

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 1 June 2012

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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
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Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 June 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

EU Non-Structural Funds

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made towards increasing EU non-structural funds by 20 percent.

(AQW 6266/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Executive is committed to increasing the drawdown of competitive EU funding over the current budget period to 2015. EU competitive funds include non-structural funds and INTERREG B and C monies. In 2011/12, £15,826,939 of competitive funding was secured, an increase of £4,868,926 from the 2010/11 baseline of £10,958,013.

The table below gives the non-structural funds element of this drawdown.

Financial Year 2010-11 (baseline)	Financial Year 2011-12
Total drawdown of EU non-structural funds (£ value)	Total drawdown of EU non-structural funds (£ value)
£8,327,361	£13,936,160

Substantial capacity building has been undertaken in 2011 to deliver long-term benefits. Four Thematic Desk Officers took up posts in March 2012 and are now located in the Executive's Brussels Office providing dedicated support to departments in delivering the Executive's European Priorities, including increased engagement in EU competitive funding programmes.

Civil Service's Submission to the Review of the Operation of the Freedom of Information Act

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the process, including Ministerial involvement, in the drafting of the Civil Service's submission to the review of the operation of the Freedom of Information Act by the Westminster Justice Committee.

(AQW 10044/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Secretary of State for Justice, Kenneth Clarke, wrote to us on 1 December 2011 with details of a post-legislative assessment of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 being carried out by the Justice Committee, and invited us to submit evidence to the Committee.

As each of the departments here are separate 'public authorities' under the terms of the legislation, we agreed to a cross-departmental consultation taking place at official level, and to a co-ordinated submission of evidence to the Justice Committee being composed by our officials. Ministers had no role in drafting the Civil Service's submission.

Community Relation Council Funding

Mr Wells asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what proportion of Community Relation Council funding for 2011/12 was awarded to victims groups (i) from the unionist community; (ii) from the nationalist community; and (iii) that are cross-community.

(AQW 10360/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A total of £7,323,556.26 was awarded by the Community Relations Council (CRC) in 2011/12 to victims groups.

A breakdown of funding as requested is not available. Funded groups provide CRC with information on the perceived community background of end beneficiaries but CRC have not yet received information from all groups for 2012. Groups themselves are not classified by community background. The community background of groups is not and cannot be a factor considered in any decision-making process for the allocation of funds from the CRC.

Employment for People with Disabilities

Lord Morrow asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will introduce legislation to encourage employers, particularly those with a large workforce, to employ more people with disabilities rather than offering voluntary placements.

(AQW 10485/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As we continue to legislate to meet our commitments under Programme for Government, EU obligations, case law requirements and emerging issues, we are currently considering the need for legislative reform in the area of disability.

Part 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act says that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person:

- in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered employment;
- in the terms on which the disabled person is offered employment; or
- by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, the disabled person employment.

The Disability Code of Practice that relates to employment and occupation explains what this means in practice.

As part of our public consultation on a new disability strategy we have invited consultees to submit their views on the need for further legislation to address the needs of disabled people. Consultation will close on 15 August and the Executive will consider responses after the summer recess.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what was the cost to their Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10537/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The cost to our Department of producing consultation documents and official reports in the 2010/11 financial year was as follows:

Consultation Documents	Official Reports
£19,605	£1,739

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) how many times, since May 2011, the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has met; and (ii) the attendance of each Minister at the meetings.

(AQW 10801/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People (MSC) has met once since May 2011. This was on 11 January 2012. The Junior Ministers chaired the meeting and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Minister of Education attended. The next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee is scheduled for 20 June 2012 and will focus on how the Delivering Social Change framework can achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

Prior to the MSC meeting, Junior Ministers also held a series of bi-lateral meetings with the Minister of Education, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Minister for Social Development, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to consider how best to progress work on implementing the Children and Young People's Strategy.

A further series of meetings is currently taking place with Ministers on the identification of actions under the Delivering Social Change framework to tackle child poverty.

Assembly Written Questions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 10013/11-15, why the information requested cannot be collated and supplied, given that a function of Assembly Questions is to obtain information which is otherwise not readily available.

(AQW 10833/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A manual calculation would be required in respect of each of the 500 Assembly Questions tabled since May 2011 and a subsequent analysis of that information to fully answer AQW 10013/11-15.

Our assessment is that this could only be undertaken at disproportionate cost.

Visit to Canada and the USA

Dr McDonnell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline some of the initiatives and opportunities which they anticipate will result from their recent visit to Canada and the USA.

(AQO 1785/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We undertook an extensive programme of engagements in the United States and Canada in March, visiting Washington, Montreal and Toronto.

With our focus on developing the economy, and with so many important fixtures on the calendar during 2012, we were keen to promote awareness of Northern Ireland across North America.

In Washington, we again represented the Executive at meetings with President Obama in the White House and Secretary of State Clinton. Both meetings were very positive and our message was one of confidence, optimism and the readiness of Northern Ireland to compete internationally as a first rate location for investment, jobs and tourism.

We also hosted our annual flagship Business Breakfast and used the event to promote NI 2012 and the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013. We met with leading politicians on Capitol Hill and attended the annual St Patrick's Days receptions hosted by the Speaker and President Obama.

We also undertook our first official visit to Canada. Canada is a major economic and political powerhouse and it is important that we foster stronger bilateral relations in view of the economic and cultural links that unite our two countries.

We visited the Bombardier Headquarters in Montreal and had discussions with senior management in the company. We then travelled to Toronto and officially launched NI 2012 to a travel trade audience at a business breakfast co-hosted by Tourism Ireland and the NI Bureau.

Later, we were guests of the Ireland Funds of Canada at a business luncheon aimed at promoting the NI business model to potential investors in the city's financial district, supported by InvestNI.

The visit was very successful in securing access to key politicians and business leaders at the highest level in the US and Canada. It would not be appropriate at this stage to discuss the detail of the business meetings or the initiatives we were exploring. However, we are confident that our engagement will bear fruit in the future in creating new jobs and encouraging trade and tourism to Northern Ireland.

Film and Information Technology

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether additional opportunities are likely to emerge in the Film and Information Technology sectors in the near future as a result of their recent visit to the USA.

(AQO 1790/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We recognise the importance of the creative industries sector and the role that it can play in our efforts to rebalance the economy, in creating jobs and in contributing to our future economic prosperity.

We visited the West Coast of the United States back in September to promote our capabilities in these sectors. We met with senior executives in the film and TV, video gaming and mobile applications companies, existing investors and promoted our ICT opportunities to other key business interests.

We also met with senior executives from Disney and HBO who were interested in having the UK film tax credit extended to television production here. Without this credit, big-budget TV programmes, such as Game of Thrones, would leave Belfast in search of a better incentive package elsewhere. We held discussions with the Treasury to ensure that the Chancellor would respond to this issue favourably. We were delighted that in March he confirmed his intentions to bring in a tax credit to cover video games, animation, and high-end TV program production.

This decision, on the back of our efforts in Los Angeles, resulted in HBO's decision to shoot series three of Game of Thrones along with the millions of pounds for the local economy that this will generate. This is fantastic news coming on the back of the recent Oscar triumph by Terry George.

As you will appreciate, the impact of our other engagements in the US in terms of investment and jobs may take some time but we are confident that further opportunities will be realised in the near future as a result of our visit.

We have exceptional creative talent here and we have been very successful in attracting major film and television productions. Industry leaders now see us as having some of the best TV and film production talent and facilities in the business and we are determined to build on this in turning the region into a global hub for ideas, innovation, and creativity.

Credit Review Office

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on discussions to establish a credit review office.

(AQW 11319/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Junior Ministers have been involved in meetings on this issue.

Given the reserved nature of banking, we would find it difficult to establish an effective Credit Review Office as the local banks would not be required to comply with it.

However, the British Banking Association (BBA) appeals process, which was formally launched on 17 November 2011, creates an appeals mechanism and dispute resolution process which should bring

benefits to businesses if they have been denied lending. If a business has been declined lending following a formal application for a business loan, then they have the right to appeal the decision. Each local bank has implemented their own appeals service, so the way in which a business will launch its appeal will differ depending on their bank. If a business has been declined lending, their bank will write to them providing details on how to go about lodging an appeal.

Child Poverty

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they measure relative low income in relation to child poverty figures.

(AQW 11380/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Act 2010 required the Executive to lay a Child Poverty Strategy before the Assembly. The Act also described the targets against which the success of the Strategy would be measured. This included:

- the relative low income target which is:
 - (1) that less than 10% of children who live in qualifying households live in households that fall within the relevant income group.
 - (2) A household falls within the relevant income group, in relation to a financial year, if its equivalised net income for the financial year is less than 60% of median equivalised net household income for the financial year.

Dissolution of the Department for Employment and Learning

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the dissolution of the Department for Employment and Learning.

(AQO 1927/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In our statement of 17 January, we indicated that we would be seeking the views of key stakeholders and interested parties on how the functions exercised by DEL should be transferred to other departments in the most appropriate manner.

We extended an invitation to comment to some 60 organisations and we have received a range of views. We have been giving careful consideration to these before making final proposals which will be set out in legislation to be brought before the Assembly.

An Assembly debate is also scheduled for 15 May on the report of the Committee for Employment and Learning on its own consultation on this matter. We were very much aware of the extensive work which the Committee was undertaking to seek views on the redistribution of DEL's functions and we will also take note both of its content and of the views expressed by members during the debate.

Victims/Survivors Groups Development Grant Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much money was underspent by groups in receipt of funding from the Victims/Survivors Groups Development Grant Scheme during the 2011/12 financial year.

(AQW 11496/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Community Relations Council has not yet concluded its financial verifications for April 2011 – March 2012. There remains some outstanding information to be provided from funded groups such as invoices and bank statements. Groups had up to 14 May 2012 to provide this information. This will now be verified and the exact underspend figure, if any, can then be quantified.

Victims/Survivors Groups Development Grant Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they can confirm that grants from the Victims/Survivors Groups Development Grant Scheme will be awarded before the end of May 2012, as opposed to the end of September as happened in 2011.

(AQW 11498/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Victims/Survivors Groups Development Grant Scheme opened for applications on 25 January 2012 for the 2012/2013 financial year. Some groups have already received awards for the 2012-2013 financial year from this Scheme. Groups can submit any number of applications up to and including 14 December 2012.

Supporting Life's Journeys Programme

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what role the Supporting Life's Journeys Programme can play in helping people who are disadvantaged, lonely or vulnerable.

(AQW 11561/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware of the work that Supporting Life's Journeys programme undertakes in regard to mentoring and befriending.

Such programmes can play a supporting role with the disadvantaged, lonely or vulnerable when they need help the most.

Alleviating Hardship and Tackling Disadvantage

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of an advisory group to assist their Department in alleviating hardship and tackling disadvantage.

(AQW 11562/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have established an advisory group to assist Ministers in alleviating hardship including any implications of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Programme. The membership of the Group includes:

- Les Allamby – Director, Law Centre
- Lindsay Conway – Director of Social Service, Presbyterian Church's Presbyterian Church Board for Social Responsibility
- Marie Cavanagh – Director, Gingerbread
- Neil Gibson – Director, Regional Services Division, Oxford Economics
- Prof Donal McKillop – Professor of Financial Services, QUB
- Monica Wilson – Director, Disability Action

Through its terms of reference, we asked the Group to consider the scope for intervention by the Executive to alleviate, mitigate and avoid further financial hardship taking account of: the impact of welfare reform; rising levels of fuel poverty; and the prospects for economic growth and to consider particularly the impact on those in receipt of welfare benefits and those in low paid employment.

The Group met for the first time on 5 April 2012 to scope its task and to consider its approach. It met again on 14 May 2012 to receive presentations from key informants. Two further meetings are scheduled to take place in May and June respectively. We expect to receive a preliminary report from the Group after the June meeting.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will bring forward proposals on the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 11564/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive has recently agreed the details on the way forward for the operation of the Social Investment Fund.

Historical Institutional Child Abuse Inquiry

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an estimate of the total cost to the public purse of the Historical Institutional Child Abuse Inquiry.

(AQW 11681/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Work is ongoing to scope the estimated costs for the Inquiry and Investigation and secure the necessary financial approvals. Estimated costs are therefore not available at this time.

Display of Republican Flags in Rasharkin

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action they are taking to address the surge in the display of republican flags in Rasharkin, to ease the intimidation of the town's unionist minority.

(AQW 11708/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Ballymoney Borough Council has commissioned Mediation NI to reinstate the Rasharkin Community Forum, which includes MLAs, statutory bodies and community representatives. The Council has also received a two-year funding package through Peace III to employ a Development Worker who will focus on youth and community work in Rasharkin.

We understand that work is ongoing through these channels to engage with members of the Rasharkin community to encourage and facilitate them to work together towards mutually acceptable outcomes to their local issues.

Proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze Site

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 9094/11-15, (i) whether the listed and retained buildings, including H block, the prison hospital, visitors and administration blocks, will be open to the public; and (ii) for what they will be used.

(AQW 11730/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Plans for the listed and retained buildings at Maze/Long Kesh are under consideration.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy Working Group

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of submissions each week to the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy Working Group to date, broken down by Party.

(AQW 11745/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: At the outset of the process, each party submitted a short position paper outlining a proposal on the vision and scope of the strategy.

In addition, all draft text has been circulated for comment in advance of meetings of the Cross-Party Working Group. All parties provided comments and suggested changes to each section of text that was developed and circulated.

Good Relations Funding

Mr G Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what Good Relations funding has been given to communities living in interface areas.

(AQO 1937/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We remain committed to building a united and shared society. The finalised Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) Strategy will be the building block for achieving this vision. Through the Strategy, we will address the division that continues to mar many areas in our community and tackle the segregation.

In recognition of the importance that we already place on tackling these complex issues, the department invested £785,000 in 2011/12 through the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme. Moreover, through the Contested Spaces Programme, jointly funded with Atlantic Philanthropies, the Department has committed £2m over 3 years to support good relations projects in interface areas and areas where there are contested spaces.

Flags Protocol Working Group

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress of the Flags Protocol Working Group.

(AQO 1940/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In December 2011, the Flags Protocol Working Group was reconvened at our request and that of the cross party working group on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI). The Working Group has now met on three occasions with a further meeting planned for the coming weeks.

A draft discussion paper has been produced to inform the ongoing considerations of the Working Group before recommendations on a revised framework are brought forward.

Following agreement of a revised framework, it is the intention that this document would form one aspect of the monitoring and implementation arrangements of the CSI Strategy.

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the capital and revenue savings their Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11773/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Over the last three financial years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12, OFMDFM has delivered revenue savings of £3.87m, £8.72m and £7.36m respectively. Capital savings achieved were £0.91m and £0.45m over the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11 respectively.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many civil servants currently employed in their Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11806/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are no civil servants currently employed in our Department who have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the NI Civil Service.

Sustainable Development Champions Group

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 11254/11-15, why they did not provide details of the recommendations made by the Sustainable Development Champions.

(AQW 11899/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The recommendations of the Sustainable Development Champions Group remain under active consideration by the Executive and it would not be appropriate to provide further details until the Executive has had an opportunity to take a view.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the capital and revenue savings her Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11656/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Savings made for the Financial Years 2009/10 and 2010/11 were within the Budget 2007 period. These are shown on Table 1.

TABLE 1

Capital and Revenue Savings in 2009/10 and 2010/11		
Description of Saving	2009/10	2010/11
	£m	£m
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		
Capital Expenditure on Accommodation	0.40	0.40
RESOURCE EXPENDITURE		
Rural Development savings associated with the new NIRDP	1.20	1.20
Review of Processes within Admin Functions	0.00	0.87
Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances	2.00	2.00
Excess Forest Service Receipts	1.00	1.00
Northern Ireland Food Strategy	1.50	1.44
AFBI Grant-in-Aid Reductions	1.42	2.11
Genotyping Laboratory Contract	0.20	0.20
Animal Health Responsibility and Cost Sharing	2.66	4.15
TB and Brucellosis Policy	0.83	1.83
TB and Brucellosis Control Programmes	0.73	1.31
Identifications, Registration and Movement of Animals Procedures	0.29	1.56
Total Savings	12.23	18.07

Savings made for the Financial Year 2011/12 are within the Budget 2010 period. These are shown on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Savings in 2011/12 (All Resource)	
Category	£m
Lower Priority	2.29
Corporate Services	0.68
Redundant Programmes	0.75
Admin/Policy, Funding and Regulations	0.55
Transactions	0.14
Procurement	0.94
Maximising Revenue	0.03
Other	0.63
Total	6.01

Masserene Barracks Site

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department would consider using the Masserene Barracks site for departmental business in the future.

(AQW 11755/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department currently has no plans to utilise the Masserene Barracks site. However any consideration of the future potential use of this or any other site would be determined by need and suitability.

Listed Properties

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the listed properties that are owned by her Department.

(AQW 11789/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The information held by the Department on listed properties which it owns is subject to review. The list includes:

Loughry Campus

- Dean Swift's Cottage (Summer House)
- Loughry House (Lindsay Manor House)

Rivers Agency

- Locks and Mooring Post on Blackwater Navigation, Benburb
- The Cockle House, Crumlin Glen
- Toomebridge Lock-Lower Bann Navigation
- Navigation Lock, The Cutts, Coleraine
- Portna Locks-Lower Bann Navigation
- Lock and bridge, Milltown Road, Ballynavally, Castlereagh

Loughgall

- Manor House
- Manor House Entrance Gates
- Manor House Gate Lodges

Greenmount Campus

- Principal's House, The Lodge, 22 Greenmount Road, Antrim
- Manor House, 22 Greenmount Road, Antrim
- Manor House Extension, 22 Greenmount Road, Antrim
- Gate Lodge, 30 Greenmount Road, Antrim
- Gate Lodge, 31 Greenmount Road, Antrim

Forest Service

- Outbuildings at Hawthorne Hill Tower, Castlearchdale, Mullies
- Gate Lodge, Town Gate, Castlewellan
- The Grange and Outbuildings, Castlewellan
- Gate Screen/Town Gate, Castlewellan
- The Bee House, Gosford, Markethill
- Drum Manor (House), Oaklands
- Entrance Gateway, Gosford Demesne, Markethill
- Barbican Gate, Tullymore
- Tower, Tullymore
- Hermitage, Tullymore
- Clanbrassil Barn, Gateway (and enclosing walls), Tullymore
- Monument/Memorial, Tullymore
- Walled Garden, The Castle, Castlewellan Castlecaldwell, Belleek
- Altavaddy Bridge, Tullymore
- Old Bridge, Tullymore
- Horn Bridge and Garden Bridges, Tullymore
- Ivy Bridge, Tullymore Forest Foley's Bridge, Tullymore
- Parnell's Bridge, Tullymore
- Maria's Bridge, Tullymore
- Fountain, Tullymore
- Walled Garden, Castlewellan Castle
- Donard Bridge, Newcastle
- Arch Brae Bridge & Embankment, Deerpark, Florencecourt
- Juggy's Bridge, Florencecourt

Testing for Bovine TB

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any comparisons that have been carried out between the likelihood of a Temporary Veterinary Officer and a Veterinary Officer Testing classifying herds with a bovine TB breakdown.

(AQW 11805/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No comparison has been made of the relative likelihood of a Temporary Veterinary Officer (TVO) classifying a herd as a TB breakdown compared with a Veterinary Officer Testing (VOT).

At this time there is no business or disease control reason for DARD to compare detection rates between the two groups of DARD staff. However their individual quality of testing is audited and their test statistics are provided to their managers twice per year for monitoring purposes.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many civil servants currently employed in her Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11807/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are no civil servants currently employed within DARD who have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the NICS.

Departmental Staff Redundancies

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many departmental staff have been made redundant on a compulsory or voluntary basis, in each of the last three years; (ii) how many of these posts have not been filled; and (iii) what savings have been made as a result, broken down by each unit within her Department.

(AQW 11836/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: One DARD officer was made redundant on a compulsory basis in the 2009/10 financial year. No other redundancies have taken place since. This post was not filled and savings of £35,700 have been made.

Backlog of Single Farm Payments

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the backlog of Single Farm Payments that have yet to be made; and what is the value of those payments, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 11837/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As at 24 May 2012 my Department had completed 95.5% of all claims and paid out over £254million. This leaves 1,707 claims left to process with around £12.3 million still to be paid for the 2011 Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme year. These claims are outstanding for a number of reasons including the need to apply inspection findings, because probate is not yet completed or because the farmer has not provided bank account details to allow payment to be credited to their bank account. Not all the remaining claims may be due a payment because of ineligibility or the application of penalties under scheme rules. The European Council legislation which governs the administration of the SFP schemes requires 95.24% of the budget for the 2011 scheme year to be paid out by 30 June 2012 in order for the Department to avoid late payment penalties being imposed by the European Commission. At 24 May 2012, 95.2% of the budget had been paid out.

The Department does not hold Single Farm Payment details on a district council basis. The data is currently held by postcode and county where known. A list of the total number of 2011 applications to Single Farm Payment yet to be paid and their potential maximum total net value as at 24 May 2012, for each postcode area in table below.

**2011 – SINGLE FARM PAYMENT
OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS @ 24/5/2012**

Postcode	Max Nett Amount Due £	Number of Cases
BT1	7206.52	4
BT2	5444.90	2
BT4	106.81	1
BT5	4525.07	2
BT6	14338.87	2
BT7	788.87	2
BT8	52718.95	3
BT9	474.43	1
BT11	234.13	1
BT14	11281.44	1
BT15	3543.41	2
BT18	39349.68	3
BT19	376.21	1
BT20	1132.34	2
BT22	99938.83	10
BT23	125126.10	17
BT24	394550.20	39
BT25	150037.70	20
BT26	124676.40	10
BT27	23883.89	8
BT28	166431.50	28
BT29	65939.70	16
BT30	215564.90	36
BT31	203928.50	30
BT32	109794.90	24
BT33	30235.14	6
BT34	463178.90	91
BT35	708337.50	98
BT36	12496.51	7
BT38	43576.10	8
BT39	171171.10	28
BT40	90963.36	18
BT41	190593.80	21

Postcode	Max Nett Amount Due £	Number of Cases
BT42	367020.60	46
BT43	369537.70	21
BT44	385371.40	55
BT45	548347.10	71
BT46	260060.40	44
BT47	517106.10	46
BT48	11649.57	5
BT49	65527.88	11
BT51	249195.90	30
BT52	16003.33	5
BT53	54133.53	18
BT54	121971.30	12
BT57	93456.09	6
BT60	394587.80	64
BT61	56870.86	21
BT62	91247.29	22
BT63	38316.55	8
BT66	40190.30	10
BT67	103611.60	14
BT68	54463.39	4
BT69	60284.84	7
BT70	532205.50	69
BT71	130302.40	26
BT74	195166.00	37
BT75	134341.10	11
BT76	183716.30	11
BT77	156569.40	8
BT78	727104.30	98
BT79	534273.00	61
BT80	233328.20	50
BT81	320860.40	34
BT82	184883.2	24
BT92	466515.60	78
BT93	575630.20	59

Postcode	Max Nett Amount Due £	Number of Cases
BT94	331688.50	46
Other	159757.30	33
Total	12,297,241	1,707

Dog Tail Docking

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has been contacted by any vets who are refusing to implement dog tail docking because they have to designate the dog's breed initially.

(AQW 11859/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 1993 under current legislation only a veterinary surgeon can dock a pup's tail. As the provision on docking of dogs' tails in the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 has not yet been commenced, there is currently no requirement for a veterinary surgeon to designate the dog's breed. However, I can advise that my Department has not received any representations from veterinary surgeons indicating that they will refuse to implement the tail docking exemption for certified working dogs because they have to designate the dog's breed.

The proposals in the draft Docking of Working Dogs' Tails (Certification and Identification) Regulations 2012, which will introduce the exemption from the tail docking ban for certified working dogs, were subject to a 12 week public consultation late last year. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) stated in their response to the consultation that they were opposed to the docking of puppies' tails and consider that the docking of all breeds of dogs should be banned, other than for veterinary medical reasons. However, they also stated that they understood that some of their members may choose to dock dogs' tails within the proposed legal framework. Whilst the veterinary profession may be opposed to tail docking in itself, they have worked with my Department to ensure that a robust exemption for certified working dogs can be put in place.

During the consultation my officials met with representatives from the veterinary profession in the north to discuss the proposals including the certification process for a potential future working dog. At that meeting there was no indication that the veterinary profession had specific concerns regarding designating a dog's breed. VetNI subsequently replied to the consultation on behalf of NIVA, the BVA and the AVSPNI indicating their broad support for the proposals in the Regulations and suggesting some additional requirements to better protect the welfare of puppies here.

It is important to remember that under both the current legislation and the proposed Regulations which will permit tail docking of future working dogs of certain breeds, there is no legal obligation requiring any veterinary surgeon to dock a pup's tail. This will, as at present, be an "ethical" decision for the individual veterinary surgeon.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what percentage of invoices, received by each of her Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11869/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The percentage of invoices received by each of this Department's arm's-lengths bodies, in the period April 2011 to March 2012, which were paid within 30 days of receipt was as follows:

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority	Livestock and Meat Commission	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	Loughs Agency
95%	96%	90% *	96%

* **This percentage is based on an estimate; however the final figure will be audited and published in the AFBI Annual Report and Accounts.**

Bovine TB in Wild Deer

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what research and tests have been carried out on Bovine TB in wild deer in the last five years; and to list the areas where the tests were carried out and the number of deer involved.

(AQW 12012/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that a surveillance exercise to detect the prevalence of bovine TB in wild deer was carried out by my Department during 2008/2009.

In that exercise 6 wild deer populations were sampled in which evidence of, or suspicion of, TB had been reported previously. Of the 6 sites surveyed, which were distributed across the north of Ireland, 3 were private estates and 3 were Forest Service sites. A total of 146 deer were sampled.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) carried out a range of laboratory tests on samples taken from these deer carcasses.

The prevalence of TB among wild deer in this survey was 2.0%. This was lower than findings from a larger survey in 1995 when 276 wild fallow and sika deer were sampled, giving a TB prevalence of TB of 4.7%.

Homeopathic and Herbal Medicines to Treat Animals

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 10737/11-15, what research departmental scientists have conducted into the potential benefits to animal health through the promotion of homeopathic and herbal medicines as an alternative to antibiotics; and to list any funding that her Department has provided for the research of these treatments in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12018/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has not commissioned or funded research into the potential benefits to animal health of homeopathic and herbal medicines as alternatives to antibiotics and has no plans to do so at this time.

The Veterinary Medicines Regulations which apply here and in Britain allow homeopathic remedies to be placed on the market, provided certain criteria are met.

A simplified registration scheme has been implemented by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate for homeopathic remedies which are placed on the market without medicinal claims and where there is sufficient dilution to guarantee the safety of the product.

All new homeopathic veterinary remedies to be placed on the market must either be registered under the scheme or have a full Marketing Authorisation. A Marketing Authorisation for a homeopathic product that was on the market prior to 1 January 1994 is optional, provided no medicinal claims are made.

Anaerobic Digestion Plants

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many anaerobic digestion plants there are and how much land these plants take up across Northern Ireland.

(AQW 12024/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The official Biogas Plant Map is maintained by the National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC) and is available at <http://www.biogas-info.co.uk/index.php/ad-map.html> . It states that there are 3 Anaerobic Digesters currently operating here. This number is expected to increase over the coming year as Anaerobic Digesters supported by my department's Biomass Processing Challenge Fund become operational. My department does not keep records regarding the physical size of such plants however officials estimate that the site required to physically host an Anaerobic Digester is generally up to 5000 square metres in size.

Grants for Anaerobic Digestion

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants are available for anaerobic digestion; and how much funding has been allocated to farmers in each of the last three years. **(AQW 12025/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The Biomass Processing Challenge Fund (BPCF) offered by my department provides grant aid to on-farm renewable energy technologies which utilise biomass for the production of heat and / or electricity. A range of technologies are supported, including Anaerobic Digesters. The BPCF opened to applications for a two month period in June 2010. Construction of Anaerobic Digesters supported by the BPCF continues, with £842,671 of EU and National match funding currently committed in Letters of Offer to farmers installing Anaerobic Digestion technologies.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 11486/11-15, what plans are in place should the Countryside Management Scheme fail to spend the budget allocated to it; and how will the funding be redistributed.

(AQW 12137/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Any budget pressures or underspend for agri-environment schemes are managed through DARD's internal monitoring rounds which take place throughout the year. If an underspend is identified it will be considered for reallocation to other budget lines within DARD.

Agri-Food Industry

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 10723/11-15, to list the 50 projects assisted under the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme; and how much funding each project received.

(AQW 12147/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The following table lists the projects approved together with the Processing & Marketing Grant (PMG) awarded by the PMG Selection Panel under the current Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

Project Promoter	Processing & Marketing Grant (PMG) awarded by PMG Selection Panel	Selection Panel
Emerald Lawns	£136,468	2008
Sparky Pac Ltd	£500,000	2008
Greenmount Farm Butchery	£120,206	2008
Cloughbane Farm Foods	£115,750	2008
Doherty & Gray Ltd	£500,000	2008
Dailybake Ltd	£481,468	2008
Ready Egg Products Ltd	£500,000	2008

Project Promoter	Processing & Marketing Grant (PMG) awarded by PMG Selection Panel	Selection Panel
Versatile Manufacturing Foods Ltd	£152,190	2008
Kettle Irish Foods Limited	£164,990	2008
Kilmore Farm Produce Ltd	£131,014	2009
Joseph Mackle	£127,406	2009
Chipmaster	£186,290	2009
Empire Meats Ltd	£500,000	2009
Lynn's1. Country Foods	£303,182	2009
Willowbrook Foods Limited	£500,000	2009
Willowbrook Foods Limited	£446,856	2009
Wilson's Country Limited	£500,000	2009
Cloughbane Farm Foods	£155,856	2009
Orchard Organics (NI) Ltd	£38,379	2010
P McCann & Sons	£500,000	2010
Skea Egg Farms Limited	£500,000	2010
Avondale Foods (Craigavon) Ltd	£421,592	2010
Loughshore Veg Ltd	£419,254	2010
K. Hughes & Co Ltd	£279,346	2010
Chapman Foods	£197,406	2010
Topping Meats	£458,176	2010
Tullynaskeagh Farms Ltd	£47,928	2010
Chapman's Farm Fresh Fruit & Veg	£47,246	2011
Cloughbane Farm Foods	£50,000	2011
Fivemiletown Creamery	£50,000	2011
Fernhill Nurseries	£13,730	2011
Glenview Foods	£48,307	2011
Mount Mills (NI) Ltd	£49,178	2011
D & S Donnelly Mushrooms	£50,000	2011
Crosskeys Fast Food Ltd	£57,665	2011
Roy Lyttle Limited	£66,096	2011
R. Thompson & Son (Armagh) Ltd	£500,000	2011
Red Heifer Ltd	£166,020	2011
Ballygarvey Eggs Ltd	£42,000	2011
Daily Bake Ltd	£384,768	2011

Project Promoter	Processing & Marketing Grant (PMG) awarded by PMG Selection Panel	Selection Panel
Gilfresh Produce	£500,000	2011
Western Brand Poultry Products (NI) Ltd	£500,000	2011
Ballyeamon Eggs	£12,656	2011
Hannan Meats	£79,160	2011
Mash Direct Ltd	£500,000	2011
Orchard County Foods Ltd	£500,000	2012
Bradmount Ltd	£165,694	2012
Annaghmore Marketing Ltd	£285,776	2012
Kearney Cheese Company	£34,218	2012
Ballymena Farm Shop	£39,048	2012
Total Grant Awarded	£12,525,319	

Testing of Measuring Wheels

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 11484/11-15, to clarify whether any of the measuring wheels were found to be outside the 1 percent tolerance level on either the (i) hard; or (ii) prepared grass surface test.

(AQW 12158/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: None of the measuring wheels were found to be outside the 1 percent tolerance level on either the (i) hard; or (ii) prepared grass surface test.

Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the current number of arm's-length bodies and quangos that are attached to her Department; and how this figure compares with the number in (i) 2008; (ii) 2009; (iii) 2010; and (iv) 2011.

(AQW 12180/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has 5 Non Departmental Public Bodies at present.

In 2008 there were 6 Non Departmental Public Bodies and in the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 there were 5 Non Departmental Public Bodies.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the percentage of sickness absence in her Department in each of the last three years; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between her Department and the trade unions.

(AQW 12219/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The percentage of sickness absence in the last 3 years is set out in Table 1 below. There are no agreed sickness absence targets between the Department and the trade unions; however a Ministerial target is set against the average number of working days lost per employee. The targets and results in the last 3 years are set out in Table 2 below.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

Year	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Percentage of Working Days Lost	3.6%	3.9%	3.9%

TABLE 2: AVERAGE WORKING DAYS LOST

Year	Ministerial Target	Achievement Against Target
2011/12	8.5 days	8.0 days
2010/11	8.9 days	8.5 days
2009/10	9.3 days	8.6 days

Bee Population

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the increasing concern about the decline in bee numbers, what research her Department has carried out on the bee population. **(AQW 12326/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Contrary to claims there is no evidence of any overall decline in the bee population here and there is no evidence that average bee losses here last year were outside of the normal over-wintering ranges.

However, a three year pilot surveillance study into honey bee losses is currently being undertaken at member state level, part funded by the EU. A sum of approximately €3.29 million has been indicated by the European Commission, with Britain and the north of Ireland being allocated €265,561. Whilst DARD is not contributing directly to the pilot exercise, outcomes from the study will have relevance to beekeepers here and will be made available in due course.

My Department also sponsors two research studentships on bees.

In addition, through the implementation of the Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee, beekeepers and officials are considering research and development needs to protect and improve the health of honey bees.

Planning Application M/2010/0697/F

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, with reference to her letter to Pat Doherty MP MLA, dated 6 April 2012, which was on departmental headed paper and supported planning application M/2010/0697/F for an eating disorders clinic 150 metres north of the Tullyallen Road in Dungannon, in what capacity the letter was issued, as it now forms part of the file relating to the application.

(AQW 12366/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development I am committed to encouraging and supporting sustainable and vibrant rural communities throughout the north. In welcoming this initiative I am supporting in principle a much needed service for vulnerable people as well as the potential it has to provide high quality jobs in a rural area.

Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the Strategy Implementation Group which was established to implement the Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee, (i) to list the dates of the meetings that have been held between her departmental officials and bee keepers since the Strategy was published in February 2011; (ii) what were the outcomes of these meetings;

and (iii) to outline any action plans which have been (a) agreed; and (b) implemented through the Strategy Implementation Group.

(AQW 12396/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD officials and beekeepers are currently working in partnership to deliver the aims and outcomes of the Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee by way of an Implementation Group and four Sub-groups.

- (i) Since the Strategy was published in February 2011, the Implementation Group met on 9 March, 18 May, 3 August and 9 November 2011 and a further meeting is planned for June 2012.

The Communications and Relationships Sub-group met on 22 July, 20 September and 24 October 2011.

The Risks from Pests, Diseases and Undesirable Species Sub-group met on 23 June, 27 July, 11 October 2011, and 4 April and 8 May 2012.

The Competency Development Sub-group met on 1 July, 7 September and 5 October 2011.

The Bee Science Sub-group met on 6 July, 1 August, 30 September and 5 December 2011.

- (ii) The Implementation Group and each of the Sub-groups have agreed Terms of Reference and priority action areas. The next steps for the Sub-groups are the preparation of actions plans and timelines for consideration and agreement by the Implementation Group.
- (iii) An action plan and timelines have been submitted by the Competency Development Sub-group, and this is being considered by the Implementation Group. Action plans and timelines are awaited from the other Sub-Groups.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Funding to Community Arts Organisations in North Belfast

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding her Department, and each of its arm's-length bodies, awarded to community arts organisations in North Belfast in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11151/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Arts Council of NI has awarded just under £3m to community arts organisations in North Belfast over the last three years. Details are below. This does not include the outreach and community work undertaken by a number of major clients in the area for example The MAC and Young at Art.

2011-12	2010-11	2009-10
£1,073,467	£879,786	£974,667

Ministerial Advisory Group on Architecture and the Built Environment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) to list the membership of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Architecture and the Built Environment; (ii) which organisations the members represent; and (iii) to detail their attendance at meetings over the last three years.

(AQW 11408/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ministerial Advisory Group on Architecture and the Built Environment (MAG) has a Chair and 8 members. Their names and occupations are listed at Annex A. The MAG advises the Minister and Department on the implementation and development of the Architecture and the Built Environment policy published in 2006.

Attendance at formal MAG meetings is noted at Annex B.**Annex A**

Chair : Arthur Acheson (Appointed Sept 2007 as a Member of the MAG and appointed as Chair of MAG in Sept 2010)

Arthur is an architect and city planner and is Partner and Chair of the Belfast based Boyd Partnership Chartered Architects.

Members:

Mrs Diana Fitzsimons (Appointed Sept 2010)

Diana is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. She is employed as Office Director of Turley Associates, Belfast.

James Donnelly (Appointed Sept 2010)

James is a qualified architect. He is a Director of Donnelly O'Neill Architects, Belfast.

Andrew Gault (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Andrew is a qualified architect and works as Project Manager with Northern Ireland Public Private Partnership Education Service.

Ian McKnight (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Ian is a qualified architect and partner of the Belfast-based practice, Hall McKnight Architects.

Marcus Patton OBE (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Marcus is a qualified architect and artist. He is Director of HEARTH Housing Association.

Emily Smyth (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Emily is a qualified landscape architect and is a lecturer in architecture at the University of Ulster, School of Architecture and Design.

Alan Strong (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Alan is a qualified civil engineer and chartered environmentalist. He is a senior lecturer in environmental engineering at the University of Ulster, School of the Built Environment and is leader of the University's Sustainable Development Group.

Tom Woolley (Appointed Sept 2007 and re-appointed Sept 2010)

Tom is an architect and environmental researcher. He is an associate with Rachel Bevan Architects, Downpatrick and is Chairman of the UK Hemp Lime Construction Products Association.

ANNEX B**ATTENDANCE AT FORMAL MAG MEETINGS OVER THE LAST 3 YEARS**

	Arthur Acheson	James Donnelly*	Diana Fitzsimons*	Andrew Gault	Emily Smyth nee Hadden	Ian McKnight	Marcus Patton	W Alan Strong	Tom Wolley
09 May 2012	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
21 March 2012	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
24 Jan 2012	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
15 Nov 2011	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
6 Sept 2011	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√

	Arthur Acheson	James Donnelly*	Diana Fitzsimons*	Andrew Gault	Emily Smyth nee Hadden	Ian McKnight	Marcus Patton	W Alan Strong	Tom Wolley
8 June 2011	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
12 April 2011	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	
16 Feb 2011	√	√			√	√	√	√	√
19 Oct 2010	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
24 Aug 2010	√			√	√		√	√	
18 May 2010	√				√		√	√	√
16 March 2010	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
19 Jan 2010	√			√		√	√	√	√
24 Nov 2009				√	√	√	√	√	
1 Sept 2009	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
3 June 2009	√			√	√			√	√
23 March 2009	√			√	√		√	√	√

* James Donnelly and Diana Fitzsimons appointed as MAG members in September 2010

Ministerial Advisory Group on Architecture and the Built Environment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what subjects and issues have been raised by the Ministerial Advisory Group on Architecture and the Built Environment over the last three years. (AQW 11409/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Two reports published by the MAG describe the work of the MAG and areas of interest relating to architecture and the built environment:

- 1 Mid term report 'Raising Expectations' June 2009 can be accessed at:

http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/dc1_10_37901__mag_mid_term_report__raising_expectations.pdf

End of Term report 'The First three Years' January 2011 can be accessed at: http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/mag_first_3_year_published_pdf.pdf

- 2 http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/mag_first_3_year_published_pdf.pdf

Key areas of interest to the MAG are:

- Design quality in public sector procurement;
- Planning policies and reform;
- Conservation and heritage; and
- Sustainable development

Work undertaken in 2011/12 is detailed at Annex A attached.

To operate effectively in all sectors of the built environment the MAG must be able to challenge accepted guidance, policy and standards which are failing to deliver good design, planning and stewardship.

However, while the MAG offers advice to Planning NI, other Departments and bodies I may reserve opinion pending responses to such advice.

Annex A

Work Undertaken in 2011-2012

- 1 Formal advice to Planning NI concerning the following:
 - The DoE Chaired Strategic Design Group working on the draft Urban Stewardship and Design Manual
- 2 Engaged with public, private and voluntary bodies including:
 - Academy of Urbanism National Congress, Derry, May 2012 and the Place Partnering Visit, April 2012;
 - DSD Housing in relation to Housing Standards;
 - Ilex In relation to the 'One Plan' for Derry-Londonderry;
 - SIB in relation to the MAZE/Long Kesh development;
 - Sport NI in relation to the proposed new Sports Stadia;
 - NIEA, Planning NI. NI Environment Link in relation to the European Landscape convention; and
 - MAG continues to promote and use collegiate working to share knowledge
- 3 Written responses were made to the following public consultations:
 - Belfast City Council consultation on the Investment Programme, April 2012;
 - DoE consultation on Demolition and Development, April 2012;
 - DRD Consultation, Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland, March 2012;
 - OFMDFM Consultation, The Social Investment Fund, December 2011;
 - DRD Consultation, Route Options for Belfast Rapid Transit, December 2011;
 - DoE consultation, Draft supplementary planning guidance to PPS21 July 2011;
 - DRD consultation, The Review of the Regional Transportation Strategy, June 2011;
 - DoE consultation, (Draft) PPS24 Economic Considerations, May 2011;
 - DoE consultation, (Draft) PPS23 Enabling Development and Best Practice Guidance Assessing Enabling Development, May 2011
- 4 Conducted design reviews of significant infrastructure projects.
- 5 Hosted the following public events:
 - Public meeting to discuss DRD Roads Service proposals for York Street Interchange
- 6 Participated in events organised by others:
 - DoE Winterschool, the Belfast Cultural Corridor, April 2012
- 7 Prepared position papers offering advice to the DCAL Minister on the following:
 - The Belfast cultural corridor.

Work in progress includes the following:

- Meanwhile uses
- A digital 3D model for considering development proposals
- Landscape NI
- Design Quality in Public Sector Procurement
- Suburbia

Arts Council's Annual Funding Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for a breakdown, by district council area, of the distribution of the Arts Council's Annual Funding Programme in each of the last four years; and which years indices of multiple deprivation are being used in the Arts Council's criteria for funding under the Programme.

(AQW 11441/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The breakdown of Annual Funding Programme (previously known as ASOP) figures is shown in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	*2012/13
Antrim	0	56,510	0	0
Armagh	85,000	85,000	85,000	60,000
Belfast	7,814,176	8,556,283	8,942,994	10,581,680
Castlereagh	19,000	0	0	0
Coleraine	105,000	105,000	105,000	136,682
Craigavon	76,000	65,000	65,000	40,000
Derry	1,229,420	1,185,417	1,185,417	1,635,555
Down	130,000	90,000	90,000	55,000
Lisburn	265,160	34,650	88,650	74,000
Newry	105,487	105,487	105,487	164,487
North Down	110,550	150,550	150,550	215,578
Omagh	0	0	0	28,850
	9,939,793	10,433,897	10,818,098	12,991,832

* Figures for Annual Funding Programme. The previous years relate to Annual Support for Organisations Programme

The Arts Council use the most deprived super output areas based on the 2010 Multiple deprivation measures.

Military Museums

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how many military museums are operational and; (ii) what financial support they receive from her Department.

(AQW 11551/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are currently four operational military museums in the north of Ireland;

- The Royal Irish Fusiliers Regimental Museum, Armagh
- The North Irish Horse Regimental Collection, Belfast
- The Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, Belfast; and
- The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Regimental Museum, Enniskillen

There is also a Royal Irish Regiment museum which is currently in storage at Thiepval barracks, Lisburn, since the closure of the Regimental depot in Ballymena.

None of these Military Museums receive funding from my Department.

Operational Museums Dedicated to the Royal Navy

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many operational museums are dedicated to the Royal Navy; and what plans she has to expand such a project.

(AQW 11553/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are no operational museums dedicated to the Royal Navy in the north of Ireland.

My Department is not aware of any specific proposals to create a museum dedicated to the Royal Navy.

Listed Properties

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail listed properties that are owned by her Department.

(AQW 11557/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: No listed properties are owned by my Department.

Library Usage

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what strategy her Department has in place to facilitate the engagement and involvement of local communities in their public library, given that Northern Ireland has the lowest levels of library usage in the UK.

(AQW 11576/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Library use in the north of Ireland has been consistently lower than elsewhere in Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland for many years. To address this, my Department has undertaken a number of actions including setting up Libraries NI in April 2009. This was to provide a single dedicated and focused organisation for the management of the public library service.

DCAL has provided funding to Libraries NI to help reduce its administration costs and to protect front line services. Recently an additional £2.4m was made available to Libraries NI to lessen the effect of the need to reduce opening hours. Funding was also made available to increase outreach, partnership and targeting of services programmes. A major programme of capital investment in library buildings and IT infrastructure is also underway.

At the operational level Libraries NI engages with community and voluntary organisations in local areas and often work in partnership in the provision of services. Libraries NI also engages with other statutory organisations, including government departments, to promote libraries as shared spaces where information and advice on a range of services can be made available to the public, particularly in towns and villages where there are no other public buildings.

As a result of these actions, the library usage figures, as measured in the NI Continuous Household Survey (CHS), for the last four years shows a gradual increase as per the following table:

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Percentage of Use	27%	26%	29%	32%

These CHS figures use a different methodology from the Carnegie Report, and cannot be directly compared to the usage figures recently reported in the media.

Both Libraries NI and my Department will continue to encourage the increased usage of this important resource by our communities.

Senior Responsible Owner of the Regional Stadium Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why the Chief Executive of SportNI was removed as Senior Responsible Owner of the Regional Stadium Development Programme.

(AQW 11596/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI was appointed Delivery Agent for the Stadium Programme, with the Chief Executive of Sport NI as Senior Responsible Owner. Sport NI initially worked with the Governing Bodies of the three sports in taking forward the Programme and I am on record as having welcomed the work carried out by Sport NI in this regard.

This is a major capital programme and a PfG commitment for the Executive. It is therefore crucial to get the delivery of the next phase right, especially when construction programmes of this scale and complexity bring with them many challenges, from design, planning and procurement through to demolition and construction.

Accordingly, I considered various delivery options, informed by independent advice through the Strategic Investment Board. I also discussed this with the Governing Bodies of the sports and Sport NI. Having done so, I concluded that the responsibility for the delivery of the Stadium Programme should be placed directly within my Department. The Board of Sport NI and the Governing Bodies have accepted this decision.

Regional Stadium Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what additional cost the appointment of a Programme Director will incur to the Regional Stadium Development Programme; and from where within the budget will these costs be assigned.

(AQW 11598/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The appointment of a Programme Director has not incurred additional costs to the Regional Stadium Development Programme. Provision was already made within the Sport NI budget for this purpose. As my Department now has responsibility for the delivery of the Stadium Programme this budget will be transferred from Sport NI.

Regional Stadium Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number and grade; and (ii) the salary cost of departmental staff appointed to the team supporting the Programme Director of the Regional Stadium Development Programme; and to detail the recruitment or appointment process.

(AQW 11600/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is currently no departmental staff appointed to the team supporting the Programme Director of the Regional Stadium Development Programme.

Programme Director to the Regional Stadium Development Project

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure which of the concerns expressed in the Gateway Review led to her decision to appoint a Programme Director to the Regional Stadium Development Project.

(AQW 11603/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In line with accepted practice for capital investments on the scale of the Regional Stadium Development Programme my Department commissioned a Gateway Review (Level 0) aimed at ensuring that the programme and its constituent projects achieve the desired outcomes.

The completion of the Gateway Review resulted in a number of recommendations being made to assist my Department in its consideration of appropriate delivery structures and skills and support required to ensure successful delivery of the programme.

A key recommendation was the appointment of a Programme Director experienced in the delivery of challenging construction programmes. This recommendation was accepted and Noel Molloy has since been appointed as Programme Director.

Ulster Scots Agency

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been allocated to the Ulster Scots Agency in the (i) North Antrim; and (ii) East Antrim constituencies in each of the last six years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 11611/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ulster-Scots Agency is funded by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The Departments do not allocate funding based on individual constituencies.

However the Ulster-Scots Agency provides funding for Ulster-Scots projects through its Financial Assistance Scheme; supports festivals; music tuition and summer schools and has supplied details of the funding it has awarded in the North and West Antrim constituencies in the last 6 years.

This is shown in the table below.

Year	North Antrim	East Antrim
2005/06	£60.00	£0.00
2006/07	£3,570.00	£34,641.72
2007/08	£12,013.24	£18,438.10
2008/09	£19,526.88	£32,179.89
2009/10	£94,564.61	£59,137.82
2010/11	£91,200.87	£51,274.70
2011/12	£73,468.48	£65,626.21
2012/13 (to date)	£46,347.78	£ 6,790.98
Total	£340,751.85	£268,089.41

People Subject to an Enforcement Action

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she plans to follow the lead of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in publishing, on the NI Direct website, the names of people who have been subject to an enforcement action by her Department or its arm's-length bodies, and the fines they received.

(AQW 11705/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I understand that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has issued press releases containing the details of prosecutions it has taken and these have been placed on the Northern Ireland Executive website.

I can confirm that information on enforcement action taken by my Department under Fisheries legislation is already in the public domain through court records. Details may also be reported in the local press.

The Department publishes a summary of prosecution information on fisheries offences on the NI Direct website.

I will consider the publication of more detailed prosecution information brought to me by officials on a case by case basis, for example, where offences are considered by the Department to be of a particularly serious nature, such as the use of illegal nets.

Cinema Access Programme

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding was given to the named venues in the Cinema Access Programme; and what auditing was carried out to ensure that the equipment provided was used on the night the Programme was launched.

(AQW 11729/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Cinema Access Programme was delivered in 2005 by NI Screen. DCAL provided £30k towards the overall cost of the scheme which was £51k.

Details of funding allocated to the eight venues through the Cinema Access Programme are listed in the table below:

Cinema	Amount
Village Cinema's, Odyssey Complex	£4,500.00
QFT, Belfast	£2,819.59
Newry Omniplex	£7,237.50
Lisburn Omniplex	£7,237.50
Iveagh Movie Studios, Banbridge	£7,237.50
IMC, Ballymena	£7,237.50
Enniskillen Omniplex	£7,237.50
Carrickfergus Omniplex	£7,237.50
Total	£50,744.59

Staff from NI Screen attended each of the launch night events and were present when the equipment was in use.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many civil servants currently employed in her Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11808/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: None of the Civil Servants currently employed in my Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the NICS.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what percentage of invoices received by each of her Department's arm's-length bodies, in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt. **(AQW 11831/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: A table is attached which reports performance for the last full financial year, 2011-2012.

	Arts Council NI	NI Screen	Armagh Observatory & Planetarium	NI Museums Council	National Museums NI	Libraries NI	Sport NI
April	100%	100%	100%	100%	88%	96%	100%
May	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	83%	98%
June	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	95%
July	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%	98%	100%
August	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	97%	100%
September	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	99%
October	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%
November	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%
December	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	98%	95%
January	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	99%
February	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%
March	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%

Northern Ireland Golfers

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the success of Northern Ireland golfers, what steps she is taking to develop golfing talent and skills among young people. **(AQW 11900/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for developing the talent and skills of young people who play golf in the north of Ireland rests, in the first instance, with the governing bodies for the sport, the Golfing Union of Ireland, Ulster Branch and the Northern District Irish Ladies Golf Union, NI Region.

In the last three financial years Sport NI, however, which is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in the north, has provided £475,750 exchequer and lottery funding to golf to assist the development of the sport.

Furthermore, the Irish Open, which is taking place in Portrush at the end of June this year, will provide a significant opportunity to promote the sport locally. My Department is part of the Irish Open Steering Group which is chaired by DETI.

Board Members of Public Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many former civil and public servants are employed as (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by her Department; and what this figure is as a proportion of the total number of board members.

(AQW 11917/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

i) There are 18 former civil and public servants employed as paid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by DCAL.

ii) There are 40 former civil and public servants employed as unpaid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by DCAL.

In total there are 137 members currently appointed to the boards of public bodies which are sponsored by DCAL. The proportion of board members who are civil or public servants is therefore 42.3%.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what powers or functions she plans to devolve to local councils under the Review of Public Administration; and whether this represents a change to her previous commitments.

(AQW 11920/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is not devolving any powers to local councils as part of the Review of Public Administration.

The functions which my Department plan to transfer are;

Armagh County Museum

Armagh County Museum will transfer to the Armagh/ Banbridge/ Craigavon Council.

Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC)

The NIMC provides a support service to local and private museums and could transfer provided that a suitable arrangement can be agreed with local government.

Water Recreation Sites

Twenty one water recreation sites are to be transferred to local councils. These are small sites which complement other leisure facilities owned by councils.

Local Arts Funding

My Department is committed to transferring the funding for local arts to local government in line with the guiding principles set out for RPA.

The Department has not identified any further functions which may be devolved to local councils at a future date. However, my Department has commenced a review of its Arms Length Bodies and this may identify some further functions which could transfer to local councils.

These plans do not represent a change to my previous commitments.

Funded Projects or Organisations

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what checks are carried out to ensure that projects or organisations that are funded by her Department are non-sectarian and meet standards of equality and inclusivity.

(AQW 11958/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The statutory duties placed on public authorities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) ensures my Department and its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) are required to promote the need for equality of opportunity and the desirability of good relations when discharging all Departmental functions. These obligations cover all functions including budgetary and funding processes.

Any organisation in receipt of public funding through my department or its ALBs must comply with the Equality and Good Relations policies of the relevant funding organisations.

From an accountability perspective DCAL seek written assurance, on a quarterly basis, from ALB senior management, endorsed by the organisation's Board that these requirements are being adhered to.

Intercultural Arts Strategy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions her officials have had with the All Party Group for Ethnic Minority Communities in relation to the Intercultural Arts Strategy.

(AQW 11970/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have not had discussions with the All Party Group for Ethnic Minority Communities in relation to the Arts Council's recently launched Intercultural Arts Strategy.

A representative of the All Party Group for Ethnic Minority Communities has been asked to join the reference group for the Strategy.

Strategy for Improving Digital Literacy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her Department's strategy for improving digital literacy amongst older people.

(AQW 11972/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Older People Strategy document, "Ageing in an Inclusive Society" sets out Government's approach to promote and support the inclusion of older people in the north of Ireland.

The Strategy takes cognisance of research which showed that older people are less likely to own a computer or access the Internet than the rest of the population. The Strategy recognises that ICT and the Internet open up a range of communicative opportunities for people who are often physically isolated or immobile. It also notes the potential role of ICT in the development of skills that can be used to access services, training and jobs or simply new opportunities for self-expression and learning.

My Department through its Arms Length Bodies makes a valuable contribution to the delivery of "Ageing in an Inclusive Society". In respect of digital literacy Libraries NI aims to increase uptake of IT by older people for leisure and lifelong learning by providing access to over 1,300 computers and the internet. Libraries NI recognises that older people in particular may lack the skills and / or the confidence to use the available technology so provides a range of courses as well as one to one support, specifically aimed at older people. The courses and support are free of charge.

This important work will be further supported by a major programme of capital investment in library buildings and IT infrastructure.

Digital Literacy Amongst Older People

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what library-run courses are available to improve older peoples' computer and internet skills; and how much funding her Department has provided to improve digital literacy amongst older people, over the last five years.

(AQW 11974/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI recognise that older people in particular may lack the skills and/ or the confidence to use the technology available within its Libraries. As a result it provides a range of courses as well as one to one support, specifically aimed at older people. The available courses are outlined at Annex A.

The courses and support are free of charge for the participants and are funded out of the Budget that my Department provides to Libraries NI. Funding has also been made available to allow the replacement of Libraries NI's IT System. The replacement system will provide enhanced online library services and public access IT systems for older people as well as general library users.

Grants Awarded by the Arts Council

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the grants awarded by the Arts Council, under the Small Grants Programme, to fund projects in East Belfast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12004/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A list of the grants awarded in the last 3 years by the Arts Council in East Belfast, under the Small Grants Programme, is set out in the tables below:

2009/10

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bright Lights	Hands-on Dance	£5,000
The Junction Club	Junction Art Players	£4,950
Clarawood Community Association	Young Girls & Image Project	£1,500
Headway Belfast	Arts in Your Hands	£6,762

2010/11

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bright Lights	Hands-On Dance	£5,000
Headway Belfast	Arts In Your Hands	£6,760

2011/12

Organisation	Project	Amount
Bright Lights	Hands on Dance	£8,000
The Junction Club	Sounds of Gamelan	£4,135
Headway Belfast	Arts in Your Hands	£7,560
Headway Belfast	Arts in Your Hands	£9,250

Success of Londonderry as the first ever UK City of Culture

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what criteria will be used to make an assessment, towards the close of 2013, of the success of Londonderry as the first ever UK City of Culture.

(AQW 12020/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A business case for DCAL support to the Derry~Londonderry City of Culture 2013 has been approved by DFP based on an assessment of need which confirmed that the City of Culture would deliver benefits in line with my Department's high level priorities and objectives. On 5 April 2012, the Executive agreed to make £12.6m available to DCAL to support the Cultural Programme of events planned in the run up to and during 2013.

Specific, measurable targets have been set to measure impact and outcomes of the City of Culture 2013. Key objectives set by DCMS in awarding the title are to deliver a high quality cultural programme, deliver lasting social regeneration, demonstrate economic impact and maximise legacy from being City of Culture. To accurately measure the impact of 2013, targets have been set up to 2020. Milestones have been developed for 2013 and 2014 for monitoring progress and to undertake post project evaluation.

Targets are concerned with increasing wages and profits in the City; increasing employment, particularly in those from the bottom half of the most deprived wards; improving community relations, perceptions of the City and equality and social cohesion; increasing visitors to the City and visitor spend; increasing the number of people who attend cultural events, particularly those living in the most deprived areas; increasing satisfaction with living in the City and raising the City's Urban Benchmark Rank.

Measurement of progress during 2013 will be undertaken by the NI Research and Statistics Agency.

Former Senior Civil Servants

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many former senior civil servants, from deputy secretary grade to permanent secretary grade, serve on the boards of her Department's arm's length bodies in a (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid capacity.

(AQW 12072/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- i) There is one former Civil Servant of Deputy Secretary/ Permanent Secretary Grade who currently serves on a Board of a DCAL arm's length body in a paid capacity.
- ii) There is one former Civil Servant of Deputy Secretary/ Permanent Secretary Grade who currently serves on a Board of a DCAL arm's length body in an unpaid capacity.

Creative Industries Innovation Fund

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why the Creative Industries Innovation Fund has been reduced from £4 million to £2.4 million; and on which services the £1.6 million saved will be spent.

(AQW 12093/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As detailed in the Executive's Economic Strategy, my Department will invest £4m via the Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) and wider sectoral initiatives to stimulate innovation, R&D and creativity. CIIF is a key component of this investment focusing on the development of commercially viable products and services capable of competing in global markets.

The allocation to the Arts Council to deliver CIIF is determined on an annual basis and reflects industry demand and the quantity of applications meeting Fund criteria and being recommended for support. It is right that support through CIIF is directed to high quality innovation projects capable of stimulating long-term economic growth.

The Arts Council was allocated £625,000 in 2011-12. It received 87 applications in total and awarded grants to 42 businesses. The Arts Council therefore returned approximately £151,000 to the Department and this was reinvested in a range of sectoral initiatives supporting innovation, R&D and creativity. This included visual effects training courses; development of cultural tourism apps; support to Digital Circle; and a diverse range of activities advancing the STEM agenda. Further information on these wider sectoral initiatives is being compiled and will be sent to Members of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee.

The Arts Council has received 100 eligible applications for the 2012-13 funding round. Final assessment decisions will be made in June. Corresponding CIIF allocation to the Arts Council will be finalised based on the number of applications being recommended for support and this approach will guide allocation in subsequent years. It is therefore not possible to determine the exact allocation to CIIF over this period but the Programme for Government Target is to support 200 projects by 2015.

Moving forward, wider sectoral initiatives will include funding, in partnership with Invest NI, to a new Music Business Support Programme. Such investment demonstrates DCAL's proactive government leadership role for the creative industries and the need to support region wide activity, in addition to CIIF, that

establishes a creative industries pipeline from which creative people, creative ideas and creative entrepreneurs emerge and flourish.

Irish Language: Funding

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when the outcome of the consultation on the core funded Irish language groups by Foras na Gaeilge will be published.

(AQO 2055/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The current project plan agreed with sponsor Departments indicates that the analysis of the submissions received during the consultation period should be available by the end of June 2012.

The plan requires Foras na Gaeilge to have the consultation findings and together with any necessary adjustments to the draft scheme completed and presented to the Foras na Gaeilge Board for decision at its June 2012 meeting.

Depending upon the outcome of the consultation and the extent of the revision of the draft schemes consideration of other suitable alternatives the existing project plan may need to be modified.

2012 Olympics: West Tyrone

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department will support any Olympic games legacy projects in West Tyrone.

(AQO 2047/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The London 2012 Inspire programme is a participation initiative spanning England, Scotland, Wales and the North of Ireland. It formally recognises exceptional non-commercial projects which have been inspired by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A number of these projects are working right across the North, including West Tyrone, and three of them have specifically targeted areas in West Tyrone – Fighting Irishmen from the Ulster American Folk Park, the North West Peace Building through Sport Programme from Omagh District Council, and Rhythms of the Year from National Museums NI.

The projects are leaving a legacy in a number of areas – increasing participation in sporting and cultural activities, improving access in sports and the arts for people with disabilities, encouraging healthy lifestyles, facilitating skills development, promoting volunteering, and creating good relations and community cohesion.

Rugby: Participation

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the increase in the number of people participating in rugby.

(AQO 2057/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Statistics from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) indicate that the proportion of adults playing rugby league or union in the north of Ireland was unchanged from 2006/07 to 2010/11 at 1%.

Overall however, the CHS figures indicate that participation rates in sport generally have been increasing in recent years. I believe that much of this trend is attributable to the work currently being carried out on the implementation of the Department's 10 year strategy for sport, Sport Matters. I would hope that the trend will continue and in due course lead to an increase in the number of people participating in all sports, including rugby.

Furthermore, I trust that the recent achievement of Ulster Rugby reaching the final of the Heinekin Cup will similarly have a positive impact on the number of people playing rugby specifically.

Cinema Access Programme

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the ten cinemas which received £30,000 from her Department, as part of the Cinema Access Programme, will be required to use the funded equipment for the screening of all films or only those films screened on the Programme launch night.
(AQO 2058/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Cinema Access Programme was delivered in 2005 by NI Screen. DCAL provided £30k towards the overall cost of the scheme. A total of £51k was awarded to the eight cinemas who participated in the project.

My Department has asked NI Screen officials to contact the Royal National Institute for the Blind regarding this issue and to engage with each of the cinemas involved in the project to determine the current usage of the equipment and to explore options for maximising future usage.

I am keen to ensure that our arts venues are as accessible as possible. Which is why I am pleased that, as part of my Department's recent programme of investment in arts infrastructure across the north of Ireland, projects like The MAC, the Lyric Theatre and the Crescent Arts Centre worked in conjunction with Adapt NI and can boast the highest levels of quality audio visual facilities. This will improve opportunities for people with sight or hearing difficulties to enjoy the artistic offer at these venues.

Libraries

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she is taking to ensure that library usage is maximised within local communities.
(AQO 2059/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has taken a number of steps to help maximise library usage in communities. This included:

- Setting up Libraries NI in 2009 to provide a single dedicated organisation to deliver a public library service.
- Provided funding to protect front line services including £2.4m to lessen the effect of reduced opening hours and increase outreach, partnership and targeting of services programmes.
- A major programme of capital investment in library buildings and IT infrastructure.

Libraries NI also works with community organisations and others to promote libraries as shared spaces where information and advice on a range of services accessed.

The NI Continuous Household Survey (CHS), for the last four years shows a gradual increase in library usage from 27% in 2007/2008 to 32% in 2010/2011.

Regional Stadium Development Programme: Section 75

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department will meet its obligations as a public authority under section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in implementing its stadia development programme.
(AQO 2060/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has been meeting its Section 75 obligations in terms of the Regional Stadium Development Programme in a number of ways.

The Outline Business Case for Stadium Development included examining a range of Non-Monetary Costs and Benefits of the options considered. This included recognising and scoring the proposals against Section 75 policies with the key aim of ensuring that access to the redeveloped facilities for all was maximised.

In addition the development of major stadiums is one of the targets in the Department's strategy for sport "Sport Matters". The strategy, including those elements relating to stadia development, was subject to Section 75 screening and integrated impact assessments, including considerable consultation with the public and stakeholders on what is planned up to 2019. This did not reveal any negative impacts.

Furthermore, as part of the Budget 2010 process, my Department's capital programme was subject to a high-level impact assessment. This included regional stadium development and the conclusion reached was that there were no negative Section 75 impacts associated with progressing the funding of stadiums.

The Regional Stadium Development Programme has as a key outcome the provision of fit-for-purpose stadiums. This can only enhance compliance with disability requirements, make the spectator experience more inviting and promote interest in the respective sports regardless of gender, race and other Section 75 categories.

Department of Education

Extent and Cost of 'Grannyng'

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the extent and cost of 'grannyng' as a means of circumventing the legislative protection that requires schools to give priority to pupils who are resident in Northern Ireland, and what steps are being taken to deal with this problem.

(AQW 11410/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Schools have a duty to verify information that may qualify applicants for admission to the school where there exists a "general knowledge or belief" of a problem with false information.

P1 Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the number of children who applied for a P1 place; and (ii) the level of over-subscription for P1 places at (a) Ballymagee Primary School; (b) Kilmaine Primary School; (c) Ballyholme Primary School; (d) Towerview Primary School; (e) Bloomfield Road Primary School; and (f) Central Integrated Primary School in Bangor.

(AQW 11424/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of children who applied for a P1 place, the admissions number and the level of oversubscription for each of the schools named for the last 5 years is as follows:-

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Ballymagee PS					
Admissions No (a)	58	58	58	58	58
Applications (b)	76	80	58	63	62
Admissions	60	60	58	58	60
Over-subscription	16	20	0	5	2
Kilmaine PS					
Admissions No (a)	87	87	87	87	87
Applications (b)	116	121	93	89	96
Admissions	90	87	88	89	90

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Over-subscription	26	34	5	0	6
Ballyholme PS					
Admissions No (a)	90	90	90	90	90
Applications (b)	107	127	84	78	94
Admissions	90	90	84	78	90
Over-subscription	17	37	0	0	0
Towerview PS					
Admissions No (a)	46	46	46	46	58
Applications (b)	79	78	50	41	42
Admissions	51	49	50	41	42
Over-subscription	28	29	0	0	0
Bloomfield PS					
Admissions No (a)	58	58	58	58	58
Applications (b)	77	64	44	41	30
Admissions	60	60	44	41	30
Over-subscription	17	4	0	0	0
Bangor Central IPS					
Admissions No (a)	87	87	87	79	79
Applications (b)	117	99	91	83	91
Admissions	87	87	87	83	80
Over-subscription	30	12	4	0	11

Notes:-

- 1) The applications and admissions figures were provided by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board and reflect the position as at the conclusion of the annual admissions procedure.
- 2) Figures exclude any children who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs or who were admitted as a result of a decision of an Appeals Tribunal. These pupils are supernumerary and are over and above the schools' approved admissions number.
- 3) The "cap on P1 intake" has been taken to mean the schools' approved (published) admissions number (a). Schools can exceed their admissions number within prescribed limits in any one year without requiring the Department's approval, provided this would not cause them to exceed their overall school enrolment limit.
- 4) The applications figures (b) represent all applications considered by the school and can include first preference, and any second and further preference applicants who were unsuccessful in gaining a place at their higher preference school(s). Second and further preference applicants may have applied to one or more of the other listed schools and could, therefore, be reflected in the "Applications" totals for more than one school.
- 5) As the applications figures include all applications to each school this figure should not be taken to represent popularity of any particular school as parents may have listed that school as their third, fourth or even fifth preference. Further, the total levels of oversubscription do not in any

way reflect the total number of pupils who remain unplaced. By the end of the process the vast majority of pupils are placed either in the schools listed or the other controlled primary schools in Bangor and North Down.

- 6) The over-subscription figures are arrived at by deducting the actual "Admissions" from the "Applications".

Cap on P1 Intake

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail the cap on P1 intake at (a) Ballymagee Primary School; (b) Kilmaine Primary School; (c) Ballyholme Primary School; (d) Towerview Primary School; (e) Bloomfield Road Primary School; and (f) Central Integrated Primary School in Bangor.

(AQW 11427/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of children who applied for a P1 place, the admissions number and the level of oversubscription for each of the schools named for the last 5 years is as follows:-

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Ballymagee PS					
Admissions No (a)	58	58	58	58	58
Applications (b)	76	80	58	63	62
Admissions	60	60	58	58	60
Over-subscription	16	20	0	5	2
Kilmaine PS					
Admissions No (a)	87	87	87	87	87
Applications (b)	116	121	93	89	96
Admissions	90	87	88	89	90
Over-subscription	26	34	5	0	6
Ballyholme PS					
Admissions No (a)	90	90	90	90	90
Applications (b)	107	127	84	78	94
Admissions	90	90	84	78	90
Over-subscription	17	37	0	0	0
Towerview PS					
Admissions No (a)	46	46	46	46	58
Applications (b)	79	78	50	41	42
Admissions	51	49	50	41	42
Over-subscription	28	29	0	0	0
Bloomfield PS					
Admissions No (a)	58	58	58	58	58
Applications (b)	77	64	44	41	30
Admissions	60	60	44	41	30

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Over-subscription	17	4	0	0	0
Bangor Central IPS					
Admissions No (a)	87	87	87	79	79
Applications (b)	117	99	91	83	91
Admissions	87	87	87	83	80
Over-subscription	30	12	4	0	11

Notes:-

- 7) The applications and admissions figures were provided by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board and reflect the position as at the conclusion of the annual admissions procedure.
- 8) Figures exclude any children who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs or who were admitted as a result of a decision of an Appeals Tribunal. These pupils are supernumerary and are over and above the schools' approved admissions number.
- 9) The "cap on P1 intake" has been taken to mean the schools' approved (published) admissions number (a). Schools can exceed their admissions number within prescribed limits in any one year without requiring the Department's approval, provided this would not cause them to exceed their overall school enrolment limit.
- 10) The applications figures (b) represent all applications considered by the school and can include first preference, and any second and further preference applicants who were unsuccessful in gaining a place at their higher preference school(s). Second and further preference applicants may have applied to one or more of the other listed schools and could, therefore, be reflected in the "Applications" totals for more than one school.
- 11) As the applications figures include all applications to each school this figure should not be taken to represent popularity of any particular school as parents may have listed that school as their third, fourth or even fifth preference. Further, the total levels of oversubscription do not in any way reflect the total number of pupils who remain unplaced. By the end of the process the vast majority of pupils are placed either in the schools listed or the other controlled primary schools in Bangor and North Down.
- 12) The over-subscription figures are arrived at by deducting the actual "Admissions" from the "Applications".

Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in Northern Ireland Report

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education why the three yearly report 'Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in Northern Ireland' lists, by category, the various forms of bullying which occur, but makes no reference to, or attempts to quantify, the extent or existence of homophobic bullying.

(AQW 11623/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department carries out research into the nature and extent of bullying in schools every five years. The research findings summarise the responses of pupils from Year 6 and Year 9 in a representative sample of 60 primary and 60 post-primary schools. The findings are a statistically valid representation of the pattern of bullying in schools.

Pupils complete the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire which is the most

widely used and internationally validated instrument to measure bullying. The use of this instrument means that findings can be compared over time and with studies in other countries. The approach used in the Questionnaire is to describe types of behaviour rather than use a specific labels such as 'homophobic bullying'.

The research “ The Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland”, published in October 2011, shows that bullying with mean names, comments or rude gestures with a sexual meaning was the sixth most common form of bullying, experienced by around 14% of Year 9 pupils who took part in the survey. This was also the fifth most common type of bullying perpetrated by 6% of Year 9 pupils.

The Appendices to the Report includes findings of other research reports, including two which consider the issue of homophobic bullying in schools.

I understand that the local Anti-Bullying Forum is considering the findings of the Report and is also developing a suite of guidance for schools, around the prevention of, and response to, various types of prejudice based bullying, including homophobic bullying. The Forum is in the process of consulting with a wide range of children and young people who have been invited to share not only their experiences of homophobic bullying, but their ideas on how it can be tackled in our schools and communities.

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to detail the capital and revenue savings his Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11658/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: As a result of the cuts imposed upon the Block Grant by the British Government in agreeing Budget 2008-11 allocations, the Executive agreed that all Departments were to deliver 3% cumulative efficiency savings over the 3 year period 2008-09 to 2010-11. The table below shows those efficiency savings delivered by my Department in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

	2009-10 £m	2010-11 £m
Revenue	97.2	138.6
Capital	27.3	39.9
Total	124.5	178.5

Following the outcome of Budget 2011-15, revenue savings of £101.5m were to be delivered in 2011-12 to ensure that the Department remained within budget. Work is currently on-going to determine the full extent of savings delivered last year. I am therefore unable to provide any further detail at this stage. The capital budget for 2011-12 was reduced compared to previous years and the Department was required to live within this revised baseline.

Irish-Medium Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10781/11-15, to detail (i) the level of funding allocated to schools from (a) the Accommodation Fund; and (b) other departmental resources to address serious accommodation deficiencies within the Irish-medium sector; and (ii) the nature of the deficiencies at each site.

(AQW 11686/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: As advised in AQW 10781/11-15, my Department provided Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta with £2m of funding to set up an Accommodation Fund. Four schools from within the Irish-Medium sector were prioritised for new modular portable buildings, each to receive an equal share of the fund. To date, the fund has provided new modular portable buildings for 2 of these schools.

Until an Irish-Medium school proves viability, it is not eligible to receive capital funding and it is therefore the responsibility of InaG to address serious accommodation deficiencies in the first instance. When a school proves viability and is vested in the schools estate, it is eligible for capital funding and can make an application to my Department’s Estate Operations Team to have necessary capital works carried out. These applications are prioritised and compete for available funding from the Department’s

capital budget, and all potential projects in any area will be critically assessed as part of the area based planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed.

Suspension of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10782/11-15, to confirm whether (i) the Joint Working Party met on the 8 May 2012; (ii) all outstanding issues within the Teachers' Side are resolved; and (iii) the Teachers' Negotiating Committee and, all its sub-committees, are fully operational.

(AQW 11689/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) The Joint Working Party (JWP) met as scheduled on 8 May 2012.

- (ii) I understand that the outstanding issues within Teachers' Side have not been resolved and that the NI Teachers' Council (NITC) passed a motion on 30 April 2012 nominating four of its five constituent unions to represent the Council at JWP and any associated meetings in the meantime.
- (iii) A meeting of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee is due to take place shortly. The next meeting of the JWP will take place on 12 June 2012 and meetings of the various sub-groups are scheduled in the coming weeks.

Windows in Sunnylands Primary School, Carrickfergus

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education when the single-pane windows in Sunnylands Primary School, Carrickfergus, will be replaced.

(AQW 11699/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The replacement of single pane windows is a matter for the Education & Library Board who has responsibility for planning maintenance programmes throughout the schools estate. The windows are listed for replacement as a maintenance backlog item at an estimated cost of £124k out of a total window backlog of £9.5m.

There are many schools throughout the Board's estate with windows in a poor condition and the Board addresses window replacement schemes on a priority basis within the available resources.

I am therefore unable to give a definitive time frame for replacement single pane windows at Sunnylands Primary School, Carrickfergus.

Occupational Therapy Provision for Children and Young People

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to improving occupational therapy provision for children and young people up to 19 years of age.

(AQW 11726/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Although occupational therapy provision is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, I am very aware of the impact provision of such therapies has for children within the education system.

While I have not had discussions with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety specifically regarding occupational therapy provision, I met with the Minister on 4 July 2011 and on 17 April 2012 to discuss issues of mutual interest including allied health services for children. These services have also been the subject of discussion between officials from both departments in the broader special educational needs context and this will continue to be the case, as appropriate.

Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to ensure that professional bodies, such as the College of Occupational Therapists, are closely involved in the development and design of any new arrangements resulting from the Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

(AQW 11727/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion has been widely consulted on and officials are continuing to engage with a number of organisations including health professionals to progress the SEN and inclusion policy proposals.

Departmental officials and colleagues in the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) are meeting regularly and the DHSSPS has facilitated meetings with the Health Boards and allied health professionals to discuss areas of joint collaboration and cooperation and will continue to meet.

A number of reference groups and liaison groups have also been established with representatives from both the statutory and voluntary sectors in attendance.

NEETs Strategy

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11130/11-15, to detail (i) when the new scheme for youth service funding will be implemented, following the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; (ii) when the scheme will be open for applications, given that Youth Council NI's current funding cycle ends in April 2013; (iii) when Youth Council NI's review of the Bytes Project will be completed, given that its interim funding stream ends in June 2012; and (iv) what provision will be made in the new funding structures to ensure that the Bytes Project receives adequate funding, given its non-standard format.

(AQW 11732/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Youth Council has advised that it intends to carry out an initial review of the "Young People Focused" funding scheme, in cooperation with Education and Library Boards and taking into account DE policy and structural changes within the youth sector. Following this review, the Council will develop proposals for a new funding scheme for consideration by the Department of Education. It is not yet possible to confirm the timescale within which the Education and Skills Authority may approve a new funding scheme, or when a new scheme will be open for applications. However, the intention is that organisations currently in receipt of Council funding will continue to be funded under the current arrangements until a new scheme is implemented. Voluntary youth organisations such as the Bytes Project will be free to apply to the Youth Council under the new funding scheme; however no guarantee of funding can be given to any organisation.

The Youth Council has also advised that its review of Bytes is currently in progress and a report on this process, along with a recommendation for the full level of funding for 2012/13, will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 25 June for a decision. The Bytes Project will be advised on 26 June of the outcome of this report and its full 2012/13 grant allocation.

Pre-School Places

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 9423/11-15, (i) whether there are funded pre-school places currently reserved at Steeple Nursery School, Antrim; (ii) whether the reserved places are affecting the request by Tannaghmore Community Playgroup, Antrim, to join the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme; and (iii) what steps he will take to ensure that the places are filled in order to assess effectively the demand for funded pre-school places at Tannaghmore Community Playgroup.

(AQW 11756/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At the end of Stage 1 of the 2012/13 Pre-School Admissions process Steeple Nursery School was under subscribed with applications from children in their final pre-school year and places remained available.

As part of Stage 2 of the process these places were on the list of settings to which parents of children unplaced at Stage 1 could apply. Stage 2 of the process is ongoing and parents will be advised by letter on 1 June of the outcome of their application.

The NEELB Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) is actively considering a request from Tannaghmore Community Playgroup to join the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme. A decision will be made at the end of Stage 2 and will depend on the need for additional provision to cater for unplaced children in the area.

Nursery School Provision

Mr Kinahan asked Minister of Education which electoral wards currently have no nursery school provision available due to (i) over-subscription; and (ii) geographical location.

(AQW 11766/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information sought relates to the admissions process for places in pre-school education for the 2012/13 academic year. This is a two stage process which is currently ongoing. Statistics will not be available until after the process is completed on 1 June 2012.

It should be noted that when the Admissions Process concludes parents who may not have applied for a place during the process or those who have not secured a place will be given a list of settings by the ELB where places may still be available. Parents then make application directly to these settings. This can result in a significant number of additional children being placed before the start of the new school term in September.

Information on the exact number of children in funded pre-school places is collected as part of the Annual School Census in October.

As you are aware in recent years there has been significant additional investment in pre-school places both through the creation of new statutory nursery units and allocation of funding to support additional places in the voluntary/private sector. I will be keeping this under review in light of the work on the Programme for Government commitment and if further investment is necessary I will consider it.

Refurbishment and Repairs at Portadown College

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10581/11-15, to detail his role in ensuring the long term cost-effectiveness of how his departmental budget is spent.

(AQW 11796/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The total gross capital budget for the Department in 2012/13 is £104.1m, and is required to cover investment in transport, ICT, youth, early years, minor works and committed major works, as well a number of other capital requirements.

The significant reduction in the capital allocation to Education has created challenges when dealing with such a large and diverse capital estate, and I am seeking a more strategic approach to capital investment through Area Based Planning.

While the work on area planning will in due course identify priorities for capital investment, in the short-term there is a need to ensure capital funding is utilised to improve the schools estate. Therefore an interim process is being developed to identify major school projects which are consistent with and supportive of the Area Planning work and in which capital investment can be made in the coming period.

It is important however that the integrity of existing school buildings is maintained and I will continue to invest in minor works and maintenance programmes to address statutory requirements including health and safety and in meeting disability needs.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education how many civil servants currently employed in his Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11809/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No staff currently employed in the Department of Education have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Integrated Services for West Belfast and Greater Shankill

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's position in relation to the continued financial support of integrated services for West Belfast and Greater Shankill, post September 2012.

(AQW 11843/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: West Belfast and Greater Shankill are areas where I have serious concerns regarding educational underachievement. I have announced my intention to make £0.5m available each year for the next three years in tackling underachievement and plan to table a prospectus with interested parties in the near future.

In the interim, my Department, in conjunction with DSD and DHSSPS have made funding available to the current Integrated Services for Children and Young People programme.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what percentage of invoices, received by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11868/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the percentages of invoices received by each Arm's-Length Body (ALB) in the period April 2011 to March 2012, paid within 30 days of receipt are shown in the table below:

ALB	% paid in 30 days
Belfast Education & Library Board	81
North Eastern Education & Library Board	83
South Eastern Education & Library Board	90
Southern Education & Library Board	89
Western Education & Library Board	85
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	100
Council for the Curriculum, Examination & Assessment	85
Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards	100
Youth Council	100
General Teaching Council	100
Comhairle na Gaelscoilaíochta	88
Council for Integrated Education	100
Middletown Centre for Autism	96

Post of Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how the position of Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board was advertised.

(AQW 11881/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The post of Chief Executive (Temporary) of the South Eastern Education and Library Board was advertised in accordance with Stage 2 of the Policy for the Control of Vacancies in the Education Sector under the Review of Public Administration.

Bullying

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education to detail the procedures and guidelines recommended by his Department for schools to follow when bullying is reported or suspected.

(AQW 11884/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Bullying, in whatever form and for whatever reason, has no place in schools and the Department is committed to tackling the issue.

All grant-aided schools are required by law to have an anti-bullying policy which includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Each school can determine, in consultation with pupils and parents, the detail of their policy.

The Department has produced guidance for schools in developing effective anti-bullying policies which includes practical initiatives and case studies to support schools to tackle bullying. The guidance "Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour" is available on the Department's website at <http://www.deni.gov.uk/ppbehaviour-4.pdf>. The effectiveness of a school's anti-bullying measures is monitored through the regular cycle of school inspections.

The Department recognises that it cannot solve the issue of bullying alone, and continues to work in close partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations through its membership and funding of the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). The Forum enables members to share models of best practice, to disseminate information, to develop and coordinate joint initiatives and to ensure that schools and organisations working with children and young people are able to develop appropriate strategies to prevent and deal with bullying behaviours.

The Forum's website (www.niabf.org.uk) provides a wealth of resources for pupils, parents and professionals in dealing with bullying incidents and preventing bullying in schools by developing whole school anti-bullying cultures.

Representatives from the Education and Library Boards who are members of the NIABF have also established an Inter-Board Group to develop a common approach to tackle bullying in schools. In October 2010, the Inter-Board group launched a CD-ROM entitled "Let's Stop Bullying". This interactive resource was developed for all primary and special schools and has been made available through the C2K system. My Department provided the funding to produce the localised version of this resource.

In addition, the NIABF is currently developing a resource to support schools in the management of alleged bullying incidents. "Effective Responses to Bullying" takes schools on a staged journey to resolving a concern, offering levelled interventions for both the recipient of bullying and the pupils displaying bullying behaviour. This resource will be distributed to all schools early in next school year.

Reported Instances of Bullying

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of reported instances of bullying at (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools in each of the last five academic years.

(AQW 11885/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold the information requested.

Schools are not required to record incidences of bullying.

The Department published a research report on “The Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland” in October. The findings show little change in the level of bullying behaviour reported by pupils compared to earlier studies completed in 2002 and 2007.

Victims of Bullying

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education what support his Department provides to victims of bullying and the school involved.

(AQW 11886/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Department is committed to tackling bullying in schools and examining ways to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of all our pupils.

Schools are supported in dealing with bullying through legislation, advice and guidance developed by the Department and by the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF), which the Department funds.

Nominated teachers are provided with enhanced training to recognise and support young people in crisis, including those who have been subject to bullying. In-service teacher training is provided by five Education and Library Boards (ELBs). Each Board has a designated officer who works with schools to tackle bullying through assisting in the development of whole school policies and supporting individual pupils who have been victims of bullying.

Training is supplemented with school-based advice from ELB staff, on-going telephone guidance, support in relation to specific anti-bullying issues and advice on the content of a school’s anti-bullying policy. Advice on preventative strategies including Positive Behaviour Management, Circle Time, training of ancillary staff and awareness raising sessions for parents is also available to schools.

The Department provides funding to Childline, to assist in the continuation of the free, 24/7 helpline for children and young people. The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) is accessible to all pupils in grant aided post-primary schools, including special schools. This allows pupils to speak to a trained counsellor about their concerns or fears around bullying.

Over the last five years, work has been ongoing to develop a Pupils’ Emotional Health and Well-Being Programme in partnership with key statutory, voluntary and community sector stakeholders. The Programme aims to address how a pupil’s emotional health and wellbeing is promoted by the school, what support systems are available to support a pupil under stress and what support is available to a school in the event of a crisis.

School Swimming Lessons

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education how many schools (i) provide; and (ii) do not provide swimming lessons for their pupils, broken down by sector.

(AQW 11889/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Department does not hold this information.

Swimming is a statutory area of Physical Education (PE) at Key Stages 2 and 3. Delivery of the curriculum in terms of meeting the minimum content is a matter for the school and the relevant Board of governors.

The Department does not specify the frequency or duration of swimming activities. . The Department recommends that schools provide opportunities for pupils to take part in at least 2 hours of PE per week; however, it is a matter for schools to decide how this is delivered, including how many swimming sessions to provide.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) what powers or functions he plans to devolve to local councils under the Review of Public Administration; and (ii) whether this represents a change to his previous commitments.

(AQW 11913/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My position is unchanged.

I do not plan to devolve any powers or functions to local councils.

Pupils Who have Learnt to Swim

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education for his Department's estimate of the percentage of pupils who have learnt to swim by the time they leave primary school.

(AQW 11915/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold this information and is therefore not able to provide an estimation.

Swimming is a statutory area of Physical education (PE) at Key Stage 2. Under Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) the minimum content states, that in relation to swimming, pupils should be enabled to:

- Develop basic swimming and personal survival skills
- Understand the importance of personal hygiene in relation to pool use
- Progress from using a swimming aid to developing their confidence and competence in being able to swim without the use of any aids using recognised swimming strokes.

However, it is a matter for schools to determine how they deliver swimming, including how many swimming lessons to provide.

Primary Schools in North Down

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) which primary schools in North Down received Extended Schools funding; (ii) how much each school received; and (iii) what criteria is applied to decide which schools receive the funding.

(AQW 11931/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The primary schools in the North Down constituency that received Extended Schools (ES) funding in each of the 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial years, and the total amount of funding which each school received, are outlined in the table below.

Primary Schools in the North Down Constituency in receipt of ES funding	2009/10 ES Allocation	2010/11 ES Allocation	2011/12 ES Allocation
Kilcooley PS, Bangor	£17,710	£17,710	£18,745
Millisle PS	£17,451	£17,840	£21,160
Bloomfield PS, Bangor	£6,381*	Did not qualify	£29,498
Clandeboye PS, Bangor	Did not qualify	Did not qualify	£17,710
Redburn PS, Holywood (note that this school is due for closure 31st August 2012)	Did not qualify	Did not qualify	£10,600
St Malachy's PS, Bangor	Did not qualify	Did not qualify	£29,440

* Bloomfield PS failed to meet the eligibility criteria in 2009/10 and a partial exiting allocation was made to cover the period April –June 2009.

To qualify for ES funding schools must meet the following criteria that apply equally across all schools:

- 51% or more of pupils drawn from a Neighbourhood Renewal Area or the 30% most disadvantaged wards/Super Output Areas (SOAs); and/or
- 37% or more of pupils with a Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) or in the case of Nursery Schools, parents in receipt of Income Based Job Seekers Allowance at or above 37%.

Primary Schools in North Down

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education which primary schools in North Down offer (i) breakfast clubs; (ii) 2-3pm clubs; (iii) after-school clubs; and (iv) holiday schemes.

(AQW 11932/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information on the clubs requested is not routinely collected from schools. The Department's Extended Schools (ES) programme provides additional funding for those schools serving the most disadvantaged areas to provide for a wide range of services and activities outside of the traditional school day and, where assessed as needed by schools, this may include breakfast clubs, after school clubs (including 2-3pm clubs) and holiday schemes.

In the 2011/12 financial year, Extended Schools funding has been allocated in respect of 6 primary schools in the North Down constituency. The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has confirmed that 4 of these schools ran a breakfast club, 5 schools provided after school clubs and 1 school operated a summer scheme using funding provided through the ES programme. The SEELB is also aware of 4 primary schools outside of the ES programme that run breakfast clubs. Details are outlined in the table below.

Extended Schools	Breakfast Clubs	After School Clubs, including 2-3pm clubs	Summer Scheme
Clandeboye PS	✓	✓	
Millisle PS	✓	✓	
Kilcooley PS	✓	✓	
Bloomfield PS	✓	✓	
Redburn PS		✓	
St Malachy's PS			✓
Non- Extended Schools			
Towerview PS	✓		
Ballymagee PS	✓		
Glencraig Integrated PS	✓		
Glenlola Collegiate Prep.	✓		

Registering Childcare Provision

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what guidance his Department provides to schools on registering childcare provision.

(AQW 11964/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Registration and regulation of childcare provision is the responsibility of the Health and Social Care Trusts under part XI of the Children (NI) Order 1995. DE does not therefore issue guidance on this matter.

Reading Recovery Programmes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether his Department intends to reinvest in the Reading Recovery programmes which provide literacy support to school children.

(AQW 11987/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department provided substantial financial support for the Reading Recovery programme from 1998/99 to 2007/08 when over 600 teachers were trained in Reading Recovery. When funding ended in 2008 a number of schools continued to provide Reading Recovery from within their delegated budget, utilising teachers previously trained in Reading Recovery techniques. The Education and Library Boards also provided funding from within their budget to retain a tutor in each Board area to support and sustain Reading Recovery.

I now have in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. Central to this is the implementation of "Count, read: succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy" which recognises the importance of the early identification of pupils who, for whatever reason, require additional support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

The strategy makes it clear that teachers have the central role in raising standards in literacy and numeracy including identifying and addressing underachievement at the earliest stage and in a systematic way. It is a matter for teachers, drawing on their professional expertise, to determine what specific form of intervention is required to address underachievement. Where necessary, teachers can draw on advice and support from other staff within the school, for example, the literacy co-ordinator, or, in a situation of continuing underachievement, external support, such as that provided by the Education and Library Boards or health professionals.

Evidence suggests that effective teaching of literacy should involve a range of approaches. Reading Recovery is one of a number of teaching methods that might be utilised by a teacher to secure improvement in a child's literacy skills.

The challenge now is to ensure the continuing and effective implementation of these policies by schools to raise educational standards overall and close the gap in achievement, particularly between those that are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those that are not.

Attendance at School

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education to detail what procedures are followed by (i) schools; (ii) Education and Library Boards; and (iii) his Department when a child fails to reach a minimum of 85 percent attendance at school.

(AQW 11989/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Procedures taken by schools; Education and Library Boards; and my Department when a child fails to reach a minimum of 85 percent are as follows:

(i) Schools

Schools have a responsibility to promote and encourage good attendance, however it is the parent or carer of a child who has legal responsibility for ensuring that the child receives full time education.

If a child's attendance falls below 85% (approximately 28 days absence) then a referral can be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). Referral is not automatic but at the discretion of the school e.g. a child may be absent if they are receiving long term medical treatment.

(ii) Education and Library Boards

If a school makes a referral to EWS an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will conduct a home visit and agree an action plan to address attendance with the pupil, parents, school and other agencies, if required.

For older pupils referral to a suitable alternative education programme may be required e.g. EOTAS (Education Other Than At School).

Education and Library Boards (ELBs), through EWS, have an obligation to ensure that parents and carers meet their legal responsibility in ensuring their child attends full time education.

If a parent fails to ensure regular attendance at school the respective ELB may serve a School Attendance Order. If the parent or guardian fails to comply with the School Attendance Order the ELB can apply to the courts to issue fines to parents of children who are not attending school. In the Magistrates Court the maximum fine that can be imposed is £1000 in respect of each child who is missing school.

The ELB can also apply to the Family Proceedings Courts to make an Education Supervision Order which places a child under the supervision of the ELB.

(iii) My Department

Statutory responsibility for ensuring that parents fulfil their statutory duty to cause their child to receive efficient full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise lies with the Education and Library Boards. My Department does not have a locus to intervene in individual cases.

A research study to identify strategies which have been successful in improving attendance in schools has just been completed and was published on my Department's website earlier this month. Officials will be working with the EWS and schools to take forward the recommendations highlighted in this report and develop guidance for schools on effective practice.

Low Attendance of a Pupil

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education what support his Department offers schools when the low attendance of a pupil is identified as a problem; and at what stage his Department offers this intervention.

(AQW 11990/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department recognises that regular attendance at school is crucial if a pupil is to engage fully with the educational curriculum and obtain the best outcomes from their period in compulsory education.

Ultimately parents and carers have a statutory duty to ensure that each child of compulsory school age receives full time education.

Schools are supported by the Education and Library Boards through their Education Welfare Service (EWS) who have a legal responsibility to ensure that parents and carers meet their own responsibility towards their children's education.

The EWS can provide advice and support to schools and parents at any time if concerns around attendance arise. If a pupil's attendance drops below 85% (i.e. approx 28 school days absent) a referral can be made by the school to EWS at the respective Board who will investigate further to identify the cause of poor attendance and determine measures for improvement. The EWS will agree an action plan, with the pupil, the parents and the school and other agencies, as required.

If no progress can be made and a parent continues to fail to ensure their child's regular attendance, the ELBs may ultimately apply to the courts to issue fines to parents of children who are not attending school regularly.

My Department recognises the problems associated in dealing with poor school attendance and is looking at methods to improve this. A research study to identify strategies which have been successful in improving attendance in schools has just been completed and was published on my Department's website earlier this month. My Department will be working with EWS and schools to take forward the recommendations highlighted in this report.

Disputes and Resolution Service for Special Educational Needs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of the Disputes and Resolution Service for Special Educational Needs pupils in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 11999/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that the cost of the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service in each of the last five financial years is as follows:-

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
BELB	24k	23k	28k	29k	23k
NEELB	29k	41k	28k	29k	34k
SEELB	49k	37k	39k	40k	43k
SELB	53k	62k	38k	76k	84k
WELB	68k	70k	72k	75k	78k

Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many cases the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service has dealt with in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 12000/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of cases the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service has dealt with in each of the last five financial years is as follows:-

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
BELB	3	3	8	6	10
NEELB	24	25	26	10	23
SEELB	18	24	38	39	43
SELB	20	34	38	18	18
WELB	15	27	11	16	18

Pre-School Advisory Group

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many funded places were initially allocated to each Pre-School Advisory Group in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12001/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the initial allocation of places to each education and library board's Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) for each of the last 5 years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
BELB	531	590	590	552	582
WELB	1212	1264	1260	1280	1247
NEELB	1636	1666	1726	1780	1799
SEELB	1391	1445	1445	1450	1570

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
SELB	1693	1965	1905	2093	1940
TOTAL	6463	6930	6926	7155	7138

School Visits

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education how many times he has visited (i) controlled; (ii) maintained; (iii) integrated; and (iv) Irish-medium schools in (a) West Tyrone; and (b) Northern Ireland, since May 2011.

(AQW 12065/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I endeavour to respond positively to as many invitations as possible and do not take into account school sectors when deciding as to whether I accept an invite. Diary commitments, Assembly business and the purpose of the visit are the deciding factors when making my decision to visit schools.

	(i) Controlled	(ii) Maintained	(iii) Integrated	(iv) Irish – Medium
(a) West Tyrone	1	2		1
(b) North of Ireland	19	34	2	4

Appointment of New School Governors

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education why he has yet to approve the appointment of any new school governors, or second-term governors, since he assumed office in May 2011.

(AQW 12069/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have in fact approved 96 school governor appointments since May 2011. It is incorrect therefore to imply that I have not approved the appointments of new school governors, or the reappointment of serving DE governors, since coming into office. I have previously made clear that, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Public Appointments, it is my preference to have a choice of candidates for each DE governor post and have given a commitment to making appointments for each post for which I do have a choice of candidates. Appointments have been, and continue to be, made by my Department on a regular basis in line with that commitment. At the same time, work continues to encourage more people to put themselves forward as school governors because I remain concerned that the pool of potential candidates is currently not fully reflective of the population.

Boards of Department's Arm's Length Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many former senior civil servants, from deputy secretary grade to permanent secretary grade, serve on the boards of his Department's arm's length bodies in a (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid capacity.

(AQW 12073/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two former senior civil servants, in the deputy secretary to permanent secretary grade range, currently serving on the boards of my Department's arms length bodies, one in a paid capacity and one in an unpaid capacity.

Partnership Between a School and a Commercial Enterprise in Dungannon

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education why his Department is delaying the partnership between a school and a commercial enterprise in Dungannon, under which the company will voluntarily heat the school with the excess energy it produces.

(AQW 12080/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department was originally made aware of this proposal in December 2011. It was evident that the potential environmental and financial benefits associated with the proposal merited serious consideration. Departmental officials subsequently wrote to the company in January 2012, followed by a site meeting in February 2012 to further explore the feasibility of the project. Officials then arranged for the technical viability of the project to be assessed (and subsequently confirmed) by a qualified mechanical and electrical engineer in March 2012.

A funding options paper for this project was forwarded to the School in March 2012 recommending that the School should explore the potential for establishing a direct contractual arrangement with the company, funding the project via anticipated revenue savings on heating oil. The School explored this option and then wrote to me (14 May 2012) seeking financial support for the project.

I have advised the School that I will urgently consider the funding of this initiative, prioritised against other demands on the Department's minor works budget.

I trust this makes it clear that my Department has not delayed the development of this project in any way.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list the schools which have a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy that teaches about heterosexuality but not homosexuality.

(AQW 12081/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold this information.

All schools should have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy, setting out how the school will address RSE. They should consult on the content of the policy with pupils and parents and it should be endorsed by their Board of Governors. Whole school planning is vital to ensure RSE is taught appropriately within a meaningful context.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact of teaching lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) students that homosexuality is wrong or not normal; and whether this reinforces homophobic bullying and increases the risk of LGB students taking their own life.

(AQW 12082/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools should have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy, setting out how the school will address RSE. They should consult on the content of the policy with pupils and parents and it should be endorsed by their Board of Governors. This means that whole school planning is vital to ensure RSE is taught appropriately within a meaningful context.

Schools teach within that framework and the Department has made them aware of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination. All students/pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. This guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006, therefore in developing or reviewing their RSE policy, schools should take account of the Equality Commission's Guidance.

Bullying, in whatever form and for whatever reason, has no place in schools. My Department alone cannot resolve this issue and it is for this reason that it funds and is a member of the local AntiBullying Forum. The Forum is developing a suite of guidance for schools, in consultation with children and young people, around the prevention of, and response to, various types of prejudice based bullying, including homophobic bullying.

It is vital that Departments work collaboratively and with the wider community and voluntary sector to achieve a co-ordinated regional approach to suicide prevention. The focus for my Department's contribution is promoting the positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and the broader school community. This focus recognises the significant role that schools can play in raising awareness of

emotional health, developing the confidence and coping skills of pupils, encouraging help-seeking behaviour and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing stress.

Teaching Children about Homosexuality

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the implications for school teachers if (i) they teach children that homosexuality is wrong; or (ii) they teach children about heterosexual relationships and not homosexual relationships.

(AQW 12083/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools should have a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy, setting out how the school will address RSE. They should consult on the content of the policy with pupils and parents and it should be endorsed by their Board of Governors. This means that whole school planning is vital to ensure RSE is taught appropriately within a meaningful context.

Schools teach within that framework and the Department has made them aware of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination. All students/pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. This guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006, therefore in developing or reviewing their RSE policy, schools should take account of the Equality Commission's Guidance.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what steps he has taken, since coming into office, to ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual students are treated equally at school.

(AQW 12084/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have recently agreed the Department's Equality Scheme and Audit of Inequalities/Action Plan.

The Action Plan features action points on Pupil Bullying and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) including how best to support teaching on sexual orientation.

In January 2012 I also launched a guidance document intended to supplement the Community Relations, Equality & Diversity (CRED) Policy. The intended outcomes of the CRED Policy are to develop learners who understand and respect the rights, equality and diversity of all Section 75 groups (including sexual orientation) and develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it.

Circular Number 2010/01 reminded schools of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006.

All students/pupils have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual, or perceived, sexual orientation.

Sharing of Education and Health Data: Early Years Provision

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11197/11-15, what meetings his departmental officials have had with other bodies in relation to improving data sharing between health and education; and to outline the details of each meeting.

(AQW 12106/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Departmental officials have held no meetings specifically in relation to improving data sharing between health and education. Officials liaise with Information officers within the Health and Social Care Board to obtain statistical data to inform policy development as needs arise. Officials may also utilise statistics drawn from NISRA in relation to live births.

STEM Subjects at GCSE and A Level

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11356/11-15, why he has chosen to reduce financial support for STEM subjects in 2011/12 before he has any indication that the action plan is bringing about increased uptake of STEM subjects at GCSE and A level.

(AQW 12107/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The higher level of funding to support STEM subjects for the period 2008/09 - 2010/11 was the £10.7million my Department acquired from the Innovation Fund. This was in addition to the funding already provided directly to schools, via the Common Funding Formula, for the implementation of the revised curriculum, including Science, Technology and Maths.

My Department continues to provide a significant level of support to promote STEM subjects by investing £1million per annum for various STEM related activities.

The member will be interested to note that statistics show an increase in GCSE and A-Level STEM examination entries as a percentage of all examination entries. The following table illustrates the increase.

	2004/05	2010/11
GCSE STEM entries as a percentage of all examination entries	33.9%	37%
A-Level STEM entries as a percentage of all examination entries	37%	40.4%

Teachers on the Transferred Redundancy List

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11602/11-15, whether he will consider introducing a package for teachers, aged over 60, who would like to retire but are unable to opt for redundancy at the school in which they are employed.

(AQW 12113/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The employing authorities offer significant financial incentives to secure volunteers for redundancy among older teachers. A transferred redundancy scheme is operated annually to allow teachers to volunteer for redundancy even if their own post is not being made redundant or there are no redundant posts within their school. This year a central clearing house will be operated across all employing authorities for those volunteers who cannot be accommodated initially within each employing authority.

I have made funding available to allow schools and employing authorities to manage teacher redundancies at August 2012. While I am hopeful that the enhanced redundancy compensation being offered will encourage older teachers to volunteer, thus protecting the jobs of younger teachers, the funding is intended to facilitate a reduction in the long term cost base of the education sector, not to allow schools to employ a replacement for every teacher who wishes to leave the profession.

Teachers who are aged 60 or over are entitled to retire on age grounds at a time of their choosing and immediately receive unreduced pension benefits.

Post-Primary Schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10990/11-15, to list the schools that sought (i) temporary variation; and (ii) temporary accommodation.

(AQW 12140/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following post primary schools have applied for an increase in their approved enrolment over the past five years in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area:

- Cross and Passion, Ballycastle
- Dalriada School, Ballymoney
- Larne Grammar School

- Magherafelt High School
- St Colms High School, Draperstown.

Over the past three years the following eight post primary schools have sought temporary accommodation:

- Cross and Passion, Ballycastle
- Dalriada School, Ballymoney
- Larne Grammar School
- Magherafelt High School
- St Colms High School, Draperstown.
- St Lillians College, Carnlough
- St Louis' Grammar School, Ballymena
- St Mary's College, Portglenone

Display of Diamond Jubilee Material

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether he plans to issue guidance to schools on the display of Diamond Jubilee material during the forthcoming celebrations.

(AQW 12205/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans to issue such guidance. It is a matter for each individual school to consider this issue.

Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to detail the current number of arm's-length bodies and quangos that are attached to his Department; and how this figure compares with the number in (i) 2008; (ii) 2009; (iii) 2010; and (iv) 2011.

(AQW 12228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of arm's-length bodies that are attached to my Department since 2008 are as follows:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
9	9	10 (wef 1 June 2010)	11 (wef 31 January 2011)	14 (wef 1 April 2012)

Free School Transport

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2228/11 -15, in relation to the home to school transport, to detail whether the shortest distance is determined (i) by the shortest route; (ii) as the crow flies; or (iii) by the route followed by the bus.

(AQW 12239/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The distance between a pupil's home and school used to establish eligibility for home to school transport assistance, is determined using the shortest public route capable of being walked. Such routes may include roads, paths and walkways.

Ministerial Cars

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education whether his official ministerial car was used on 24 May 2012 to escort a prisoner on release to attend a funeral.

(AQW 12242/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My ministerial car was not used to escort a prisoner on release to attend a funeral.

Budget Reductions

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 6565/11-15, how he intends to make savings of £5 million in the home to school transport budget for 2012/13, and further savings of £5 million in subsequent years.

(AQW 12243/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The £5m savings requirement from the home to school transport budget was a single reduction in 2011/12 which reduced the budget for that and subsequent years by £5m. Accordingly, Education & Library Boards who are responsible for the operational aspects of the home to school transport scheme, are not required to make a further savings of £5m in each subsequent year.

Savings in the home to school transport budget will be achieved through efficiency measures taken by the Education and Library Boards across all its operations. The measures will ultimately include those set out in the second report on school transport by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU), once an appropriate action plan has been agreed and published.

Department for Employment and Learning

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the capital and revenue savings his Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11659/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The Department for Employment and Learning has achieved the following capital and revenue savings in each of the last three years:

	2009-10 Target (£m)	2009-10 Achieved (£m)	2010-11 Target (£m)	2010-11 Achieved (£m)	2011-12 Target (£m)	2011-12 Achieved (£m)
Capital	5.16	5.16	6.91	6.91	-	-
Revenue	34.93	34.93	52.32	52.32	66.50	66.50
Total	40.09	40.09	59.23	59.23	66.50	66.50

Work Placements

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consideration has been given to retaining work placement services within Executive Departments; and what scope exists to vary the conditions relating to work placements from those currently operating in Great Britain.

(AQW 11754/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is currently developing a work placement programme under the Youth Employment Offer.

Unlike in GB where obtaining these placements is contracted out to third party providers, my work placement programme will rely on the Employment Service's Employer Engagement Team to secure local opportunities. Personal Advisers based in JobCentres and Jobs & Benefits offices will then match unemployed young people to these placements and monitor their progress.

Listed Properties

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the listed properties that are owned by his Department.

(AQW 11788/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not own any listed buildings.

Gender Imbalance at Senior Management Levels

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department plans to address the gender imbalance at senior management levels.

(AQW 11816/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is the statutory authority tasked with engaging employers on equality issues, and providing them with information, guidance and support in this respect.

In respect of the Department for Employment and Learning, the gender profile at Senior Civil Service grade is equally balanced, with five females and five males in post.

Funds from the European Social Fund

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department has any plans to use unallocated or undercommitted funds from the European Social Fund to address unemployment in areas of deprivation, such as the Kilcooley Estate in Bangor, or to support organisations which work with long-term unemployed people, such as the Kilcooley Community Forum and the Kilcooley Women's Centre.

(AQW 11817/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not anticipate that unallocated funds will become available over the duration of the 2nd 'call' for funding from the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme, 2007-2013. On this basis it is not the ESF Managing Authority's intention to issue any additional letters of offer at this stage but the situation will be kept under review as part of the programme's ongoing financial management.

Furthermore, during a Ministerial visit to the European Commission on the 16th February 2012, I personally raised the issue of whether any additional ESF Funding may become available as a result of potential under spends elsewhere in the Community EU with Commissioner Andor. He advised that no additional ESF funding would be made available to any region during the current ESF Programme funding period.

Since then I have conveyed this information to any training organisations that I have met seeking additional ESF funding.

Law Lectureship

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether it is possible to hold a law lectureship, or be appointed a Law Professor, at (i) Queen's University, Belfast; or (ii) the Ulster of University, without having a primary degree in law.

(AQW 11880/11-15)

Dr Farry: Both Queen's University and the University of Ulster have confirmed that an individual may hold a law lectureship, or be appointed a Law Professor, without having a primary degree in law.

Lecturers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what research his Department has carried out on the amount of time lecturers spend with their students through seminars, lectures and tutorials, to ensure that students are receiving a value for money service.

(AQW 11968/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning has carried out no research into the amount of time lecturers spend with their students through seminars, lectures and tutorials.

The Department continues to be committed to ensuring that students have a high quality learning experience. From the start of the academic year 2012-13, all higher education institutions (HEIs) in Northern Ireland will be required to produce a Key Information Set (KIS) for each of their courses. This will include information on the proportion of time students spend on various learning and teaching activities, and the range of assessment methods used.

The KIS will contain areas of information that students have identified as useful. These areas include student satisfaction; course information; employment and salary data; accommodation costs; financial information, such as fees; and student union information. The KIS will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to fulfil students' needs, in terms of both content and delivery.

In August 2011, the QAA, an organisation supported by the Department, published 'Contact hours: a guide for students'. The QAA believes that a good quality experience for students is one where they are given the best opportunities to succeed in their studies. It refers to these factors as 'learning opportunities' and discusses institutional performance in this regard in its reports.

The QAA also state that quality is linked to a wide range of factors, including teaching, support services, access to learning spaces and resources, and assessment and feedback processes. There is no evidence to suggest, therefore, that quality can be measured solely by contact hours.

The Department will continue to ensure that students are provided with the best quality learning experience when studying at a higher education institution in Northern Ireland by continuing to support the work of the QAA and through the implementation of 'Graduating to Success', the Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Funding for Students

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what funding is available for students who wish to undertake a Masters degree.

(AQW 12005/11-15)

Dr Farry: Support for postgraduate students, many of whom have already had the benefit of my Department's student support for their primary degree, has always been discretionary and subject to change to reflect wider government priorities.

Each year my Department, through its Postgraduate Awards scheme, makes available student support funding to Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster for research and certain approved courses of full-time study leading to higher degrees (Masters and PhDs). The universities are responsible for administering the Postgraduate Awards scheme and select, by competition, the students to fill these awards within the limits of funding available.

For the forthcoming academic year 2012/13, eligible students who are successful in securing a postgraduate award for a taught masters course will receive a minimum grant for personal maintenance of £6,795 (provided they satisfy the residency requirements of the scheme) and they will have their tuition fees paid.

Other sources of funding that postgraduate students may be able to avail of include a Professional and Career Development Loan, an interest subsidised bank loan which is designed to help people pay for work-related learning to help gain experience, training and qualifications to improve job skills or launch a new career. For more information on Professional and Career Development Loans, students should

call 0800 100 900 or visit <http://www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl> or e-mail pcdlinfo@ypla.gov.uk <http://www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl>.

Alternatively, students may be able to source a grant through the Educational Grants Advisory Service. For more information, students should log on to www.family-action.org.uk/educationalgrantssearch or call the information line on 020 7254 6251 (available 2pm-4pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday only).

Postgraduate students who are in financial hardship or are contemplating leaving their course because of financial problems may be able to seek assistance from their university's Support Funds.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Promoting NI2012

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much has been spent, to date, on promoting NI 2012 in the rest of the UK.

(AQW 11616/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Tourism Ireland spends £12.6 million on marketing in the Great Britain market and ensures that Northern Ireland is featured in a third of its activity.

It also received an additional £4.7million to boost its ni2012-specific promotional activity, particularly during the early part of the year. Of the additional £4.7million, the majority of this money, £3.4 million, has been invested in Great Britain, which is our most important market.

A significant amount of this additional investment has been spent on co-operative marketing campaigns with air and sea carriers. Other activity to promote ni2012 includes TV advertising on British terrestrial and satellite channels, a major promotional roadshow series in key access gateways such as London, Manchester and Glasgow and participation in trade and consumer travel shows in France, Spain and Germany.

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the capital and revenue savings her Department has made in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11660/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI delivered £15.2million Resource savings in 2009/10, £23.7million Resource savings in 2010/11, and further savings of £1.1million Resource in 2011/12.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on the possibility of developing a UK-wide aviation strategy to improve the export potential of businesses.

(AQW 11671/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department for Transport has been leading on the development of a sustainable United Kingdom policy framework for aviation. My Department has been contributing to this process to ensure that Northern Ireland's unique position and heavy reliance on air connectivity to access global business and inward tourism markets is fully reflected in the emerging UK policy.

Posts within InvestNI

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many posts at each grade within InvestNI have been filled by internal tawl, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11704/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

Year June 2011 – May 2012	Number of Internal Trawls	Number of Posts Filled
Executive Officer 2	1	2
Staff Officer	1	1
Deputy Principal	3	6
Grade 7	2	2

Year June 2010 – May 2011	Number of Internal Trawls	Number of Posts Filled
Executive Officer 2	2	13
Staff Officer	2	2
Deputy Principal	3	2
Grade 7	3	3
Director	2	2

Year June 2009 - May 2010	Number of Internal Trawls	Number of Posts Filled
Deputy Principal	1	1

Pumping of Raw Sewage into the Sea at Ballyhornan, Co Down

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the extent to which local tourism and business is affected by the on-going pumping of raw sewage into the sea at Ballyhornan, Co Down.

(AQW 11819/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is not aware of the specifics around the pumping of raw sewage into the sea at Ballyhornan, however there is a direct link between water quality and tourism.

Compromised water quality in the lough has the potential to translate into reduced visitor numbers with resulting impacts on the viability of tourism related businesses in the area.

NI2012 Initiative in the Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many events have been planned as part of the NI2012 initiative in the Upper Bann constituency; and what budget has been allocated for the events.

(AQW 11835/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has published this information on their Corporate Website www.nitb.com/events.

The Tourism Events Funding Programme 2012/13 has offered funding to 51 events. This information is filterable by Town, County, District Council Area and Constituency for your convenience.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many civil servants currently employed in her Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11846/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI has not re-employed any staff who received a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of invoices, received by each of her Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11865/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During the 2011-12 Financial Year, the last 12 month period for which figures are available, the percentage of invoices received by the Department's arm's-length bodies and paid within 30 days of receipt were as follows:

- Invest Northern Ireland – 97%
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board – 94%
- Consumer Council for Northern Ireland – 99%
- Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland – 100%

Promoting Business and Tourism

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps have been taken to promote business and tourism at the same time when the Northern Ireland Football Team is playing in cities.

(AQW 11879/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has met with the Irish Football Association and discussed the possibility of joint programmes when they go overseas. Such programmes will be carefully targeted to take into account Invest NI's key markets for both inward investment and exports to maximise potential benefits.

Tourism Ireland will maximise the tourism marketing opportunities around Northern Ireland matches which take place in, or involve teams from, key markets for inbound tourism to Northern Ireland. This would include activity such as promoting media attendance and coverage of the Northern Ireland leg of the matches, as well as inviting sports, lifestyle and travel media to enjoy wider familiarisation tours of Northern Ireland on the back of the fixtures.

NITB is currently working in conjunction with the Irish Football Association (IFA) in planning activity for Northern Ireland home matches and is keen on developing a good working relationship, to encourage the team to act as ambassadors for Northern Ireland when playing away from home.

Equality Commission's Publication Trends in Community Proportions of Applications and Appointments to the Private and Public Sectors

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what response her Department will be making to the Equality Commission's publication, 'Trends in Community Proportions of Applications and Appointments to the Private and Public Sectors' (March 2012), particularly in so far as it shows a lower success rate for Protestant applicants for jobs in the private sector throughout the last decade.

(AQW 11937/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 relates specifically to religious community background and labour market outcomes and it would be for OFMDFM, as the Department responsible for both the legislation and for the Equality Commission, to provide comment.

Gas Reprocessing Facility

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any consideration her Department has given to the need for a gas reprocessing facility.

(AQW 11941/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have assumed that the question is referring to a gas processing facility. In which case, my Department has, to date, not given consideration to the need for such a facility.

European Entrepreneurial Region Award 2014

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether they will seek the European Entrepreneurial Region Award 2014 for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 11943/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Details on the 2014 award process are not currently available. However, in line with its commitments within the Barroso Taskforce Action Plan, Invest NI will consider taking forward an application, including a focus on its Local Economic Development work with Councils, once the required information is available.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has made any assessment of the impact that hydraulic fracturing would have on property prices.

(AQW 11944/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has not made any such assessment.

Funding Allocated for the Irish Open Golf Tournament at Portrush in 2012

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the level of funding allocated for the Irish Open Golf Tournament at Portrush in 2012, whether through sponsorship or concessions.

(AQW 11965/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Executive has allocated £2million in sponsorship through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The European Tour is responsible for other sponsorship and concessions and, as these are commercial decisions, The Northern Ireland Executive is not aware of the details.

Londonderry first ever UK City of Culture

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what co-ordination will take place between her Department and the organisers of the Londonderry first ever UK City of Culture events, to ensure that the region gets maximum publicity for tourism related events and that they leave a lasting legacy.

(AQW 11967/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are regular meetings taking place with the Culture Company 2013, Ilex Urban Regeneration Company, Derry City Council, and DCAL at both DETI and NITB levels. Discussions cover areas such as infrastructure, investment and development, events programming, funding and marketing. In addition, a draft Memorandum of Understanding has been produced identifying roles and responsibilities of various organisations including DETI, NITB, DCAL, Derry City Council and the 2013 Culture Company.

NITB has committed £700,000 in event funding towards UK City of Culture 2013 to cover programming and marketing. In addition NITB will be launching its 2013 events funding programme in September 2012 which will have a particular focus on the 2013 UK City of Culture.

NITB and Tourism Ireland will continue to feature heavily Londonderry's City of Culture year in 2013 in all of its promotion and marketing activity throughout the remainder of 2012 and into 2013.

Furthermore NITB has contributed £14million to the Built Heritage programme and Lighting Strategy as part of the Walled City Signature Project which will enhance the visitor experience in the city in 2013 and will leave a lasting legacy for years to come.

The UK City of Culture 2013 is seen as a stepping stone towards achieving our tourism potential of £1billion tourism spend by 2020 ; 4.5 million visitors; over 50,000 jobs sustained.

Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland'

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of paragraph 4.38 of Lord Whitty's report 'Energising Northern Ireland' which states that it is not clear that consumers in Northern Ireland are receiving as great a benefit as those in the Republic of Ireland from the island of Ireland electricity wholesale market; and what steps she intends to take to redress this imbalance.
(AQW 11977/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The common wholesale electricity market ensures suppliers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland pay the same price for the electricity they buy from the market, with electricity prices reflecting underlying international wholesale gas costs. Each supplier will then set their own customer tariffs.

Ongoing developments such as a second North-South interconnector and the new East-West interconnector will enhance efficient functioning of the market, along with a programme to align the market with the Great Britain market under the European target model for 2014/16. This will bring further benefits to consumers, with a long term downwards competitive pressure on wholesale prices and greater security of supply.

PowerNI

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the monopoly which PowerNI has, in relation to solar photovoltaic installation, as a result of the grant money it receives from the Regulator, and of the impact this might have on the future of independent companies.
(AQW 11994/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I understand that the independent Utility Regulator's Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) is open to any pre-registered organisation which meets the eligibility criteria; these organisations can propose schemes to be considered for NISEP support. A temporary suspension of customer applications for several renewables schemes, including solar photovoltaic (PV), has been agreed with Power NI to allow the Utility Regulator an opportunity to consider the concerns raised.

The main source of financial support for renewable electricity installations is provided by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO). Accreditation of microgeneration solar PV panels under the NIRO is subject to installation by companies accredited under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what powers or functions she plans to devolve to local councils under the Review of Public Administration; and whether this represents a change to her previous commitments.
(AQW 12061/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In 2008 it was agreed that the following functions would be transferred when the new councils are established on foot of the Review of Local Administration (RPA):-

- Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows;
- Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Princes Trust and Shell Livewire);
- Social Entrepreneurship;
- Investing For Women;
- Neighbourhood Renewal funding relating to enterprise initiatives;
- Small scale tourism accommodation development;
- Local tourism marketing;

- Local Tourism product development;
- Visitor servicing;
- Providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes;
- Providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues.

There has been no change in the principles underlying the types of activity to be transferred; but I am discussing with the Environment Minister the extent to which this precise list of functions needs to be revisited in light of developments since 2008.

Feed-in Tariff with Contracts for Difference

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, if the impact of the introduction of Feed-in Tariff with Contracts for Difference is to reduce consumer prices, whether there is sufficient east-west interconnection for customers in Northern Ireland to benefit; and to outline her Department's policy on enhancing east-west interconnection.

(AQW 12102/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The introduction of a Feed-in Tariff with Contracts for Difference (FIT CfD) is a system of low-carbon generation revenue support that will provide more certainty of revenues for low-carbon generation and make investment in clean energy more attractive. A FIT CfD is expected to lead to lower consumer bills compared to what they would have been otherwise with the Renewable Obligation continuing to support new renewable generating capacity. Electricity bills are estimated to be, on average, 4% lower over the next two decades than they would otherwise have been.

Adequate electricity interconnection between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is currently provided by the Moyle Interconnector. While there are no current plans to enhance this interconnection capacity, a second east-west electricity interconnector between the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain has recently been completed, and along with the Moyle, will improve regional electricity market integration, and help deliver more competitive electricity prices within a larger market.

Bed and Breakfast Businesses

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support is available from her Department and its arm's-length bodies for (i) newly established; and (ii) existing Bed and Breakfast businesses, to extend or modernise their premises.

(AQW 12117/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Whilst Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) does not offer any financial incentives for potential B&B accommodation providers, there is a range of advisory and support services available. These include guidance on the legal requirements involved when opening a B&B, operational matters, signage and advice on other statutory bodies' legislative requirements i.e. Environmental Health and Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service.

B&B providers can also avail of free marketing via NITB's consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com and can apply to participate in the quality grading scheme offering the opportunity to be star graded.

They will have access to NITB's Next Level Programme of Events which includes road shows, master classes, business insights and conferences. In addition, a range of ICT business support and customer service initiatives are also available to certified B&B providers.

NITB also works closely with the Accommodation Associations, including the Northern Ireland Bed & Breakfast Partnership, who can provide further guidance to potential B&B operators.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the percentage of sickness absence in her Department in each of the last three years; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between her Department and the trade unions. **(AQW 12224/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: There is no memorandum of understanding between DETI and trade unions in relation to sickness absence targets. However, detailed below are the Ministerial targets and the actual rate achieved by DETI for each of the last three years:

Year	Ministerial Target	Actual
2009/10	8.5	8.3
2010/11	8.1	8.1
2011/12	7.9	7.3 (Estimate)

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the insurance requirements for a company for hydraulic fracturing; (ii) whether her Department has received copies of the commercial liability insurance, and all the supporting documents from any company wishing to undertake hydraulic fracturing; (iii) to list the names of the companies providing this insurance and the policy number; and (iv) for her assessment of the approximate minimum level of insurance cover which would be required for Tamboran Resources to commence hydraulic fracturing.

(AQW 12271/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has not issued a licence for hydraulic fracturing nor is it in receipt of any application for hydraulic fracturing.

Should a company apply for consent to drill and test for oil or gas using hydraulic fracturing; my Department will make an assessment, in respect of appropriate insurance requirements, based on advice from relevant professionals. Such insurance requirements will then be stipulated as an obligation which companies must meet prior to such consent being granted.

My Department is in receipt of the relevant commercial liability insurance for each of the four Petroleum Licences which have been awarded. Insurance specific to hydraulic fracturing is not required as no formal application has yet been made by any of the licensees.

The terms of any insurance policy between an insurance company and the organisation which is being insured is a commercial matter and not one which it would be appropriate for me to report on.

My Department has not made any such assessment, at this time.

Cost of Broadband

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the cost of broadband to a household of each of the services that are supported by her Department; and how this cost compares to private companies in the market.

(AQW 12294/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI only has one contract that provides broadband services for households. This is with Onwave under the Remote Broadband Services contract

The current prices, as published on the company's website, indicates that for the basic service of 6 Mbps the installation is £109.95 and £39.95 per month thereafter. The costs for this product, compared to similar products available in the market, indicate that the charges are attractive.

The telecommunications market is fully competitive and regulated nationally by OFCOM across a wide range of market segments. It is proper in a competitive market that companies are free to set prices for these services as appropriate. The market is very dynamic and changes regularly and it is for consumers to compare costs and decide which products are suitable for their needs. If competition is not effective then it is a matter for OFCOM to consider and investigate if required.

Access to Broadband in Rural Areas

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what broadband services are available to rural customers on the Lisnahunshin Road, between Rasharkin and Portglenone, who do not have access to the higher speed broadband to which other customers in this area have access. **(AQW 12295/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: Broadband services in Northern Ireland are delivered via a mix of technologies including fixed-line, satellite, radio (wireless) and mobile. This is not unique and is not dissimilar to many regions globally where there are geographic and topographic challenges to network development.

My Department has and continues to support a number of initiatives aimed at providing broadband services in rural areas where, due to long line lengths, it is difficult to access a service using telephone lines. Without specific details it is difficult to be precise but, generally speaking, customers on the Lisnahunshin Road should be able to access the satellite broadband services available under the Department's contract with Onwave Ltd.

Onwave offers services with download speeds of 6, 8 and 10 Megabits per second details of which can be found on their website at www.onwave.co.uk/ni or by contacting the company directly on 0845 43 43 500.

Alternatively, customers might wish to avail of the fixed-wireless broadband services available from North West Electronics, which can offer products with download speeds of between 10Mbps and 100Mbps. To pursue this option, customers should visit the company website at www.nwewn.com or contact them directly on 028 7135 1999.

Department of the Environment

Milford House, Armagh

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the current condition of Milford House, Armagh, as a Grade B1 listed building; and (ii) to detail any discussions his Department has had on the future use of the building.

(AQW 11904/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): NIEA's Historic Buildings Unit (HBU) is reviewing all listed buildings on the BHARNI Register of Buildings at Risk, and has recently assessed this building as being a Category 'A' Building at Risk - which is:

"Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed".

HBU has been aware of the very poor condition of this listed building for a number of years. In August 2011, following representation from Armagh City and District Council, the Director of Built Heritage met with the Chief Executive of Armagh City & District Council, to discuss the condition of the building and assistance for listed buildings at risk, including an Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) options appraisal grant.

In September 2011, the Director of Built Heritage and his Area Conservation Architect met representatives of Milford Buildings Preservation Trust (MBPT), to discuss the potential for the Trust to take over the building.

Further to that meeting, HBU has been in discussions with the AHF as a potential funding source for the Trust to develop its ideas, and provide funding for an options appraisal grant. AHF contacted the

HBU Area Architect on 18 April 2012, advising that AHF would require a commitment from NIEA that they would be prepared to acquire the listed building - by compulsory acquisition - though the issue of a Repairs Notice, and pass the building on to MBPT in a back-to-back agreement (similar to the arrangement at Sion Mills with HEARTH).

On 31 July 2009, the Department received an application for outline planning permission for a retirement village (comprising 110 residential units) and nursing home on land within the grounds of Manor House, Milford. This application is being treated as 'enabling development' and remains under consideration.

The Department considers it inappropriate that it should use its statutory powers to acquire the building, while a planning application is being considered not least because the planning application includes the re-use, and therefore, regeneration and protection, of Milford House.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Children and Families Care Bill

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will take into consideration the Children and Families Care Bill for England and Wales, during his intended consultation on family law. **(AQW 11544/11-15)**

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): We will assess the relevance of the proposed Bill when the full detail of its content is known.

Migrant Workers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for a breakdown of the number of migrant workers by sector. **(AQW 11670/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The closest approximation to the information requested comes from the October - December 2011 Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS estimated¹ that there were some 71,000 people aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland who were born outside the UK. An estimated 56,000 of these were born outside both the UK and the Republic of Ireland. See table overleaf.

MIGRANT WORKERS BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

Industry sector in main job	Born outside the UK	Born outside the UK and RoI
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*
Energy and water	*	*
Manufacturing	19,000	17,000
Construction	*	*
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	15,000	13,000
Transport and communication	*	*
Banking and finance	11,000	10,000
Public admin, education and health	17,000	12,000
Other services	*	*
Total	71,000	56,000

Source: Labour Force Survey, October – December 2011

- 1 Since the LFS is a sample survey, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.
- * It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller the group whose size is being estimated, the (proportionately) less precise that estimate is. As a result, grossed LFS estimates under 8,000 are not published as they are likely to be unreliable.

Illegal Car Parks in the Vicinity of Belfast International Airport

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action Land and Property Services is taking to address the loss of rates revenue resulting from the presence of illegal car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport.

(AQW 11770/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Land & Property Services (LPS), in co-operation with both Antrim District Council and Belfast International Airport, carried out a special exercise in 2010 to review those properties in the vicinity of the airport which are operating as car parks, to ensure that an up to date entry in the valuation list was in place. At present there are eight properties valued that include an element related to car parking. These are shown in the valuation list, which can be viewed at: -

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/property_valuation/valuation-of-property/valuation-lists.htm

There are practical difficulties in this particular area, given that car park businesses may begin operating without the normal formal approvals. Information, therefore, is not always made available to LPS. However, LPS continues to regularly monitor the situation on the ground and is confident that currently the properties referred to have been valued. Where information relevant to such properties becomes available, it should be forwarded to the District Valuer (Lisburn) in LPS.

Building Control Fees for Loft Insulations

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he would consider carrying out an urgent review of the necessity to charge building control fees for loft insulations.

(AQW 11783/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Building Regulations have just been revised and the new regulations come into operation on 31st October 2012. Consultation on proposals for the new regulations took place in two phases during 2010 and 2011. There were no challenges to the continued inclusion of loft insulation as work for which Building Control approval would be required. The new Regulations will not therefore exempt loft insulation from the requirement to seek approval from and pay a fee to Building Control.

Inspection by Building Control is necessary to ensure correct installation of loft insulation, to avoid serious problems such as condensation, mould growth and potentially structural failure, which can occur with incorrect installation. Building Control has a statutory obligation under building

regulations to ensure such measures are undertaken properly. If the fee was to be waived the resulting shortfall in income would have to become rate-borne.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of invoices, received by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11866/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department has 5 small arm's length bodies.

Details on the number of invoices received by 2 of these bodies in the 2011-12 financial are as follows:

Arm's length body	Number of invoices received 2011-12	Number paid within 30 days of receipt	Percentage paid within 30 days of receipt
Lay Observer	15	15	100
Public Service Commission	20	16	80

For the remaining 3 arm's length bodies – Statistics Advisory Committee, NI Building Regulations Committee and Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) Governance Group – expenditure cannot be separately disaggregated from the departmental accounting system and it is not therefore possible to provide the information. However, combined expenditure for these bodies is less than £10k, the number of payments generated is small and the impact on prompt payment performance is therefore minimal.

Civil Partnerships

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many (i) Civil Partnerships; and (ii) marriages have taken place since 2005.

(AQW 11871/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of marriages and civil partnerships registered each year since 2005 is given in the table below.

Table 1: Number of civil partnerships and marriages registered, 2005 to 2011P

Registration Year	Number of civil partnerships registered	Number of marriages registered
2005 ¹	12	8,140
2006	116	8,259
2007	111	8,687
2008	86	8,510
2009	96	7,931
2010	116	8,156
2011 ^P	89	8,364

1 Civil partnerships were introduced in December 2005

P Provisional data.

Equality Commission's Publication Trends in Community Proportions of Applications and Appointments to the Private and Public Sectors

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what response his Department will be making to the Equality Commission's publication, 'Trends in Community Proportions of Applications and Appointments to the Private and Public Sectors' (March 2012), particularly in so far as it shows a lower success rate for Protestant applicants for jobs in the private sector throughout the last decade.

(AQW 11938/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Officials in my Department have seen and noted the policy and research paper "Trends in Community Proportions of Applications and Appointments to the Private and Public Sectors" published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in March 2012. My Department carries out statutory monitoring and reporting on the community background of the NICS workforce and where appropriate, it will continue to use lawful outreach measures or positive action advertising welcoming job applications

from under-represented groups. Appointments to the NICS are made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition.

Board Members of Public Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many former civil and public servants are employed as (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by his Department; and what this figure is as a proportion of the total number of board members.

(AQW 11951/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are no paid board members in any of the public bodies which are sponsored by my Department.

There are currently five former civil or public servants serving on an unpaid basis on the committees of the public bodies which are sponsored by my Department. This represents 19% of all unpaid members.

Barnett Consequentials

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what were the Barnett consequentials following the Chancellor's 2012 Budget.

(AQW 11961/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As a result of the Chancellor's Budget 2012 some £7.2 million of Resource DEL Barnett consequentials were allocated to Northern Ireland over the next three years. The profile of these Barnett additions is £3.3 million in 2012-13, £2.3 million in 2013-14 and £1.6 million in 2014-15.

Northern Ireland also received Barnett consequentials of £4.5 million in respect of Capital DEL over the next three years. The profile of the capital DEL consequentials is £3.1 million in 2012-13, £1.9 million in 2013-14 and -£0.5 million in 2014-15. However, these capital consequentials relate to financial transactions and can only be used to fund loans or equity investment. In addition, 60% of this funding must be repaid to the Exchequer by 2019-20.

PEACE III Funding Allocated to Ex-Prisoners Groups

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 11227/11-15, to identify the group which benefited from the award of £460,124; and whether this award was included in the figure of £10,319,882 provided in the response.

(AQW 11992/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The project in question is Expac Ltd's Conflicts of Interest. This award was included in the figure of £10,319,882 provided in my earlier response.

Green New Deal

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) what will happen to the £4m set aside for the Green New Deal if it is not spent; and (ii) what flexibility exists to spend the money on other projects.

(AQW 11993/11-15)

Mr Wilson: On 18 May 2012, DFP Supply approved a business case submitted by DSD to consider 'Options for Increasing Domestic Energy & Thermal Efficiency in Northern Ireland'.

This case was the outworking of the cross-departmental group created to consider the Green New Deal Coalition's (GNDC) business model and the GND proposal was one of two shortlisted options. Although innovative, the GND business model was not sufficiently advanced and retained a prohibitive level of risk in relation to both financial and non-monetary aspects of the model.

The preferred option, which will avail of the funding allocated for a 'Green New Deal' solution is a Northern Ireland Housing Executive led boiler replacement programme that will generate some £27million in terms of wider economic benefits over the next three years.

This response covers both parts (i) and (ii) of the question.

Vacant Business Premises

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many business premises in the (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle district councils areas were vacant on 31 March 2012, or such later date as is available.

(AQW 12002/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on business premises is not available. The number of vacant non-domestic properties in the (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle District Council areas as at 20th May 2012 (the latest date for which information is available) is (i) 483; (ii) 203; and (iii) 116 respectively.

Ballylumford Power Station: Rates

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) whether Ballylumford Power Station has requested a reduction in rates from Larne Council, due to its decrease in out-put; (ii) the level of reduction requested; and (iii) the level of rates rebate that will be paid.

(AQW 12196/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rateable value of Ballylumford Power Station is based on the Declared Net Capacity (DNC) of its generating plant as prescribed in rates legislation. As a result of a major failure of one of its generators on 7 December 2011 AES, who operate the power station, sought a revision of the assessed value due to the reduction in generating capacity. No specified reduction was sought; however, on considering the circumstances the Commissioner of Valuation revised the assessment from £7,485,980 NAV to £5,644,830 NAV in line with the statutory formula.

This reduction resulted in a refund of regional and district rates to the operator of some £322,000 for the period from 7 December 2011 to 31 March 2012. While the full extent of the refund will not be known until the repairs are completed and the original assessment is reinstated, it is understood that a refund for April and May 2012 would amount to £176,000. It is understood that full generating capacity will be restored very shortly and full liability will resume from that date.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the operating capacity of each Accident and Emergency department; (ii) the number of people attending at each department in 2011/12; and (iii) what plans there are to increase the operating capacity of each department.

(AQW 11663/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): In relation to Parts (i) and (iii) above, operating capacity within hospital services changes over time to meet demand. Capacity in an A&E Department cannot be seen in isolation to the general capacity provision of the acute hospital. Key drivers on capacity within a hospital setting include (a) the physical environment eg A&E Unit; (b) staffing complement both professional and administrative staff and skill mix (c) access to diagnostics, interventions including acute surgery, critical care, ambulatory care, day case procedures and (d) inpatient ward capacity and access to urgent outpatient appointments.

It is acknowledged that there is evidence of an increasing demand on A&E services, with people presenting with increasing acuity, as a result of changing demographics, more complex needs of the population and the impact of life style choices.

To meet this demand the model of service provision and staffing complement including skill mix continues to change. In addition changes in the physical environment of A&E departments and/or related wards include: an increase in observation beds, use of ambulatory chairs, and the introduction of medical assessment units and short stay wards.

In relation to Part (ii) the tables below show the number of new and unplanned review attendances in 11/12

New and Unplanned Review Attendances by Emergency Care Department, 2011/12^P

Emergency Care Department	Attendances (New & Unplanned Review)
Belfast City ¹	24,726
Mater	42,743
Royal Victoria	81,812
RBHSC	32,738
Antrim Area	71,175
Whiteabbey	8,624
Mid Ulster	6,133
Causeway	43,081
Ulster	77,757
Ards MIU	9,078
Bangor MIU	12,244
Lagan Valley ²	27,443
Downe ³	20,124
Craigavon Area	71,667
Daisy Hill	38,023
South Tyrone	18,759
Armagh & Mullinure	7,802
Altnagelvin Area	53,045
Erne	27,662
Tyrone County	15,256
Total	689,892

Source: EC1 Departmental Return

Notes: Attendance figures detailed above relate to all new attendances and all unplanned review attendances at emergency care departments. They do not include planned review attendances. Information on all attendances including planned review attendances at emergency care departments will be published on 28th June 2012.

P It should be noted that these figures are marked provisional and may be subject to change.

1 On 1st November 2011, the Belfast HSC Trust closed the emergency care department at the Belfast City hospital due to a shortage of senior staff.

- 2 On 1st August 2011, the South Eastern HSC Trust introduced new temporary arrangements for the provision of emergency care services at the Lagan Valley hospital resulting in the closure of the emergency care department from 8pm to 9am daily.
- 3 On 4th April 2011, the South Eastern HSC Trust introduced new arrangements for the provision of emergency care services at the Downe Hospital resulting in the reduction of consultant-led emergency care services, from a 24 hours based service to 8am to 10pm daily, with services provided from 10pm to 8am by an enhanced GP Out of Hours (GPOOH) service. The GPOOH's provides the urgent care response supported by an appropriate handover period and the appropriate services within the hospital. After 10pm all 999 ambulances go directly to the Ulster hospital or nearest appropriate emergency care department.

Health Service Patients Referred to Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Health Service patients have been referred to Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast, and paid for by the public purse, since 1 September 2011.

(AQW 11791/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients that are transferred by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for treatment in the Independent Sector are transferred to a specific Independent Sector provider. The transferring Trust does not specify nor request information on the specific facility used by the provider to treat the patient. In this case, patients were transferred to the 3fivetwo Healthcare group but information on the number of Health Service patients that were treated specifically in the Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast, and paid for by the public purse, since 1 September 2011, is not available.

Operations on Health Service Patients Carried out at Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many operations on Health Service patients have been carried out at Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast, since 1 September 2011, broken down by the type of operation.

(AQW 11794/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients that are transferred by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for operations in the Independent Sector are transferred to a specific Independent Sector provider. The transferring Trust does not specify nor request information on the specific facility used by the provider to treat the patient. In this case, patients were transferred to the 3fivetwo Healthcare group but information on the number of Health Service patients that had operations specifically carried out in the Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast, broken down by the type of operation, since 1 September 2011, is not available.

Procuring Treatments from the Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money the Health Service has spent in procuring treatments from the Kingsbridge Private Hospital, Belfast, in each month since 1 September 2011.

(AQW 11797/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients that are transferred by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for treatment in the Independent Sector are transferred to a specific Independent Sector provider. The transferring Trust does not specify nor request information on the specific facility used by the provider to treat the patient. In this case, patients were transferred to the 3fivetwo Healthcare group but information on how much money the Health Service has spent in procuring treatments from the Kingsbridge Private Hospital Belfast in each month, since 1 September 2011, is not available.

Accident and Emergency Department at Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average length of time, in the last 12 months, patients waited to be (i) triaged; and (ii) seen by a doctor after admission by ambulance at the Accident and Emergency Department at Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry.

(AQW 11861/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Average Cost of Surgical Procedures

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for an estimate of the cost of (a) hip replacement; (b) knee replacement; (c) coronary artery by-pass; (d) heart valve surgery; (e) abdominal hernia; (f) varicose vein removal; (g) cataract surgery, including phacoemulsification and more expensive procedures; (h) obesity surgery, including gastric band and gastric bypass surgery; (i) hernia surgery; (j) major breast surgery; and (k) tonsillectomy (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area; and (iii) on average across all Trusts.

(AQW 11890/11-15)

Mr Poots: Estimated unit costs for each trust and the average for all trusts for 2010/11 (latest information available) are shown in the table below:

		Belfast Trust £	Northern Trust £	South Eastern Trust £	Southern Trust £	Western Trust £	NI Weighted Average Cost £
a	Hip Replacement (Inpatient FCE) ¹	7,419	N/A	5,239	8,548	7,671	7,422
b	Knee Replacement (Inpatient FCE)	6,444	N/A	2,172	9,266	8,514	7,036
c	Coronary Artery Bypass (Inpatient FCE)	10,952	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,952
d	Heart Valve Surgery (Inpatient FCE)	12,260	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12,260
e	Abdominal Hernia (Day-case)	1,342	1,342	996	1,280	1,050	1,164
	Abdominal Hernia (Inpatient FCE)	3,404	2,758	2,803	3,436	3,042	3,152
f	Varicose Vein removal (Daycase)	810	1,656	1,368	750	1,069	1,054
	Varicose Vein removal (Inpatient FCE)	2,637	1,470	1,723	2,487	1,750	2,160

		Belfast Trust £	Northern Trust £	South Eastern Trust £	Southern Trust £	Western Trust £	NI Weighted Average Cost £
g	Cataract Surgery (Daycase)	642	N/A	754	690	807	697
	Cataract Surgery (Inpatient FCE)	1,960	N/A	1,147	N/A	1,196	1,860
h	Obesity Surgery (Inpatient FCE)	7,211	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,211
i	Hernia Surgery (Daycase)	1,399	1,372	928	1,214	1,065	1,129
	Hernia Surgery (Inpatient FCE)	2,815	2,331	2,153	3,110	2,614	2,677
j	Major Breast Surgery (Daycase)	1,250	1,362	1,317	1,179	937	1,241
	Major Breast Surgery (Inpatient FCE)	3,758	2,919	2,919	4,620	2,739	3,397
k	Tonsillectomy (Daycase)	1,072	996	1,239	1,093	N/A	1,078
	Tonsillectomy (Inpatient FCE)	1,639	1,201	1,560	1,270	1,350	1,404

Source: HSC Trusts: Healthcare Resource Group (HRG) Reference Cost Information (includes direct costs, indirect costs, overheads and capital charges).

1 An FCE is a finished consultant episode, i.e. completed period of care of a patient under one consultant.

Average Cost of an Overnight Hospital Stay and Treatment at an Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average cost, per patient, of (i) an overnight hospital stay; and (ii) treatment at an Accident and Emergency Departments in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 11891/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The cost of an overnight stay in hospital differs significantly between patients and is subject to a range of variables including the diagnosis, procedures performed and the complexity of the case. In this context, it is not possible to provide a single average comparative cost per patient for an overnight hospital stay.
- (ii) The average cost, per attendance, for treatment at an Accident and Emergency Department in each Health and Social Care Trust for 2010/11 (latest information available), is provided in the table below:

HSC Trust	Average cost of an attendance at an Accident and Emergency Department £
Northern	127

HSC Trust	Average cost of an attendance at an Accident and Emergency Department £
Belfast	123
Western	129
Southern	100
South Eastern	122

Source: Trust Financial Returns 2010-11

Aspirin Tablets and Artovastatin Tablets

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of the Health Service providing (i) 32 aspirin tablets; and (ii) 28 artovastatin tablets.

(AQW 11892/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is a range of different dosages available for both the above drugs and the question is not specific in this regard. The actual drug costs which would currently be reimbursed to a community pharmacist based on a selection of the most frequently prescribed available dosages are as follows:

Item	Quantity	Cost	Dispensing Fee
Aspirin (Dt) Gastro-Resistant Tablet 75mg	32	£1.10	£1.03
Atorvastatin 20mg Tablet	28	£24.64	£1.03
Atorvastatin 40mg Tablet	28	£24.64	£1.03

Source: NI Drug Tariff May 2012

Note: The Drug Tariff price for Aspirin 75mg GR Tablets is 0.96 pence for a pack of 28 tablets. The figure above has been extrapolated to give a figure for 32 aspirin tablets.

The total costs of prescribing these drugs on the Health Service from January 2011 to December 2011 are set out in the table below as follows:

Item	Total Number of Prescriptions	Gross Ingredient Cost	Total Dispensing Fees
Aspirin (Dt) Gastro-Resistant Tablet 75mg	623,468	£902,435	£659,469
Atorvastatin 20mg Tablet*	159,390	£6,601,429	£164,172
Atorvastatin 40mg Tablet*	215,242	£8,524,424	£221,699

Note: Net Ingredient Cost is not known but the NI average rate of Discount for 2011 was 9.61%.

Source: BSO Prescription Cost Analysis: Northern Ireland 2011

* these data include figures for prescriptions written as 'atorvastatin' (generic title) and 'Lipitor' (brand name for atorvastatin)

Cancelled Operations or Surgical Procedures

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any operations or surgical procedures have been cancelled or postponed by the Health and Social Care Trusts in the last 12 months to save money.

(AQW 11893/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Trusts have advised me that no operations or surgical procedures have been cancelled in the last 12 months to save money.

Patients' Medical Notes

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why patients' medical notes are released to private healthcare companies, without notifying the patients, and prior to a patient being informed that they are to be offered in-patient treatment at a private clinic, in order to reduce waiting list times.

(AQW 11906/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) is responsible for commissioning services and for negotiating contracts with the independent sector. The HSCB has advised that Trusts do not seek consent from patients for the transfer of medical notes to independent sector providers on the grounds that the referral is a continuation of the health and social care for the patient, and the independent sector provider is acting on behalf of the Trust.

The Board has produced detailed guidance on governance arrangements for contracts with the independent sector. This guidance provides that an outline service specification be prepared for all potential contracts, the purpose of which is to set out the specific details of the services to be provided under contract. This specification includes aspects such as arrangements for the storage and transfer of patient records. It also deals with Data Protection and patient confidentiality requirements.

Treatment Provided by Private Health Care Companies

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the treatment provided by private health care companies that are used to reduce Health Service waiting lists, is subject to the same level of scrutiny as the treatment that is provided by the Health Service.

(AQW 11908/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board negotiates, commissions and manages contracts with the Independent Sector on behalf of the five Trusts in Northern Ireland.

Contracts, which provide for pre-contract quality assurance checks and post-contract performance review, require providers to deliver minimum quality outcomes.

Accreditation System for Counselling

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to introduce an accreditation system for counselling.

(AQW 11981/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have no specific plans at present for the introduction of an accreditation system for counselling.

The Departmental Strategy for the Development of Psychological Therapy Services recommends a proper training regime to ensure provision of safe and effective counselling services. A regional group taking forward implementation is currently addressing training issues to enhance current provision, including potential introduction of accreditation.

Suicide Rates

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why his Department has not achieved the suicide rate reduction targets of 10 percent by 2008, and a further 5 percent by 2011, as set out in the Protect Life Strategy; and to detail the change in suicide rates during this period.

(AQW 11982/11-15)

Mr Poots: The "Protect Life" Strategy was launched in 2006 at a time which, as it later emerged, coincided with an unprecedented increase in the Northern Ireland suicide rate. The baseline for the reduction targets was based partly on much lower suicide rates experienced prior to 2005. The 2005/06 increase therefore had an almost immediate negative impact on the potential for achieving the reduction targets.

The increase in recorded deaths, starting in 2005 and sustained since then, is likely to be partly attributed to a more open and robust approach to the reporting and recording of a death as suicide. It is also likely that ongoing work to reduce stigma around suicide and to encourage more openness on the issue has had an influence on increasing the number of families who are prepared to acknowledge suicide as the cause of death of a family member.

Suicide is a complex societal issue and many wider social factors, beyond the remit of the “Protect Life” Strategy, influence suicide levels in our communities. The Northern Ireland Audit Office has noted that the suicide rate alone is an unreliable indicator of health patterns and has acknowledged the difficulty of assessing the impact of “Protect Life” on suicide levels. In view of this, new objectives and measures are being developed which will allow for more balanced assessment of the impact of “Protect Life” whilst retaining the overall goal of a reduction in suicide.

Suicide prevalence over the period 2003 to 2011 is outlined below:

NORTHERN IRELAND 3-YEARLY CRUDE SUICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION

Year	2003-05	2004-06	2005-07	2006-08	2007-09	2008-10	2009-11(p)
Rate	9.8	12.6	14.3	15.5	14.7	15.9	16.0

(P) As the 2011 Mid Year Estimate population figures are not yet published, the 2009-11 rate is using the previous year's population figures. The rate is therefore subject to change when the 2011 population figures have published. The figure will remain provisional until the publication of the 2011 Annual Report of the Registrar General (due to be released in November 2012).

Mental Health Service Delivery

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he intends to achieve a more co-ordinated, preventative and partnership approach to mental health service delivery between the statutory, community and voluntary sectors.

(AQW 11983/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Bamford Review considered the integration of services as central to the effectiveness of a person-centred holistic approach and recommended that all statutory and independent providers must be fully engaged and involved in service delivery.

Integrated Care Partnerships, which will be established across NI during 2012/13, will join together the full range of health and social care services in each area in a partnership approach to service delivery, including GPs, community health, including community mental health services and the mental health crisis response service, social care providers, hospital specialists and representatives from the independent and voluntary sector.

Occupational Therapists

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last two years, to detail how many occupational therapists have been on sick leave for a period of more than a week in (i) Co Fermanagh; and (ii) the rest of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 12035/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on sick leave among Occupational Therapists within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care is not available at county level, but by Health and Social Care Trust.

The number of occupational therapists who have been on sick leave for a period of more than a week was provided by the HSC Trusts and is set out below:

Trust Name	April 2010-March 2011	April 2011- March 2012
Belfast	64	73

Trust Name	April 2010-March 2011	April 2011- March 2012
South Eastern	25	27
Southern	39	45
Northern	44	59
Western	30	32

Waiting Time for a Referral to an Occupational Therapist in Co Fermanagh

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time in Co Fermanagh for a referral to an occupational therapist.

(AQW 12037/11-15)

Mr Poots: Table 1 below details the number of people waiting from referral to treatment by an occupational therapist, by aggregate time band, in each HSC Trust at 30 April 2012.

TABLE 1

HSC Trust	Waiting time from referral to treatment for Occupational Therapy (by weeks waiting) ¹					Total
	0-3	>3 to 6	>6 to 9	> 9 to 13	> 13	
Belfast	561	528	470	242	19	1,820
Northern	695	494	286	46	0	1,521
South Eastern	381	312	194	102	19	1,008
Southern	319	320	192	101	68	1,000
Western	268	332	212	44	0	856
Northern Ireland	2,224	1,986	1,354	535	106	6,205

1 Figures detailed in reply to this question were provided on request by the HSC Board and have not been validated by the DHSSPS.

The median waiting time from referral to treatment in each HSC Trust was “>3 to 6” weeks.

The information collected cannot be disaggregated by geographical areas smaller than HSC Trust.

Vacancies in the Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current vacancies in the Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, broken down by post.

(AQW 12047/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table overleaf.

Staff Vacancies in the Accident and Emergency Unit at Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast by Grade at May 2012

Grade	Royal Victoria Hospital	
	HC	WTE
Consultant	1	1.00
Specialty Doctor	1	1.00
Specialist Registrar	1	1.00
Band 4 Admin & Clerical	3	3.00

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

1 HC = Headcount; WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.

Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently employed in the Accident and Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, broken down by post.

(AQW 12048/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table below.

STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNIT AT ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BELFAST BY GRADE AT MAY 2012

Grade	Royal Victoria Hospital	
	HC	WTE
Consultant	12	11.00
Staff Grade / Associate Specialist / Specialty Doctor	4	4.00
Specialist Registrar	6	6.00
Foundation House Officer	9	9.00
Band 7 Nurse	11	10.47
Band 6 Nurse	15	14.04
Band 5 Nurse	52	46.90
Nurse Support staff	14	12.29
Band 4/5 Admin / Medical Secretary	7	5.96
Band 2/3 Admin	29	25.59
Total	159	145.25

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

2 HC = Headcount; WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.

Accident and Emergency Department at Altnagelvin Area Hospital

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of complaints received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the Accident and Emergency Department at Altnagelvin Area Hospital, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12051/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of complaints received by the Western HSC Trust regarding the Altnagelvin emergency care department during each of the last 5 years is not available.

Information is available on the number of complaints received about waiting times at the three emergency care departments (Altnagelvin, Erne and Tyrone County) within the Western HSC Trust in each of the last 5 years, and is detailed in the table below. It is not possible to break this information down by emergency care department.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE WESTERN HSC TRUST RELATING TO EMERGENCY CARE WAITING TIMES, DURING EACH OF THE LAST 3 YEARS (2007/08 - 2011/12)

	Financial Year				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of complaints regarding emergency care waiting times	11	6	5	11	10
% of total complaints which related to emergency care waiting times	1.7%	0.9%	1.0%	2.4%	2.1%

Recruitment Drives for Doctors and Nurses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many recruitment drives for doctors and nurses were carried out by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) grade; and (b) hospital; (ii) how many vacancies were included in each drive; (iii) how many applications were received for each post; and (iv) how many posts were filled as a result of each drive.

(AQW 12053/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Department of Health collects information on the number of vacancies within Trusts on a bi-annual basis (as at 31st March and as at 30th September) by means of a survey and this information is published on the Departmental website. The latest available report records vacancies as at 30th September 2011 and can be found at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_september_2011_web_report-2.pdf

Maximum Length of a Shift for Hospital Staff

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what is the maximum length of a shift for each grade of hospital staff; and (ii) how many times staff have worked more than the maximum length of a shift, in each of the last 12 months, at the Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 12056/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health & Social Care Trust advised that it was not possible to provide information on shifts in the last 12 months due to disproportionate costs. All staff are covered by the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) and the Trust stated that they adhere to this with regard to working hours for medical staff and Agenda for Change terms and conditions for other staff. Junior

Doctors in training EWTD compliance is measured over a 26 week reference period with a maximum of 13 hours in a single shift within an overall average of 48 hours per week. It should be noted that staff are not required to work extra hours beyond those they are contracted to work. Any extra hours are worked on a voluntary basis.

Patient Care at the Antrim Area Hospital

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the findings of the investigations carried out by Mary Hinds and Dr Ian Rutter, what immediate action will be taken in relation to patient care at the Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 12057/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board will be reporting to the Department on the totality of the work on improving Emergency Department quality and performance and these reports make a helpful and important contribution to this work. As required by the Department, the Board is examining and applying the best available, evidence based, good practice in whole system, not just Emergency Department, management.

Apprenticeship Programmes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the apprenticeship programmes available within his Department; (ii) the apprenticeship programmes provided by his Department; (iii) the number of people currently enrolled in these programmes; and (iv) the number of places available on the programmes.

(AQW 12088/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not currently offer an apprenticeship programme; however, a range of development opportunities is available for staff to help them improve their skills and capabilities, including nationally recognised vocational qualifications.

In addition, DHSSPS is working with the Department for Employment and Learning to offer work placements for participants under that Department's programme-led apprenticeship scheme.

Kangaroo Birth

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 11342/11-15, to detail how each Health and Social Care Trust encourages skin-to-skin contact for new born babies, including how this is communicated to staff in maternity units.

(AQW 12109/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC adhere to UNICEF baby friendly policies and NICE guidance on breastfeeding, which encourage skin-to-skin contact where appropriate.

In addition, all HSC Trusts have protocols, such as breast feeding strategies, that encourage skin-to-skin contact. Such protocols are communicated to staff in maternity units upon appointment at their induction training and, when policies are updated, through the normal line management arrangements.

All mothers are encouraged and supported to have skin-to-skin contact with their baby, but this is dependent on the clinical condition of the baby and is ultimately the mother's choice.

Cards Used for the Payment of Fuel for Ambulances

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the cards used for the payment of fuel for ambulances are valid in the Irish Republic; and (ii) to list the names of the card suppliers.

(AQW 12123/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has advised that its fuel cards are valid in the Republic of Ireland and that it uses one fuel card supplier, Allstar Business Solutions.

Social Workers in Co Fermanagh

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of social workers, per head of population, in Co Fermanagh; and how this figure compares with other areas.

(AQW 12126/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of Social Workers is not available at County level. However, information on the number of Social Workers at Trust level per 100,000 population is provided in the table below.

SOCIAL WORKERS EMPLOYED WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PER 100,000 POPULATION BY HSC TRUST AS AT MARCH 2012

HSC Trust	Staff in post WTE	WTE per 100,000 Population
Belfast	771.11	229.7
Northern	738.59	161.0
South Eastern	556.82	160.6
Southern	589.48	164.4
Western	602.54	201.2
Overall	3,258.54	181.1

Source: Social Workers – Human Resource Management System

Population – Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Notes:

- 1 WTE = Whole-time equivalent
- 2 Figures exclude bank staff, staff on career break and staff with a whole-time equivalent of 0.03 or less.
- 3 The latest population figures relate to the mid-year population estimate for 2010.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Pension Scheme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, if he has made a decision on whether members of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, who have completed 30 years service before their 50th birthday, will be entitled to any form of compensation for over-contributing to their pension schemes.

(AQW 12166/11-15)

Mr Poots: A decision has not yet been taken on this issue.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the percentage of sickness absence in his Department in each of the last three years; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between his Department and the trade unions.

(AQW 12226/11-15)

Mr Poots: A detailed analysis of sickness absence data for all NICS Departments is published annually by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and is available on their website.

My Department's current five-year target absence rates are shown in the table below, along with the actual absence rate for 2010/11 and 2011/12 (the data for 2011/12 is provisional).

My Department's sickness absence rates are not subject to agreement with the Trade Unions.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Target	9.0	8.6	8.2	7.8	7.5
Absence Rate	8.5	7.1			

Tender Applications Received for the Summer Scheme for Disabled Children

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline (i) how many tender applications were received for the Summer Scheme for Disabled Children (Northern Sector) in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area; (ii) the cost of the tender awarded; and (iii) for his assessment of the equality screening of the scheme, given that it prioritises young people by virtue of their disability.

(AQW 12259/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) In line with procurement guidelines, the Western HSC Trust invited tenders from four organisations with whom the Trust have had contractual arrangements, namely the Cedar Foundation, Foyle Parents & Friends Group, Mencap and Positive Futures. Two organisations submitted tenders by the due date, the Cedar Foundation and Positive Futures.
- (ii) The tender was awarded to Cedar Foundation at cost of £11,922.
- (iii) Priority groups were identified based on the following criteria:
 - Evaluations of the scheme as provided in recent years.
 - Inclusion of children not defined as disabled, eg pre-diagnosis/ 'early years' children
 - Siblings (non-disabled groups)
 - Groups of disabled children attending mainstream school, moderate learning disability schools, and severe learning disability schools.

The priority groups were based on previous evaluations and availability of appropriate alternative summer scheme provision, and not on the nature of the disability of the children and young people.

Accident and Emergency Departments: Waiting Time Targets

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what immediate action is being taken to address hospitals not meeting waiting time targets for their Accident and Emergency Departments.

(AQW 12313/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have made it clear on a number of occasions that I want to see a significant improvement in the performance of Emergency Departments across Northern Ireland, and I want a clear assurance that the quality and safety of services is up to acceptable standards.

To address this issue the Health and Social Care Board, working with the Public Health Agency, has established an Emergency Department Improvement Action Group as part of a three month programme to secure a step-change improvement in 12 hour and 4 hour performance and to the patient experience. The Group is working with all Trusts across Northern Ireland to secure improvements.

Independent Review of the Whole-Time Recruitment Exercise

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) who will be undertaking the independent review of the whole-time recruitment exercise; (ii) whether they will have disciplinary powers; and (iii) whether the review will be published.

(AQW 12354/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I can confirm that the independent review of the whole-time recruitment exercise will be conducted in liaison with Sir Ken Knight, Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to the UK Government.
- (i) The Review Team will have no disciplinary powers; disciplinary powers are reserved for the NIFRS Board.
- (ii) A report into the findings of the review, which will also include recommendations, will be prepared and published in due course

EU Meat Classification

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he plans to challenge the European Commission's decision to reclassify desinewed meat as machine separated meat.

(AQO 2083/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Food Standards Agency (FSA), which has policy responsibility in this area, has worked closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on behalf of the UK Government in explaining to the European Commission (EC) the full impact of their decision that desinewed meat (DSM) can no longer be produced from ruminant bones and that DSM made from poultry or pork bones should be labelled as mechanically separated meat (MSM). The FSA held urgent discussions with senior EC officials once the EC made its position known, securing an extension to the original 5-day deadline for action. The FSA continues to pursue this matter vigorously with the EC at all levels, making the case for the UK interpretation, including scientific evidence to support that case.

Domiciliary Care

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will introduce charging for domiciliary care as referred to in 'Transforming Your Care - A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland'.

(AQO 2079/11-15)

Mr Poots: Transforming Your Care does not propose introducing charging for domiciliary care; it does, however, suggest that we initiate a sensible debate about growing income within the spirit of NHS principles. Whilst I am committed to ensuring that all aspects of TYC are implemented, I will need to comprehensively assess the impact of any income generating or charging proposals on patients and clients before I would introduce any such measures.

Respiratory Disease: Portable Oxygen

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the availability of portable oxygen for people suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and other respiratory diseases.

(AQO 2085/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board is responsible for commissioning oxygen services. I have been advised by the Board that portable oxygen services are currently available to patients suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and other respiratory diseases under current contracting arrangements. There is no waiting list for these services at the present time.

The HSC Board is currently undertaking a review of the existing contracted arrangements for domiciliary oxygen therapy supply via concentrators in Northern Ireland. The Review will consider a range of new and improved treatments and devices for the delivery of Long Term Oxygen Therapy to patients in Northern Ireland including the availability and supply of portable oxygen.

Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the media reports that Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital will be closed to make way for a new super facility in Ballymena.

(AQO 2084/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no such plan and it is not helpful for such speculation to precede the proper process that I have approved to ensure that the future configuration of acute hospital care services is safe, sustainable and resilient.

The “Transforming Your Care” (TYC) report has made it clear that significant changes will be required to the HSC. The Report recommended that specific plans should be prepared for the future configuration of services, and these population plans will address the implications for individual hospitals, based on clear and robust criteria which are in preparation. The development of all population plans includes input from a number of professional advisory groups including local consultants, GPs, nurses Allied Health Professional and social services staff.

As the process of identifying and assessing options has not yet been completed, no-one can yet say what will be the full range of options that will be assessed in any part of Northern Ireland. However, there will be proper, open formal consultation on the way ahead that I will propose when I have assessed all the population plans, and no decisions on major service reconfiguration will be made before that process has been completed.

DHSSPS: Whistle-Blowing

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he can confirm that all Health and Social Care bodies and his Department’s arm’s-length bodies have made their employees aware of the Minister’s letter of 22 March 2012 regarding the whistleblowing policy.

(AQO 2086/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that all HSC bodies have made employees aware of my letter on whistleblowing. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has recently reviewed its whistleblowing policy and is now in the process of making their employees aware of the new policy and my letter to all staff.

Chronic Conditions

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Policy Framework ‘Living with Long Term Conditions’ in improving the quality of care for people living with chronic conditions.

(AQO 2087/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 26 April I launched my Department’s Policy Framework, “Living with Long Term Conditions”. The Framework will help drive the modernisation of health and social care services for adults living with long term conditions and their carers, supporting my vision of driving up the quality of care, improving outcomes and enhancing the patient experience.

The Framework sets out clear principles and good practice for commissioners and providers in the statutory, independent, voluntary and community sectors who are responsible for planning and delivering treatment and care to support people living with long term conditions.

Importantly, the Framework reflects the new model of care recommended in “Transforming your Care”, which includes long term conditions as one of its key areas.

The Policy Framework is relevant across a wide range of conditions and all care settings. It was developed in conjunction with the Long Term Conditions Alliance Northern Ireland, which is an umbrella body for voluntary and not for profit organisations working with and for people with long term conditions in Northern Ireland.

My officials are working to progress the establishment of a Regional Implementation Steering Group to take forward the implementation of the Long Term Conditions Policy Framework.

Health: Cross-Border Patients

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the protocols for patients accessing health care across the border.

(AQO 2088/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients access services on opposite sides of the border via a number of routes. In the main these include: patients accessing free immediately necessary care in the other country during a visit; cross-border workers entitled to the full range of health service treatment; and cross-border referrals for specialist procedures under the S2 route. In some cases, patients may opt to use and pay for services in the other country.

It is vitally important we invest our time and resources carefully to secure delivery of safe and effective services that secure value for money

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he can confirm that a series of audit investigations are currently under way into financial irregularities within the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

(AQO 2089/11-15)

Mr Poots: Investigations into a range of allegations made by two Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue staff have been undertaken by my Department.

Tobacco Products: Packaging

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to introduce plain packaging for tobacco products.

(AQO 2090/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recently agreed to the inclusion of Northern Ireland in a UK-wide consultation exercise on standardised or plain packaging for tobacco products. The consultation closes on 10 July 2012 and I look forward to receiving a breakdown of the Northern Ireland responses, in addition to a UK-wide analysis.

When I have fully considered the consultation responses, and any other information which may be available at that time, I will be in a position to determine whether plain packaging for tobacco products should be introduced in Northern Ireland.

Department of Justice

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice on what terms or licence was Thomas Ward released from custody after serving his sentence for offences committed in March 2006.

(AQW 11592/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): To provide details would breach Mr Ward's rights under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Contingency Prison Accommodation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the terms of reference for the selection of the location of contingency prison accommodation.

(AQW 11618/11-15)

Mr Ford: I intend to launch a full public consultation on the Outline Estate Strategy in early June and no decisions will be taken on any of the proposals that are subject to consultation until that exercise has been completed.

Terms of Reference have not been developed, but the Service is committed to conducting an options appraisal and associated site search for contingency accommodation.

Badger Persecution

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice, given that it is an offence to kill, injure, disturb, take or sell a badger, and that badgers and their setts have full protection under schedule 5 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, how many (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions have been secured for badger persecution under this Order since its inception.

(AQW 11630/11-15)

Mr Ford: Badgers and other wild animals are protected against killing, injuring, disturbing, taking or selling and damage to their shelter under Articles 10 to 13 of the 1985 Order. Prosecution and conviction data does not distinguish between offences against badgers and other animals under this legislation.

The table below gives the number prosecuted and convicted for the calendar years 1993 (the earliest year for which figures are currently available) to 2006. The data system from which figures for 2007 and 2008 are sourced provides conviction data only.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE PROSECUTED AND CONVICTED OF UNDER ARTICLES 10 TO 13 OF THE WILDLIFE (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985, 1993-2008.

Year	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of Persons Convicted
1993	6	5
1994	6	6
1995	3	3
1996	7	7
1997	4	1
1998	0	0
1999	5	5
2000	0	0
2001	0	0
2002	4	4
2003	2	1
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	3	3

Year	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of Persons Convicted
2007	n/a	0
2008	n/a	0
Total	40	35

Since 2008, the Police Service for Northern Ireland has recorded no specific charges for badger baiting though four people have been charged with interfering with a badger sett arising out of incidents in 2012.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule whereby only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included. Data for 1993 - 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Abuses Within the Transport Industry

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking, in conjunction with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the PSNI, to tackle abuses within the transport industry relating to the use of illegal fuel and the smuggling of contraband goods; and with what effect.

(AQW 11638/11-15)

Mr Ford: Organised crime in the areas of fuel fraud and intellectual property crime are among the key threats identified by, and being tackled through the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF), which I chair.

The areas highlighted are matters on which HMRC is in the lead, but there is a joined up approach across agencies including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Serious Organised Crime Agency and the United Kingdom Border Agency. The operations are therefore often multi-agency in nature and may include officers from UKBA, HMRC scanning teams, SOCA, PSNI and transport licensing and enforcement. Various overt and covert techniques for detection may be used, including road fuel testing, alcohol and tobacco searches and cash dogs.

I am considering the possibility of adding evasion of duty on fuel to the list of referable offences contained within the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006. This would enable appropriate cases to be referred to the Court of Appeal by the Director of Public Prosecutions where he believes the sentence to be unduly lenient.

The activities being undertaken by OCTF partners seek to frustrate the efforts of criminals by seizing stock and addressing demand for illegal goods. We are committed to ensuring that assets acquired using proceeds of crime are removed from the criminal ring leaders. This sends a clear signal that crime does not pay and that society is not prepared to accept those who exploit it.

The 2012 Organised Crime Task Force Annual Report and Threat Assessment will be launched on 4 July.

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will order an investigation into why the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has not yet filed accounts in relation to the payment of legal aid to defence solicitors and counsel; and what action he will take to address this situation and prevent a recurrence.

(AQW 11642/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) assumed responsibility for the administration of legal aid in November 2003. The NILSC was established as a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) under the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Under the Access to Justice (NI) Order 2003, the NILSC is required to keep accounts and prepare, in respect of each financial year, a statement of accounts.

A backlog of Accounts existed until May 2012, due primarily to problems in estimating legal aid liabilities. This backlog has now been cleared, with the 2010/11 Annual Accounts of the NILSC laid before the NI Assembly on 8 May 2012. The draft Annual Accounts for 2011/12 were submitted to the Department of Justice in May 2012 in line with the departmental timetable.

The Department of Justice acts as sponsor body of the NILSC, and will work closely with the Commission to ensure that its Accounts continue to be prepared in accordance with the timescale.

Legal Aid Budget

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total amount paid from the legal aid budget to each Queen's Counsel (QC), including the name of the QC, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 11645/11-15)

Mr Ford: The attached table details the total amounts paid in legal aid, to each Queen's Counsel, over the last five years. The figures provided represent gross payments, including VAT. In some cases a proportion of the monies paid will have been subsequently repaid, for example where the initial payment represented an overpayment.

The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC), is required to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act (the DPA), when considering whether to publish personal information. As the process required by the DPA could not be completed within the required timeframe for answering Assembly Questions, it is not possible to identify all QCs in the attached table.

The names of QCs set out on the table are those whose names have previously been published in the lists of top 100 earning barristers from legal aid, published annually by the NILSC.

In addition to the payments detailed in the attached table, the NILSC also paid £41m to solicitors during the same period as disbursements for the services of counsel, including QCs, in civil cases. These costs cannot be further disaggregated.

Direct Payments By NI Legal Services Commission to Queen's Counsel by Year						
Financial Years 2006-07 to 2010-11						
QC Name	2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £	Grand Total £
Mr C D C Adair	263,032	81,515	80,941	96,637	34,207	556,332
Mr W G Berry	531,448	706,099	1,235,222	972,410	362,065	3,807,244
Mr W A Brangam	368,553	6,874	11,132	0	0	386,559
Mr A M Cinnamon	470,420	148,914	433,896	87,806	15,936	1,156,972
Mr A G P Colton	13,899	60,728	128,153	89,447	52,241	344,468
Mr J A Creaney	0	11,677	99,875	0	0	111,552
Mr A E Donaldson	344,034	60,295	59,517	109,325	338	573,509
Mr D P Fee	372,106	80,437	237,991	258,227	362,572	1,311,333
Mr T T Ferris	64,674	14,895	72,633	75,103	63,793	291,098
Mr S A Fowler	17,674	30,911	19,523	392,169	11,690	471,967
Mr J A Gallagher	861,404	252,425	649,647	707,713	704,056	3,175,245
Mr J E Grant	452,531	538,424	511,741	699,700	308,220	2,510,616
Mr A D Harvey	786,919	516,233	410,144	1,196,867	465,675	3,375,838
Mr D J Hopley	245,447	187,186	352,595	237,171	691,912	1,714,311
Mr T M Horner	0	0	0	0	282,000	282,000
Mr A J Kane	43,105	14,620	36,221	147,254	47,221	288,421
Mr B C Kennedy	103,707	16,256	134,963	32,883	66,400	354,209
Mr G W Kerr	0	0	0	166,302	0	166,302
Mr J F Larkin	362,314	0	940	0	3,874	367,128

Direct Payments By NI Legal Services Commission to Queen's Counsel by Year						
Financial Years 2006-07 to 2010-11						
QC Name	2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £	Grand Total £
Mr J P Lavery	50,296	41,016	31,267	0	50,371	172,950
Mr P T Lynch	61,496	0	0	0	0	61,496
Mr P Lyttle	156,043	342,500	133,706	227,801	112,483	972,533
Mr B G McCartney	497,876	295,646	465,439	1,461,399	305,711	3,026,071
Mr L G McCollum	441,216	416,169	27,593	37,256	58,750	980,984
Mr F G McCrory	234,888	123,537	112,913	539,347	163,510	1,174,195
Mr L P McCrudden	222,133	131,265	834,145	771,930	53,890	2,013,363
Mr J F McCrudden	136,549	315,928	464,479	702,755	85,086	1,704,797
Miss E M McDermott	684,250	331,052	887,633	923,411	897,657	3,724,003
Mr P T McDonald	647,524	196,783	283,473	326,890	186,362	1,641,032
Miss N B P McGreenera	18,849	100,169	20,670	28,585	56,230	224,503
Mr B McGrory	0	35,361	101,907	25,408	90,873	253,549
Mr C A McKay	0	7,784	70,398	40,191	164,991	283,364
Mr K R M McMahon	16,981	35,062	44,238	87,456	45,162	228,899
Mr B Macdonald	565,910	762,101	547,942	386,124	140,866	2,402,943
Mr P Magee	647,559	252,905	431,747	862,709	577,723	2,772,643
Mr T Montague	0	30,170	41,019	363,318	190,324	624,831

Direct Payments By NI Legal Services Commission to Queen's Counsel by Year						
Financial Years 2006-07 to 2010-11						
QC Name	2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £	Grand Total £
Mr P Mooney	491,743	316,733	9,088	42,550	86,744	946,858
Mr F P O'Donoghue	362,500	400,402	141,572	547,647	44,889	1,497,010
Mr J Orr	283,211	764,650	333,176	139,226	399,697	1,919,960
Miss J Orr	73,643	97,223	272,159	550,895	7,986	1,001,906
Mr Orlando Pownall	0	440,625	281,265	391,949	47,000	1,160,839
Mr P E Ramsey	219,639	178,570	365,415	665,438	209,886	1,638,948
Mr C A Simpson	74,879	22,558	0	2,185	0	99,622
Mr G E J Simpson	67,454	0	158,691	0	68	226,213
Mr P Thomas	0	0	0	147,331	0	147,331
Mr Michael Topolski	0	0	0	92,000	0	92,000
Mr J Treacy	582,143	842,387	382,259	36,800	117,500	1,961,089
Mr R K Weir	47,944	0	0	503,420	3,960	555,324
Number 42	5,405	23,853	50,639	70,626	48,244	198,767
Number 46	13,504	0	35,278	16,800	48,008	113,590
Number 50	0	0	0	74,750	0	74,750
Number 51	8,476	33,835	20,527	5,261	0	68,099
Number 53	8,448	7,203	15,079	0	17,867	48,597
Number 54	5,810	1,763	3,599	16,193	16,331	43,696
Number 55	13,219	0	3,688	18,791	7,068	42,766

Direct Payments By NI Legal Services Commission to Queen's Counsel by Year						
Financial Years 2006-07 to 2010-11						
QC Name	2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £	Grand Total £
Number 56	0	326	10,581	10,603	11,874	33,384
Number 57	0	0	0	26,315	0	26,315
Number 58	19,308	1,058	2,938	2,875	0	26,179
Number 59	0	0	20,814	0	0	20,814
Number 60	0	0	0	0	17,932	17,932
Number 61	0	0	11,869	0	0	11,869
Number 62	0	0	0	0	10,728	10,728
Number 63	0	9,500	0	0	0	9,500
Number 64	0	0	0	6,325	0	6,325
Number 65	0	0	6,286	0	0	6,286
Number 66	5,031	0	0	0	0	5,031
Number 67	0	4,705	0	0	0	4,705
Number 68	0	0	0	0	2,977	2,977
Number 69	0	0	2,598	0	0	2,598
Number 70	0	0	0	0	1,575	1,575
Total Direct Payments by NILSC to QCs during Financial Year	11,965,194	9,290,328	11,101,224	15,421,574	7,752,523	55,530,843

Case Against People Present at a Republican Easter Commemoration in Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked Minister of Justice, in light of the dismissal of the case against four people who were present at a republican Easter commemoration in Londonderry in 2011, what guidelines are issued to judges to ensure that a final deadline for dealing with delayed cases can be given.

(AQW 11653/11-15)

Mr Ford: The case heard at Londonderry Magistrates' Court on 10 May 2012 was not dismissed, the court refused to return the defendants for trial to the Crown Court.

There are a wide range of factors which will impact on the time taken to prepare a case for hearing including the complexity of the investigation, the number and availability of witnesses and the volume of evidence.

The assessment of what may constitute an unreasonable delay, and any decisions flowing from that assessment, is a matter for the judiciary to determine on a case by case basis taking into account all the circumstances of the case. In terms of case management generally, I am aware that the Lord Chief Justice has issued protocols on Criminal Case Management in both the Crown Court and the Magistrates' Court.

Interpreters Deployed in Criminal Court Cases

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what daily fee is paid to interpreters deployed in criminal court cases; and what has been the total cost of interpreters in each of the last five years.

(AQW 11661/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is party to a contract with Connect-NICEM, who supply interpreters in a wide variety of languages for the criminal justice agencies.

NICTS is also a party to a similar contract with Action on Hearing Loss (AHL) for the provision of sign language interpretation services.

The rates under both contracts are exclusive of VAT.

Connect-NICEM

There are different rates depending on the type of court appearance and interpreter booked.

Local Interpreter (Northern Ireland based)

For all hearings other than a Crown Court trial one local interpreter is engaged. The fees are as set out below and apply whether there are one or more individuals requiring an interpreter at a particular court venue.

Minimum Fee (3 hour session)	Hourly Fee thereafter	Booking Fee	Fixed Travel Fee	Mileage Rate
£75.00	£25.00	£50.00*	£6.00	£0.45

* If less than 24 hours notice is given then an enhanced booking fee of £70.00 is charged.

There is also a £10.00 waiting fee between interpreting sessions if this is necessary.

National Register Interpreter

For all Crown Court trials two nationally registered interpreters are required for each case, these may be Northern Ireland based interpreters or may be sourced from outside the jurisdiction. The rates below are per interpreter.

Minimum Fee (6 hours)	Hourly Fee thereafter	Booking Fee	Fixed Travel Fee	Mileage Rate
£240.00	£40.00	£50.00	£6.00	£0.45

Where the interpreter has to be sourced from outside Northern Ireland all travel and accommodation costs and a daily meal allowance of £15.00 per interpreter are payable.

AHL

Sign language interpretation rates are dependent on the type of interpreting services required. The rates below are per interpreter and, where necessary, two sign language interpreters may be booked. The fees apply whether there are one or more individuals requiring an interpreter at a particular court venue.

Type of Interpreting Services	Minimum Fee	Hourly Fee thereafter
British Sign Language Deaf Blind Interpreters	£175.00 for up to 3 hours	£49.00
Irish Sign Language Lipspeakers Speech to Text Reporters	No fixed fee, charged at cost plus £15.00 administration fee	N/A

All rates are inclusive of travel expenses.

NICTS became responsible for processing interpreter invoices in 2009 and the tables below detail the total cost of interpreters for civil and criminal proceedings in the last three financial years. These costs are inclusive of 'language line' facilities at four court venues which may have been used for civil or criminal court proceedings.

TABLE 1 – COSTS IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

Year	Language Interpretation (£)	Sign Language (£)	Document Translation (£)	Language Line* (£)	Total (£)
2009/10	12,227.69	7,676.40	18,169.46	96.70	38,170.25
2010/11	57,427.51	4,919.05	6,796.45	230.68	69,373.69
2011/12	56,837.67	11,324.70	8,989.26	276.72	77,428.35

TABLE 2 – COSTS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

Year	Language Interpretation (£)	Sign Language (£)	Document Translation (£)	Total (£)
2009/10	475,954.00	4,046.00		480,000.00
2010/11	411,436.95	3,110.20	240.00	414,787.15
2011/12	545,2294.46	2,446.75	203.27	547,944.48

Release of Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 10762/11-15, on how many occasions, between the date of his release from custody and 20 December 2010, were Thomas Ward's Sexual Offences Prevention Order breaches brought to court; and how the breaches were dealt with on each occasion.

(AQW 11674/11-15)

Mr Ford: Court records show that five cases relating to seven separate charges of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order were taken against Thomas Ward. Two of the charges were subsequently withdrawn.

Mr Ward pleaded guilty to the remaining five charges. On one of the charges he was sentenced to three months imprisonment, suspended for one year and six months. Two charges resulted in a probation order for two years. On the remaining two charges Mr Ward was sentenced to three months imprisonment, to run concurrently.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether, in instances of repeated breaches, he has any plans to replace the Sexual Offences Prevention Orders with barring orders with more stringent conditions attached.

(AQW 11676/11-15)

Mr Ford: Breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order is an offence with appropriate criminal sanctions, including extended sentences for public protection. I have no plans to change this framework.

People from the Republic of Ireland who face Motoring Offence Charges Committed in Northern Ireland,

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases which are currently in the court system, involve people from the Republic of Ireland who face motoring offence charges committed in Northern Ireland, but which are unable to proceed due to the incorrect service of summonses, broken down by court division.

(AQW 11677/11-15)

Mr Ford: A decision on whether or not a summons has been correctly served is a matter for the District Judge (Magistrates' Court). Information is only available for cases which have been concluded. In 2011 there were 187 cases involving defendants with an address in the Republic of Ireland which did not proceed because the court was not satisfied that the summons had been served. The following table gives this information by County Court Division.

County Court Division	Number of cases
Belfast	15
Londonderry	52
Antrim	7
Fermanagh and Tyrone	38
Armagh and South Down	67
Ards	2
Craigavon	6
Total	187

All data for 2011 is provisional

Income Derived from Speed Awareness Courses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice how much income has been derived from speed awareness courses since their introduction.

(AQW 11683/11-15)

Mr Ford: The levels of income derived from the speed awareness courses is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many sexual offences Thomas Ward has been convicted of in each year; and whether his Category 3 sex offender status was altered at any stage.

(AQW 11703/11-15)

Mr Ford: Thomas Ward was convicted of indecent assault in April 2007 and sexual assault in January 2012.

Levels of risk posed are determined by a number of factors at any given time and are not static. I cannot provide specific details of risk assessment and management in individual cases.

Postal Summonses for Speeding

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why some residents of the Republic of Ireland, who receive postal summonses for speeding in Northern Ireland, are fined and receive penalty points in court, while others leave court with no penalty points or conviction because they received their summonses by post; and for his assessment of the adequacy with which postal summonses explain a defendant's right not to attend court and enter a plea.

(AQW 11711/11-15)

Mr Ford: The conviction of defendants who are served with a summons by post is a matter for the District Judge (Magistrates' Court) who must decide if the defendant is aware of the proceedings before the court. The conviction of a defendant and imposition of a fine and penalty points in speeding cases involving people residing in the Republic of Ireland is also a matter for the District Judge who must decide if the case against the defendant has been proven and then determine the penalty to be imposed.

If the prosecution or defence wish to challenge a decision by a District Judge on a point of law they may do so by way of stating a case to the Court of Appeal.

The Public Prosecution Service routinely includes documentation with summonses to enable a defendant, regardless of their place of residence, to plead guilty by post thereby negating the need to appear personally.

Breach of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to amend legislation to introduce more stringent penalties for people who breach Sexual Offences Prevention Orders, particularly in the case of higher category sex offenders.

(AQW 11713/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the reply I gave to him on 29 May (question number AQW/11676/11-15).

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Justice to detail the capital and revenue savings his Department has made in each of the last two years.

(AQW 11716/11-15)

Mr Ford: During 2010-11, the Department of Justice lived within the budget allocated to the Department following the devolution of justice on 12 April 2010.

Specific revenue savings targets were set by the Department as part of the Budget 2011-15 planning process, covering the financial years 2011-12 to 2014-15. The 2011-12 savings target was £36m and savings of £40m were delivered.

Throughout the Budget 2011-15 period the Department will regularly monitor progress against savings plans and will publish six monthly updates. This information is available on the Department's website www.dojni.gov.uk within the Publications section, category 2 – Departmental Business.

Capital budgets over the two year period in question were zero based. Therefore, in common with other departments, the Department of Justice was not required to make capital savings in these two years.

Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what preparation work is being carried out at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre for the rehabilitation of offenders.

(AQW 11748/11-15)

Mr Ford: Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) works with each young person and their family to prepare them for release. Whilst in custody, every young person attends the Education and Learning Centre and is supported in acquiring a wide range of vocational and essential skills, including literacy and numeracy where required. Staff work with each young person on an individualised plan that addresses factors related to their offending. This often includes work on substance misuse.

The range of educational and vocational support provided to young people in custody is kept under review and may be adapted in response to changes in the age profile of those held at the JJC.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland published a detailed report in November 2011 following an inspection of the JJC. The report covers a wide range of areas including rehabilitation work undertaken in the JJC. Copies of the report are available in the Assembly Library or on the CJINI website: www.cjini.org.

Youth Justice Review

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what training is envisaged for Prison Service staff as a result of the Youth Justice Review.

(AQW 11751/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not anticipated that any training will be developed for prison staff as a direct result of the Youth Justice Review. However in relation to the wider prison reforms and in particular the Owers Review, significant training is currently being developed for new and existing staff to ensure that they are adequately skilled to perform their roles of Custody Officer and Offender Supervisor.

This training programme is being developed and will shortly be going out to tender for accreditation by an appropriate educational body. The programme is designed to provide Custody Officers with a certificate of professional competence and Offender Supervisors with a higher level of licence to practice. This is in line with strategic organisational objectives of having a competent professionally qualified well trained workforce.

Coupled with this specific training, interventions are also being developed and designed in order to provide bespoke tailored programmes to managers in order that they too can utilise the benefits of specific management development programmes.

Youth Justice Review

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the timescale for the publication and implementation of the Youth Justice Review.

(AQW 11753/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Youth Justice Review was published on 26 September 2011. It was then put out for full public consultation which concluded at the end of January following a number of requests for an extension to the original timescale.

We have been giving careful consideration to the many views expressed through the public consultation on the Review, and I intend to take the views of the Committee for Justice in the next few weeks. I will then make an announcement in the Assembly on the way forward. This statement will set out what work has been taken forward in the intervening period and how the Review recommendations are to be progressed.

For a number of the Review recommendations, Executive support and cross-Departmental working is vital if we are to deliver all of the outcomes envisaged by the Review Team.

Stuart Townsend

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Stuart Townsend has signed the Sex Offender Register; and if so, for how long is he to remain on the Register.

(AQW 11771/11-15)

Mr Ford: Personal information of this nature is not provided due to data protection and human rights obligations.

Court Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11204/11-15, to outline the general nature of the charges that are dealt with by hospital, compulsory treatment or combination orders.

(AQW 11781/11-15)

Mr Ford: The nature of an offence is not a determining factor for the court when making a Hospital Order or Supervision and Treatment Order; they are made on the basis of medical evidence regarding a defendant's level of mental illness or impairment. However, a Hospital Order can only be made in cases where the offence of which a person is accused is punishable by imprisonment.

There is therefore a wide range of offences for which these orders can be made. The offences associated with the cases detailed in my answer to AQW11204/11-15 include, offences against the person, arson, serious sexual offences, robbery, possession of explosives/firearms and harassment.

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to list the agencies responsible for monitoring Thomas Ward after his release from custody for an offence committed in 2006; and which agency employed his Designated Risk Manager.

(AQW 11782/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Probation Board for Northern Ireland had statutory responsibility for the supervision of the probation order following release from custody. The police were responsible for enforcement of the sex offender notification requirements and the Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

These agencies worked together under the PPANI procedures, along with others listed in Article 50 of the Criminal Justice Order, to assess and address the risks posed. The Designated Risk Manager was from the Probation Board.

Listed Properties

Mr McQuillan asked Minister of Justice to detail the listed properties that are owned by his Department.

(AQW 11786/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice does not currently own any listed properties.

Prisoners in the Maze/Long Kesh

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners in the Maze/Long Kesh had blood samples taken in the aftermath of the fire and riots in October 1974.

(AQW 11811/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has no record of medical teams carrying out large-scale blood tests in the aftermath of the fire and riots in October 1974. Many files have been destroyed from that era in accordance with Disposal Schedules and a search of our registry database has not uncovered any relevant information. There may still be some individual prisoner custody files in existence which could hold information relating to prisoners' particular medical treatments. However, it is impossible to say with certainty which files might hold any relevant information and any such search would incur a disproportionate cost and is unlikely to be conclusive.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what percentage of invoices, received by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11828/11-15)

Mr Ford: The attached tables show what percentage of invoices received by the Department's arm's length bodies, excluding agencies, were paid within 30 days of receipt during 2011/12.

EXECUTIVE NON DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Police Service Northern Ireland	97.7%
Northern Ireland Policing Board	99.9%
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	100%
Northern Ireland Police Fund	100%
RUC George Cross Foundation	100%
Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland	100%
Probation Board Northern Ireland	98%
Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission	100%

The NI Legal Services Commission does not report against payments to the legal profession as the legal aid claims against which the payments are made are not invoices and are subject to assessment.

ADVISORY NON DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Northern Ireland Law Commission	Independent Assessor for PSNI Recruitment Applications
99.1%	N/A

The Independent Assessor for PSNI Recruitment Applications received no invoices during the 2011/12 financial year.

OTHER ARM'S LENGTH BODIES

Prisoner Ombudsman	100%
Parole Commissioner	98.4%
Independent Monitoring Boards	100%

Commissioner for Hearings Under Prison Rule 109B	N/A
Remission of Sentences Commissioner	N/A

The Commissioner for Hearings Under Prison Rule 109B received no invoices during the 2011/12 financial year.

Invoices for The Remission of Sentences Commissioner are paid via the Northern Ireland Prison Service and they do not separately record the prompt payment statistics for the Commissioner.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice how many civil servants currently employed in his Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11849/11-15)

Mr Ford: The only civil servants currently employed in the Department of Justice who have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service are 18 former prison officers employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). All 18 of these officers received their redundancy package through schemes that operated prior to 2002. The most recent redundancy scheme resulted in 160 prison grades being selected to leave. None of these staff has applied to rejoin NIPS.

It should be noted that, in relation to administrative staff within NIPS, it has not been possible to check the circumstances of staff employed prior to 2002 as the current NIPS HR system was introduced in 2002 and to check further back would require a manual inspection of records, which would incur disproportionate costs.

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the timescale of court activity, and other relevant activity, including prison release(s) in the case of Thomas Ward from his arrest and charge for the sexual assault of his first victim in 2006 to his imprisonment in 2012 for the sexual assault of his second victim in 2011.

(AQW 11850/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested regarding Thomas Ward's court activity is provided in the table below;

Date	Court Appearance	Details
22/4/2006	Dungannon Magistrates' Court	Following his arrest by PSNI on 18/4/2006 Thomas Ward was remanded in custody for attempted rape and other offences associated with the sexual assault which took place in Dungannon on 17 March 2006. He was subsequently convicted on 24/5/2007.

Date	Court Appearance	Details
20/9/2006	Dungannon Magistrates' Court	Convicted of Disorderly Behaviour and a variety of motoring offences. Sentenced to four months detention in a Young Offenders Centre, disqualified from driving and fined.
5/1/2007	Craigavon Magistrates' Court	Convicted of Driving while disqualified and other motoring offences. Sentenced to two months detention in a Young Offenders Centre and disqualified from driving.
24/5/2007	Enniskillen Crown Court	Convicted of Indecent Assault, False Imprisonment, and other offences. Sentenced to a Custody Probation Order of four years custody and three years probation.
28/1/2009	Omagh Crown Court	Convicted of breaching the probation element of his sentence. Sentenced to a further 12 months in custody.
9/2/2009	Belfast Magistrates' Court	Convicted of a variety of motoring offences, possessing drugs and two charges of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. He received a number of penalties including disqualification from driving, a fine, a suspended prison sentence and three months imprisonment to run concurrently.
8/5/2009	Belfast Magistrates' Court	Convicted of driving while disqualified and having no insurance. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment suspended for two years and disqualified from driving for five years.
12/8/2009	Dungannon Magistrates' Court	Convicted of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order on 6 November 2008 and sentenced to imprisonment for one month. This sentence was subsequently varied on appeal on 26 March 2010 to a probation order for two years.

Date	Court Appearance	Details
11/11/2009	Belfast Crown Court	Convicted of motoring offences including taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent, driving while disqualified and having no insurance. He received a total of nine months imprisonment suspended for 18 months, a five year disqualification from driving and a £200 fine.
26/3/2010	Belfast Crown Court	Convicted of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order on 15 December 2008; he was sentenced to a two year probation order.
9/4/2010	Belfast Magistrates' Court	Convicted for an assault on police and fined £200.
26/11/2010	Belfast Magistrates' Court	Convicted of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. Sentenced to three months imprisonment suspended for 18 months.
24/2/2010	Belfast Magistrates' Court	Convicted on a charge of common assault: ordered to pay £500 compensation and received a sentence of two months imprisonment suspended for two years.
2/3/2011	Dungannon Crown Court	Convicted of sexual assault committed on 1 February 2010 and sentenced to an indeterminate custodial sentence.

The information requested in relation to Mr Ward's prison releases constitutes sensitive personal data as defined at section 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998. The disclosure of such information is likely to breach Mr Ward's rights under the Act and would be incompatible with the Data Protection principles. The information cannot therefore be provided as requested.

Cases of Child Abandonment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases of child abandonment are currently in the court system, broken down by court division.

(AQW 11860/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently two cases of child abandonment within the meaning of Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 before the courts.

There is one in the County Court Division of Londonderry and one in the County Court Division of Fermanagh and Tyrone.

Legal Aid Budget

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to introduce a maximum annual amount that a barrister or law firm can be paid from the legal aid budget.

(AQW 11907/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans to introduce a maximum annual amount that a barrister or firm of solicitors can be paid from the legal aid budget.

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what was the nature and date of the offences for which Thomas Ward was given a suspended sentence, which he was subject to, when he committed a further offence on 1 February 2011.

(AQW 11934/11-15)

Mr Ford: Thomas Ward pleaded guilty and was convicted on 26 November 2010 of breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order due to being absent from his registered address during curfew hours on 4 May 2010.

He received a prison sentence of three months which was suspended for 18 months.

Funding to Women's Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much funding his Department has provided to Women's Aid, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 11952/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since the Department of Justice was devolved on 10 April 2010 it has provided the following funding to Women's Aid:

Service	2010/11	2011/12
Domestic Violence Helpline	£96,722	£105,000
Support services to potential victims of Human Trafficking	£9,390.52	Not Known
Total	£106,112.52	£105,000

Women's Aid operates the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline on behalf of the three funding agencies; Department of Justice, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

In addition, since the devolution of the Department of Justice, Women's Aid has assisted in delivering a pilot programme which provides support services to potential victims of Human Trafficking. My Department funded Women's Aid directly for these services until 31 January 2011. Since 1 February 2011 Migrant Helpline, along with its delivery partner Women's Aid, has provided support services to potential victims of Human Trafficking under contract but it is not possible to itemise separately the amount paid to each organisation for the services provided.

GPS tracking of Sex-Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to follow the example set by the Scottish Parliament, in introducing GPS tracking to monitor sex-offenders in the community, particularly those offenders who are classified as the most dangerous.

(AQW 11953/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Scottish Government has not introduced GPS tracking of offenders. The Scottish First Minister announced on 3rd May that his administration was currently giving consideration to

recommendations made in an independent report, which included using GPS technology for monitoring certain high risk offenders. He indicated that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice would update the Scottish Parliament on the actions which would be taken in response to that report in due course.

The use of GPS in the monitoring of offenders has been constrained across the United Kingdom by technological limitations. The technology is continuing to develop and my department is keeping a watching brief on progress. While I have no immediate plans to introduce this technology in Northern Ireland, I am open to reviewing this position, should future evaluations evidence the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of such systems.

Serious Case Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Serious Case Reviews have been carried out by agencies within, or under the remit of, his Department in each of the last five years, broken down by agency.

(AQW 11954/11-15)

Mr Ford: Six serious case reviews under paragraph 2.14 of the Guidance to Agencies on Public Protection Arrangements (PPANI) have been carried out in the last five years. It is not possible to allocate reviews to particular agencies as reviews are carried out by all agencies involved in the multi-agency risk management of a particular case. The breakdown by year is as follows:

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of Serious Case Reviews	1	1	nil	nil	4

Convictions for Child Abandonment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of child abandonment in each of the last five years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 11955/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the number of defendants convicted of at least one charge of child abandonment in each of the last five years, broken down by County Court Division.

County Court Division	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	Total
Belfast	0	0	0	1	0	1
Antrim	0	0	0	1	1	2
Ards	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	0	0	2	1	4

* Figures for 2011 are provisional.

Sex Offenders Register

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how many people were on the Sex Offenders Register in (i) January 2008; and (ii) January 2012.

(AQW 11966/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Use of Illegal Fuel, Unlawful Interference with Tachograph Equipment and Smuggling

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether he will consider a cross-departmental task force to help address the threat posed to the legitimate freight industry by the use of illegal fuel, unlawful interference with tachograph equipment and smuggling.

(AQW 12003/11-15)

Mr Ford: My reply to AQW11638/11-15 explained the Organised Crime Task Force's multi-agency approach to tackling organised crime, including fuel fraud and smuggling, and my consideration of adding evasion of duty on fuel to the list of referable offences contained within the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006.

Although unlawful interference with tachograph equipment is not an organised crime matter, I intend to ask the Minister of the Environment to permit his officials to brief members of the OCTF's Fuel Fraud Group on the licensing regime for road hauliers that is being introduced by his Department from July 2012. This should enable the identification of opportunities to work in partnership to tackle criminality and the threat posed to the legitimate freight industry.

Barristers: Legal Aid Payments List

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11462/11-15, given that both barristers made representations, why one was permitted to remain anonymous and the other was not.

(AQW 12015/11-15)

Mr Ford: In this instance, the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) received representations from two barristers. The first person contended that there was no need for the NILSC to publish any names. As the NILSC had considered similar objections in the context of previous publications, they did not accept that this representation prevented publication. The second person raised issues, under the Data Protection Act (DPA), regarding the publication of personal information. At the time of publication of the 2010/11 figures, consideration of the issues raised by the second individual had not been completed and as a result the name of this individual could not be included in the published list at that time. The NILSC can only decide whether or not to publish the name of the individual concerned once the statutory process laid down in the DPA is complete.

The NILSC is required to comply with the provisions of the DPA, which requires public bodies to notify individuals of personal information it intends to publish. Those individuals have a right to object to publication and the public body is required to consider each objection.

Migrant Helpline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much funding his Department has provided to Migrant Helpline, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12017/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since April 2010 DOJ has provided the following funding to Migrant Helpline. Information is provided in line with the terms of the contract rather than in financial years.

Service	April 2010 – January 2011	February 2011 - January 2012	February 2012 – April 2012
Support Services for Potential Victims of Human Trafficking Pilot Programme	£4521.45		
Support Services for Potential Victims of Human Trafficking		£137743.57	£9422.95
Total	£4521.45	£137743.57	£9422.95

From April 2010 to January 2011 Migrant Helpline received funding from the Department of Justice to deliver a pilot programme to provide Support Services for Potential Adult Victims of Human Trafficking. The pilot was delivered by Migrant Helpline and Women's Aid.

With effect from 1 February 2011 Migrant Helpline, and their delivery partner Women's Aid, were awarded the support service contract. Under the terms of the contract all payments are made directly to Migrant Helpline, as contractor.

Replacement Facility for Magilligan Prison

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Justice what is the estimated cost of a replacement facility for Magilligan Prison.

(AQW 12022/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Outline Estate Strategy presented to the Justice Committee on 26 April 2012 identifies the need for a new medium security establishment built to Category B standards. The strategy and its recommendations are in the process of undergoing a full public consultation exercise.

The establishment's size and configuration will be informed by undertaking a core needs analysis of the prisoner population. The location of the establishment also needs to be determined and will be informed by a site search to identify suitable land on which it can be built. As such the cost of such land is unknown at this time.

A Rough Order of Measure cost of £140 million has been estimated for this facility based on experiences of other prison services in the UK and associated benchmark costs. The cost, size and configuration of this facility will be subject to a detailed Business Case.

Treatment of Male and Female Children

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice why the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland's recommendation that, by April 2012, male children should be treated the same as female children has not been implemented; and when he intends to implement this recommendation.

(AQW 12033/11-15)

Mr Ford: While I fully support the thrust of the recommendation made by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, the timescale suggested did not allow for the preparations that had to be put in place to enable it to be implemented. As a result of intensive work led by the Youth Justice Agency, there are now only three 17 year olds in Hydebank Wood YOC. Work is proceeding on this front and I will be announcing, in the context of the Youth Justice Review, how custodial arrangements will operate in future for all those under the age of 18.

Sentencing Tariffs for Murder

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to review the level of sentencing tariffs for murder.

(AQW 12036/11-15)

Mr Ford: The legislation governing the determination of tariffs where a court has passed a life sentence is the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001.

I am currently considering whether a review of the current legislation is warranted and will make an announcement in the near future.

Apprenticeship Programmes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the apprenticeship programmes available within his Department; (ii) the apprenticeship programmes provided by his Department; (iii) the number of people currently enrolled in these programmes; and (iv) the number of places available on the programmes.

(AQW 12089/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is currently one internal Apprenticeship Programme available and provided by the Department of Justice.

The specification of the 2012/13 Programme is currently under consideration therefore no staff are currently enrolled.

There will be approximately 20 places available in 2012/13.

HMP Magilligan's Workforce

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice how many of HMP Magilligan's workforce live in the constituencies of (i) East Londonderry; (ii) Foyle; and (iii) North Antrim.

(AQW 12105/11-15)

Mr Ford: As of 25 May there was a total of 440 staff employed at Magilligan Prison.

332 of these live in the East Londonderry constituency. 16 of these staff members live in the Foyle Constituency. 71 staff members live in the North Antrim constituency.

The remaining 21 staff live outside the three named constituencies.

Appeals to a Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the process by which papers submitted in an appeal to a Small Claims Court ruling are dealt with in the 21 days from the court ruling to determine whether the appeal has merit.

(AQW 12114/11-15)

Mr Ford: On receipt of an appeal, court office staff review the documentation to ensure that it complies with procedural requirements. Where there is an issue with the lodged papers, the court office contacts the appellant to bring this to their attention. Court office staff do not assess whether the appeal has merit as that is a judicial function.

The Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) Small Claims Guide provides information about the small claims system including the appeal process. It is not intended to be exhaustive advice and refers customers to NICTS staff for assistance with the procedures to follow when lodging or responding to an appeal. The Small Claims Guide also recommends contacting a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau for legal advice.

Appeals to a Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether papers lodged in respect of an appeal to a Small Claims Court ruling, that are found to be unsatisfactory, are returned to the appellant or kept by the Courts Service.

(AQW 12115/11-15)

Mr Ford: On receipt of an appeal, court office staff review the documentation to ensure that it complies with procedural requirements. Where there is an issue with the lodged papers, the court office contacts the appellant to bring this to their attention. Court office staff do not assess whether the appeal has merit as that is a judicial function.

The Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) Small Claims Guide provides information about the small claims system including the appeal process. It is not intended to be exhaustive advice and refers customers to NICTS staff for assistance with the procedures to follow when lodging or responding to an appeal. The Small Claims Guide also recommends contacting a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau for legal advice.

Appeals to a Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice why the Small Claims Court Guide does not detail how unsatisfactory papers, that are lodged in respect of an appeal, are dealt with.

(AQW 12116/11-15)

Mr Ford: On receipt of an appeal, court office staff review the documentation to ensure that it complies with procedural requirements. Where there is an issue with the lodged papers, the court office contacts the appellant to bring this to their attention. Court office staff do not assess whether the appeal has merit as that is a judicial function.

The Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) Small Claims Guide provides information about the small claims system including the appeal process. It is not intended to be exhaustive advice and refers customers to NICTS staff for assistance with the procedures to follow when lodging or responding to an appeal. The Small Claims Guide also recommends contacting a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau for legal advice.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice what powers or functions he plans to devolve to local councils under the Review of Public Administration; and whether this represents a change to his previous commitments.

(AQW 12261/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that there are currently no plans to transfer any powers or functions from my Department to local councils under the Review of Public Administration. This does not represent a change to my previous commitments.

Case Against Four Republicans in Relation to an Illegal Rally

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11604/11-15, whether this case will proceed to trial; and if not, to outline the reasons.

(AQW 12267/11-15)

Mr Ford: The decision whether to recommence these proceedings is a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Juvenile Defendants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many court cases have involved juvenile defendants, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12297/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the number of cases involving youth defendants dealt with in the Crown Court and Youth Court in each of the last five years.

Year	Crown Court	Youth Courts*	Total
2007	54	3,275	3,329
2008	55	3,082	3,137
2009	47	3,120	3,167
2010	45	3,317	3,362
2011**	47	3,018	3,065
Total	248	15,812	16,060

* A youth defendant is defined as someone who at the date of the commission of the offence had not yet attained the age of eighteen years.

** Figures for 2011 are provisional

Northern Ireland Policing Board: Staff

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the staff reductions at the Northern Ireland Policing Board since the publication of the review of the Board by Ken Reed Consultancy; and what are the projected budget savings at the Policing Board for the next financial year.

(AQW 12322/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Interim Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Policing Board has informed me that the Policing Board has reduced its permanent staffing complement by seven since the Ken Reed Report was made public on 3 November 2010.

The projected Savings Delivery Plans for the Policing Board for 2012-13 and 2013-14 are £1,112,000 and £1,249,000 respectively, as previously published. Reductions in staff contribute towards those plans.

Roe House: Prison Population

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice, given the on-going protest and the infection controls that are in place for prisoners and staff, what measures he intends to put in place in Roe House should the prison population there continue to rise.

(AQW 12384/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service routinely monitors prisoner numbers in all areas including Roe House. Contingency plans are in place to manage the rising prisoner population.

Trustee of the RUC George Cross Foundation

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice how many applicants' names were released in error, by electronic mail, to an applicant for the post of Trustee of the RUC George Cross Foundation.

(AQW 12391/11-15)

Mr Ford: A list containing the names of nine individuals, who had requested an application pack for the position of Trustee of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation, was released in error, by electronic mail, by my Department to one potential applicant. It did not include contact details, addresses or any other identifying information.

I apologise again for this breach and for any distress it has caused.

Department for Regional Development

Public Transport Links

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development what public transport links are in place to facilitate visitors to (i) the Marble Arch Caves; (ii) Florence Court House; (iii) Devenish Island; (iv) Aughakillymaude Mummery Centre; (v) the Janus Figures on Boa Island; and (vi) Belleek Pottery.

(AQW 11607/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Translink, who have operational responsibility for the provision of services, has advised me that:-

- (1) Services to Marble Arch Caves are served by Translink service 64 together with Bus Éireann's service 66 providing options between 09:25 and 17:35.
- (2) Florencecourt House is served by Translink service 192 with buses at 07:30 and 18:05.

- (3) The boat to Devenish Island leaves from Round 'O' Jetty in Enniskillen which is a 10-minute walk from the bus depot.
- (4) Translink service 58 provides buses between 08:50 and 17:55 to facilitate visitors to Aughakillymaude Mummerts' Centre.
- (5) Service 194/195 facilitates visitors to the Janus Figures on Boa Island. Buses are at 11:30 and 15:45.
- (6) The same service (194/195) also facilitates visitors to Belleek Pottery. Bus Éireann service 30 also operates to Belleek at 09:30, 11:30, 13:30 and 15:30.

Translink recognise that the bus stops used by these services may not always be close to the visitor sites. However some of the sites – Devenish Island and The Mummerts' Centre – are not accessible by bus and to provide services directly to the sites would not, in its opinion be commercially viable. Translink has also advised me that representatives from the relevant tourist organisations have not approached Translink in regard to the provision of bus transport.

Translink: Managerial Posts

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the managerial posts that Translink (i) has created in the last twelve months; (ii) intends to create in the next twelve months, and the salary attached to each of these posts; and to outline the justification for the creation of these posts given that Translink is predicting financial losses in the coming years.

(AQW 11641/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that (i) there have not been any managerial posts established in the last 12 months; (ii) there are no plans to establish any new managerial posts in the next 12 months however during the financial year ahead there are plans to remove two senior managerial posts.

Vesting of Land by Roads Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation is carried out with residents who will be affected by the vesting of land by Roads Service.

(AQW 11647/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is an initial consultation at an early stage with all landowners affected by a road scheme, regardless of whether the land is acquired by agreement or through the vesting process. This often takes the form of a series of meetings and correspondence to explain the scheme and discuss any concerns raised by landowners or their agents.

If vesting is the proposed method of acquisition of lands required for a minor works scheme, following the initial consultation, a copy of the Vesting Order, which includes, information on the objection procedure and details of the proposal, is sent by recorded delivery to each landowner. Further negotiation and consultation will take place in an effort to resolve any objections. Any outstanding objections to the proposed Vesting Order are forwarded to Roads Service Headquarters for a decision on whether to proceed without recourse to a public inquiry.

Additional information is available on my Department's website at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements.htm>

Vesting of Land by Roads Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what protocols are in place to determine the process of vesting land by Roads Service.

(AQW 11648/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is an initial consultation at an early stage with all landowners affected by a road scheme, regardless of whether the land is acquired

by agreement or through the vesting process. This often takes the form of a series of meetings and correspondence to explain the scheme and discuss any concerns raised by landowners or their agents.

If vesting is the proposed method of acquisition of lands required for a minor works scheme, following the initial consultation, a copy of the Vesting Order, which includes, information on the objection procedure and details of the proposal, is sent by recorded delivery to each landowner. Further negotiation and consultation will take place in an effort to resolve any objections. Any outstanding objections to the proposed Vesting Order are forwarded to Roads Service Headquarters for a decision on whether to proceed without recourse to a public inquiry.

Additional information is available on my Department's website at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements.htm>

Vesting Land Near the Proposed Sightline Improvement Works on the A2

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the rationale for vesting land near the proposed sightline improvement works on the A2 near the Millisle and Ballyvester Roads.

(AQW 11649/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is an initial consultation at an early stage with all landowners affected by a road scheme, regardless of whether the land is acquired by agreement or through the vesting process. This often takes the form of a series of meetings and correspondence to explain the scheme and discuss any concerns raised by landowners or their agents.

If vesting is the proposed method of acquisition of lands required for a minor works scheme, following the initial consultation, a copy of the Vesting Order, which includes, information on the objection procedure and details of the proposal, is sent by recorded delivery to each landowner. Further negotiation and consultation will take place in an effort to resolve any objections. Any outstanding objections to the proposed Vesting Order are forwarded to Roads Service Headquarters for a decision on whether to proceed without recourse to a public inquiry.

Additional information is available on my Department's website at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements.htm>

Vesting Land Near the Proposed Sightline Improvement Works on the A2

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation took place with residents of the Millisle Road and Ballyvester Road prior to the decision to vest land near the proposed A2 road improvement scheme.

(AQW 11650/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is an initial consultation at an early stage with all landowners affected by a road scheme, regardless of whether the land is acquired by agreement or through the vesting process. This often takes the form of a series of meetings and correspondence to explain the scheme and discuss any concerns raised by landowners or their agents.

If vesting is the proposed method of acquisition of lands required for a minor works scheme, following the initial consultation, a copy of the Vesting Order, which includes, information on the objection procedure and details of the proposal, is sent by recorded delivery to each landowner. Further negotiation and consultation will take place in an effort to resolve any objections. Any outstanding objections to the proposed Vesting Order are forwarded to Roads Service Headquarters for a decision on whether to proceed without recourse to a public inquiry.

Additional information is available on my Department's website at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements.htm>

Railway Line Between Londonderry and Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether preparatory work for a permanent passing loop can be carried out on the railway line between Londonderry and Coleraine during the upgrading work that is currently taking place and which is due to last for the next ten months.

(AQW 11652/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I secured the funding to bring forward the Coleraine to Londonderry Track Renewals project. The project will be completed over three Phases, with Phase 1 scheduled to start on site at the end of July this year.

The construction of the passing loop will take place under Phase 2 of the project which will be completed during the 2014/15 year and for which funding is in place in that year.

In these circumstances preparatory work such as the design and land acquisition (if required) will not be progressed during the closure of the line from July 2012 to April 2013. However, Translink has advised that it will be able to construct the passing loop alongside the main line work during Phase 2 without any unnecessary closure of the line. Any such closure would be limited to weekend work.

Public Bicycle Schemes in Cities

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration his Department has given to the introduction of public bicycle schemes in cities, similar to those in place in London and Dublin.

(AQW 11672/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A partnership project was established in 2010 involving Belfast City Council, my Department and the Strategic Investment Board to investigate the feasibility of introducing a public bike hire scheme in Belfast. In August 2010, following a successful tender, Grant Thornton were appointed by the partnership to complete an outline business case. The final report concluded that an opportunity exists for the introduction of a bike hire scheme in Belfast. The partnership project did not include consideration of public bike hire schemes in other cities within Northern Ireland.

Officials from my Department and Belfast City Council have been considering the report with a view to agreeing the most appropriate way forward.

Office of National Statistics of NI Water

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10826/11-15, to detail the extra cost to the public purse incurred as a result of the reclassification of Northern Ireland Water as a non-departmental public body.

(AQW 11693/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As noted in the earlier response, the reclassification of Northern Ireland Water as a non-departmental public body was a direct consequence of the Executive's decision to defer the introduction of domestic water charges. The financial implications of deferral are that DRD requires public expenditure budget cover for the bulk of Northern Ireland Water's expenditure of around £340 million in 2012/13.

The extent to which these costs would be reduced if Northern Ireland Water was reclassified as a public corporation, (i.e. if it was majority self-funding) would depend on the policy decisions taken about funding arrangements, for example, any arrangements for vulnerable groups, phasing in of additional payments and so on.

An indirect cost of the reclassification is that Northern Ireland Water has less freedom to achieve efficiencies because of public expenditure constraints.

Motorway Speed Limits

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he is giving to following the plans, that are soon to be announced in England, to assess test sites to increase motorway speed limits to 80 mph.

(AQW 11701/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that the Department for Transport's proposal to increase speed limits on motorways to 80 mph will be subject to public consultation and, if approved, will only apply to relevant stretches of motorways in England and Wales.

I have asked my officials in Roads Service to keep a watching brief on future developments on this issue. I am aware that increasing motorway speeds could lead to an increased risk of more severe collisions in addition to higher levels of fuel consumption and these factors may outweigh any improvements in journey times.

Bill Posters on Departmental Property

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development why Roads Service enforces the law on bill posters on departmental property in some areas, whilst in other areas, sectarian material remains on display on departmental property for long periods of time.

(AQW 11702/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Firstly, I should like to make it clear to the Member that neither I nor my Department's Roads Service condone or support the unauthorised use of departmental property for any purpose.

In accordance with my Department's policy in relation to unauthorised advertising, I can confirm that where advertising is erected illegally on Roads Service property or adjacent to special roads, action is taken by Roads Service officials to try to remove these under articles 87 & 21 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993.

Where possible, the owner of the sign may be contacted to seek co-operation and agreement in having the material removed. Where cooperation is not forthcoming, Roads Service may remove the material in question and may subsequently seek to recover costs.

The removal of sectarian material is not so straightforward. The erection of such material is akin to other unauthorised activities such as kerb painting, lamppost painting and flying flags, which have local and political sensitivities in addition to posing health and safety risk for those tasked with their removal. Consideration must also be given to the risk of escalating the problem.

Given the sensitivities surrounding this issue, Roads Service reluctantly tolerates such activities unless road safety is affected, or there are clear indications that action to remove the offending material would have widespread local support.

As with other unauthorised activities which it encounters, Roads Service must fully consider the possible consequences of taking action to remove sectarian material. For example, in the case of flag removals, this is generally done through consultation and negotiation with local communities. Roads Service is not generally perceived to be best placed to lead on such consultations, but provides appropriate support and technical assistance, if requested. Roads Service considers that removal of sectarian material warrants a similar approach.

When Roads Service becomes aware of such material on its property, it will assess the situation to determine if action can be taken, either directly or in support of others. This often involves working with elected and local community representatives and the PSNI. Roads Service gives priority to situations that are considered to present a road safety hazard.

Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the opportunities of growth for Londonderry and district, arising from its status as UK City of Culture 2013, what assurances he can give that bus or rail services will not be reduced in the area, under the guise of Translink efficiencies, or otherwise.
(AQW 11707/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink will be working to clarify its financial plans for 2013/14 and 2014/15 which, based on current projections, suggest that measures to get closer to a financial balance will be required. There are no indications, at this stage, that these measures will materially impact in the Londonderry area or impact on the transport arrangements required for City of Culture events.

Capital and Revenue Savings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the capital and revenue savings his Department has made in each of the last three years.
(AQW 11717/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As part of the Budget 2008-11 settlement Departments were required to deliver 3% cash releasing savings year on year across the Budget period. For DRD this equated to a total saving of £65 million by March 2011.

The Final Budget 2011-15 requires DRD to take forward a range of measures to deliver savings of £15.5 million / £27.1 million / £58.1 million / £58.4 million in current expenditure against the 2010-11 baseline by 2014-15. The measures for delivering these savings were set out in our published Savings Delivery Plan which can be accessed via the Departmental website.

<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=7811>

The table below details the resource and capital savings delivered in 2009-10 and 2010-11 under the Efficiency Delivery Plans and the savings measure targets for 2011-12. Delivery of the 2011-12 savings will be confirmed following finalisation of the Department's resource accounts.

£'m	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Resource Savings	11.6	11.2	15.5
Capital Savings	10.2	10.0	Not applicable
Total Savings	21.8	21.2	15.5

No specific capital savings targets were set as part of the Budget 2011-15 process.

NI Water: Embedded Contractors

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) why, given that the term 'embedded contractors' appears on page 26 of the March edition of its staff magazine, 'Waterline', has NI Water consistently stated, in replies to Assembly Questions, that it does not recognise this term; and (ii) how much it would cost NI Water to recall, reprint and redistribute this edition of Waterline, to ensure that its staff are not misled or misinformed.
(AQW 11721/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that (i) it is aware that the term "embedded contractors" was used erroneously in the recent staff magazine article and (ii) it intends to advise staff of the error through a suitable correction in the next edition of the magazine, at no additional cost.

NI Water Tender C398

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10366/11-15, (i) to provide details of the legal challenge to NI Water tender C398, including who launched the challenge. **(AQW 11723/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that FM Environmental Limited served a writ of summons associated with contract C398 alleging that the decision of NIW to award contract C398 to Williams Industrial Services Limited was unlawful and/or was reached in a manner which was in breach of:-

- (i) the requirements of the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended); and/or
- (ii) general principles of EU Law; and/or
- (iii) the implied tendering contract between FM Environmental Limited and NIW.

As a result of the legal challenge contract C398 was not awarded by NIW.

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times the head of NI Water's Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) function met with embedded contract staff in relation to tender C071, in each of the last three years, broken down by M&E area; and to detail (i) the location of the meetings; (ii) the reasons for the meetings; (iii) who requested the meetings; and (iv) whether the current, or previous, Chief Executive Officer was made aware of the meetings.

(AQW 11725/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 8815/11 dated 12 March 2012. I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it does not recognise the term "embedded contract staff". Employees of contractors engaged by NIW under a tendered contract arrangement are not deemed NIW employees. NIW has informed me that the meeting on 27 January 2012, referred to in that answer, was the only occasion in the past three years that its Head of Mechanical & Electrical Services met with contractor employees.

NI Water Tender C527

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10373/11-15, (i) to clarify what NI Water considers to be 'applicable employment laws'; (ii) whether the employment rights of the embedded contractors engaged under tender C527 have been affected by the award of this tender; (iii) whether NI Water is aware that, at 4 May 2012, the embedded contractors employed under this tender did not have signed contracts of employment; (iv) how the lack of signed employment contracts impacts on the award and monitoring of this contract under the Utilities Contract Regulations 2006, NI Water's internal auditing processes and other UK and EU legal requirements; and (v) what actions NI Water will take to address this issue.

(AQW 11728/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) the reply to AQW 10373/11-15 relates to the employment laws applicable within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland at the date of award of contract C527. (ii) NIW does not recognise the term "embedded contractor". To the best of NIW's knowledge, information and belief, the employment rights of those employees of third party contractors who previously provided the services now encompassed within contract C527, have not been prejudiced by the award of contract C527. (iii) NIW cannot comment on matters relating to the contracts of employment entered into between third party contractors and their employees. (iv) NIW cannot comment on matters relating to the contracts of employment entered into between third party contractors and their employees. (v) NIW cannot comment on matters relating to the contracts of employment entered into between third party contractors and their employees.

Housing Developments: Adopted Roads

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how many housing developments, which were determined for adoption under the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980, are subject to enforcement action by the National Asset Management Agency, with the roads remaining unadopted; and for his assessment of the impact that this might have on the adoption process.

(AQW 11735/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is aware of eleven housing developments, which were determined for adoption under the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980, and are currently listed as being subject to enforcement action by the National Asset Management Agency, with these roads remaining unadopted.

In cases where housing developers have ceased trading, including those sites owned by NAMA, Roads Service officials will liaise with the responsible parties to seek completion of unfinished roads. Irrespective of current ownership, the bond providers remain liable for the cost of completing the roads, if the developer or administrators are unable or are unwilling to do so. If necessary, enforcement action will be taken, with bond monies being accessed and used to complete the roads to a suitable standard for adoption into the public road network.

Car Parks

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current cost of parking in each of the car parks that are under the control of his Department, broken down by council area.

(AQW 11784/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of all car park tariffs, for which my Department's Roads Service is responsible, can be accessed on my Department's website at:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/parking-and-parking-enforcement/off-street-and-on-street-parking.htm>.

Translink Posts

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many posts Translink has (i) cut; and (ii) left unfilled across its network of operations over the last three years, broken down by grade.

(AQW 11790/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the total workforce in Translink over the last 3 years is as follows. This represents a net position taking account of inflows and outflows.

2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
4020 employees	3959 employees	3860 employees

The workforce total as at 31 March 2009 was 4,200. Translink has advised that they cannot break down unfilled posts over this 3-year period by grade.

Whilst Translink do not keep a record of unfilled posts it works to a resource plan. Given the current need to reduce costs, when vacancies arise the posts are considered to see how they can best be covered and whether there is no alternative but to recruit to fill the post. Translink HR reports vacancies in progress on a monthly basis. At the end of March 2012 a total of 67 unfilled posts were included in the recruitment process.

Management Level Posts in Translink

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many management level posts currently exist in Translink compared with three years ago.

(AQW 11792/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that there are currently 82 managerial posts in Translink, compared to 87 three years ago.

Translink: Managers Working in Seconded Roles

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many managers Translink currently has working in seconded roles.

(AQW 11793/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advises that within the organisation there are four managers currently working on internal secondment. This approach has allowed the organisation to undertake specific projects without the requirement to employ either additional staff or specialist consultants.

Water Mains Network on the Berryhill Road, Donemana

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the delay in Asset Management Unit bringing forward plans for the replacement of the water mains network on the Berryhill Road, Donemana; and when this work will be begin.

(AQW 11818/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it is aware of the recent burst history in this area but it has not yet been possible to commence work on the replacement of water mains in the Berryhill Road area of Donemana owing to funding priorities. It is unlikely that work will commence until the 2013/14 financial year but, in the interim, NIW will continue to closely monitor the situation to ensure that the existing water supply system is operating as effectively as possible.

Mains Water Network in the Berryhill Road, Donemana

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development how many pipes have burst in the mains water network in the Berryhill Road, Donemana, in the last twelve months; and what was the total cost of repairing the pipes.

(AQW 11820/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that during the period May 2011 to April 2012, there were 13 burst watermains within the Berryhill Road area. The total cost of repairing the bursts was approximately £20,000.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what percentage of invoices, received by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11830/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In the past twelve months the Department's arm's-length bodies have paid 94.3% of invoices within 30 days. This is detailed as follows:

Arm's-Length Body	Invoices Paid	Invoices Paid in 30 days	Prompt Payment %
Translink / NITCo	57,176	55,493	97.1
NI Water	36,665	33,022	90.1

Arm's-Length Body	Invoices Paid	Invoices Paid in 30 days	Prompt Payment %
Combined	93,841	88,515	94.3

Instances of People Setting Fire to the Water or Gas Escaping from their Taps

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide details of any instances where people have set fire to the water or gas escaping from their taps.

(AQW 11832/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it is unaware of any situations where gas would escape from water taps or of any incidents of water from taps being set on fire.

Private Roads Adopted by Roads Service

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the criteria used to determine whether a private road will be adopted by Roads Service; and (ii) how many private roads have been adopted by Roads Service in the last year.

(AQW 11863/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is presumed you are referring to private roads, for example, pathways, alleys, lanes etc, as opposed to unadopted roads within private developments.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that the adoption of a private road is governed by Article 9 of the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980. A street may be considered for adoption where the following three criteria are met:

- the majority of the owners/frontagers so request it;
- the Department is of the opinion that the street, or part of a street, should become a public road; and
- the street is first brought up to the required standard at the expense of the owner/frontagers.

I can advise that one private road was adopted by Roads Service in the last year.

Department's Car Parks

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the location of (i) his Department's car parks; and (ii) charged on street parking, in each council area, including the type of charges imposed; and whether there any variations in the charges such as 'first half hour free' and bank holiday exclusions.

(AQW 11864/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of all car park tariffs, for which my Department's Roads Service is responsible, can be accessed on my Department's website at:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/parking-and-parking-enforcement/off-street-and-on-street-parking.htm>

With regard to charged on-street parking spaces, I can advise that these are provided in Belfast, Lisburn and Newry. In Belfast, there are two rates of charge which apply, these being, £0.80 per hour, that is, £0.20 per 15 minute period in some streets and £1.20 per hour, that is, £0.30 per 15 minute period, in others. Charges apply from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday.

In Lisburn, a charge of £0.60 per hour, that is, £0.15 per 15 minute period applies in all charged streets. Charges apply 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday.

In Newry, a charge of £0.40 per hour, that is, £0.10 per 15 minute period applies in all charged streets. Charges apply 8.30am to 6.15pm, Monday to Saturday.

On-street charges do not apply on 1 January, Easter Monday, 12 and 13 July, 25 and 26 December, or days in lieu. These excepted days and dates are listed on the Pay and Display machines.

Proposed Footway Between Lynda Avenue and the Railway Halt on the Jordanstown Road, Jordanstown

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) when work will begin on the proposed footway between Lynda Avenue and the railway halt on the Jordanstown Road, Jordanstown; (ii) why there has been a delay in the commencement of the work; and (iii) what steps have been taken to resolve any outstanding issues preventing the commencement of the work.

(AQW 11873/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, subject to the acquisition of the necessary land, work on the proposed footway between Lynda Avenue and the railway halt on the Jordanstown Road, is scheduled to commence in August 2012, and is expected to last between four to six weeks. This is in accordance with the programmed timings for construction work due to commence during Summer 2012.

Roads Service is actively progressing the vesting of the land, and as no objections are anticipated, remains optimistic that the process can be completed on time.

Management Functions and Roles within Translink

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will conduct a review and evaluation of all management functions and roles within Translink in light of its request for more funding.

(AQW 11874/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Management functions and roles are essentially an operational issue for Translink. While my Department currently has no plans to conduct a specific review and evaluation of all management functions, an overall review was carried out as part of the Public Transport Reform Programme. As part of this ongoing programme of reform Translink has been taking forward the delivery of efficiency measures including consideration of appropriate staffing levels and roles.

In addition my Department, with input from Department of Finance and Personnel, is in the process of initiating a further efficiency review of Translink.

Translink: Staff Sickness Absence

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what systems Translink has in place to deal with bus and rail staff sickness absence; and whether it is planning any changes to the management or operation of the systems.

(AQW 11877/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advises that it has an attendance management and rehabilitation policy which applies to all employees.

The policy which has been communicated to all employees and is available on the company intranet, sets out standards, systems and procedures relevant to effective management of sickness absence and legal compliance.

The company's Executive team reviews its absence figures monthly in order to ensure good management of this area.

The Company's management also engages with its trade unions in relation to the management of employee sickness absence with an objective of seeking continual improvement.

Traffic Volumes in the Event of a Re-Location of the Balmoral Show

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what modelling or steps have been taken to evaluate the capacity of access roads to cope with traffic volumes in the event of a re-location of the Balmoral Show to the Maze/Long Kesh site; and to detail the outcome of the evaluation.

(AQW 11878/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that no planning application has been submitted relating to the relocation of the Balmoral Show to the Maze/Long Kesh site.

However, I can confirm that my officials have recently met with Transport Consultants, at their request, to discuss Roads Service's requirements regarding the impact of increased traffic to the area. It is anticipated that these issues will be evaluated in due course, when Consultants formally submit scoping documentation related to all transportation aspects of the proposed relocation.

Subsidence Problem on the Springfield Road, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) when work to address the subsidence problem on the Springfield Road, Belfast, will commence; (ii) how long this work will take to complete; and (iii) why temporary traffic lights have been erected at the site for two months without any work commencing.

(AQW 11901/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that upon being informed of the subsidence problem on the Upper Springfield Road, it immediately closed the affected section of the carriageway in the interests of public safety. Subsequently, the situation was fully investigated and remedial works to stabilise the embankment on the Upper Springfield Road were designed.

Roads Service officials further advise that remedial work to address the subsidence problem will take between 8 and 10 weeks to complete and will commence immediately upon the successful completion of ongoing negotiations with the landowner.

Until the necessary remedial works are completed, the temporary traffic lights will remain in place for safety reasons. During this period, up to date information will be provided on Roads Service's TrafficwatchNI website.

Developments in the Gortmerron Link Area of Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 11031/11-15, why these roads have yet to be adopted; and when they will be adopted.

(AQW 11905/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the developer of the roads referred to in AQW 11031/11-15 continues to liaise with Roads Service, in order to progress the various development phases to adoption standard and fulfil his obligations under the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980. As these phases are brought up to adoption standard, my Department will make arrangements to have the roads and footways adopted.

Roads Service officials further advise that the developer believes that Article 32 bond reductions are not dependent on a Northern Ireland Water (NIW) Article 161 agreement being signed off. However, under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with NIW, Roads Service will not proceed beyond a 50% reduction in the bond amount until NIW has signed off the Article 161 agreement.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development how many civil servants currently employed in his Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11911/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Two existing members of staff within my Department were re-employed by the NI Civil Service having received voluntary redundancy benefits some years earlier.

Bus Station in Banbridge

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has any plans to work with Translink to provide a site for a bus station in Banbridge.

(AQW 11916/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is committed to assisting Translink and Banbridge District Council in their efforts to provide new bus facilities in Banbridge. I note that planning permission is already in place for such facilities at Kenlis Street and that funding and lands transfers are the key issues to be addressed.

Translink advise that it and Roads Service officials are currently working together on a feasibility study of options, with a view to producing an Economic Appraisal. The Economic Appraisal will be submitted to my Department for approval, probably at the end of summer this year.

In the meantime I will be meeting with Translink's Chief Executive later this month to discuss the matter further.

I should point out that at this point, there is no provision for this project in Translink's current Corporate Plan but this will be reviewed when the Economic Appraisal process is complete. As you will appreciate this will have to be considered in the context of future Translink and Departmental budget scenarios.

Board Members of Public Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development how many former civil and public servants are employed as (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid board members of public bodies which are sponsored by his Department; and what this figure is as a proportion of the total number of board members.

(AQW 11918/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Our records indicate six former civil and public servants from a total of 52 board members are serving on the boards of public bodies sponsored by my Department. All six of these board members are paid which represents 11.54% of the total.

Homes Not Connected to a Mains Water Supply

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development how many homes are not connected to a mains water supply, broken down by county; and what plans are in place to connect these homes.

(AQW 12091/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Water maintains records of its customers i.e. those who are connected to the mains network. It does not hold specific records on the number of properties unconnected to the public water supply.

A consultation carried out by my Department between November 2010 and February 2011 as part of the Review of Financial Assistance For Domestic Properties Not Served By A Water Main identified around 1200 properties in Northern Ireland that are not served by a water main. This information was collated by local council area (rather than county) as follows:

Local Council District	Number of Properties not served by a water main
Antrim	32
Ards	5
Armagh	58
Ballymena	193

Local Council District	Number of Properties not served by a water main
Ballymoney	14
Banbridge	24
Belfast	0
Carrickfergus	11
Castlereagh	0
Coleraine	44
Cookstown	27
Craigavon	7
Derry	16
Down	22
Dungannon	47
Fermanagh	59
Larne	121
Limavady	38
Lisburn	8
Magherafelt	86
Moyle	90
Newry & Mourne	110
Newtownabbey	10
North Down	1
Omagh	82
Strabane	77

Properties that are 'not served' are those that do not have a water main in the public road nearest to the property (or within 100m of the nearest access point) as opposed to those which are not connected where there is an available mains supply. The latter would be a higher figure than the number of properties not "served".

On 9 May 2012, I announced the launch of the Rural Borewell Scheme which will provide a grant to households in isolated rural areas for a private borewell where the cost of a water mains requisition is prohibitively high. This innovative cross-departmental scheme will help provide affordable access to a wholesome water supply for households who are outside the reach of the public network. The scheme will come into operation this summer and will run for four years subject to demand.

Boards of Department's Arm's Length Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development how many former senior civil servants, from deputy secretary grade to permanent secretary grade, serve on the boards of his Department's arm's length bodies in a (i) paid; and (ii) unpaid capacity.

(AQW 12098/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Our records indicate one former senior civil servant, from deputy secretary grade to permanent secretary grade, is serving on a board of a public body sponsored by my Department. This board member serves in a paid capacity.

Car Park Ticket Vending Machines

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether he has considered replacing car park ticket vending machines with machines that dispense change; and (ii) to estimate the additional revenue raised annually by using ticket vending machines that do not dispense change.

(AQW 12403/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that car parks with a 'Pay on Foot' operation, do offer change. 'Pay and Display' machines do not offer this facility, but instead calculate the time of parking permitted, depending on the amount of money inserted.

The cost of changing the current Pay and Display machines, to dispense change would be prohibitively expensive and, under the current budgetary pressures, there are no plans to do so.

As Pay and Display machines calculate the time of parking allowed depending on the amount of money inserted, it is not possible to calculate how much additional revenue is raised.

For your additional information, I can advise that a cashless parking system is currently being trialled in Belfast, Newry, Lisburn, Omagh and Londonderry, whereby parking can be paid using mobile phones without the need to put cash into the Pay and Display machine. Under this system, the 'parking event' can be stopped upon return to the vehicle and the user therefore only pays for the parking used. If this trial is successful, it will be rolled out throughout Northern Ireland.

Railways: Coleraine to Londonderry

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he can give an assurance that railway safety will not be compromised if the Castlerock and Londonderry signal boxes are closed when the signalling system between Coleraine and Londonderry is upgraded.

(AQO 2065/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I thank the Member for his question and am pleased that this work will be going ahead as I have secured the necessary funding and the Executive and Assembly's approval to bring forward the Coleraine to Londonderry Track Renewal Work. The project will be completed in three phases, with the first phase commencing in July 2012 and finishing in April 2013. While this means the line will be closed at the start of the City of Culture year, it will be open again for key events in the City of Culture calendar.

The responsibility for the safe operation of the railway system rests with Translink. My Department, as the Safety Authority for Northern Ireland, approves the processes used. This includes change management processes to ensure that any alterations to existing systems are introduced in a safe manner.

Translink has confirmed that all modern signalling systems are undertaken remotely from the railway itself without compromising safety. Indeed they also advise that the new system will enhance overall safety, with signalmen receiving feedback on the location of trains between Coleraine and Londonderry, unlike at present.

Grange Lane and Trench Lane Bridge, Mallusk

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions have taken place with other departments on the replacement of the bridge at Grange Lane and Trench Lane, Mallusk.

(AQO 2066/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Grange Lane and Trench Lane, Mallusk, including the bridge over the Ballymartin River, are in private ownership and are, therefore, not the responsibility of Roads Service. However, my Department's Roads Service is aware of the deterioration of the bridge structure, having previously

attended inter-agency meetings at Newtownabbey Borough Council offices on 9 December 2011 and 19 January 2012 when this issue was discussed with a view to identifying a potential solution.

Roads Service also met with Rivers Agency officials on 15 December 2011 to discuss options and design concerns. Roads Service subsequently forwarded information to Newtownabbey Borough Council on 23 December 2011 in relation to the basic design, costs and operational difficulties associated with undertaking replacement bridge works. My officials recommended that the residents employ the services of a Project Manager and contractor with the expertise to provide a 'Design and Build' service.

At the most recent meeting on 19 January 2012, Roads Service officials advised that it was not possible to offer any further assistance over and above the technical assistance already provided, as the bridge is a private structure and Roads legislation does not permit my Department to spend public money on privately owned structures. However, I understand that ongoing discussions are taking place between various agencies and Departments and I will await their outcome.

A5 Dual Carriageway: Social Clauses

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he is taking to ensure that the social clauses included in the contracts for the A5 road project will be honoured.

(AQO 2067/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that for contracts, commencing the tender process after 1 September 2011, social clauses have been included in all one-off contracts of value greater than £1m.

These clauses have been agreed with the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland and will form part of the phase two contracts associated with the delivery of the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor project.

Subject to a successful outcome to the Public Inquiry process, it is proposed to commence construction later this year.

Monitoring of the implementation of these social clauses, which will take place in conjunction with the Department for Employment and Learning, will form part of the overall management of the contracts.

Water Supply

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development how many rural homes are currently without a mains water supply.

(AQO 2068/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Water maintains records of its customers i.e. those who are connected to the mains network. It does not hold specific records on the number of properties unconnected to the public water supply.

A consultation carried out by my Department between November 2010 and February 2011 as part of the Review of Financial Assistance For Domestic Properties Not Served By A Water Main identified around 1200 properties in Northern Ireland that are not served by a water main. Properties that are 'not served' are those that do not have a water main in the public road nearest to the property (or within 100m of the nearest access point) as opposed to those who are not connected to the mains supply as a matter of choice.

On 9 May 2012, I announced the launch of the Rural Borewell Scheme, which will provide a grant to households in isolated rural areas for a private borewell where the cost of a water mains requisition is prohibitively high. This innovative cross-departmental scheme will address a long standing problem by helping to provide affordable access to a wholesome water supply for households who are outside the reach of the public network. The scheme will come into operation this summer and will run for four years subject to demand.

Traffic Calming

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the effectiveness of the current criteria for the introduction of traffic calming measures.

(AQO 2069/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for the vulnerable road user. Traffic calming is recognised as an effective way of improving road safety in urban and residential areas by reducing speed and managing driver behaviour.

Roads Service receives numerous requests for traffic calming schemes and undertakes an extensive prioritisation exercise to ensure the most deserving and appropriate schemes are implemented.

The method of prioritisation for proposed schemes considers many factors, including traffic collisions, traffic speed and volume, the local environment and the effectiveness of the proposed works. This is followed by a widespread consultation exercise with affected stakeholders and residents, to ensure the most appropriate measures are implemented.

Roads Service reviews traffic calming schemes that have been in place and operational for at least six months, to ensure the intended objectives have been fully met. In addition, analysis of road traffic collisions at each location is undertaken by comparing the three year periods prior to and after implementation of each scheme. Changes in traffic speeds can also be measured as part of the monitoring process.

Roads Service's experience has shown that these relatively low cost measures have had a positive effect on residents living in areas where traffic calming has been implemented. This is most evident where the speed and volume of traffic has reduced and subsequently the personal injury road collision history has improved accordingly.

I am, therefore, satisfied that the current policy and assessment criteria is appropriate. I can, however, assure the Member that roads safety is a key priority for Roads Service and my officials are constantly researching methods to continually improve the safety of our roads.

Translink: 60+ SmartPass

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department monitors the number of people availing of the 60+ SmartPass scheme every year.

(AQO 2070/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department monitors the number of people availing of the 60 plus SmartPass every year by gathering information regarding usage from each operator and from information provided by independent external auditors acting on behalf of the Department. These auditors carry out an annual assessment of the scheme.

The terms and conditions for the 60 plus concessionary fares scheme are designed to safeguard public monies with payments on actuals only and with a rigorous audit trail.

Buses: Renewable Energy

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he intends to take to introduce a new generation of buses which are more reliant on renewable energy than on fossil fuels.

(AQO 2071/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has invested considerably in recent years to upgrade the Translink fleet with the aim of improving accessibility and average fleet age. Over 900 buses costing around £135m have been purchased from 2004 to 2012. Future investment in buses will be determined by available Capital budgets

Possible future transport power sources are numerous from biofuel to gas to electricity but there is no established trend for take up by Bus companies anywhere in the UK.

Translink already uses one twentieth (5%) bio-diesel fuel, and were early adopters of this fuel source in Northern Ireland. There are doubts about whether this bio-diesel element can be increased. Translink does not have any trials in place for electric vehicles. Its assessment is that this is still an emerging technology. Vehicles are currently expensive with infrastructure and replacement battery costs an additional factor to be considered.

My department has, however, funded Translink to invest in initiatives to reduce the use of fuels used by its buses. Over the past 18 months Translink has installed idle shut down systems in three quarters (75%) of its fleet ensuring that engines switch off once they have been idling for a pre-determined time. Following a successful eco-driving pilot which demonstrated that specific driver training supported by on-bus systems to inform drivers as to their 'driving style' can yield fuel efficiency gains, roll out of this system is due to commence in June 2012.

Unadopted Roads

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the current position on unadopted roads and developments.

(AQO 2072/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The issue of unadopted roads in housing developments has become much more significant primarily due to the effects of the economic downturn. My Department's Roads Service is working to adopt properly constructed development roads, in line with current Private Streets legislation and processes.

The process of construction and adoption of new roads in housing developments is usually led by private developers. The changing economic circumstances have presented developers with major challenges and impacted upon their capacity to complete developments as originally planned. However, it must be emphasised that responsibility for these new roads remains with the developers (or other responsible parties), until the adoption process is completed.

My Department is cooperating with the Committee for Regional Development's Inquiry into Unadopted Roads, and I will respond to its findings in due course.

Translink: Fare Increases

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions his Department has had with Translink in relation to the recently announced increases in rail and bus fares.

(AQO 2073/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Each year Translink produces a 3 year Corporate Plan which is discussed with my Department. The focus is on the year ahead. Translink is obligated under the Transport and Company acts to consider going concern issues and must break even year on year. Plans are drawn up which take account of Translink's statutory obligations, funding, costs, fares, fare income and levels of service.

My role, and that of my officials, is to consider and accept the Translink Corporate Plan in whole or in part, on the understanding that this will impact on fares and will be updated within a year.

Discussions begin at official level a number of months before the start of the financial year, mainly about funding scenarios. Prior to approving any increases I also take into account the views of key stakeholders including the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.

Following these discussions I accepted the need for the fare increases for the current 2012/13 financial year. In my assessment of the fare increases I had to balance the impact on customers against the commercial obligations placed on Translink. Obviously fare increases are not welcome but in the current financial climate particularly given increasing fuel costs, an average fare increase of below the rate of inflation set in the context that Translink has not put fares up since June 2010, which contrasts markedly with the position in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, is a positive outcome.

Accessible Transport Strategy

Ms Brown asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact that the recent Translink price rise may have on the draft Accessible Transport Strategy.

(AQO 2074/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Accessible Transport Strategy was approved and published in 2005. It contained an objective to “provide help with travel costs to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them”. I have not carried out a formal assessment, but I do not expect the recent decision on Translink fares to impact adversely on the achievement of this objective.

In pursuit of this objective, the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme provides free travel for people aged 60 and over and to those registered blind, and half fare travel for certain people with disabilities, including those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

In 2012/13, benefits for people with disabilities, including Disability Living Allowance, were increased by over one twentieth (5.2%), whilst Translink fares, on average, have risen by less than the current rate of inflation (3% compared to 3.5%). Affordability of public transport, therefore, is unlikely to impact this year on delivery of the Accessible Transport Strategy. My decision to approve the fare increases was key to underpinning the Translink business plan and will enable the company to meet its commercial obligations and mitigate the risk of contraction in the network of bus and rail services.

I acknowledge that any fare increase is unwelcome however it is also important to note that fares have not increased since June 2010. This contrasts markedly with the position in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

In January 2012, my Department published a draft Action Plan to take forward the Accessible Transport Strategy up to 2015. The draft plan includes two actions in relation to the affordability objective. Neither of these actions will be affected by the recent fare increases.

Ballyquin Road, Dungiven

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the current position on the realignment of a bend on the Ballyquin Road in Dungiven where five young people died in three separate accidents.
(AQO 2075/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: May I firstly say that the death of the young people on the Ballyquinn Road and indeed, any death on our roads, is deeply regrettable, and our sympathy goes out to all those who have lost loved ones due to road accidents.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that a scheme has been developed to realign the bend on the Ballyquin Road in the townland of Scriggan. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to include this scheme in the 2012/13 minor works programme. However, subject to the availability of finance and the successful acquisition of land, it will be considered for prioritisation and inclusion in a future programme.

Department for Social Development

Housing Executive Properties: Double Glazing

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development whether any incremental yearly targets have been set at Housing Executive district level in relation to upgrading existing properties that do not have double glazing,

(AQW 10955/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive has not set any yearly targets at District Office level for double glazing installation. At my request it is currently finalising an extensive review of its replacement window specification, that will enable it to firm up a three

year programme to ensure that all of its stock has double glazing installed by the Programme for Government target date of 2015.

Photographs Taken by Publicly Funded Photographers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last three years, to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of photographs taken by publicly funded photographers in which he has appeared in his Ministerial role and which included another member of the DUP who was not there in their Ministerial role, and which have been released to the media or published on the Executive's Flickr account.

(AQW 11009/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) Since May 2011, I have been in photographs taken by publicly funded photographers on 9 occasions which have also included another member of the DUP who was not there in their Ministerial role, and which have been released to the media or published on the Executive's Flickr account. In all cases those included in the photographs were elected representatives for the area or were directly associated with the event.
- (ii) We do not hold the information in the format requested.

New Windows for the Flats and Houses at Innishargie Gardens, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the new windows for the flats and houses at Innishargie Gardens, Bangor.

(AQW 11084/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not currently available as I have considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could now be made. I have therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. Until that review is completed, all further double glazing installations are to be held until the new contract provisions, to include any revised specifications, can be put in place. The only exception to that would be where a current Egan contractor has a contract placed with a supplier for delivery of frames and any cancellation would mean nugatory expenditure. While it is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme, and this will be completed in the current CSR period, any delay will be as short as possible while the Housing Executive carries out the review requested by me.

Refurbishment of Flats at Barnagh Grove, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the refurbishment of flats at Barnagh Grove, Donaghadee.

(AQW 11085/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Kitchen and window replacement schemes are planned for the flats in the current financial year. However, as I have considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could now be made. I have therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. Until that review is completed, all further double glazing installations are to be held until the new contract provisions, to include any revised specifications, can be put in place. The only exception to that would be where a current Egan contractor has a contract placed with a supplier for delivery of frames and any cancellation would mean nugatory expenditure. While it is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme, and this will be completed in the current CSR period, any delay will be as short as possible while the Housing Executive carries out the review requested by me.

Window Replacement Scheme for the Flats at Rathgill Park, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timescale of the window replacement scheme for the flats at Rathgill Park, Bangor.

(AQW 11160/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not currently available as I have considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could now be made. I have therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. Until that review is completed, all further double glazing installations are to be held until the new contract provisions, to include any revised specifications, can be put in place. The only exception to that would be where a current Egan contractor has a contract placed with a supplier for delivery of frames and any cancellation would mean nugatory expenditure. While it is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme, and this will be completed in the current CSR period, any delay will be as short as possible while the Housing Executive carries out the review requested by me.

Average Rent for a Housing Executive House

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what is the average rent for a three-bedroom Housing Executive house.

(AQW 11490/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive does not calculate rents based on the number of bedrooms but rather on the number of bed spaces. Typically a three bed roomed house could have 3, 4, 5 or 6 bed spaces. The table appended details typical weekly rents by number of bed spaces across property types.

I hope this information is useful.

Typical weekly Housing Executive rents by number of bed spaces across property types

Property Type	Number of Bed Spaces			
	3	4	5	6
Detached House	£64.62	£66.28	£72.91	£74.57
Semi detached house	£59.65	£61.31	£67.94	£69.59
Terrace house	£58.00	£59.65	£66.28	£67.94
Flat/Maisonette (2 Storey or less)	£49.71	£51.37	£58.00	£59.65
Flat Maisonette (3 Storey or More)	£44.74	£46.40	£53.02	£54.68

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Disability Living Allowance

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's involvement in assessing the tenders to deliver the medical assessment to be introduced in moving claimants from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment.

(AQW 11505/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Security Agency in Northern Ireland is participating with the Department for Work and Pensions in Great Britain in a procurement process which was launched on 2 May 2012 to procure Assessment Providers to support Personal Independence Payment.

The Social Security Agency has had extensive involvement and input to the procurement process including the service specification which reflects Northern Ireland specific differences. These differences reflect the Customer Journey proposed in Northern Ireland, distinct security requirements and the required legislative passage of the Welfare Reform Bill through the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Officials from the Social Security Agency will evaluate the bids to provide services in Northern Ireland and will sit on the Department for Work and Pensions Personal Independence Payment Programme Board and on supplier panel meetings.

Housing Waiting List

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how many people on the housing waiting list require accommodation for single occupancy.

(AQW 11507/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At the 1st May 2012 there were 15,253 single applicants on the waiting list for social housing in Northern Ireland.

Social Housing Units

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the 4,600 housing units planned to be built in the next three years are designed for single occupancy.

(AQW 11508/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the next 3 years, we plan to deliver 4600 new social homes.

The current 3 year Programme includes 315 schemes with the potential to deliver 6,181 new homes, of which approximately 50% will be suitable for single occupancy.

However, some of these schemes may not progress for a variety of reasons and other schemes will be added, particularly in years 2 and 3 of the programme.

I am particularly conscious of the challenges that will be posed by forthcoming welfare reform changes and have already made clear that our future new build plans must take account and be responsive to the challenges faced.

Housing Executive's Current Specification to Contractors for Double-Glazing Installation

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development to whom he spoke to in the glass and glazing industry that led to his concerns about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for double-glazing installation.

(AQW 11510/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I and my officials along with the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive have had informal approaches and letters from a number of firms in the double glazing industry. I and the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive then met with representatives of the Glass and Glazing Federation and Fusion 21 to discuss double glazing specifications in Housing Executive properties in relation to the Glass and Glazing Federations guidelines 'The Good Practice Guide for the Installation of Replacement Windows and Doors'.

Double-Glazing Scheme for Housing Executive Properties in Kilcooly, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development whether the double-glazing scheme for Housing Executive properties in parts of Kilcooly, Bangor, will proceed in 2012.

(AQW 11519/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of the Housing Executive's review of double glazing, I have agreed what category groups and schemes should now proceed and I have asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position. With regard to the scheme for Kilcooley, I can confirm that it is scheduled to commence in 2012/13.

Housing Executive Properties in the South Down Constituency Without Double-Glazed Windows

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties in the South Down constituency without double-glazed windows; and (ii) when they will be fitted with double-glazed windows.

(AQW 11535/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not currently available as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. In addition the Housing Executive's records on the level of double glazing within its stock are incomplete as many such schemes were carried out prior to the introduction of its computerised recording system and they are now carrying out an extensive exercise to identify those properties which require double glazing. This will be completed by the end of May 2012.

I have had considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could be made. I therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. As part of the Housing Executive's review I have agreed what category groups and schemes should proceed and I have asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position. It is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme overall and this will be completed in the CSR period, by 2015 as set out in the Executive's Programme for Government.

With regard to schemes in the South Down constituency I can confirm that two double glazing schemes in Downpatrick and one in Newry should commence in 2012/13 financial year.

Social Housing Developments in the South Down Area

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development how many social housing developments have been built in the South Down area since 2006.

(AQW 11539/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of social housing units completed within the South Down Parliamentary Constituency during the period 2005/06 – 2011/12: -

Year	Units completed
2011/12	116
2010/11	14
2009/10	29
2008/09	40
2007/08	33
2006/07	31
2005/06	11

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Need for New Build Housing in Cookstown

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what assessment has been carried out into the need for new build housing in Cookstown in the last two years; (ii) who carried out this assessment; (iii) how long it took to complete; (iv) what its findings were; (v) how many of these findings has been implemented; (vi) whether any projects have been scheduled as a result of these findings; (vii) what stage these projects reached; and (viii) what is the current status of all new build projects in the Cookstown District.

(AQW 11569/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) A housing need assessment is carried out annually for all local housing areas across Northern Ireland. In addition to this annual assessment, the Housing Executive has also undertaken a specific study of Cookstown Town.
- (ii) This assessment was carried out by the Housing Executive West Area Planning Unit.
- (iii) The Annual assessment is undertaken each year during the month of August. The specific study of Cookstown Town took a number of weeks to complete in 2009/10 and has been updated on a number of occasions since.
- (iv) The projected housing need for Cookstown Urban area is 65 units over the period 2011-2016.

The specific study is a useful and living document for identifying potential development sites for social housing in the Town

- (v) Several potential development sites were registered by housing associations with one specifically added to the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP). Within the last 3 years, 10 new homes have been completed in Cookstown. A previous scheme that could have delivered up to 50 units over different phases was identified and a housing association appointed to explore it further. Unfortunately site assembly issues have prevented that scheme from progressing further, hence the attempt to bring forward another scheme initially planned for 2014/15.
- (vi) A scheme for 15 new homes that was initially identified to begin during 2014/15 is now being considered for an earlier start if feasible.
- (vii) I understand work on that specific scheme is at an early stage.
- (viii) There is currently a scheme in year three of the SHDP for 15 units. The Unmet Need Prospectus now lists Cookstown as having an unmet need of 50 units over the period 2011-2016. This includes information relating to the development limits and an outline of the housing requirements to meet housing need in Cookstown for the 2011-2016 period. The Unmet Need Prospectus will assist housing associations in their search for sites in advance of the annual bidding round later this year.

Repair and Maintenance Schemes for Housing Executive Stock

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the number of repair and maintenance schemes for Housing Executive stock; and (ii) the start and completion date of each scheme, broken down by council area.

(AQW 11583/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not differentiate between repair and maintenance schemes, nor do they collate this information by council area. However, the tables attached detail the schemes started and their completion date (where completion has been achieved) by Housing Executive District Office.

The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Reversible Windows

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development when the Housing Executive began installing reversible windows in its properties; and for what reason it decided to install them.

(AQW 11595/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive began installing fully reversible windows when the window replacement policy was changed in 2006/07. Their decision to install these types of windows was based on several factors:-

- The need for a universal window arrangement across property types.
- This window type is fully compliant with all respective standards and legislation pertaining to safety and security (BS 7950), operation and strength characteristics (BS 6375) and weather-tightness (BS EN 12211 & BS EN 1027)
- The steel construction and fewer moving parts than most other window operating systems make maintenance and lubrication of the window, if required, much easier coupled with the fact that specialised equipment or contractors do not have to be employed for simple maintenance purposes

There is a review of the above specification for the low rise housing stock and consideration of a window style and hinge arrangement used widely in the private sector. There will still be the key requirements of egress, easy clean and child restriction as standard as in the present arrangement. This change in the specification is aimed at effecting savings in the overall cost of the window.

Vacant Properties in the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of vacant (i) Housing Executive properties; and (ii) housing association properties in the North Down constituency, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 11615/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i) the information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by electoral ward. However, Table 1 below details the vacant Housing Executive properties within the Housing Executive's Bangor District Office area which covers the North Down constituency. In relation to (ii) Table 2 details the vacant Housing Association properties by electoral ward for the North Down constituency.

TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF VACANT HOUSING EXECUTIVE PROPERTIES IN THE BANGOR DISTRICT OFFICE AREA

Estate/ Area	No. of vacant properties
Bloomfield/Rathgill/Willowbrook	8
Clandeboyne Road	1
Conlig/Breezemount	4
Kilcooley	29
Lisnabreen	1
Loughview	10
Redburn	3

Estate/ Area	No. of vacant properties
Woodlands	1
Strand /Kinnegar	1
Whitehill	3
Total	61

TABLE 2 - NUMBER OF VACANT HOUSING ASSOCIATION PROPERTIES IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

North Down Electoral Wards	No. of vacant properties
Groomsport	1
Broadway	1
Harbour	3
Bloomfield	1
Conlig	3
Silverstream	2
Rathgael	1
Hollywood Demesne	2
Total	14

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Social Houses: Energy Efficiency Rating of Energy Performance Certificates

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to detail the percentage of social houses which fall into (a) categories A to G on the energy efficiency rating of energy performance certificates; (b) each category code (1 to 6) for sustainable homes; (ii) for an estimate of the average additional cost, per dwelling, of requiring that all new build social houses conform to code 6 for sustainable homes; and (iv) given the increasing levels of fuel poverty, what consideration he has given to increasing the code for sustainable homes requirement for all new build social houses.

(AQW 11631/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the Government's standard method of rating the energy efficiency of a dwelling.

The most recent available figures regarding SAP readings are from the 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey.

This indicated that of the estimated 110,000 dwellings in the social housing sector the SAP readings were as follows;

Band A/B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G
4,200	36,200	46,500	17,400	5,400	400

(Please note that the total number of dwellings selected for participation in the 2009 House Condition Survey was 3,000 and that these figures should be viewed as indicative.)

- (ii) The most up to date information available in relation to the categories in the code for sustainable homes relates to 2010/11, when there were 1516 new build units started, all of which were built to the Code for Sustainable homes codes 3 and 4.
- (iii) As the only code 6 scheme to be built in Northern Ireland was developed privately, there are no figures available on the additional cost requirements at this time. A scheme that will be started on site by Oaklee Housing Association in Carryduff later this year will deliver to Code 5 standard and may also include some Code 6 homes that will help us better understand the challenges and costs associated with this increased scale of development.
- (iv) The Code for Sustainable Homes was introduced to drive a step change in sustainable home building practice. It is a standard for key elements of design and construction which effect the sustainability of a new home. It does not specifically address issues associated with Fuel Poverty which remains a key priority for me both in new homes we build and existing homes we must seek to improve.

Development of Welfare Policy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has had with the UK Government in relation to a formal system of consultation on, and participation in, the development of welfare policy, including opportunities for the identification of potential policy variations, at an early stage of policy development, in relation to social security and the consequential impact on more fully devolved matters.

(AQW 11762/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Section 87 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, provides for consultation between the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Minister for Social Development to ensure that a single system of social security, child support and pensions exist for the United Kingdom. I have been working closely with Ministers in Department for Work and Pensions to develop more frequent and meaningful consultation at Ministerial level.

It is our experience that the full impact of any policy proposals only becomes known as the corresponding Bill and/or regulations are drafted, together with the Equality Impact Assessment. At this point, my officials would have ongoing contact with their counterparts in Department for Work and Pensions on the policy proposals and any primary or subordinate legislation arising.

At Ministerial level, both UK Ministers and I have formal and informal discussions and correspondence at appropriate points in the policy development process.

Since becoming Minister for Social Development, I have had, and continue to have, discussions around welfare reform with relevant UK Ministers including Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform (Lords), Rt Hon Owen Patterson, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Maria Miller, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Disabled People.

These discussions cover a range of issues including the specific challenges that may arise from the implementation of the proposed Welfare Reform changes in Northern Ireland and how best we can progress discussions on operational flexibilities, taking account of issues raised at the Executive Sub-Committee meeting.

I should also advise that Lord Freud met with the Executive Sub Committee on Welfare Reform on 17th May and the OFM dFM Advisory Group on Hardship the following day, the 18th May, to hear at first hand their views on the wider impacts of social security within Northern Ireland.

Welfare Reform

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what work his Department has carried out to determine the accurate cost of the impact of Welfare Reform.

(AQW 11763/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A range of work is being taken forward to determine the cost and public expenditure implications of Welfare Reform.

Economic appraisals for each individual strand of Welfare Reform are being progressed including the required financial analysis on value for money and the related public expenditure impacts in line with Department of Finance and Personnel guidance; and

Two separate strategic models which cover the spending review 2010 and 2014 periods are being progressed.

The first model considers the impact on Northern Ireland social security benefit related spending funded directly from HM Treasury in line with actual demand and supports the work of the Executive Sub Committee on Welfare Reform. Early results were presented to the Sub Committee on 6 February 2012, with an update due prior to the summer recess

The second model considers the costs of implementing the Welfare Reform changes and administering the benefits system over the Spending Review 2010 and Spending Review 2014 periods and captures the impact on Northern Ireland Executive managed block funds.

The Department for Social Development and the Social Security Agency are also developing the use of the Department for Work and Pensions Policy Simulation Model which uses data from the Family Resources Survey to evaluate the impact of policy proposals on individuals and households. This is currently being used to evaluate the impact of Universal Credit. This work will continue to be updated and refined as projects progress and move from planning into implementation and delivery.

Listed Properties

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the listed properties that are owned by his Department.

(AQW 11785/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development owns two managed workspace properties, at 109/113 Royal Avenue, Belfast and 42 Waring Street, Belfast which are listed.

Building Control Fees for Loft Insulations

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact of Building Control fees for loft insulations on the Warm Homes Scheme.

(AQW 11833/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Building Control professionals have expressed concerns about the lack of ventilation in roof spaces which is leading to serious problems with damp. They argue that there is a need to inspect insulation given the focus there has been in recent years on roof space insulation. Article 13(2) (e) of The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland Order) 1979 authorises district councils to charge prescribed fees for inspection of roof space insulation. There is no mandatory obligation to do so but where District Councils decide to charge fees they can. The fees that are applicable are those set by the Department of Finance and Personnel. However, District Councils may absorb the fee ie. pay the fee itself using powers provided by Section 115 of The Local Government Act 1972.

A dispute process is underway between the Warm Homes Scheme managers and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to ascertain who is obliged to pay the Building Control Fee and this matter has not been concluded.

I am confident that the Public Service Agreement target of assisting 9,000 vulnerable homes with energy efficiency improvements will be met. The commitment of both the Warm Homes Scheme managers and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has ensured that, since the contract was awarded in 2009, the target has consistently been exceeded.

Universal Credit

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of (i) the benefits of maintaining a fortnightly payment of Universal Credit; (ii) the benefits of paying Universal Credit to the female head of the household and the impact this might have on a child's wellbeing.

(AQW 11838/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) I support the principle that, where possible, Universal Credit payments should mirror salary payments, which in the vast majority of cases for working families is a monthly payment. This could help people currently on benefit with the transition into employment and helps them avoid the 'poverty premium' with access to monthly direct debit payments and reduced costs. However, I also recognise that some customers will struggle with a monthly payment of benefit and I am therefore ensuring that appropriate support to cope with the change is available to those who require it. A payment service will also be available to allow for more frequent payment of Universal Credit for those customers who are unable to cope with monthly payments.
- (ii) A key aim of Universal Credit is to encourage greater responsibility for household budgeting through the payment of a single household monthly payment. Responsibility for nominating who should receive payment of Universal Credit will rest with the household. My Department would wish to ensure childrens' well being in whatever payment arrangements are put in place however, there is no evidence to support the view that mandatory payments of Universal Credit to the female head of household would have a significant impact on a child's well being.

Passported Benefit Payments and Social Fund Payments

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration he has given to the extent to which existing expenditure on (i) passported benefit payments; and (ii) social fund payments can be preserved.

(AQW 11840/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) There are a range of passported benefits currently available to those people in Northern Ireland who are in receipt of an out of work means tested benefit, tax credits or a low income. These benefits are delivered by a variety of Government Departments and decisions in respect of eligibility criteria and funding for a specific benefit are the responsibility of individual Departments. Departments with responsibility for passported benefits are currently considering the options for delivery of these benefits following the introduction of Universal Credit and the Personal Independence Payment in 2013. The Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform has also discussed the issue of passported benefits and how they may be delivered in Northern Ireland.

My Department is also directly responsible for the provision of a number of passported benefits and my officials are currently considering the implications for these benefits from the introduction of Universal Credit. Benefits that will remain as part of the regulated Social Fund, including Cold Weather Payments, Funeral Payments, Sure Start Maternity Grants and Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be entitlement based. Funding for these benefits will continue to be met from Annually Managed Expenditure in common with other social security benefits. My Department also has no plans to reduce the level of housing renewal grant aid for the private housing sector as a result of welfare reform.

- (ii) There have been a number of discussions between Ministers in respect of the abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses and household items and my Department's plan to replace them with new discretionary support provision. Discussion on

the level of funding which will be made available for the new provision is ongoing with HM Treasury and the Department for Finance and Personnel and it is not currently clear what funding will transfer from HM Treasury. I will ensure that all efforts are made to negotiate the best possible financial settlement for replacement discretionary support. I have also secured Executive agreement that HM Treasury transferred funding will be ring-fenced for the purposes of discretionary support delivery.

Civil Servants

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development how many civil servants currently employed in his Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 11845/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No civil servants currently employed in my Department have been re-employed after receiving a redundancy package from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Equality Impact Assessment on the Proposed Welfare Reform Changes

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Equality Impact Assessment on the proposed Welfare Reform changes considered the impact on foster carers.

(AQW 11858/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Equality Impact Assessment on the Welfare Reform changes did not specifically consider the impact on foster carers as they are not one of the groups listed within Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. However, as foster carers fall within a number of the protected groupings the impact of welfare reform on each of the protected groups (insofar as the data is available), has been considered within the Equality Impact assessment. An updated Equality Impact Assessment was published on the department's website on 4th May 2012.

Department's Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of invoices, received by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in the last twelve months, were paid within 30 days of receipt.

(AQW 11867/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is provided in the table below. Figures relate to the 2011-12 financial year ended 31 March 2012.

Name of body	% invoices cleared within 30 days
NI Housing Executive	84.4
ILEX Urban Regeneration Company	94.1
Charities Commission for N Ireland	99.5

Employment and Support Allowance Appeal Hearings

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the 8,417 Employment and Support Allowance appeal hearings which took place in 2011/12, how many of the appeals resulted in the initial decision being (i) upheld; and (ii) overturned.

(AQW 11963/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the manner requested. The Chairman of the tribunal hearing records whether the decision made on appeal is either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award is made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the

original determination. On this basis, the table below details the outcome of the 8,417 appeal hearings held in 2011/12.

ESA appeals held in 2011/12	Sub-Totals
Outcome More Advantageous	2193
Outcome Less Advantageous	4125
Cases pending final determination	2099
Total	8417

Social Housing Development Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many new home starts have been delivered in the North Antrim constituency through the Social Housing Development Programme.
(AQW 12058/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of social housing starts within the North Antrim parliamentary constituency during the five year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

Year	Units started
2007/08	3
2008/09	10
2009/10	57
2010/11	16
2011/12	68

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Housing Strategy

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 11582/11-15, whether both sets of housing on the Girdwood site will be allocated according to the Common Selection Scheme, and not segregated on religious grounds.
(AQW 12068/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All social housing in Northern Ireland irrespective of where it is located is allocated in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme.

Housing Executive Double-Glazing Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development the number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties, in the North Down area, affected by the double-glazing scheme being put on hold.
(AQW 12075/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have had considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could be made. I therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. I have also agreed what category groups and schemes should proceed and I have asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position. With regards to the North Down

area no double glazing schemes have been put on hold and there are 688 properties included in three schemes which can proceed and should go on site in this financial year.

Housing Executive Double-Glazing Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what schemes are scheduled, for the North Down constituency, to replace single-glazed windows with double-glazed windows in Housing Executive properties, in the next twelve months.

(AQW 12077/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's records on the level of double glazing within its stock are incomplete as many such schemes were carried out prior to the introduction of its computerised recording system and they are now carrying out an extensive exercise to identify those properties which require double glazing. This will be completed by the end of May 2012.

I have had considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could be made. I therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. I have also agreed what category groups and schemes should proceed and I have asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position. It is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme overall and this will be completed in the CSR period, by 2015 as set out in the Executive's Programme for Government.

In relation to North Down, the Housing Executive has advised that there are three double glazing schemes programmed for North Down in 2012/13. They are: -

- Local Area Priority - Bangor District
- Lisnabreen/Clanmorris
- Whitehill

However, the findings from the survey exercise to identify those properties which require double glazing may result in additional schemes being programmed for North Down in 2013/14.

Housing Executive Double-Glazing Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether the double-glazing scheme for Housing Executive properties in parts of Bloomfield, Bangor, will proceed in 2012.

(AQW 12078/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All dwellings in the Bloomfield Estate have had double glazing installed with the exception of seventy one bungalows which are included in the current stock transfer proposal. Oaklee Housing Association is currently working on their proposal and has therefore still to confirm its improvement proposals for these bungalows. It is highly likely that double glazing will be part of these proposals and that work would therefore be carried out should the transfer go ahead. In the event that the transfer is rejected by the tenants, the Housing Executive will ensure that these bungalows are programmed for double glazing by the Programme for Government target date of 2015.

Housing Executive Double-Glazing Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties, in the North Down constituency, without double-glazed windows; and (ii) when they will be fitted with double-glazed windows.

(AQW 12079/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive's records on the level of double glazing within its stock are incomplete as many such schemes were carried out prior to the introduction of its computerised recording system and they are now carrying out

an extensive exercise to identify those properties which require double glazing. This will be completed by the end of May 2012.

I have had considerable concern about the value for money of the Housing Executive's current specification to contractors for window installation and believe that significant savings could be made. I therefore asked the Housing Executive to rigorously review the entire glazing specification. I have also agreed what category groups and schemes should proceed and I have asked the Housing Executive to urgently write to all contractors to confirm the position. It is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the double glazing programme overall and this will be completed in the CSR period, by 2015 as set out in the Executive's Programme for Government.

Social Housing Development Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many disability adaptations have been carried out in the North Antrim constituency through the Social Housing Development Programme.

(AQW 12085/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to Disabled Adaptation Grants paid to Housing Associations. The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the number of Disabled Adaptation Grants paid to Housing Associations in the Housing Executive's North East area, which includes the North Antrim constituency, for the five year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

North East Area: -

Year	No. of Grants
2007/08	205
2008/09	163
2009/10	206
2010/11	176
2011/12	138

This information refers to Housing Association stock only and excludes: -

- Applications made by Housing Associations for Disabled Adaptation Grants which have not been approved.
- Applications made by Housing Associations for Disabled Adaptation Grants which have expired/ been withdrawn/ ineligible.
- Adaptations carried out by Housing Associations for which Disabled Adaptation Grants have not been claimed.

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Work Capability Assessments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been paid to date to ATOS Healthcare for conducting Work Capability Assessments.

(AQW 12118/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Atos Healthcare provides medical support services on behalf of the Social Security Agency across a range of benefits. This includes medical experts, administrative staff, accommodation and ICT infrastructure. Under the contract charges are levied on a total basis including all services

provided. I am unable to provide the specific information for the costs of conducting the Work Capability Assessment as the charging regime is designated as commercially sensitive information, in accordance with Schedule 30 of the Medical Support Services Agreement.

Occupants who Wish to Buy a Single-Storey Housing Executive Property

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive applies an age-limit to occupants who wish to buy a single-storey Housing Executive property.

(AQW 12124/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Under the current House Sales Scheme, introduced in September 2002, tenants irrespective of age whose tenancy of one and two bedroom bungalows commenced on or after 1 September 2002 do not have a right to buy them. This policy was put in place in order to protect the future limited supply of suitable properties for elderly and disabled people.

However, bungalows with three or more bedrooms are available to purchase by tenants who have five or more year's tenancy with the Housing Executive or any qualifying landlord. This is because such bungalows are viewed as family accommodation.

Lone Parents on Jobseekers Allowance

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department expects lone parents on Jobseekers Allowance to actively seek work during the school holidays, given that no childcare allowance is provided to claimants.

(AQW 12145/11-15)

Mr McCausland: When a lone parent claims Jobseeker's Allowance, an Adviser will draw up a jobseeker's agreement, and amongst other things, will discuss the availability of suitable and affordable childcare with the lone parent. It is normally a condition of entitlement to jobseeker's allowance that claimants are willing and able to take up employment of at least 40 hours per week, but in the case of lone parents there are flexibilities which enable lone parents to restrict their availability for employment to the child's normal school hours. This does not prevent a lone parent from actively seeking work during the school holidays.

Advanced Land Purchase Grants to Housing

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether it is the policy of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to pay Advanced Land Purchase grants to housing associations for sites where neither the necessary planning permission is in place nor where the site has been purchased subject to planning permission; and if so, to detail the rationale for the policy.

(AQW 12197/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Planning Approval is not a prerequisite for an application for an Advance Land Purchase (ALP) grant; however any association applying for an ALP must ensure the development proposals for the proposed land purchase are broadly acceptable to the Planning Service. Generally this will involve liaison with Planning Service and/or the engagement of a Planning Consultant to obtain a professional opinion on development potential of the site in question.

New Social Housing at Killynure Road, Carryduff

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development (i) when construction of the new social housing at Killynure Road, Carryduff will be completed; and (ii) when these properties will be allocated.

(AQW 12206/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I understand that Oaklee Housing Association have had to retender this project and as such do not expect to have a contractor in place and ready to start development on the site until after the summer.

On this basis it is too soon to speculate on when the scheme will complete and be ready for allocation. Once construction begins I will be in a better position to advise you on these issues.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to outline the reasons for the delay in introducing the Welfare Reform Bill; and (ii) whether he can give a commitment that, once introduced, he will not seek accelerated passage.

(AQW 12214/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There has been no undue delay in introducing the Welfare Reform Bill (the Bill). It is normal practice for a Northern Ireland parity Bill to be introduced as soon as possible after the corresponding Westminster Bill has received Royal Assent, in this case, The Welfare Reform Act 2012 received Royal Assent on 8th March, 2012.

I should advise that there are a number of pre-introductory legislative processes to be completed before I can seek the agreement of the Executive Committee to introduce the Bill. These include seeking confirmation from the Departmental Solicitor's Office and the Attorney General that the Bill is within the legislative competence of the Assembly, as well as seeking the consent of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the inclusion of provisions which deal with excepted matters under section 4(1) of, and Schedule 2 to, the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

I can confirm that I have issued a paper to the Executive Committee seeking their agreement to introduce the Bill to the Assembly.

I do not intend to seek accelerated passage for this Bill.

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