Provision**

248. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health if he will expedite and approve funding for the long-term care of a person (details supplied). [20241/16]

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

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, the Deputy can contact my Private Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### **Health and Social Care Professionals Registration Boards**

249. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if the Health Service Executive will review its policy of not recognising qualified counsellors with a standing degree in counselling if they do not have a second degree in a human relative discipline; if a degree recognised by the Association of Professional Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Ireland will qualify a person for working with the executive; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20252/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on this matter. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days he should contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Mental Health Services**

250. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Health if the Health Service Executive will engage the services of private counsellors to eliminate waiting times for persons experiencing mental health difficulties; if he will provide a dedicated fund for this; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20253/16]



**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service issue, this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply. If the Deputy has not received a reply within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Home Care Packages Funding**

251. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware that the home care package is exhausted in County Limerick since April 2016; if he will provide extra funding for same; if so, when he will do this; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20260/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** The HSE’s National Service Plan for 2016 provides for a target of **10.4 million** Home Help Hours to support about 47,800 people. It also provides for **15,450** Home Care Packages and **130** Intensive Home Care Packages for clients with complex needs. A further **60** clients with dementia will be supported with co-funding from Atlantic Philanthropies under the Irish National Dementia Strategy.

Home support services across the country are being stretched by demands from more people, and for more hours at times outside of core hours, in the evenings and at weekends, all of which cost more. Activity in the first quarter of 2016 was ahead of the same period last year as efforts continued to alleviate pressure on the acute hospital system.

I am delighted that the Government has been able to respond to this demand by providing an extra €40m for home care in 2016. This will ensure that the home support services provided in 2015 are maintained and that the rate of service allocation can be maintained during the summer months. €10m of this money has been ring fenced for home care as part of the new winter initiative. The targets for 2016 will be reviewed in light of these additional resources.

### **Accident and Emergency Departments Data**

252. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients who attended the accident and emergency department at University Hospital Waterford on a monthly basis for each of the years 2013 to 2015 and in 2016 to date in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20263/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Beds Data**

253. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the number of beds, that is bed capacity, operational at University Hospital Waterford for each of the years 2014 to 2015 and in 2016 to date, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20264/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the

matter up.

### **Hospital Services**

254. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the surgical theatre space operational at University Hospital Waterford on a monthly basis for each of the years 2013 to 2015 and in 2016 to date, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20265/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Services**

255. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the progress that has been made in developing a 100 bed community nursing unit on the grounds of St. Patrick's Hospital in County Waterford; the time frame for completion; the additional current spend that will be made available to ensure the unit is operational; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20266/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The HSE has been requested to reply directly to the Deputy on this matter as it is responsible for the delivery of health care infrastructure projects. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office who will follow up.

### **Palliative Care Services**

256. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the progress that has been made in constructing a palliative care unit at University Hospital Waterford; when construction work will begin; the estimate of when construction work will be complete; when the unit will be operational; the additional current spend that will be made available to ensure the unit is fully operational; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20267/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Helen McEntee):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Hospital Appointments Delays**

257. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the number of outpatient appointments, inpatient appointments and elective surgery procedures cancelled at University Hospital Waterford, by appointment type, on a monthly basis for each of the years 2011 to 2015 and in 2016 to date, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20268/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE

within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

258. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Health the number of outpatient appointments where patients did not show for appointments at University Hospital Waterford, by month, for each of the years 2011 to 2016 to date, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20269/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Medical Card Applications**

259. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the procedure to be followed by a person (details supplied) in seeking a renewal in September 2016 under the medical card scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20277/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Health Service Executive has been asked to examine this matter and to reply to the Deputy as soon as possible. The Health Service Executive operates the General Medical Services scheme, which includes medical cards and GP visit cards, under the Health Act 1970, as amended. It has established a dedicated contact service for members of the Oireachtas specifically for queries relating to medical cards and GP visit cards, which the Deputy may wish to use for an earlier response. Contact information has recently issued to Oireachtas members. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, he should contact my Private Office who will follow up the matter with them.

### **HSE Properties**

260. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of a proposal by a service provider (details supplied) to purchase a building in County Cork as a replacement for the current location for the day service and to provide extra capacity for an intake of 2016 school leavers; if he will give the matter his urgent attention; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20282/16]

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

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy. If the Deputy has not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days, the Deputy can contact my Private

Office and they will follow the matter up with the HSE.

### **Respite Care Services**

261. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) was charged for respite care. [20283/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Long-stay charges for in-patient services only apply to the further provision of in-patient services to persons who have already received at least 30 days of in-patient services during the immediately preceding 12-month period. Accordingly, many respite episodes would not attract any charge.

Charges for the maintenance element of long-stay in-patient services – which may include in-patient respite care services – are provided for under the Health (Amendment) Act 2005 and the Health (Charges for In-Patient Services) Regulations 2005, as amended.

The Regulations provide for two different classes of income-based charges in respect of the maintenance element of the in-patient services provided:

- Class 1 relates to charges for those receiving in-patient services on premises where 24-hour nursing care is provided, subject to a current maximum of €175 per week for a person whose income is €208 or more, and
- Class 2 charges apply where 24-hour nursing care is not provided, subject to a current maximum of €130 per week for a person whose income is €194 or more.

Affordability and the avoidance of financial hardship are built-in features of the charging provisions under the 2005 Act and Regulations:

- Firstly, the Act caps the amount which may be charged – at 80% of the non-contributory State Pension weekly rate. At present, that means an upper limit of €177.60 per week.
- Secondly, the charges are structured to ensure that those paying them retain a reasonable income for personal use: at least €33 per week for those paying Class 1 rates and at least €64 per week for those paying Class 2 rates
- Thirdly, the Act provides that the HSE may reduce or waive a charge imposed on a person if necessary to avoid undue financial hardship.

To assist in the fair application of the provisions of the 2005 Act and Regulations, the HSE has developed national guidelines for the determination of long-stay charges for in-patient services. These include the need to have regard to the individual circumstances of each service user and his or her dependants. The guidelines ensure that the applicable charge is determined taking account of each person's income and necessary outgoings while receiving care, including reasonable regular financial commitments. This avoids any unfair burden on the service user or his or her dependants.

As the issue raised by the Deputy relates to an individual case, this is a service matter for the Health Service Executive. I have asked the HSE to look into the particular matter raised and to reply directly to the Deputy. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

262. **Deputy Hildegarde Naughton** asked the Minister for Health the reason for the delay in providing ultrasound scans to new born infants with potential hip dysplasia at University Hospital Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20287/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

263. **Deputy Hildegarde Naughton** asked the Minister for Health if he is aware of the long waiting lists for cataract operations at University Hospital Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20288/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and my officials will follow the matter up.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

264. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20304/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The result of the referendum means that the UK electorate have declared their wish to leave the EU. It is important to be clear that the UK has not yet left the EU. Until it formally withdraws from the Union, the UK remains a full member, with all of its existing rights and obligations.

The terms of a British exit from the EU are unknown at this stage. Negotiations between all EU member states, including Ireland, on the UK's withdrawal from the EU are expected to take place over at least two years and possibly longer. The Department of Health will be fully involved in these negotiations.

A sub-committee of the Management Board was set up in advance of the UK referendum to examine the potential consequences of a UK decision to leave the EU on healthcare in Ireland and for Irish citizens. This sub-committee will build on initial work completed to undertake a full audit of the possible impacts, risks, opportunities and contingencies arising over the longer term, in the phases preceding and following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. It includes representatives from each division within the Department and is chaired at senior level.

Staff from my Department are in regular contact with other Departments on the issue of the UK vote to leave the EU. The Department of Health is also represented on the Senior Officials Group on EU Affairs and on the Interdepartmental Group on EU/UK Affairs, which are both coordinated centrally by the Department of the Taoiseach.

### **Health Services**

265. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Health the long-term plan for the re-

gional administrative centre and current positions which are held in Kells, County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20310/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly on this matter. If you have not received a reply from the HSE within 15 working days please contact my Private Office and they will follow up the matter with them.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

266. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March, 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20348/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The information requested by the Deputy is being collated and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

It is the policy in my Department only to engage the services of external consultants where it is felt to be appropriate and cost-effective, taking account of Government decisions and policy on the matter.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

267. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office, inclusive of costs incurred from use of the Ministerial allowance, in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department. [20378/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** It is the policy of the Department to keep costs in relation to the use of photographers to a minimum. Photographers are usually booked through the Press and Communications Office.

No photography costs are met from my Ministerial Allowance. From time to time individual units may incur other photography costs.

The detailed information requested by the Deputy is currently being collated and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as it is available.

### **Public Relations Contracts Data**

268. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal Departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20393/16]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Press and Communications Office of the Department liaises with the media on behalf of the Department and does not use the services

of public relations firms.

It is the policy in my Department only to engage the services of external groups where it is felt to be appropriate and cost-effective, taking account of Government decisions and policy on the matter.

I will advise the Deputy separately if any public relations firms have been employed by other units in the Department since I took office.

### **Beef Data Programme**

269. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason a person (details supplied) will not receive payment under a scheme; the options available to this person; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20128/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person name applied to participate in the Beef Data and Genomics Programme on 18 May 2015. An initial payment of €2,231.42 issued in December 2015.

At the time of the initial payment, all of the required survey details had not been received in the Department in order to facilitate full payment .

The person named subsequently submitted the remainder of their outstanding survey information to the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation on 20 May 2016 and a supplementary payment will issue as a result. This payment will issue in the coming weeks.

### **Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme**

270. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the status of an application by a person (details supplied) under a scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20129/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person concerned is an applicant under the TAMS II Animal Welfare, Safety and Nutrient Storage Scheme. The application is currently being processed and once it has been determined that all the terms and conditions of the Scheme have been complied with a letter of approval to carry out the works will issue.

### **TB Eradication Scheme**

271. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his views on the claim by the Irish Wildlife Trust that his Department regularly breaches the terms of special licences to snare and shoot 6,000 badgers a year as part of the State's bovine tuberculosis eradication programme. [20130/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine fully complies with the terms and conditions of licences issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to remove badgers in the context of its Bovine TB eradication programme. My officials work very closely with those of the NPWS in implementing this policy and are in constant contact on the badger capturing programme, in-

cluding at local level, to ensure that the conditions of the licences are being monitored and met.

Our policy of removing badgers is based on very considerable scientific evidence of a link between badgers and cattle in the context of the spread of bovine Tuberculosis. Research conducted by the Department and others has demonstrated that the eradication of bovine TB is not a practicable proposition until the issue of the reservoir of infection in badgers, which is seeding infection into the cattle population, is addressed. It is therefore necessary to eradicate TB in both species. I would stress that the removal of badgers is undertaken only in areas where badgers are the likely source of infection.

Furthermore, my Department believes that the removal of badgers has contributed significantly to the very substantial reduction in the incidence of TB in cattle in recent years. The incidence of bovine TB in Ireland has declined significantly since 2008 when approximately 30,000 animals were removed as reactors to just c. 15,300 in 2015. Herd incidence, which is another measure of trends, was at c.3.37% in 2015 compared with 5.88% in 2008. This is a historically low level. I am satisfied that the badger removal policy is the main factor in the reduction in the incidence of the disease and I would draw attention to the situation in Northern Ireland, which does not implement a badger culling programme, and where the incidence of TB is almost twice as high as ours.

It is important to note that the badger removal policy is a temporary measure pending the development of a suitable vaccine for use in badgers as it is our intention to gradually replace culling with vaccination. Accordingly, the Department has been collaborating for some years with the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CVERA) in UCD and with DEFRA in the UK on research into a vaccine to control tuberculosis in badgers. A number of vaccination projects, replacing repeated culling in already culled areas, have been implemented since 2013. If these projects are ultimately successful in demonstrating that vaccination is as effective as continued culling, vaccination will become an increasingly important part of the national eradication strategy, provided that any obstacles relating to the delivery of the vaccine are overcome.

### **Agrifood Sector**

**272. Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he is concerned at the recent survey by Bord Bia which found that some 40% of Irish food and drink exporters expect their sales to decline in the wake of the British exit from the European Union; his contingency plans to mitigate the effects of this on the agrifood sector, given that Irish food and drink exports to the United Kingdom accounted for 41% of total exports in 2015, valued at €4.4 billion; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2017/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** I fully acknowledge the concerns of the agri-food sector about the potential implications of the UK's decision to leave the EU. My Department and our agencies, in association with our stakeholders, have been giving careful consideration to this issue for some time, looking at the areas in which the greatest risks may arise and on which we will need to focus when negotiations begin.

The most immediate concerns for agri-food exporters centre on exchange rates. In that regard, the Central Bank of Ireland has pre-established contingency plans to deal with market volatility surrounding the referendum result. The Bank will engage with the Department of Finance and individual financial institutions regarding potential risks. Actions by ECB and other global actors will be monitored closely. In addition, I asked Bord Bia to provide practical guidance to SMEs to assist them in dealing with marketing challenges arising in the short



term, and yesterday it announced a number of measures to support food and drink businesses. These measures cover areas such as managing volatility impacts, the provision of consumer and market insight, deepening customer engagement, and extending market reach, with the aim of helping companies maintain their competitiveness.

Aside from currency fluctuations, the main areas in which potential impacts are foreseen are in relation to tariffs and trade, the EU budget, regulations and standards, and customs controls and certification, while complex issues also arise for the fisheries sector.

However, we must remember that our trading relationship with the UK is not altered in any way until the negotiation process that will dictate the terms and conditions of the UK's departure is completed. In the meantime, and as part of our overall contingency planning, I have established a dedicated unit in my Department to work on all of the issues that I have mentioned, and I have convened a consultative committee of stakeholders to ensure a full exchange of information as the negotiations proceed. The Department will also continue to feed into the central Contingency Framework being co-ordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach.

### Food Security

273. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will urgently conduct a national food security review with clear timelines on the implementation of a national food security strategy until 2030; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20318/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The FAO definition of food security states that: "*food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life*" (World Food Summit, 1996). Food security has four main dimensions - food availability, food access, utilisation and stability. At national level, food security is addressed through a range of Government policies providing social protection and supports for low income, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. At EU level, Ireland is engaged in research under a number of EU Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs).

Within my Department planning for food availability takes place with in the context of FoodWise 2025, the 10-year vision of sustainable growth for Irish agri-food. This strategy identified significant growth opportunities across the Irish agri-food industry. Cumulatively, it projects that exports have the potential to grow to €19bn per annum in value by 2015, representing a considerable increase on the €10.8 billion in agri-food and drink products exported in 2015 to over 175 markets worldwide. Implementation of the strategy overall and at sectoral level is monitored by a High Level Implementation Committee, which I chair.

In most sectors Ireland is a net exporter, indeed Ireland exports over 80% of the agri-food it produces. In the case of horticulture, Food Wise 2025 outlines the potential to grow the farm gate value of Irish horticultural output to over €500m in the medium term. Exports are less of a feature than in other sectors, with the exception of mushrooms.

While there is potential to increase production of certain horticultural crops in Ireland, in some cases it may not be economic to do so. Some crops can't be grown under Irish climatic conditions; other crops can only be grown economically at certain times of year or in certain parts of the country. Consumer desire for high quality fresh fruit and vegetables coupled with the high perishability of certain fresh fruit combine to create a situation where Ireland can't be fully self-sufficient in terms of horticultural production. Notwithstanding this situation the

Government is committed to maintaining and where possible developing Ireland's potential to produce food.

My Department implements two specific schemes to promote development of the horticulture sector. These are the State funded Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector and the EU funded Producer Organisation Scheme. Both schemes aim to promote the sustainable development of the industry with a focus on maximising grower competitiveness, aligning production with consumer demand and respect for the environment. The EU has co-funded mushroom promotions undertaken by Bord Bia in partnership with the sector for several years. My own Department has also contributed funding, together with the EU and the trade for a successful three year potato promotion "Potatoes – More than a Bit on the Side".

The Food Dudes and Food Dudes Boost programmes, co-funded by my Department under the EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, have developed in schoolchildren in national schools a taste for fresh fruit and vegetables leading to increased consumption.

The Grocery Goods Regulations, 2016, which were signed by my colleague the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, entered into force in April this year with the aim of improving the supply chain.

### **Horticulture Sector**

274. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he is considering providing funding for the Horticulture Industry Forum, given that this important sector does not receive funding to a level commensurate with the other sectors in agriculture and the need to develop education and research; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20319/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The Horticulture Industry Forum was established in Summer 2014 to allow the horticulture industry work together to discuss and seek solutions to the issues it faces. The Forum consists of growers representing all the main sectors within Ireland's edible horticulture industry. Teagasc and the IFA are associate members of the Forum.

In line with the recommendation set down in Food Wise 2025, the industry is funding the work of the Forum. There are no plans at present to provide State funding for the Forum.

To allow the Forum continue as an industry representative group which can effectively lobby Government, it is important that their independence be maintained.

### **Horticulture Sector**

275. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he has considered proposals to give special status to the horticulture sector in order to encourage the development of this vital sector of agriculture; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20320/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** There are no proposals at present to give special status to the horticulture sector, however the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine implements two schemes that specifically facilitate development of Ireland's horticulture sector.

The nationally funded Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector provides grant aid at a rate of 40% (50% in the case of young applicant's under 35 years of age) on approved costs associated with investment in a broad range of specialised horticultural equipment and buildings that contribute to at least one of the Scheme's objectives of facilitating environmentally friendly practices, promoting the diversification of on-farm activities, improving the quality of products or improving working conditions in the sector. Earlier this year the Minister of State with special responsibility for horticulture, Andrew Doyle, T.D. issued approvals to 154 applicants with a total value of €5.4m under the 2016 Round of the Scheme. This will facilitate grower investment costing approximately €13.5m over the coming months.

The EU funded Producer Organisation Scheme provides aid to encourage producers of fruit and vegetables to set up an organisation to jointly market their production in order to strengthen the producer's position in the marketplace. The Scheme also aims to increase market orientation among EU growers, encourage innovation, promote fruit and vegetables, increase grower's competitiveness and improve marketing, product quality and the environmental aspects of production.

A fruit or vegetable Producer Organisation may claim 50% EU aid on approved actions implemented through their Operational Programme up to a ceiling of 4.1% of their Value of Marketed Production, which is essentially their turnover.

There are currently two recognised horticultural Producer Organisations in Ireland. In line with the recommendation set down in FoodWise 2025 the Department's policy is to encourage grower participation in horticultural Producer Organisations.

### **Retail Sector**

276. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he is considering measures to examine the issue of near-cost or below-cost selling of food produce; if he has examined how other states such as Germany and the United Kingdom tackle this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20321/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Retail legislation is a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Grocery Goods Undertakings Regulations, 2016 signed by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and which entered into force on 30 April 2016, introduced a number of requirements including written contracts, payment to suppliers within 30 days except where otherwise provided in a contract, submission of an annual compliance report to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and enforcement provisions. The Regulations apply to grocery goods retailers and wholesalers with an annual worldwide turnover of more than €50 million. I will be very interested to see the impact they have in their first year.

### **GLAS Applications**

277. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the restrictions he has placed on an application by a person (details supplied) under the green low-carbon agri-environment scheme; how these impact monetarily on the person; his plans to deal with this in general terms; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20417/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person named has been approved under Tranche 2 of GLAS with a contract start date of 1 January 2016.

My Department has not placed any restrictions on participants in the GLAS Schemes, however the actions available under the scheme are bound by specific requirements. GLAS is a voluntary scheme and details of the scheme were made available in advance of the scheme being launched giving clients appropriate time to decide if the scheme was suitable to them or not.

The Hen Harrier action as selected by the person named is a Tier one environmental asset and secured priority access to the Scheme for the person named. The rate of payment for the Hen Harrier action is €370 per hectare and this rate is based on the additional costs involved in protecting and enhancing the habitat, and the income foregone as a direct result of that.

### **GLAS Issues**

278. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 173 of 24 April 2016, the status of the case, given correspondence (details supplied) received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20419/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The designation of areas under the Birds and Habitats Directives is a matter in the first instance for the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. My Department has recently received revised datasets from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which are currently being reviewed by officials in my Department.

Any updates or revised designations will be incorporated into the GLAS online system in advance of GLAS 3 being launched.

### **Rural Development Programme**

279. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the status of the knowledge transfer programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20171/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Knowledge Transfer Groups are currently being rolled out as part of the range of supports and measures contained in Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP), 2014-2020. The terms and conditions for the Scheme set out a required group size of 12 – 18 participants and a maximum number of 5 groups per facilitator. Maintaining the required group size and the maximum number of Knowledge Transfer Groups per facilitator is designed to underpin a more effective group interaction and to facilitate the delivery of the individualised Farm Improvement Plans which each farmer must develop with his facilitator as part of the Scheme.

My officials have examined our records in relation to the group names provided, and I note that the facilitator in question has registered the maximum number of Knowledge Transfer Groups. I have asked my officials to examine this case.

### **TAMS Administration**

280. **Deputy Kevin O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his proposals to raise the investment ceiling under the targeted agricultural modernisation scheme 2 from €80,000 to €300,000 in view of the complex nature of pig units and the overall costs involved in carrying out the appropriate works. [20200/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** There are no plans currently to increase the ceiling in the Pig and Poultry Investment Scheme of TAMS II from €80,000. Any increase in this ceiling would require a formal amendment to the Rural Development Plan and approval from the European Commission.

### **Basic Payment Scheme**

281. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of transfer of entitlement cases held up, not completed due to suspension; the reason there is a suspension; if it is the case that this suspension is in place since May 2016; and when the suspension will be lifted (details supplied). [20222/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Under EU Regulations governing the Basic Payment Scheme Member States were obliged to definitively establish Entitlements for all farmers prior to 31 May 2016. In this regard the definitive establishment of Entitlements was completed for 127,000 farmers in Ireland on 31st May 2016. In order to definitively establish Entitlements for a farmer all their Transfer of Entitlement applications must be processed to completion. In a small number of cases, 106 in total, it was not possible to complete a Transfer of Entitlements application by the May deadline, mainly due to outstanding documentary evidence pertaining to the Transfer.

Following the definitive establishment of Entitlements clarification was required from the EU Commission regarding the methodology for processing remaining Entitlement related applications including Transfer cases. This clarification has now been received and arrangements are being made to process the remaining Transfer applications as soon as possible.

### **Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments**

282. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 521 of 24 May 2016 when he will issue payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20226/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person named commenced their AEOS contract on 1 May 2015. Payments have issued in respect of the 2013-2015 Scheme years.

Payments are issued on a yearly basis following a comprehensive administrative check, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System. These checks take place in the last quarter of each year, and the 2016 scheme payment will be processed once these checks are finalised.

### **Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments**

283. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if there are further options to seek a review or appeal of a decision by a person (details supplied); and

if he will make a statement on the matter. [20261/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person named commenced their AEOS 1 Contract on 1 September 2010 for the contract period from 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2015. Payment issued in respect of 2010-2014 Scheme years.

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 must take place. During this check issues arose in respect of a parcel of Wild Bird Cover which was not declared as such for the full term of the contract. Recoupment was sought for all payments made on this action.

The person named has been advised of their right to appeal this decision to the Agriculture Appeals Office.

### **Basic Payment Scheme Appeals**

284. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when he will issue payment under the basic payment scheme to a person (details supplied); when the person will be allocated the top-up of entitlements from the national reserve; the reason for the delay in making the payment and awarding the entitlements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20281/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person named submitted an application under the 'Old Young Farmer' category of the 2015 National Reserve. The application was not successful as the applicant was deemed to have commenced farming outside the eligible time frame for the 'Old Young Farmer' category. The applicant was notified in writing of this decision and was offered the opportunity to submit an appeal. My Department received an appeal from the person named. This appeal has been considered on the basis of the information set out by the person named and has been successful. The person named has been notified of this outcome in writing and payment is due to issue shortly.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

285. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20295/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** A dedicated unit has been established within my Department's EU and International Trade Division to plan and coordinate the Department's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. Initially comprised of three people, including the Head of the Division, the Unit reports to the relevant Assistant Secretary General. The Unit will also draw on expertise from all parts of the Department and its agencies. It inputs to the Government's central Contingency Framework co-ordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach, and co-ordinates the work of the Consultative Committee that I recently established to ensure a full exchange of information between stakeholders, as well as co-ordinating the work of the contact group of state agencies recently established by the Food Wise 2025 High Level Implementation Committee.

The unit is currently consolidating the work already undertaken in identifying the main challenges presented by a UK decision to leave the EU with a view to prioritising the key issues of relevance to the Irish agri-food sector that will have to be addressed during the exit negotiations. These negotiations may not commence for some time, but when they do, and when the likely nature of the post-exit relationship between the EU and the UK begins to become clearer, the unit may be expanded as required.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

286. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March, 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20339/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The information requested by the Deputy is provided in the following table. Some of the reports outlined are mandatory in the context of EU obligations.

#### 2011: March- December

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
University College Dublin	Evaluation of the EU School Fruit Scheme/Food Dede Programme in Ireland 2011 - Commission Regulation 288 of 2009	10 January 2012	4,500
University College Dublin	EU School Fruit Scheme/Food Dede Programme in Ireland – A review of evaluations completed to date - Commission Regulation 288 of 2009	6 February 2012	6,388
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2010 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2010 Market Report for Ireland for the Timber Committee 2010	May 2011 January 2012 Sept 2011	12,792
Rockwell Automation	Hazard and Operability Study	13 December 2011	3,740
Fitzpatrick Associates	Interim Evaluation, of 2007-2013 SDP	3 June 2011	39,325

Questions - Written Answers

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Brendan Riordan, Research Economist	The Net Contribution of the Agri-Food Sector to the Inflow of Funds into Ireland: a New Estimate	23 July 2012	6,000
Accenture	An analysis of an internal review of procurement.	Not for external publication.	Work done on a pro-bono basis
Accenture	An examination of the opportunities and capacity for further shared services between the Department and its non-commercial state agencies.	Not for external publication.	Work done on a pro-bono basis
Accenture	A review of the Department's role in regulating meat plants	Not for external publication.	Work done on a pro-bono basis
KPMG	An examination of the administration of the Single Payment Scheme.	13 October 2011	Work done on a pro-bono basis
Fitzmaurice Tingle Ltd.	Refrigeration Consultancy on 6 Fishery Harbour Centre Sites	Not for external Publication	3,505
Brian Scott	Port Security Assessment- Castleown-bere Fishery Harbour Centre	Not for external Publication	4,680
Deloitte Ireland	To examine recommendations of the Report of the Review Group on State Assets and Liabilities as applicable to be this Department to value the assets referred to and to make a series of recommendations. For internal Departmental information	Not for external publication	Work done on a pro-bono basis



Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Michael Dowling	Beef 2020 Activation Group: Growing the Beef Sector	June 2011 – for input into FH 2020 Committee	10,000
Stiofan Nutty	Report on the Development of Ireland's Organic Industry and an Organic and an Irish Organic Trade Board.	For internal Departmental information Not for external publication	29,040
Briggs Environmental Services	Oil Spill Contingency Plans	Not for external Publication	4,424
Deloitte Ireland	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine – Annual Accounts Certification. Required by EU Legislation.	Not for external publication.	509,830

**2012: January- December**

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2011 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2011 Market Report for Ireland for the Timber Committee 2011)	May 2012, 3 July 2012 Sept 2012	12,792
Irish Equine Centre	Demographic study on the unwanted horse population in Ireland	March 2012	10,000
Indecon	Review of certain aspects of the Irish Horse Racing Industry	20 July 2012	59,225
CMG Crime Management Ltd	ISPS Port Security Plan- Castleownbere Fishery Harbour Centre	Not for external Publication	3,198
Philip Farrelly & Co. Ltd	Food Harvest 2020 – Environmental Analysis Report	January 2014	229,610
Team BDS	Lean Review of the Meat Inspection Service	16 December 2013	98,597

Questions - Written Answers

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Compass Informatics Ltd	Independent specialist review of all Geographical Information based computer systems in the Department, carried out as part of the effective and efficient administration of the Department's EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) based payment schemes.	Not for external publication.	16,254
Deloitte Ireland	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine – Annual Accounts Certification. Requirement of EU Legislation.	Not for external publication	514,169

**2013: January- December**

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Norfolk Marine	Survey works report to Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre	Not for external Publication	10,828
Brian Scott	Port Facility Review, Killybegs	Not for external Publication	1,200
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2012 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2012 Market Report for Ireland for the UN-ECE Timber Committee 2012)	May 2013 July 2013 October 2013	11,400
Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants	Ex Ante Evaluation, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment of the 2014 – 2020 Rural Development Programme	July 2015	48,401
Judith A Annett Countryside Consultancy	Irish Deer Management Policy Vision	Not for external publication	2,500

Company	Title of Report	Date or Expected Date of Publication	Costs €
Forest Solutions	NPV and IRR analysis for New afforestation scheme	Not for external publication	1,968
Deloitte Ireland	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Annual Accounts Certification. Requirement of EU legislation	Not for external publication	468,277

**2014: January- December**

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost
Indecon	Review of certain matters relating to Bord na gCon	7 July 2014	60,885
Deloitte	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine -Annual Accounts Certification as required by EU legislation	Not for external publication	452,699
RSM McClure Waters	Ex Ante Evaluation, SEA and AA of Seafood Development Programme 2014-2020	24 June 2015	64,083
NTA Monitor Ltd	Independent assessments of the Department's IT security measures and security review of the Department's infrastructure. Required for EU accreditation purposes.	Not for external publication.	18,382

Questions - Written Answers

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2013 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2013 Market Report for Ireland for the Timber Committee 2013	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire- completed May 2014 and submitted to the EUROSTAT/FAO Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2013- published as part of COFORD Woodflow 2013 in July 2014 UNECE report - was completed September/October 2014 for submission to the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest industry.	11,780
RSM McClure Waters (Consulting)	Ex Ante Evaluation Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment of 2014-2020 Forestry	Published in 2014 as part of the consultative process on the new Forestry programme	97,508
Forest Solutions	NPV and IRR analysis for new forestry for Fibre scheme	Was not specifically published but formed part of the deliberative and consultative process on the new Forestry programme	2,214
Forest Solutions	Cost Benefit Analysis- Forest Roads Programme 2014-2020	Was not specifically published but formed part of the deliberative and consultative process on the new Forestry programme	2,952
Freshwater Bivalve Investigations Freshwater Bivalve Investigations	Site Assessment of the River Lickey Site Assessment of the River Lickey	Not for external publication Not for external publication	5,040 2,769
Occupational Physiotherapy Solutions	To conduct an ergonomic assessment of tasks in Cork Blood Testing Laboratory. Internal use only.	Not for external publication	1,347
Crime Management Services Ltd	ISPS Port Security Assessment: Castle-townbere FHC	Not for external Publication	4,735

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost
Crime Management Services Ltd	ISPS Port Security Assessment: Killybegs FHC	Not for external Publication	4,735
Fitzpatrick Associates	RDP 2014-2020 Ex Ante. Evaluation Strategic Environmental Assessment & Appropriate Assessment	June 2014	48,401

**2015: January- December**

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost €
Philip Farrelly & Co	Agri-Food Strategy 2025. Environmental Analysis Report (Provisional Title)	December 2015	89,790
Deloitte	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine -Annual Accounts Certification as required by EU legislation	Not for external publication	137,111
BDO	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine -Annual Accounts Certification.	Not for publication. Report is a requirement of EU Legislation.	381,743
NTA Monitor Ltd	Independent assessments of the Department's IT security measures and security review of the Department's infrastructure. Required for EU accreditation purposes	Not for external publication.	16,279
Fitzpatrick Associates	RDP 2014-2020 Ex Ante. Evaluation Strategic Environmental Assessment & Appropriate Assessment	July 2015	50,130

Questions - Written Answers

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost €
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2014 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2014 Market Report for Ireland for the Timber Committee 2013	May 2015 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2014-published as part of COFORD Woodflow note. Sept/Oct 2015	12,398
Bearing Point	Technical code review of the Animal Health and Welfare System	Q1 2016 Not for external publication.	126,198
Deloitte	Technical code review of the Integrated Fisheries System	Q1 2016 Not for external publication.	79,827
NTA Monitor Ltd	Independent assessments of the Department's IT security measures and security review of the Department's infrastructure. Required for EU accreditation purposes	Not for external publication.	35,611
Capt. Alan Coghlan	Draft Report on the use of Tugs and Associated Pilotage at Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre	Not for external publication	4,800
CMG Crime Management Ltd	ISPS Port Security Plan: Killybegs FHC	Not for external Publication	4,245
CMG Crime Management Ltd	Port Security Plan: Killybegs FHC	Not for external Publication	4,362
Martin Heraghty	Confidential Report to Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Commercial Mushroom Producers (CMP) participation as a Producer Organisation in the Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Scheme	21 September 2015	2,000

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost €
Dr. Claire Sansford, Independent Plant Health Consultant, York, UK.	Revised assessment of the risk of spread of Hymenoscyphus fraxineus on untreated wood of ash (Fraxinus spp., particularly Fraxinus excelsior).	4 September 2015 Published on the DAFM website in January 2016	18,691
McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of Freshwater Pearl Mussel Plan for Ireland	27 May 2016	54,710
ADAS UK ITD	An Evaluation of the Green Low –Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)	2021	1, 500,000
Smith Carter	Structural Report on Amelioration Works	Commissioned in December 2015. Not for Publication	27,060
Presidion	Aim Calf Survival Herd of Origin Deliverables Report	Commissioned in December 2015. Completion February 2016	4,500
Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions Ltd	Longford Slope Stability Appraisal	Not for external Publication	29,446
Clare Mulligan Consulting	DAFM Culture and Gender Review	Not for external Publication	18,000

**2016: January - To Date**

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost €
NTA Monitor Ltd	Independent assessments of the Department's IT security measures and security review of the Department's infrastructure. Required for EU accreditation purposes	Not for external publication	12,694
NTA Monitor Ltd	Independent web application testing	Not for external publication	4,133

Questions - Written Answers

Company	Title of Report	Date or expected Date of Publication	Cost €
Indecon International Economic Consultants	Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme	November 2016	146,997
University College Dublin	Evaluation of the Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme (implementing EU School Fruit & Vegetables Scheme)	January 2017	84,235
BDO	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine -Annual Accounts Certification.	Not for publication. Report is a requirement of EU Legislation.	49,200
PEFC (Ireland) Ltd (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification)	Pilot Project on Group Certification	July 2016	2,500
Henry Philips	Roundwood Production Forecast 2016-2035 Assessment of the impact of forest felling age on overall financial return to forest owners	On web Q1 2016 Print Q3 2016 Commissioned March 2016 Completion Q4	12,000 46,800
Drima Marketing Ltd	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JSFO) 2015 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2015 Market Report for Ireland for the UN-ECE Timber Committee	May 2016 Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2015-published as part of COFORD Woodflow note. Expected date of publication July 2016. October 2016	14,071

### Departmental Expenditure

287. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance, in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department;; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20369/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The information requested by the Deputy is available on my Departments website at [www.agriculture.gov.ie/aboutus/ministers/photographycosts/](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/aboutus/ministers/photographycosts/). When possible, the Department avails of internal photography skills.



## Public Relations Contracts Data

288. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal Departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20384/16]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** My Department does not employ External Public Relations firms. Public Relations advice is provided by my Department's Press Office.

## Invasive Fish Species

289. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the action being taken to eradicate the invasive dace fish in the River Barrow; the amount of money being spent on this eradication scheme; and the success of this scheme to date. [20190/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Seán Kyne) (Deputy Seán Kyne):** Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources.

I have been informed by IFI that since the first discovery of dace in the tidal waters at Saint Mullins, as far back as 1992, the species had, by 2006, spread over 70km upstream, to near Vicarstown and upstream of the confluence of the Barrow Navigation and the Barrow Line of the Grand Canal. At present, the species is firmly established throughout the river and navigation and there are no practical measures that can be taken to control or eradicate this species where it is already present in abundance. I am also advised that it is established in both the Nore and Suir rivers.

While dace is a valuable angling species for many anglers in certain freshwaters, including the River Barrow, it is acknowledged that the species can prove to be a nuisance to game anglers targeting brown trout and to a lesser extent salmon, and it is an invasive species in Ireland.

The presence of dace in the Barrow system poses an increased risk of spread to interlinked waters and the primary approach of IFI in this regard is to prevent its spread outside of systems where it is already established, such as the Barrow.

There is no eradication scheme in place as the fish is prolific and widespread. There is currently no mechanism available that would enable the removal of the fish from the river without affecting other important species and communities.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (2011), with regard to dace, a licence is required to breed, reproduce or release or allow or cause to disperse or escape from confinement, or for any person who has in his or her possession for sale, or for the purposes of breeding, reproduction or propagation, or offers or exposes for sale, transportation, distribution, introduction or release.

## Media Mergers

290. **Deputy Timmy Dooley** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his views on the planned takeover of seven Irish radio stations by an organisation (details supplied); his role in deciding if this complies with media mergers legislation; if this passes the public interest test under media merger guidelines and the effect on the existing media plurality landscape; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20211/16]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Denis Naughten):** Under the Competition Act 2002, as amended by the Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014, proposed mergers or acquisitions meeting certain criteria must be notified to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC). The CCPC must then examine the notification and decide if the merger may proceed on competition grounds.

Media mergers (mergers or acquisitions in which two or more of the undertakings involved carry on a media business in the State, and mergers and acquisitions in which one or more of the undertakings involved carries on a media business in the State and one or more of the undertakings involved carries on a media business elsewhere) which have received the CCPC's determination must also be notified to me as Minister.

Upon notification, a *Phase 1* examination of the merger is carried out by my Department. This examination is guided by the relevant criteria laid out in the legislation and by the *Guidelines on Media Mergers*, both of which are available on my Department's website.

Following this examination, I have three options under the legislation, which are to allow the merger to proceed, to allow the merger to proceed with conditions or to ask the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) to conduct a more in-depth or *Phase 2* examination of the proposed merger.

If the latter is the case, then the BAI shall provide me with a report detailing their recommendations on the matter. It is also possible for me, as Minister, to establish an advisory panel to provide an opinion to the BAI on the application of the relevant criteria to the media merger in question.

Following receipt of the BAI's report and recommendations, I must then make a decision either to allow the merger to proceed, to allow it to proceed with conditions or to refuse to grant my consent.

No notification has been made by the organisation referred to in the Question and, therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to provide further comment at this time. That said, I am aware that this merger is currently being considered by the CCPC.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

291. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20298/16]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Denis Naughten):** As the Deputy will be aware, the Government has adopted a Contingency Framework identifying key policy issues to be managed by Government Departments arising from the referendum vote in the UK to leave the EU.

The Contingency Framework is being co-ordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach. It is based on preparation over many months including inputs by Government Departments to identify the key strategic and sectoral issues arising from the UK disengaging with the EU. This framework will ensure that the Government and its constituent Departments are able to focus on key policy/issues to be addressed in any exit negotiations with a view to minimising potential operational risks likely to arise.

Amongst the priority issues identified in the contingency planning process is Energy.

Under the Contingency Framework, Ministers, Departments and Agencies will track and adapt the detail of contingencies and risk management strategies arising in each of the key areas identified.

As part of the contingency planning for a UK EU exit, a number of existing structures are in place and will be used to manage the process on a whole-of-government basis. This includes:

- The Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs and the Senior Officials Group that supports it;
- The joint UK Permanent Secretaries/Irish Secretaries General group and its North-South equivalent;
- A senior official in every Government Department has already been identified to oversee this issue - in the case of my Department this is the Assistant Secretary over the Energy area;
- The Department of the Taoiseach chairs an Interdepartmental group of senior officials that has been meeting regularly to look specifically at the bilateral and national interests affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The work of this group will be scaled up and intensified;
- A wider consultative group of stakeholders chaired by Department of the Taoiseach comprising key business representative groups, ICTU and NGOs has also been meeting for some months now. The work of this group will also be scaled up and intensified;
- The work of the North-South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council will become more important as mechanisms to develop the detailed outworking of policy issues arising.

An internal group of senior officials in my department has been meeting since early 2015 to consider the implications of Brexit, to ensure that the impacts were identified and any that appropriate contingencies prepared. The work of this group will now be intensified and will focus on more detailed contingency planning. The Group, as indicated, will be chaired by the Assistant Secretary over the energy area who will in turn report into my Department's Management Board chaired by the Secretary General.

As Minister, I will continue to ensure that the necessary political oversight is provided to the contingency planning process and to the development of negotiating positions insofar as issues related to my Department are concerned.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

292. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20342/16]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Denis Naughten):** In the time available it has not been possible to gather the information sought by the Deputy. My Department is compiling the information requested and I will write to the Deputy with the information sought as a matter of urgency.

### Departmental Expenditure

293. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20372/16]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Denis Naughten):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table.

Photography Costs - 6th May to 7th July 2016 - Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources			
Company	Event Date	Event	Cost - €
Maxwell Photography	25/05/2016	Launch of EPA Guidelines, Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone	602
Maxwell Photography	31/05/2016	Launch of report on impacts of Online Trading Voucher scheme	490
Total			1092

Payments from Ministerial allowances are not a charge on the Vote of the Department and therefore my Department does not hold information on these payments.

Photographers are booked for the purpose of recording key events attended by Ministers, such as the launch of schemes and programmes, new initiatives and visits by various delegations.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, following an EU-level advertised procurement process, has established a Framework Agreement comprising five firms for the provision of photography services. The Framework was established in February 2012 and is open for use by all Government Departments and Offices. My Department avails of this Framework Agreement for photography needs.

### Public Relations Contracts Data

294. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20387/16]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Denis Naughten):** Since taking office on 6 May 2016, my Department has not used any external public relation firms.

My Departmental remit includes complex policy areas, oversight of State regulation and service provision across key strategic services such as energy and public broadcasting, and regulation of sectors such as mining and hydrocarbon exploration. Given the technical complexity, economic significance and community interest in these areas, there is a requirement to disseminate information and address specific issues as they arise. The Department, therefore, may incur expenditure on public relations from time to time.

In procuring these services, my Department always seeks to ensure value for money and to keep expenditure to the minimum necessary.

### Departmental Agencies

295. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his oversight of the tree felling and land clearance Irish Rail conducts in maintaining rail lines and infrastructure; the chemical agents it uses in this process; the potential environmental impact of this felling; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20316/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The issue raised is a matter for Iarnród Éireann and I have forwarded the Deputy's question to the company for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.

### Road Projects Status

296. **Deputy Imelda Munster** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he can confirm the inclusion of the N52 Ardee bypass for consideration in the 2017 capital programme review. [20332/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** As Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. Within its annual budget the planning, design and implementation of individual road projects, such as the Ardee Bypass is a matter for Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly known as the NRA) under the Roads Acts 1993-2015 in conjunction with the local authorities concerned.

As the Deputy is aware the Ardee Bypass was not included in the Capital Plan published in September 2015. Decisions on the transport elements of the Capital Plan were framed by the conclusions reached in my Department's Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport. Based on the findings in that report it is envisaged that maintenance and renewal of the road network will continue to be the main priority over the next period and the bulk of the roads capital budget, over €4 billion, is earmarked for such essential work with a further €600 million allocated for implementation of the PPP road programme which is already underway. In this context the Ardee bypass was one of the projects that it was not possible to include given the overall funding envelope available.

As the Deputy is aware, the Government proposes to undertake a Mid-Term Review of the Capital Plan, which will take stock of progress and provide the Government with an opportu-

nity to consider the scope for increased levels of investment, including in the transport sector, taking economic growth and fiscal progress into account.

### **Public Service Vehicles**

297. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will address a matter (details supplied) concerning the number of wheelchair taxis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20170/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** Since 2010 the regulatory framework for Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs) requires that new taxi or hackney licences may only be granted where the vehicle complies with the specifications for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs).

There is a clear need to favour the issuing of licences to WAVs rather than for standard taxis or hackneys. The number of WAVs in Ireland compares very poorly by comparison with other jurisdictions. The effect of the low proportion of WAVs in the overall small public service fleet has translated into major difficulties for wheelchair users to obtain transport.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has introduced a number of initiatives to address the shortfall in WAVs including the introduction of new regulations permitting smaller vehicles to be used as wheelchair accessible taxis and a grant scheme to assist in the purchase of suitable vehicles.

I have referred your question to the NTA to provide some further detail on taxi licensing and the steps being taken to address the shortfall in WAVs. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within 10 working days.

### **Regional Airports**

298. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the additional €10 million for regional airports provided for under the programme for Government will be made available; if this €10 million is spread over one or more years; the limitations that exist on the areas this money can be spent on; if the additional money is for capital spend; to outline precisely the capital spend allowed and not allowed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20217/16]

299. **Deputy David Cullinane** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if any of the additional €10 million for regional airports provided for under the programme for Government will be spent on extending the runway at Waterford Regional Airport; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20218/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 298 and 299 together.

As I mentioned in my composite reply to Question Nos. 517, 567 and 568 on 21 June last, Waterford Airport receives substantial Exchequer support under the Regional Airports Programme that is administered by my Department. This Programme also supports the other three regional airports in Counties Donegal, Mayo and Kerry with funding but only in relation to the implementation of necessary safety and security related projects and activities.

Development projects at the airports which are designed to expand capacity are a com-

mercial matter for the airports themselves and are outside the scope of the Programme. In the case of the proposed runway extension at Waterford, I understand that the airport authorities are pursuing local interests for funding in relation to that project.

The extra €10 million in the Programme for Government is for capital funding and will enhance my Department's ability to further support safety and security related investments by the four regional airports. This brings to €38 million (was €28m) the amount provided in the Capital Plan 2016-2022 for supporting the airports in these important areas and, as I said at the Select Committee last week, I would see these extra funds being allocated towards projects over that period, beginning in 2017.

For details of the grant support schemes under the current Regional Airports Programme, I previously referred the Deputy to my Department's website: <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/aviation/english/irelands-regional-airports-programme-2015-2019/irelands-regional-airports-programme-2015-2019.pdf>.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

300. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20309/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The coordination of my Department's response to the UK exit from the EU is led by the Principal Officer in the Policy and Governance Coordination Division of my Department. The Officer is assisted by the EU Coordination Unit within that Division consisting of three officers at Assistant Principal, Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level. The Principal Officer represents my Department on the high level Inter Departmental Group chaired by the Department of an Taoiseach and is also responsible for keeping myself and the senior management of the Department apprised of developments, evolving risks and contingency plans.

The Government Contingency Framework, published in the immediate aftermath of the UK referendum, is an iterative process and as issues emerge and recede in the course of negotiations, my Department will be monitoring the evolving situation and will work with the Department of the Taoiseach, with other Government Departments and with our agencies in identifying and preparing contingency plans and actions and inputting these into the overall Government Framework.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

301. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to provide, per annum, all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March 2011 in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20353/16]

303. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a

statement on the matter. [20398/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 301 and 303 together.

Details of external services, including consultancies and public relations firms as requested by the Deputy, are available from my Department's website at the following link [www.dttas.ie/corporate/english/expenditure-external-services-2015](http://www.dttas.ie/corporate/english/expenditure-external-services-2015). This document is updated twice each year and information relating to the first half of 2016 will be available later this month.

It is the policy of the Department in the exercise of its functions to use internal resources as far as possible. Consultants are hired occasionally in circumstances where particular expertise is not available internally and where it is deemed to add value and independence to the overall work of the Department.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

302. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office, inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20383/16]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** Photography costs incurred by my Department are on its website at the following link: <http://www.dttas.ie/corporate/english/photography-costs>.

However, I can confirm to the Deputy that no costs have been incurred since my appointment.

It is the policy of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport that photography costs are kept to a minimum and services are provided in-house by staff, where feasible.

*Question No. 303 answered with Question No. 301.*

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

304. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the steps she will take to assist smaller businesses who trade between the United Kingdom and Ireland following the result of the United Kingdom's referendum to leave the European Union; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20111/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** It is important to emphasise that the UK is still an EU member, therefore our businesses can continue to trade with the UK on the same terms as before. The precise implications of the UK vote will now depend on the period of negotiation ahead, involving the UK and our EU partners. The Government has undertaken careful planning in recent months for the contingency of this result. We will now take this work forward to ensure that we respond appropriately and that Ireland's interests are represented fully in the negotiating process.

Following the announcement of the referendum result on Friday June 24th, as part of my



own contingency plans, I instituted a Coordination Group consisting of the Chief Executive Officers of both IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland and relevant enterprise, single market, and trade officials, to oversee the management of our immediate response and the messaging to businesses both overseas and domestically. I will continue to chair this Group as part my Department's ongoing response as developments unfold. I have also met with the Director General and CEOs of IBEC, SFA, ISME, and the Irish Exporters Association, to hear at first hand the reactions and concerns of business.

In addition, I have met with the British Irish Chamber of Commerce and will meet them again shortly. Given the importance of the North-South economic relationship I am also meeting this week with Inter-Trade Ireland and recently met bilaterally with my Northern Ireland Counterpart and the Referendum result was discussed.

Enterprise Ireland, as the enterprise agency under the remit of my Department with responsibility for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets, including many smaller businesses who trade between the UK and Ireland, has already put in place a dedicated team to address issues of concern to clients. It has also provided a dedicated phone line and published an Information Guide for clients, detailing '5 pillars of support' and FAQs on its website.

Since the referendum result on 24 June, Enterprise Ireland has:

- Communicated with more than 1,500 clients who export to the UK, with a statement of reassurance and pointing them to the resources available.
- Initiated direct engagement with clients most impacted (more than 200 to date) both in Ireland, and overseas, to hear their concerns.
- Led a pro-active communications campaign in the national media, supporting Enterprise Ireland's ability to respond to client needs for information and assurance.

The most immediate impact for Enterprise Ireland clients is currency fluctuation. To address this, Enterprise Ireland have conducted a survey of clients exporting to the UK markets to ascertain their currency management status and developed a webinar, which is now live on the Enterprise Ireland website.

This week, Enterprise Ireland will publish a new 'Guide to Exporting to the UK, post EU Referendum' which will include expert advice and commentary as well as practical supports on LEAN business, business models, legal, tax, currency risk and supply chain management.

In the period ahead, Enterprise Ireland will pursue a dual strategy of market diversification, beyond the UK markets, while at the same time, supporting Irish companies to maintain and grow existing exports in the UK market (€7.5bn in 2015.)

I have asked Enterprise Ireland to accelerate the finalisation of their plans for increasing the number of trade missions both within the EU, to include France, Germany and Scandinavia, and to intensify our programme of missions in non-EU markets.

More generally, with trade in goods and services across the Irish sea amount to approx. €1.2 bn per week, I will be lending my support to deepening bi-lateral trading relations, and in this regard I will lead a trade mission to the Farnborough International Air Show on 12/13 July.

The network of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), which are the 'first-stop-shop' for providing advice and guidance, financial assistance and other supports to those wishing to start or grow their own business, will continue to provide assistance to the small business sector via

their suite of support measures.

The LEOs also offer direct grant aid to microenterprises (10 employees or fewer) in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sector which, over time, have the potential to develop into strong export entities.

My Department is fully committed to supporting business in this period of heightened uncertainty and we will continue to work closely with the Department of the Taoiseach, the enterprise agencies and other Departments to monitor the impact of the UK referendum result both on indigenous and international companies.

### Skills Development

305. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the studies her Department has previously, is currently, or plans to carry out to develop a skills profile of workers needed in the technology sector; if any of this information will come from the findings of census 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [2011/4/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** In 2013, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) published a report on “*Addressing Future Demand for High-Level ICT Skills*” in Ireland. This report indicated a strong on-going demand for people with high-level ICT skills across many sectors of the economy – not just the ICT sector itself. The Expert Group’s report suggested that 44,500 new job openings could arise in Ireland from expansion and replacement demand over the period to 2018.

A main recommendation in the Expert Group’s report was that the quantity and quality of ICT graduates should be boosted. The report also recommended that enterprises should move further towards the development of experienced employees and providing career pathways for new graduate entrants.

The Government’s ICT Skills Action Plan provides an integrated education system response to increasing the supply of high-level ICT skills.

The current Plan, which covers the period 2014-2018 focuses on actions under three Priority areas:

1. Increasing output of high-level graduates;
2. Enhancing ICT capacity and awareness in the education system; and
3. Ensuring Ireland maintains a strong ICT talent pool and promoting Ireland as a centre for high-level ICT Skills

Actions being taken to increase skills supply include the funding of additional places at Third Level, the provision of targeted reskilling/skills conversion opportunities, and marketing Ireland as a location of choice for international tech professionals looking to work on challenging and interesting projects.

The implementation of the ICT Skills Action Plan is driven by a High Level Steering Group under the auspices of my Department and the Department of Education and Skills. The Steering Group includes industry representatives. A key aspect of the success in progressing the ICT Skills Action Plan process to date has been the close engagement of industry with Government Departments and education and training providers.

The 2016 Action Plan for Jobs includes a commitment to review the implementation of the ICT Skills Action Plan and identify additional measures that might be taken to boost the supply of skilled workers in this area. My Department will work closely with the Department of Education and Skills on this review.

The profile of the specific ICT/Tech occupations used in the EGFSN's previous work was derived from a special tabulation of occupational codes produced by the CSO from the Census 2011.

Similar findings from the Census 2016 will be valuable in updating this ICT/Tech occupational profiles information.

### **Farm Safety**

306. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount of funds allocated by the Health and Safety Authority for farm safety initiatives in 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20134/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Pat Breen):** The Health and Safety Authority has allocated a budget of €244,000 for 2016 for farm safety initiatives. These initiatives will include the organisation of, participation in, or support for a number of agriculture related events such as the Farmer of the Year Awards, Farm Safety Week, Teagasc Beef 2016, and the National Ploughing Championships.

The Authority's Programme of Work for 2016 continues the emphasis on engagement with farmers through knowledge sharing groups and the level of inspection on farms will be maintained at 2015 levels. Priority tasks for the current year include:

- implementation of Year 1 of the Farm Safety Partnership Action Plan, 2016 to 2018;
- continuing awareness campaigns through the media, events and advertising targeted at agricultural sector;
- promotion of good health for farmers;
- publication of information sheets;
- reviewing and updating the Code of Practice on farm safety;
- developing an e-learning tool on tractor and machinery safety;
- focusing on child safety on farms through programmes at primary and post-primary school level;
- increasing awareness of farm safety throughout the sector.

### **Workplace Relations Commission**

307. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if a prosecution has been initiated by the Workplace Relations Commission under the 1977 Protection of Employment Act relating from the closure and liquidation of a company (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20136/16]

308. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the outcome of the High Court proceedings taken by companies (details supplied) against officers of his Department; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20137/16]

**Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Pat Breen):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 307 and 308 together.

The Deputy may be aware that authorised officers have sought information from a number of parties in relation to the collective redundancies that took place in OCS Operations Limited on 12 June 2015. This was one of the actions initiated as part of the Government response to the closure of Clerys last year. The work of the authorised officers relates to the application of the Protection of Employment Act 1977 to the collective redundancies in question. Prosecutions, if appropriate, remain an option under the Act.

One of the parties from whom the authorised officers sought information initiated proceedings in the High Court challenging the powers of the authorised officers. This matter is due back before the High Court today, 7 July. As the matter is before the courts it would not be appropriate for me to comment any further.

### **Trade Agreements**

309. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation when the European Commission will present a proposal to the Council of Ministers asking the European Council to vote to give the Commission the authority to sign-off on the final text of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the Canadian Government; when she will get access to the wording of this proposal to conclude the agreement; and if she will make this proposal public. [20177/16]

310. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if, given that the European Commission's stated intention is to ask the European Council for permission to provisionally apply the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement at the same time as it is asking the European Council for permission to sign-off on or conclude the final text of the arrangement, if she will make public her position as to whether she supports provisionally applying the agreement. [20178/16]

311. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation her views that Article 29.5.2° of Bunreacht na hÉireann places a constitutional imperative on the State to have any international agreement involving a charge upon public funds to be approved by Dáil Éireann; should the European Council of Ministers vote by a qualified majority vote to approve the signing and provisional application of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, and considering the ISDS mechanism of the agreement is designed specifically to allow for a charge upon public funds, her views on whether this would thus create a constitutional crisis for Ireland and the EU whereby Ireland could be the subject of the settlement cases which lead to a charge upon public funds prior to Dáil Éireann approving the agreement; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20179/16]

312. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the way in which, given that Article 30.7.4(d) of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement declares that the parties shall understand the term, "entry into force of this Agreement", as meaning the date of provisional application, she can claim that the agreement and its settlement will not be enforced upon Ireland prior to the agreement being approved by Dáil Éireann. [20180/16]

313. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if she is aware that Article 218.5 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union declares that the Council, on a proposal by the negotiator, shall adopt a decision authorising the signing of the agreement and, if necessary, its provisional application before entry into force; and if she will detail the necessity test it is using to inform its thinking on the provisional application of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. [20181/16]

314. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if she is aware that the European Commission staff working document, SWD, on the free movement of capital in the EU, SWD (2013) 146 final, states that, with relation to a private company using an intra-EU member state investment state dispute settlement, ISDS, mechanism, such agreements clearly lead to discrimination between EU investors and are incompatible with EU law (details supplied); and the way in which she can explain her position that the ISDS of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement is compatible with EU law. [20182/16]

315. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if she is aware that the European Commission's legal service has made amicus curiae submissions to investment state dispute settlement cases involving intra-EU bilateral investment treaties in order to make its legal case that ISDS is incompatible with EU law (details supplied); the way in which her position that the ISDS of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement is compatible with EU law; and the reason she does not invoke Article 218.11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and ask the European Court of Justice to deliver a legal ruling as to whether ISDS is compatible with EU law. [20183/16]

316. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if she is aware of the fact that the European Commission is engaged in legal action at the European Court of Justice against five member states requiring that they terminate their intra-EU bilateral investment treaties, BITs, because investment state dispute settlement, ISDS, contravenes the principles of the Single Market (details supplied); and her views on a scenario (details supplied). [20184/16]

317. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the reason she supports the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and its investment state dispute settlement, ISDS, (details supplied). [20185/16]

318. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation how she intends to protect Irish citizens from the European Commission's proposal to provisionally apply the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA, prior to a definitive legal ruling as to the distribution of competences relating to new proposals to subject the EU to an ISDS under the CETA (details supplied). [20186/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 309 and 318, inclusive, together.

The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) is a new generation agreement that will remove over 99% of tariffs between the EU and Canada and will create sizeable new market access opportunities in services and investment. It will end limitations in access to public contracts, open-up services market, and offer predictable conditions for investors.

The EU-Canada Agreement will save on duty costs as 99.6% of all industrial tariffs will be eliminated on entry into force. Irish firms will also benefit from the recognition of product standards and certification, thus saving on 'double testing' on both sides of the Atlantic. These are some of the benefits of the trade deal with Canada as well as providing new market oppor-

tunities in many sectors for Irish firms.

In May this year, the Council had an exchange of views on the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the process towards signature and provisional application of the agreement. The European Commission and Member States highlighted the high quality of the agreement reached with Canada and expressed the desire to work towards signature of the agreement at the October EU-Canada Summit. The Commission published their proposals for signature, conclusion and provisional application on 5 July 2016 which are available on the European Commission Register of Documents. The proposal is for CETA to be a mixed agreement.

At the last EU Council of Trade Ministers on 13 May 2016, I made Ireland's approach clear, that based on our current assessment of its provisions, we viewed CETA as a mixed Agreement, in terms of EU and Member State competency. In view of the position taken by Ireland and other Member States I note that the Commission have now decided to submit CETA to the Council for decision as a mixed agreement. This means that each Member State will be required to ratify the agreement under its own procedures. The Oireachtas will be part of the final decision on ratification. It will now be a matter for the Council and the European Parliament to decide on the signature, conclusion and provisional application of CETA.

The provisions of the CETA on investment dispute resolution relate solely to the CETA as a multinational trade agreement. Such trade agreements are not part of domestic law. This is why separate adjudication arrangements are required in the event of disputes under the agreement.

### **Enterprise Ireland Funding**

319. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the status of an application by an organisation (details supplied) for grant assistance; if she will provide funding for this; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20224/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** The details supplied pertain to a Westmeath based unit of the Irish Manufacturing Research Centre (IMR). IMR is an Enterprise Ireland/IDA Ireland Technology Centre focused on manufacturing and industrial energy efficiency research aimed at delivering solutions to manufacturing companies throughout Ireland. The Centre offers the manufacturing industry a unique environment to collaborate with peer companies across all manufacturing sectors, and to inform and guide manufacturing research that can provide solutions to industry problems.

I asked my officials to consult with Enterprise Ireland in relation to the grant assistance referred to in the Deputy's question. My officials are advised there is no application for grant assistance pending for the Unit in question. IMR receives the core of its funding from Enterprise Ireland (currently in the region of €15 million over 5 years) but, like all Technology Centres, the Centre must also attract a portion of matching funding from industry and also from competitive research funding sources. These additional funding sources ensure that Enterprise Ireland /IDA Ireland Technology Centres remain relevant to industry's needs while also being of a sufficient research & technological standard to win competitive funding. The Mullingar based unit of this Technology Centre receives its funding from the central IMR budget where funding & governance decisions are made by its Board, which is predominantly comprised of industry representatives.

### **Local Enterprise Offices Expenditure**

320. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the amount of funding drawn down from her Department and given out by each of the local enterprise offices for each of the years 2012 to 2015, inclusive and to date in 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20284/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** Capital funding for the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) is provided by my Department via the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Enterprise Ireland, who distribute the funding to individual LEOs. The Capital allocations are for direct financial supports to the micro-enterprise sector (Measure 1 grants) and so-called “soft” supports for LEO clients, such as training and mentoring (Measure 2 supports). Measure 1 grants are given out to LEO client companies, in the form of priming, business expansion and feasibility grants. Since 2014, the LEOs also disburse direct Capital funding in the form of investments to successful applicants under the Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) competition.

Table 1 provides details of the Capital funding drawn down by the CoE for allocation to the LEOs for the years from 2012 to 2015 and to 6 July 2016. The table also shows the total expenditure made by the LEOs over the same period under Measure 1, Measure 2 and IBYE (2014 and 2015).

The total value of the Measure 1 direct grant assistance made by the LEOs to their clients over in this period may also include an element of refundable aid which is generated by the LEOs from repayments by clients of up to 30% of the value of the grants made. The Measure 2 expenditure may include an element of own resource income generated by the LEOs from their training courses and mentoring services, etc. These additional elements are included in the expenditure amounts in Table 1.

A more detailed up-to-date breakdown of expenditure on a LEO by LEO basis is being compiled by my Department and will be supplied to the Deputy as soon as it is available.

	Total Sub-head - Capital Allocation	Measure 1 Allocation	Measure 1 Expenditure	Measure 2 Allocation	Measure 2 Expenditure	IBYE Expenditure
2012	€18,775,750	€ 9,989,000	€12,303,035	€ 8,810,262	€10,959,105	N/A
2013	€18,180,500	€ 9,695,866	€11,496,596	€ 8,447,916	€10,626,920	N/A
2014	€18,499,500	€ 8,065,866	€10,931,992	€ 7,506,416	TBC	€ 1,644,800
2015	€18,500,000	€ 8,332,366	€10,048,453	€ 7,401,294	TBC	€ 2,137,048
To 6 July 2016	€18,500,000	€ 7,500,000	€4,282,386	€ 7,109,000	€1,398,174	N/A

### UK Referendum on EU Membership

321. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland’s response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20305/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** In light of the breadth and diversity of policy and operational areas that are relevant to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union, this is a matter that impacts on, and is being monitored by, all of the Divisions across my Department.

In the immediate aftermath of the announcement of the UK referendum result on the morning of 24 June last, as part of my contingency plans, I instituted a Coordination Group consisting of relevant enterprise, single market, and trade officials of my Department, together with the Chief Executive Officers of IDA and Enterprise Ireland, to oversee the management of our immediate response, including the messaging to businesses both domestically and overseas. I am chairing this Group personally, and I will continue to do so as part of my Department's ongoing response as developments unfold.

In addition, the EU Affairs Unit of my Department exercises a dedicated overall coordination role across all of the relevant policy areas, and represents my Department in the work that is being undertaken at cross-Government level, led by the Department of the Taoiseach, in response to the outcome of the referendum, and which facilitates the framework for my Department's interaction with other Departments in this context.

The Management Board of my Department, chaired by the Secretary General, also meets weekly and co-ordinates the Departments own response across all its Divisions to the referendum outcome.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

322. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to provide, per annum all external consultant reports commissioned by her Department since March, 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20349/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** The names of external reports commissioned by my Department and Offices of my Department, the costs, the date or expected date of publication and the name of the external consultants are set out in the following tables for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and to 5 July 2016. In some cases, the costs of the reports were shared with other bodies and these are noted below.

The data in respect of 2014 includes research and analysis which was commissioned by Forfás prior to the date of its integration into my Department in August 2014, and for which my Department held the 2014 budget. This research and analysis has subsequently been carried out in the Strategic Policy Division in my Department.

#### 1 January – 5 July 2016

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title		Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
Sabeo	Health check on email archive system		December 2015	Awaiting final report, Internal ICT assessment – not for publication	1,750.00



Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title		Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
Gas Package Solutions (GPS) Ltd.,	Assessment of application for recognised third party recognition status under EU Pressure Equipment Directive 97/23/EC		22 June 2015	Technical assessment report - not for publication	6,685.00
Capita Business Services Ltd		Review of Science and Technology Development Programme – Draft Audit Report	October 2015	Operational report not for publication	8,250.00
Ward Solutions		ICT Security Reviews	Various Dates	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	3,198.00
Sabeo		Patents Office ICT System Architecture Review	March 2015	Internal ICT architecture – not for publication	4,305.00
Insight Statistical Consulting		Annual Survey of Economic Impact 2015	December 2015	Due for publication Q1 2017	46,125.00
ESRI Research Programme with DJEI & EI		Research Programme – Innovation & Productivity & Services export diversification	July 2016	Due for publication Q4 2016	50,000.00 (DJEI) 50,000.00 (EI)

Questions - Written Answers

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title		Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
Indecon Economic Consultants		Study to Examine the Affordability of Irish Housing and its impact on economic competitiveness.	March 2016	To be published July 2016	25,239.60
Indecon Economic Consultants		Review of RD&I Supports available to businesses in Ireland	24th May 2016	Ongoing	59,133.80 (23,645.52 paid to date)
Insight Statistical Consulting		Data Analysis to feed into Knowledge Based Capital study	29th April 2016	For internal use – not for publication	13,776

**1 January – 31st December 2015**

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
Technopolis	Evaluation of Ireland's Participation in FP7 and Horizon 2020	December 2015	Ongoing	97,237.65 (29,171.30 paid in 2015)
University of Limerick	Study on the prevalence of zero hour and low hour contracts and their impact on employees	February 2015	Published 3 November 2015	96,670.00
Planet21 Communications Ltd.	Strategic Review of Network	January 2015	Internal ICT network assessment – not for publication	9,932.25
Ward Solutions	ICT security review	Various Dates	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	54,765.75

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
Version 1 Software	Oracle eBusiness Suite Release 12 Upgrade Assessment	November 2014	Internal ICT system assessment – not for publication	8,079.92
Copenhagen Economics	TTIP Impact in Ireland	December 2013	Published on 27th March 2015	84,896.04
Insight Statistical Consulting	Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact (ABSEI)	December 2014	ABSEI 2014 – Report published June 2016	46,740.27 (DJEI) 46,740.27 (EI) 46,740.27 (IDA)
Insight Statistical Consulting	Annual Employment Survey 2015	July 2015	Survey Report published June 2016	5,965.50 (DJEI) 10,737.90 (EI) 1,193.10 (IDA)
Technopolis	Enterprise demand survey and analysis for report on Strengthening Ireland's Market-Focussed Research Centre Capacity	February 2015	Technical input to development of successor to SSTI - Complete	30,750.00
Mazars LLP	Not in public domain.	September 2014	This report forms part of the evidence in a criminal prosecution by the DPP and will be detailed in court when the case is heard.	177,545.80
Mason Hayes Curran	Tables of Destinations and Origins to Companies Act 2014	April 2015	15th June 2015	123,000.00
Crowley's DFK	Audit of funds transfer as part of Forfás restructuring	December 2014	Operational report not for publication	7,000.00
Capita Business Services Ltd	Review of Agency case	January 2015	Not for publication.	9,809.25

Questions - Written Answers

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report€
CMI	A study on the role and importance of Design in Irish-based firms in Non-Design Intensive Sectors	June 2015	Complete to be published shortly (underpinned the publication “Policy Framework for Design in Enterprise in Ireland” – published 26th of January	48,454.65
Dr Christian Ketels	Review of Competitiveness Frameworks	August 2015	Published April 2016	34,045.00
ESRI Research Programme with DJEI & EI	Review of Expansion & Diversification of Irish Exports - Manufacturing	November 2015	Completed – due for publication Q3 2016	30,000.00 (DJEI) 30,000.00 (EI)

**January – December 2014**

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Technopolis	Ireland’s Future Infrastructure Needs	Q2 2015	Published as part of Innovation 2020 in December 2015	47,203.17
Ward Solutions	ICT security reviews	Various dates	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	35,178.00
Rits	Mobile Device Policy Assessment	September 2014	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	2,236.00
Version 1	Oracle eBusiness Suite R12 Upgrade Assessment	November 2014	Internal ICT assessment – not for publication	4,174.13
Clarion Consulting Limited	Employment Permits Administration Section Business Process Improvement Project Report	July 2014	Not for publication	52,275.00

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
CIRCA Group Europe Limited	Review of Ireland's membership of international research organisations	Q1 2015	Published as part of Innovation 2020 in December 2015	61,131.00
CM International	Assessment of Public Funded RD&I Supports for Innovation in Services and Business Processes	January 2014– commissioned by Forfás	Input to Forfás report on Services Innovation published April 2014	6,000.00
Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government	Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2014	Q1 2014 – Commissioned by Forfás	Input on economic complexity to competitiveness analysis.	2,600.00
Insight Statistical Consulting / Fitzpatrick Associates	Evaluation of IDA Training Grants	November 2013 – commissioned by Forfás	Input to programme of evaluations - publication Q1 2015	29,250.00(19,188.00 paid by DJEI in 2014: balance paid by Forfás)
DCU/Fitzsimons Consulting	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2014 (GEM)	Q4 - 2013	Ongoing - GEM 2014 report will be published	20,000.00
Insight Statistical Consulting	Annual Employment Survey 2014 (AES)	July 2014	Published Feb 2015	5,882.60 (DJEI) )11,337.40 (IDA/EI)
Indecon Economic Consultants	Analysis of direct & indirect economic impacts on an export-led growth enterprise policy	December 2014	Complete – input to Enterprise 2025	48,275.00 (14,482.00 paid in 2014: balance paid in 2015)
IDC	Harnessing Big Data for innovation led growth: an assessment of Ireland's progress and further policy requirements	July 2014– commissioned by Forfás	Complete – publication Q2 2015	56,690.00

Questions - Written Answers

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
CM International	Optimising Policy Intervention to Strengthen the Impacts of Enterprise RD&I in Ireland	August 2014	Complete – input to development of successor to SSTI analysis Publish 8th December 2015	36,469.00
Fitzpatrick Associates	Econometric analysis of effectiveness & impacts of agency supports	December 2014	Input to DJEI Evaluations of agency programmes. Published Q2 2015	47,970.00 (14,391.00 paid in 2014; balance paid in 2015)
Insight Statistical Consulting	Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact (ABSEI)	December 2013	ABSEI 2013 report published January 2015	44,034.00 (DJEI)44,034.00 (IDA)44,034.00 (EI)
PWC	Role of Intellectual Property	Q4 2013	Input to competitiveness analysis	15,612.00
PWC	Review of Insurance Costs	August 2014	Input to published Costs of Doing Business 2015 & Competitiveness Bulletin published Jan 2016	34,440.00
PWC	The role of public procurement in driving Ireland's competitiveness, whilst delivering value for money	Q4 2013	Published as input to Competitiveness Challenge 2014	31,340.00
Technopolis	Strengthening Ireland's Market-Focused Research Centre Capacity	July 2014– commissioned by Forfás	Complete – input to development of successor to SSTI analysis	84,255.00
Tom Martin & Associates	Higher Education Engagement by EGFSN	October 2014	Completed for EGFSN – not for publication	€11,931.00

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
AECOM	Assessing the Demand for Skills in the Freight Transport, Distribution and Logistics Sector in Ireland over the period 2014-2020	May 2014 – commissioned by Forfás	Input to EGFSN review - publication Q1 2015	€78,702.00(National Training Fund contribution €60,601.00)
DKM RPS	Water Services & Environmental waste Issues & Priorities for Enterprise	Commissioned by Forfás in early 2014	Ongoing - input to Forfás/DJEI submissions to regulator and competitiveness reports	50,353.00
Technopolis	A Mapping of Smart Ageing activity in Ireland and an assessment of the potential smart ageing opportunity areas	July 2014– commissioned by Forfás	Input to DJEI analysis – published Q2 2015	89,605.00
Cambridge IP	An Analysis of Intellectual Property Activity in Ireland based on the existing data Phase 1	April 2014– commissioned by Forfás	Input to DJEI analysis - publication Q1 2015	40,966.38
Technopolis	A Study on enhancing the Intellectual Property activities in the firm base in Ireland	September 2014	Input to DJEI analysis – publication Q2 2015	49,138.00
E&Y	Analysis of Sectoral Ecosystems - Input to Enterprise Policy 2025	Q2 2014 – Commissioned by Forfás	Enterprise 2025 Published November 2015	61,461.00

Questions - Written Answers

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
RSM McClure Watters	Study of the Current and Future skills requirements of the Marine/Maritime Economy to 2020	June 2014 - commissioned by Forfás	Input to EGFSN review – published Q1 2015	€82,502.25(National Training Fund contribution €63,527)
Indecon Economic Consultants	Hospitality Sector - Hotels, Tourism & Catering	November 2014	Input to EGFSN review – published Q4 2015	€78,289.50 (€39,145.00 paid in 2014, balance payable 2015)National Training Fund Contribution €60,282.92

**January – December 2013**

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Ward Solutions	ICT security reviews	Various dates	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	24,627.00
Fitzpatrick Associates	Export Licensing Administration Process Review	July 2012	Complete	47,417.00



Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Tom Martin & Associates/TMA	Youth Unemployment A review of wage costs and other factors which may affect the employment of young people in Ireland.	Q4 2013	Not for publication - Presented to the Troika in line with the terms of the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policy which is a component of the Memorandum of Understanding, September 2013, as part of which the Irish Government undertook to present a report in December 2013.	5,547.30
Janet Hughes	Labour Court Review of Joint labour Committees	February 2013	Published	17,835.00
RSM McClure Watters	The evaluation of the Workplace Relations Pilot Early Resolution Service	February 2013	Published September 2013	35,498.00
First Choice Financial Services Ltd and AJS Financial Advice Ltd	Credit Guarantee Scheme "Findings and Recommendations"	July 2013	September 2013	24,600.00

**January – December 2012**

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Ward Solutions	Security reviews of ICT systems	Various dates	Internal ICT security assessments – not for publication	39,095.00

Questions - Written Answers

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Version 1	ICT systems review – Patents Office	November 2011	Internal technology review – not for publication	29,667.00
Achilles Procurement Services Ltd.	Recommended Procurement Strategy for a Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) from the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court	July 2012	Published internally August 2012	2,560.00
Deloitte	Feasibility Study: Making Ireland an International Centre for Intellectual Property		Ongoing	102,872.62

**March – December 2011**

Name of external Consultant/ Organisation	Report Title	Date of Commission	Publication Status	Cost of Report - €
Rits	IT Security assessment of new hosting site in Revenue Hosting Centre	May 2011	Internal ICT security assessment – not for publication	7,093.00
Maxima Ireland	Computer Server Virtualisation Strategy Review	June 2011	Internal technology review – not for publication	8,276.00
UCD (Dr Frank Walsh)	Review of ERO and REA Wage Setting Mechanisms	Q1 - 2011	Published May 2011	15,000.00
Greater Heights Ltd	Learning Need Analysis (NERA Staff)	October 2010	Published	15,645.00
Capital for Enterprise Ltd.	Design of Temporary Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme	August 2011	Not for publication	59,565.00

## Departmental Expenditure

323. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation the total photography costs per annum for her Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within her Department;; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20379/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** I can advise the Deputy that the total photography costs incurred by my Department and its Offices since 6 May, 2016 are €461. The list of occasions for which photographers were booked, the photographers used and the breakdown of costs are detailed in the table below.

No expenditure for photography was incurred from Ministerial allowances.

Photography Costs incurred since 6 May, 2016

Occasion for which Photographer Booked	Name of Photographer	Cost
Ministerial reception for Mr Kevin Duffy and Mr Kieran Mulvey on their retirement as Chairman of the Labour Court and Director General of the Workplace Relations Commission	Tommy Clancy	€461

The Department uses external photographers sparingly and, with a view to keeping costs to a minimum, regularly uses its own facilities and staff to take photographs in-house. My Department also avails of the panel of photography firms, selected following a procurement process undertaken by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which is available for use by all Departments.

## Public Relations Contracts Data

324. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by her Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20394/16]

**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor):** My Department uses external public relations providers having regard to its business needs for specialist communications advice and technical materials assistance. In engaging such providers, the Department is mindful of the need to secure value for money and, accordingly, strives to keep costs to the minimum.

The names and business addresses of the providers of public relations services used by my Department and the Offices of my Department and the details of the services supplied by each since 6 May, 2016 to date are as follows:

Date	Name and Business Address	Details
6 May to Date	Barberry LtdT/A Keating & Associates 19 Fitzwilliam Place Dublin 2	To provide the Workplace Relations Commission with Communication Services (including PR; Media Monitoring advising on the design, content and production of reports and brochures

### Mother and Baby Homes Inquiries

325. **Deputy Gino Kenny** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the reason for the exclusion of former residents of county homes, other than from a minority of four selected county homes, from giving evidence to the mother and baby homes commission; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20230/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** The Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and certain related matters was formally established by Government Order on the 17th February 2015.

In accordance with its comprehensive Terms of Reference, the Commission was tasked with thoroughly examining the experience of mothers and children resident in 14 named Mother and Baby Homes and a representative sample of County Homes to be selected by the Commission.

The criteria for the selection of this representative sample by the Commission are outlined in Section 2 of Appendix 1 of S.I. No 57 of 2015.

It is essential to recognise that in accordance with Section 9 of the Commissions of Investigation Act 2004, the Commission is independent in the performance of its functions. It is a matter for the Commission to decide how best to conduct the various elements of its investigations and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which are for the independent Commission to decide and progress.

Persons wishing to contact the Commission may do so by writing directly to: Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, 73 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2, email [info@mbhcoi.ie](mailto:info@mbhcoi.ie) or by telephone at 01-6445000.

### Special Educational Needs

326. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if she is aware of incidents in which children with special educational needs who had enjoyed supports as part of the previous supports system are to have these existing supports withdrawn henceforth following the introduction of the new access and inclusion model, AIM, to support children with disabilities and special needs to access preschool education; if such a removal of supports contravenes a previous commitment given by her in which it was stated that all supports currently available through the various agencies are to remain in place for 2016-17 during this transition period; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20232/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** Last month I introduced the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), a new programme of supports to enable children with a disability to access and fully participate in the free pre-school programme.

The AIM initiative was led by my Department, in close collaboration with the Department of Health, the Department of Education and Skills and others.

As the Deputy notes, when introducing AIM, I emphasised that all existing supports, whether funded via the HSE or the Department of Education and Skills, should remain in place until the new model is fully embedded in the system. This approach was agreed by the three Government Departments involved in the development of the model and remains the policy position.

It is my understanding that all local services provided by or on behalf of the HSE have been issued with an instruction from HSE senior management that existing supports are not to be withdrawn from children with a disability until AIM is fully embedded. I will raise this matter again with my colleague, Mr Finian McGrath, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for disability.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

327. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20297/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** I do not have any staff in my Department that are dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union. My Department has limited exposure to EU matters and, accordingly, there are few direct implications for my Department arising from the UK's decision. My Department is appropriately represented at Assistant Secretary level in the Interdepartmental process that is led by the Department of the Taoiseach to co-ordinate Ireland's response and I will address any issues that arise within my Department's remit.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

328. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to provide, per annum all external consultant reports commissioned by her Department since March 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20341/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** In order to deliver key commitments in relation to children and young people and to put in place a unified framework of policy, legislation and provision across Government in respect of children and young people, it is at times necessary to commission reports and utilise expertise from a range of expert individuals and bodies. My Department ensures that all reports commissioned are of direct relevance to the operational and policy commitments of my Department.

I have set out in the following table the full range of external consultant reports commissioned by my Department. Costs may include, where applicable, copy editing, design and other costs relating to publication. Separate material is provided in respect of the Growing Up in Ireland study.

Questions - Written Answers

Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Audit of Children and Young people's Participation in decision making in Ireland	November 2009	November 2011	Cnag ar an Doras and Sandra Roe (joint contract)	€19,890.42
National Consultation with Children Living in the Care of the State	November 2010	July 2011	Cnag ar an Doras	€25,610.00
Body Image Survey Report	March 2011	October 2011	Anam Cara	€6,800.00
Youth Work: A Systematic Map of the Research Literature	September 2011	June 2013	Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of (EPPI-Centre) London.	€67,000.00
Valuation report	November 2011	Internal use only	Elliott Fitzgerald Ltd.	€1,230.00
Needs Assessment for the Redevelopment of www.childrensdatabase.ie	December 2011	Internal use only	Centre for Effective Services	€18,400.00
Every Child a Home: A Review of the Implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy	December 2011	July 2013	Centre for Effective Services Penhouse Design Intacta Print Carole Devaney for proofing of report and of briefing note	€6,000.00 €5,522.70 €4,706.57 €1,360.00 Total: €17,589.27
Comhairle na nÓg and Garda Síochána survey on the Attitudes of Gardaí to Young People. Questionnaire for Gardaí and Young People	July 2012	Publication date to be finalised	Anam Cara	€7,650.00

Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Public Knowledge and Attitudes Relating to Children's Rights, Welfare, Protection and Services	July 2012	Publication date to be finalised	Behaviour and Attitudes Qualitative Research – Group Facilitation Quantitative Research – Interviews Barometer Research	€42,864.98 €59,040.00 €1,107.00 Total: €103,011.98
Ireland's Consolidated 3rd and 4th Report to the United Nations Committee in the Rights of the Child	July 2012	July 2013	Ms. Carmel Corrigan – Drafting of Report Ms. Carol Devaney – Editing, Formatting and Indexing	€12,600.00 €4,760.00 Total: €17,360.00
Strategic Human Resources	December 2012	April 2013	Mazars	€20,602.50
Internal Audit Report: Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme Internal Audit Report: ICT Shared Services Arrangements	December 2012 December 2012	Internal use only Internal use only	Capita Business Services Ltd- Capita Business Services Ltd	Combined for both reports €23,803.00
Summary Report for Young Voices Have Your Say- Structured Dialogue	January 2013	March 2013	Cnag ar an Doras	€4,918.00
Care Issues Review	March 2013	Internal use only	Victor McElfarrick	€3,556.56
Report on Structural Damage	March 2013	Internal use only	Frontier Engineering Group Ltd.	€7,668.74
Staff Roster Review	April 2013	Internal use only	McGuinness Killen Partnership	€6,715.80
Role Review for Child & Family Agency	May 2013	November 2013	Mazars	€16,512.75
Care Issues Review	September 2013	Internal use only	Conal Devine & Associates	€13,636.21

Questions - Written Answers

Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Internal Audit Report: Community Child-care Subvention/Childcare Education and Training Supports Programmes	January 2014	Internal use only	Capita Business Services Ltd	€8,200.00
Care Issues Review	February 2014	Internal use only	Kieran McGrath	€13,500.00
Policy Analysis and Development on Remission of Sentence	March 2014	Internal use only	Bramell Lane Ltd	€29,151.00
Land Valuation Report	August 2014	Internal use only	Lisney Chartered Surveyors	€2,152.50
Internal Audit Report: National Children's Detention Facility	October 2014	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€12,623.00
Internal Audit Report: Programme Integration Platform (June 2015)	November 2014	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€15,675.00
Internal Audit Report: Transactions Audit	November 2014	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€16,858.00
Report on Ireland's Implementation of EU Youth Strategy	November 2014	Late 2015	Carmel Corrigan	€6,300.00
"Becoming an Active Player" - Report on meeting of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Advisory Council	December 2014	Internal use only	The Change Exploratory Ltd.	€1,600.00
Internal Audit Report: Programme Integration Platform (January 2015)	January 2015	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€16,858.00



Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Internal Audit Report: DCYA Governance of Child and Family Agency (Tusla) (Working Title)	February 2015	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€12,100 (to date)
Report of the involvement of children and young people in the recruitment of the Ombudsman for Children	March 2015	December 2015	Sandra Roe	€6,000.00
A report of consultations with children and young people for Ireland 2016	May 2015	March 2016	Ursula Kelly - UCC	€9,827.70
Review of Public Spending Code Return (Quality Assurance)	June 2015	Internal use only	Capita Business Services	€4,125.00
Report of the process of consulting children and young people living in Direct Provision	July 2015	January 2016	Ursula Kelly - UCC	€9,948.00

Questions - Written Answers

Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Audit of education and training on children's rights and children's and young people's participation in decision-making in all third level and further education programmes and continuing professional development programmes in Ireland	September 2015	March 2016	Ursula Kelly - UCC	€19,978.00
Report of the workshop discussions at Dáil na nÓg 2015	October 2015	January 2016	Sandra Roe	€4,000.00
Updating the Comhairle na nÓg Toolkit	November 2015	June 2016	Cnag ar an Doras	Per diem rate –number of days to be determined
Provision of Services Pursuant to A National Consultation with Children (aged 3-5) on the National Early Years Strategy	December 2015	Internal use only	Imelda Coyne Trinity College, Dublin	€23,865.00
Scoping Report on the Development of Data Relating to Children	December 2015	February 2016	Research Matters Ltd	€20,726.55
Research support for the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive	February 2016	2017	Dr Carmel Corrigan, Independent Researcher	€26,445

Name of External Report	Date of Commission	Date/expected date of Publication	Name of External Consultant	Cost of Report
Report of consultations with children on after school care	3rd March 2016	2017	Dr. Deirdre Horgan, School Applied Social Studies, University College Cork	€11,076.27

### Growing Up in Ireland

In 2006 a contract to carry out the first phase the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland was awarded by the Department of Health and Children (through the Office of the Minister For Children & Youth Affairs) to a consortium comprising of the ESRI and the Children's Research Centre at TCD. Since then the Study has adopted the working title of 'Growing Up in Ireland'. Following another public procurement competition a contract was awarded to the ESRI/TCD consortium to carry out the second phase of the study over the period 2015-2019. As part of the overall contracts the ESRI/TCD are required to prepare and publish reports from time to time. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs meets the costs of printing these reports and since this Department was established in June 2011 the total cost of printing is €31,967.14.

### Departmental Expenditure

329. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the total photography costs per annum for her Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within her Department;; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20371/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** I have not incurred any photography costs since I was appointed.

### Public Relations Contracts Data

330. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by her Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20386/16]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** Since coming to office in May of this year, my Department has not employed any external public relations firms. I have no current plans to engage such firms but I would be open to the possibility where I believe their professional expertise could be of assistance to my Department.

### Defence Forces Investigations

331. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence further to Parliamentary Question No. 566 of 28 June 2016, when he will issue a reply (details supplied). [20225/16]

**Taoiseach and Minister for Defence (Deputy Enda Kenny):** I can confirm that there is a military investigation in relation to the administration of the Soldiers Welfare Fund as distinct from the Be nevolent Fund, I had earlier treated both terms synonymously. For the avoidance of any doubt, I am advised that the investigation into the Welfare Fund is the only investigation underway. I am sure the Deputy will appreciate that pending conclusion of this investigation, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further. However, I will receive a report on the findings of this investigation when completed.

### **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

332. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the number of staff dedicated to managing Ireland's response to the decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union; the structure of this team; how it will work with teams in other Departments; who has overall responsibility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20299/16]

**Taoiseach and Minister for Defence (Deputy Enda Kenny):** At this point in time, the response to the decision of the United Kingdom is being dealt with within the existing organisational structure of the Department of Defence.

As part of contingency planning for a UK EU exit, a number of existing structures are in place and these will be used to manage the process on a whole-of-government basis. These structures include:

- The Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs and the Senior Officials Group that supports it;
- The joint UK Permanent Secretaries/Irish Secretaries General group and its North-South equivalent;
- The identification of a senior official in every Government Department, including in the Department of Defence, to oversee this issue;
- An Interdepartmental group of senior officials, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, that has been meeting regularly to look specifically at the bilateral and national interests affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.
- A wider consultative group of stakeholders, chaired by Department of the Taoiseach, comprising key business representative groups, ICTU and NGOs has also been meeting for some months now. The work of this group will be scaled up and intensified;
- The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade will continue to use the expertise of the Export Trade Council to advise Government on this issue. The expertise of the Council will be focused on the issues arising from the UK's disengagement from the EU.
- The work of the North-South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council will become more important as mechanisms to develop the detailed outworking of policy issues arising.

### **Consultancy Contracts Data**

333. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence to provide, per annum all external consultant reports commissioned by his Department since March, 2011, in tabular form; the costs per report; the company involved; the title of the report and the publication date. [20343/16]

**Taoiseach and Minister for Defence (Deputy Enda Kenny):** The information requested by the Deputy in relation to external consultant reports commissioned by the Department of Defence since March 2011 is set out in the following table.

Report	Cost	Company	Publication Date
An independent review of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) fatalities in 1989	€51,660	Mr. Frank Callinan, S.C.	19th September 2011
Review of the Air Corps' Safety Management System	€20,000	Jacques Michaud	14 November 2013
Third Report of the Independent Monitoring Group (IMG)	€22,500	Dr. Eileen Doyle	3 September 2014
Consultancy report to assess the impact of an upgrade of Departments financial application software.	€24,870.60	Fujitsu Ltd	30 January 2015
Review of the Civil Defence Branch	€7,200	Mr. Jim Blighe	N/A
Research on vessels linked to Roger Casement	€4,605	Mr. John Kearon	N/A

### Departmental Expenditure

334. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the total photography costs per annum for his Department since coming to office inclusive of costs incurred from use of the ministerial allowance in tabular form; the list of occasions for which photographers were booked; the photographers used; the breakdown of costs associated with each occasion that a photographer was used; if there is a policy regarding the booking of photographers within his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20373/16]

**Taoiseach and Minister for Defence (Deputy Enda Kenny):** My Department has not incurred any photography costs since I was appointed in May 2016.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, following an EU-level advertised procurement process, has established a Framework Agreement comprising five firms for the provision of photography services. The Framework was established in February 2012 and is open for use by all Government Departments and Offices. My Department plans to avail of this Framework Agreement as the need arises.

**Public Relations Contracts Data**

335. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence to provide, broken down per annum, the use of external public relations firms employed by his Department since coming into office, in tabular form; the external public relations firm used; to outline the internal departmental policy with regard to employing external groups; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20388/16]

**Taoiseach and Minister for Defence (Deputy Enda Kenny):** The Department of Defence has not incurred any expenditure on external public relations since March 2011.