

Written Answers to Questions

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

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 15 June 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

10-Year Children and Young People's Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for an update on the review of the structures and processes to implement the 10-Year Children and Young People's Strategy, which includes the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People; (ii) when the review will be completed; (iii) when the outcome will be presented to the Executive; and (iv) when the review findings will be published.

(AQW 10797/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy is being driven forward as a major project within the context of the Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework that we announced in the Programme for Government. A key aim of DSC is to improve the outcomes for children and young people.

Implementation of the Strategy will continue to be led by a Ministerial Sub-Committee (MSC) which is jointly chaired by the Junior Ministers, with all Executive Ministers as members. The MSC and the Executive Sub-Committee will meet on alternate quarters with four scheduled meetings per year.

The Delivering Social Change Programme Board, which is made up of senior officials from across Departments, is currently focusing on children and young people and will be bringing forward proposals in the coming months on implementing structures, including the involvement of stakeholders, to the Ministerial Sub-Committee for approval. Decisions will be made at that stage on how any changes will be disseminated.

Delivering Social Change Programme

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how the Delivering Social Change Programme will contribute to a reduction in the level of child poverty.

(AQW 11383/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Delivering Social Change is the Executive's new delivery framework for social policy and our approach to reducing poverty and tackling social exclusion. It will bring together short and long term measures to improve the opportunities for young people.

Delivering Social Change aims to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages, including an improvement in children's and young people's health, well-being and life opportunities.

We are committed to driving forward new actions that reflect more collaborative and more integrated delivery of services. Through the Delivering Social Change programme board, we are working to deliver new cross-departmental cross-disciplinary approaches in which the services we prioritise for children will be those which deliver the greatest impact in promoting their opportunities throughout their lives.

Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the public consultation on the draft Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse will be published.

(AQO 1877/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The terms of reference for the Investigation and Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse were published on 31 May. Prior to publication they were discussed with representatives of victims and survivors and agreed with the Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart.

Bi-Lateral Meetings with Ministerial Colleagues

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the bi-lateral meetings with Ministerial colleagues, which were arranged by the junior Ministers, to discuss issues affecting children and young people.

(AQW 11563/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Junior Ministers recently met with Ministerial colleagues from DARD, DE, DSD, DRD, DHSSPS, DEL and DOJ to consider further how to progress the work on addressing child poverty.

Further meetings have been scheduled to allow all Ministers to be involved in plans to eradicate child poverty.

Much of what has been developed has been assimilated into the Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework. Within this framework, an action plan, comprising a small number of high level strategic actions, will be developed. The bi-laterals have been the first opportunity Junior Ministers have had to promote DSC to other Ministers and to secure their active commitment and participation.

As a result of earlier work, a significant number of actions have also been included in the Programme for Government which will also contribute towards the reduction in child poverty both in the short-term and across generations.

Child Poverty Strategy

Mr Cree asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on an action or delivery plan for the Child Poverty Strategy.

(AQO 1936/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are driving forward action to tackle child poverty through our Delivering Social Change framework announced in the Programme for Government.

Delivering Social Change aims to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages; and an improvement in children's and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities thereby breaking the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems.

Within the Delivering Social Change framework, an action plan comprising a small number of high level strategic actions is being developed. This will supersede existing and intended Action Plans in relation to the Children and Young People's Strategy and the Child Poverty Strategy.

Junior Ministers are holding discussions with each Executive Minister around the development of this plan.

A significant number of actions which will contribute to the reduction of child poverty are included in the Programme for Government.

Shared Future Proofing

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 10866/11-15, whether 'Shared Future Proofing' is an approved common approach across Government, and from when; and whether it was included in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 11684/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The policy to carry out “Shared Future Proofing” is unique to the Department for Employment and Learning.

The process has not been included in the Programme for Government.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Spratt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Social Investment Fund will start to have a real impact on local communities.

(AQW 11883/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 17 May 2012 Executive Ministers agreed the operation of the Social Investment Fund (SIF), details of which are available on the OFMDFM website (<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/social-investment-fund.htm>)

Our officials can now commence the delivery phase of SIF and have begun the process of establishing Steering Groups to engage with the wider community, identify and prioritise objective evidenced need and propose relevant interventions for inclusion in a strategic area plan.

Whilst we therefore intend to have funding hit the ground over the next few months and gaining momentum over the Budget period, it is important that we acknowledge the complexity of the historically difficult issues we are trying to address.

The Social Investment Fund is aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation and many of the systemic issues associated require a longer term approach. Whilst we expect to see progress over the next few months and into the next 2 years, in that targeted interventions will begin to be delivered, it will take longer to measure the direct impact these will have on communities.

Our officials are working closely with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA) to ensure a full monitoring and evaluation framework is in place so we can monitor and measure progress and identify where interventions are having an impact.

We will also be establishing a Learning and Advisory Forum to ensure examples of best practice and key learning points can be shared across zones as we progress through implementation.

Central to the success of SIF and to ensure maximum impact on the ground, it is imperative that communities and statutory bodies work together, in a truly integrated way. The success of this programme therefore relies on us all to play our part and make the most of this welcomed £80 million investment.

North West Gateway Initiative

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 11158/11-15, how the response sits with the content of the North-South Ministerial Council Institutional Joint Communiqué of 27 April 2012.

(AQW 12199/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no inconsistency between our response to AQW 11158/11-15 and the Communiqué issued following the meeting of the NSMC in institutional format on 27 April. The North West Gateway Initiative provides a framework for relevant projects being delivered and planned by departments within existing resources; it does not itself directly fund those projects.

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail how the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has increased the integration of (i) policy; (ii) funding; and (iii) service delivery for children and young people.

(AQW 12236/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Sub-Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring that the needs of children and young people remain at the heart of the Executive’s priorities.

It has led on the implementation of the Executive's Ten Year Strategy on Children and Young People through the agreement and delivery of the Executive's 2007-08 and 2008-11 Children and Young People's Action Plans. In addition, it has identified and agreed a number of priorities where departments are working together on sub-groups to tackle specific issues around the delivery of children's services such as safeguarding, vulnerable young people, road safety and transitions for children with special educational needs. The Ministerial Sub-Committee will have a critical role under the Delivering Social Change (DSC) arrangements in ensuring that the Executive delivers on its commitments under the Ten-year Strategy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Under the new DSC arrangements, the Executive's Ministerial Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion and its Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People will meet quarterly on alternate rotation – this will mean four scheduled meetings per year (two for each Sub-Committee). Both Committees will be chaired by Junior Ministers, with all Executive Ministers as members. Once a year we will chair a joint meeting of the Sub-Committees.

By integrating efforts across all government departments in this way we can ensure maximum impact on the priority issues in relation to children and young people.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether all the pension schemes that are in place across their Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12304/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Most of the pension schemes in use across our Department's public bodies are Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions made before the change from the Retail Price Index, with the exception of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPSNI) to which some of our public bodies belong, and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) which operates a defined contribution (money purchase) scheme which enables staff to take their pension entitlement with them when their contract ends and ultimately to purchase their own annuity.

We understand that for active members of the LGPSNI and those who left the Scheme after 1 April 2011, all accrued benefits will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index. For deferred pensions and those who left the Scheme before 1 April 2011, the increase to their benefits will be measured by the Retail Price Index up to the beginning of April 2011 and Consumer Price Index thereafter.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at their Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12312/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The total cost of remuneration for Board members for OFMDFM sponsored bodies for the 2011/12 financial year is £599,850. The details are as follows:

Strategic Investment Board	£71,000
NI Judicial Appointments Commission	£35,794
Community Relations Council	£18,000
Equality Commission	£175,192
Commission for Victims & Survivors	£203,250
Ilex Urban Regeneration Co Ltd	£96,614
Total	£599,850

Draft Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the public consultation on the draft Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse will be published.

(AQW 12397/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse were published in a written statement to the Assembly on 31 May 2012. Prior to their publication, they were discussed with victims and survivors and agreed with the Chair of the Inquiry.

Minority Ethnic Development Fund

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Minority Ethnic Development Fund, including when the proposed report on its implementation will be published.

(AQW 12401/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We expect to publish the evaluation of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund in the next few weeks.

Alongside it, we will publish a paper containing proposals for the revised fund which is intended to stimulate discussion with the minority ethnic sector and other key stakeholders about the future shape of the fund.

The Department will stage a number of open meetings to discuss the proposals.

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans they have to reduce (i) the number of QUANGOs; and (ii) the operational cost of QUANGOs.

(AQW 12456/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department is participating in the review of arm's-length bodies across all departments, led centrally by the Budget Review Group, to establish whether individual bodies might be abolished, absorbed into their parent Department or merged with another body, with resultant efficiencies and savings.

In Budget 2010, all OFMDFM sponsored bodies are required to find savings of 3% of their administration costs. This will deliver savings of £0.49m, £0.99m, £1.48m and £1.97m respectively across the Budget period.

Efficiency measures already put in place by our Department include the co-location within Equality House of the Commissioner for Older People, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Equality Commission. This will deliver better value for money in terms of both accommodation costs and the sharing of a number of back office administration costs.

Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what contribution the Executive will be making to the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.

(AQW 12487/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No decision has been made about a contribution from the Executive to The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Agri-Food Strategy Board's Action Plan

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Action Plan will be published.

(AQW 12149/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): As outlined in the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15, the aim is to have an agreed strategic vision for the agri-food sector by the end of this financial year.

However it would be my hope that the Board would publish its action plans as quickly as possible.

Planning Applications

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the information, including the map scales, provided by the Rivers Agency to parties who are making planning applications that might fall within an area designated as a flood plain.

(AQW 12182/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On receipt of information request from parties interested in making a planning application, officials from my Rivers Agency will review the available information for the particular site with a view to providing the most accurate and up-to-date information. This may include the Strategic Flood Map at 1:25,000 scale, extracts from local studies and reports as well as historical flood records and maps, at a range of scales, indicating watercourses and infrastructure for which Rivers Agency has a responsibility.

Planning Applications

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the information, including the map scales, used by the Rivers Agency to respond to consultation requests from the Planning Service, in relation to planning applications which might fall within an area designated as a flood plain.

(AQW 12185/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On receipt of a consultation request from Planning NI, officials from my Rivers Agency will review available information for the particular site with a view to obtaining the most accurate and up-to-date information on which to base advice. This may include the Strategic Flood Map, local studies and reports as well as historical flood records which may provide a range of mapping information from the Strategic Map at 1:25000 scale, to more detailed maps, if available, down to perhaps 1:500 scale. Rivers Agency officials will usually visit the site to familiarise themselves with the site layout, location and the consistency of the information available.

Where it is evident that there is a flood risk issue at this site or as a consequence of the proposal, Planning NI will be advised to request the applicant to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment. This may require the applicant or their professional advisor to carry out further detailed surveys and river modelling, to enable a more definitive outline of the flood risk area and to identify all flooding sources and submit proposals to be taken to mitigate flood risk. Rivers Agency officials will appraise the flood risk assessment in the light of the available information and advise Planning NI on the suitability of the assessment.

Arm's-Length Bodies Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether all the pension schemes that are in place across her Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12305/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Pension schemes are in place in three of my Department's arms length bodies – the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI), the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) and the NI Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA).

AFBI provides pension benefits to staff through the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). Pensions in payment and preserved pensions in this Scheme are Consumer Price Indexed. This includes pension benefits that were earned by contributions before the change of indexation from the Retail Price Index which took effect in April 2011.

Staff in the LMC and NIFHA are members of the NI Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) pension scheme. Prior to April 2011, pension indexation was based on the increase in the Retail Price Index. From April 2011, indexation is based on the Consumer Price Index. In relation to standard scheme benefits, for active members of the scheme and those who left after 1 April 2011, all accrued benefits will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index. For deferred and pensioner members who left prior to 1 April 2011, the increase to their benefits will be based on the Retail Price Index up to April 2011 and the Consumer Price Index thereafter. In relation to additional pension benefits, for contracts that commenced after 1 April 2012, the pre and post retirement increase to benefits is based on the Consumer Price Index. For contracts that commenced prior to 1 April 2012, the current guidance applies a pre and post retirement increase based on the Retail Price Index. However, this guidance is currently under review.

Wind Turbines

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether funding is still available for the provision of wind turbines.

(AQW 12308/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme grant assistance may be provided for standalone renewable initiatives including the erection of wind turbines or for projects where renewable energy technology is planned as part of the larger project. None of the energy produced may be used to reduce the running costs of the farm business or farm home.

Private Promoters, including farmers, farm family members and rural micro businesses (less than 10 employees) may be offered financial assistance at a rate of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant amount of £50,000. Social Economy Enterprises and Community Groups seeking to introduce renewable technologies can be funded at a rate of up to 75% of eligible costs subject to a maximum grant amount of £170,000 depending on the measure applied to. A feasibility study is a programme requirement and as an eligible cost may be supported through technical assistance at similar grant rates up to a maximum grant amount of £5,000.

Single Farm Payments

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had any discussions, with local farmers and MEPs, regarding the effect of the weakening Euro on Single Farm Payments; and whether her Department has considered the need to support farmers, at this time, with additional funding.

(AQW 12323/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am concerned about recent movements in the sterling/euro exchange rate given the negative impact this could have on the amount of Single Farm Payment (SFP) received by farmers. The exchange rate used since 2005 to convert SFP to sterling has ranged from €1 = £0.6777 to €1 = £0.9093. The current market rate is around €1 = £0.80, although for the purposes of SFP in 2012, it is the market rate on 30 September 2012 that will be applied.

Movements in the exchange rate are outside the control of my Department and it is not possible to make additional payments to offset their impact. Some banks and other financial institutions offer hedging arrangements in order to mitigate the exchange rate risk which farmers may wish to explore further.

DNA Testing of Pedigree Cattle for Tuberculosis

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures are in place (i) for the DNA testing of pedigree cattle for Tuberculosis; and (ii) to prevent traders from making fraudulent claims on the pedigree of an animal.

(AQW 12325/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All TB reactor cattle, including pedigree animals, are uniquely tagged at valuation by a Departmental official. Tissue samples are collected during this tagging. Random comparison of the retained tissues are made with other samples to ensure they are from the same animal.

This type of sampling provides a very high degree of confidence that samples can be confirmed as being from the same animal and therefore assures DARD that the animal valued has been slaughtered.

Plans for the testing vet to apply these tags at the earlier time of the TB test are well advanced.

If there are any concerns raised as to the authenticity of the breeding history of the valued cattle, Veterinary Service Enforcement Branch (VSEB) will investigate. As part of their investigation, VSEB will submit the DNA sample taken, at the test or valuation, for analysis and compare this with any DNA held by DARD or pedigree societies from the reactor or its registered parents.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at her Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12355/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at my Department's 4 Executive and 1 Advisory Non Departmental Public Bodies is £181,656.12.

Relocation of Departmental Headquarters

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the relocation of her departmental headquarters, and whether Limavady is still a contender for the site of the relocation.

(AQW 12381/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As you will be aware the advancement of the relocation of the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is one of the commitments set out in the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-2015. Work on delivering this important commitment is progressing. I am currently considering potential locations and hope to reach a decision soon.

Woodland Cover

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on her Department's strategy to increase the amount of woodland cover.

(AQW 12428/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department continues to develop strategy to deliver an increase in woodland cover. This development is closely linked to the Commission's proposals under the Rural Development Regulation.

Within the last reporting year, Forest Service achieved both targets associated with the key strategic objective to extend the area of woodland. The new woodland creation target of 200ha was exceeded and 313ha of new woodland was planted by private landowners with support from the Woodland Grant Scheme. It is acknowledged that this rate of planting is insufficient to meet our aim to increase woodland cover to 12% of land cover by the middle of this century.

To support increased planting Forest Service also developed proposals for new mechanisms to support woodland creation. These proposals focus on integrating forestry and farming activities by exploring the scope for forestry to support farmers in retaining their single farm payment (SFP) where land has,

since 2008, become ineligible for agricultural support, or is in danger of breaching the conditions for land to be in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). We will explore the potential of this land with stakeholders in advance of the 2013 planting season and carry out further work to inform negotiations on the Rural Development Regulation.

Audjesky's Disease in Pigs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many confirmed cases of Audjesky's Disease in pigs have been recorded; and to detail the date and circumstances of the last confirmed case.

(AQW 12452/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: An industry-led initiative with support from my Department was formed in 2004 with the objective of eradicating Aujeszky's Disease (AD) from the north and achieving EU recognition of AD freedom. The number of confirmed cases of disease since then is shown below.

Year	Number of Infected Herds
2004 (31 Dec)	4
2005 (31 Dec)	9
2006 (31 Dec)	16
2007 (31 Dec)	4
2008 (31 Dec)	2
2009 (31 Dec)*	0
2010	0
2011	0
2011	0

* zero new cases, one pig tested positive from previous case.

The last confirmed case of AD was in 2008, however serological evidence of AD was recorded in 2009. This case related to a herd which had previously tested positive and therefore was not a new case. A serological test on 28 May 2009 gave a positive result for one animal which had been kept in isolation. That animal was subsequently culled in September 2009.

As a result my Department has now formally submitted an application for recognition of our AD freedom to the EU Commission and I am anticipating formal approval within the next few months.

Audjesky's Disease in Pigs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how her Department tackles incidences of Audjesky's Disease in pigs; (ii) for her assessment of this approach; (iii) whether she will promote the case for Audjesky's Disease free status for Northern Ireland, independent of the position in the Republic of Ireland; and (iv) for her assessment of the benefits to the pig and pork industry should disease-free status be granted.

(AQW 12453/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) Currently the north is free from Aujeszky's Disease (AD) and my Department is in the process of seeking official EU recognition of our disease free status. In order to protect our disease freedom in the event of a suspect or confirmed case of AD in the future, a number of control measures would be implemented. These include the application of restrictions on the suspect or confirmed pig holding, strict biosecurity measures and a requirement that movements on and off the holding must be licensed. Testing and slaughter options would be considered and a full disease investigation will be

initiated in order to trace the source of the outbreak. Control measures would also be applied to any pig premises within at least 5 km of the confirmed holding.

- (ii) All of the measures that I have outlined are the minimum required by the European Commission in order to maintain our future AD Free Status and are in line with recognised disease control measures for a non-endemic disease. The powers to implement the measures are contained within the Aujeszky's Disease Order (NI) 2012. I consider that this approach would be proportionate in order to maintain or protect current and potential trade markets for pigs.
- (iii) Like us, the south is in the process of applying to the EU for official recognition of AD free status. Both jurisdictions have now submitted applications for disease freedom to the Commission with the aim of moving towards disease free status in a similar timeframe, therefore reducing potential trade barriers on the island. I am hopeful that our application will be approved at a forthcoming meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCOFAH) but the timing is dependent on the Commission.
- (iv) Formal recognition of the north's Aujeszky's Disease free status will ease trading restrictions with Britain and other Member States who have disease free status as well as increasing trade opportunities with potential new markets in, for example, India, China and Korea, which may ultimately help improve the profitability of the pig sector here.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what changes her Department has made to the Central Investigation Service (CIS) following the Deloitte report into the CIS on 28 July 2010.

(AQW 12661/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department considered the findings and recommendations of the Deloitte report into the CIS in detail. All of the recommendations were accepted and an Action Plan was put in place immediately to address the specific recommendations. There were, as a result of this review, a number of changes to internal policies and procedures and these have now been implemented in full.

As a consequence of implementing the action plan CIS now have a more comprehensive manual documenting the various policies and procedures associated with the investigative process; including an updated prosecutions policy. Case closure procedures were also refined to include referral to the Branch Head as and when appropriate.

In addition, changes have been made to the process of reporting fraud cases. This includes more regular and timely updates to the Northern Ireland Audit Office, as well as a refreshed version of the annual fraud report that clearly details CIS achievements over the previous 12 months.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will set a target date for the eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis.

(AQO 2118/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am committed to the eradication of TB and tackling TB in cattle is a key priority. We have a rigorous TB eradication programme in place and we have made good progress with this disease over the past decade. We have achieved EU Commission approval for our programme for 2010, 2011 and 2012, which is vital in safeguarding our annual £1,000 million plus export-dependent trade in livestock and livestock products. Having EU Commission approval also enables DARD to draw down €5 million co-funding from Europe each year to offset a proportion of the costs of the eradication programme.

However, as is supported by the evidence to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee's Thematic Review, bovine TB is a very complex, multi-factorial and challenging disease that is difficult to eradicate. There is no simple, cost-effective, solution or 'quick-fix' and eradication is not something that could be achieved within the immediate future.

We know that to eradicate TB we will need to deal effectively with all the factors, but all the steps needed to get to eradication and the tools that we would need to use are not yet all known. Therefore I intend to build a sound evidence base to underpin further interventions in cattle and/or wildlife that could help to reduce TB as part of our eradication programme.

As is indicated as a “building block” in the Programme for Government, funding of around £4 million has been allocated in my Department’s budget to conduct TB and wildlife research and studies to help ensure we have well informed and evidence based strategies to address the issue of cattle to cattle spread as well as the wildlife issue. We will use the evidence produced by this research and studies to guide our TB eradication strategy in the future.

Rural Development Funding to Refurbish the Republican Monument in Crossmaglen

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 11474/11-15, to outline the content of the correspondence from the European Commission regarding the proposal to use Rural Development Funding to refurbish the republican monument in Crossmaglen.

(AQW 12692/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: In their correspondence the European Commission rehearsed the rules of the Rural Development Programme and Regulation, of which the Department is fully aware

As I have advised you previously this advice has been passed to SOAR and confirmation of their decision in relation to the Crossmaglen Memorial Heritage Project is awaited

Forest Service: Fires

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the total losses to the Forest Service, as a result of fires, in the last three years.

(AQO 2111/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: Around the beginning of May 2011 we witnessed some of the worst wild fires in recent memory. During 2011-12 the Forest Service Annual Report and Accounts reported a loss of 704 hectares of planted land with an associated timber valuation loss of £981,000. An additional 1096 hectares of unplanted land was also damaged.

In the previous year 2010-2011, seventy five hectares of planted land was destroyed with a timber valuation loss of £48,000.

In 2009-2010 no damage was reported.

Dairy Industry

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures are being taken to encourage the dairy farming industry to grow its potential and become a key driver in our economic recovery.

(AQO 2112/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: First of all, I want to say that I value highly the important contribution which the dairy industry makes to the economy and life in rural areas.

My Department, working alongside industry partners and other Government Departments, has a role in supporting the whole agri-food sector, including the dairy industry, to grow its potential by becoming more market-led. In practice this means that, especially when EU milk quotas end in 2015, decisions both on milk production and the products produced should be taken by milk producers and processors in the context of their input costs, market requirements and market returns.

For too long, our dairy industry has been reliant on the processing of commodity products which normally generate the lowest returns. However, I am pleased to see that steps have been taken in recent years to move away from the processing of milk powders to higher added value products. But

more needs to be done. That is why Arlene Foster and my predecessor provided support to Dairy UK (NI) to undertake an industry-led competitiveness study. The aim was to help it plan for the future and representatives from the dairy industry are now taking forward the report's recommendations.

The sector also receives significant assistance from Government through AFBI and CAFRE. In particular, CAFRE's Loughry Campus supports the processing sector in the key area of product innovation. Additionally, my Department has provided support under the Regional Food Programme and Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

I believe that the dairy sector has the potential to grow further and to exploit opportunities arising from the expanding world population. The key is to grasp these opportunities and I would encourage the dairy sector to engage positively with the Agri-Food Strategy Board to articulate its views on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Rural Youth Employability Programme

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the Rural Youth Employability Programme, as part of her Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. **(AQO 2113/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: With your permission Mr Speaker, I will answer questions 8 and 12 together as they both relate to youth unemployment in rural areas, which is a key priority for me as Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Through the Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation framework, my department is supporting two rural youth initiatives aimed at increasing employability and promoting entrepreneurship.

Through the Youth Employability Programme – marketed as BOOST - unemployed rural young people will have an opportunity to develop skills to increase their employability and improve their chances of securing a job. The Programme includes: face to face workshops, an interactive support package, access to a network of 'Employment Mentors' and the provision of industry endorsed certification (from the Federation of Small Businesses - FSB) on completion. BOOST will target almost 1,500 unemployed young people by working with partner agencies such as the job centre networks, libraries, the Rural Development Council, the Rural Support Networks, Local Action Groups, Local Councils, Local Enterprise Agencies, Rural Colleges and sports centres.

I am also supporting the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme which aims to develop business potential among vulnerable young people in rural areas. These areas will be identified using multiple deprivation criteria and will recruit 600 vulnerable young people onto the Programme by undertaking various outreach events and workshops in the areas identified. The RYE programme will create the foundations for the development of future rural businesses through upskilling, networking, mentoring and sharing of ideas to stimulate business creation.

I am confident that these innovative initiatives will help to address the problem of youth unemployment in rural areas and in doing so will also help reduce rural youth migration and increase the sustainability of rural communities.

Animal Welfare: Enforcement Powers

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the transfer of powers, to local councils, in relation to animal welfare enforcement. **(AQO 2114/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Councils have had responsibility for enforcement of the powers in the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 in respect of other animals, i.e. domestic pets and horses since 2 April 2012.

Councils have decided to deliver this enforcement role on a regional basis. They have appointed and trained 5 Animal Welfare Officers, who have been fully operational since 2 April. Up to 18 May 2012, Councils had received 795 animal welfare complaints, which have resulted in 478 investigatory visits.

Forty improvement notices have been served on owners detailing the improvements which must be made to improve the conditions in which their animals are kept. In addition, one animal was seized during this period.

I have been very encouraged by the positive approach taken by Councils to their new responsibilities and by the close and effective partnership working between Councils and my Departmental officials in putting the necessary arrangements in place. Councils have worked exceptionally hard to implement the new powers and must be commended for this and all their enforcement work to date. For the first time in the north we have resources dedicated to animal welfare enforcement in respect of domestic pets and horses and the initial feedback on the ground is that these new arrangements are working well.

My officials will continue to liaise with Councils as they implement these new powers. I know Councils intend to review their delivery structure at the end of 2012, by which time they will have built up experience and good information about the volume and type of welfare complaints relating to domestic pets and horses.

Rural White Paper Action Plan

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Rural White Paper Action Plan.

(AQO 2115/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: *I am delighted to announce that the Executive approved the Rural White Paper Action Plan on 31 May 2012.

The Rural White Paper Action Plan is an Executive initiative led by me which includes commitments by each Department in relation to rural areas. It is a first in that it is the first initiative in the North to focus entirely on rural issues and to include commitments by all government Departments. As Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development I am committed to working with my Ministerial colleagues in seeking to improve the quality of life of those living in rural areas and the Rural White Paper Action Plan sets out actions which the Executive proposes to take to achieve this.

The development of the Action Plan was commenced by my predecessor, Michelle Gildernew, and I would like to place on record the valuable work undertaken by Michelle during the previous Assembly. This has been a very intensive process involving extensive consultation with stakeholders and government departments and I would like to thank my Ministerial colleagues for their support and contributions during the process. I would also like to thank members of the Rural White Paper Stakeholder Advisory Group for their valuable work and commitment during the stakeholder process.

I am currently arranging for the document to be formally published and will be officially launching the Action Plan shortly.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

(AQO 2116/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU Commission published its formal CAP reform proposals on 19 October 2011. The central features of the farm support arrangements within this package include a move to a flat rate payment per hectare at a regional level by 2019 and the introduction of new environmental requirements (greening). There are also proposals for a number of additional compulsory and optional direct support payments. The reform proposals relating to farm support have attracted considerable criticism across Europe, not least due to the complexity surrounding greening and the fact that the current single support payment would be replaced by up to six (and in some cases more) separate payments. The other elements of the reform package, notably around rural development, have proven less controversial.

Following the publication of the Commission's proposals, I launched a full public consultation and received significant and valuable feedback from stakeholders. Taking due account of this input, I prepared and presented a response to the EU Commission proposals to Georg Haeusler, Head of Cabinet for Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Ciolos, on 19 April 2012. In this response, I sought to be constructive and offered various suggestions aimed at improving the focus of the Commission's proposals as well as achieving significant simplification. This was a very positive meeting and I followed it up a week later in a further meeting with Gwilym Jones, member of Commissioner Ciolos' Cabinet.

Apart from the Commission, I have been engaging directly with Defra Ministers and my Devolved Administration colleagues on the reform proposals, as well as with Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the south. I have also discussed CAP reform with our local MEPs and hosted a briefing of MEPs in Brussels in May 2012. My officials are very closely involved with Defra and Devolved Administration counterparts in feeding into the Brussels working groups and discussions and keep in regular contact with officials in Dublin.

Although there has been very considerable discussion and debate in Brussels since the reform proposals were published last autumn, to date there has been fairly limited progress in the negotiations, with the EU Commission unwilling so far to concede many Member States' suggestions for change. The European Parliament is currently in the process of preparing its response to the proposals. I expect the negotiations to intensify in the latter part of 2012 and continue into 2013. At this stage, it is not possible to state exactly when an overall agreement will be reached. However, agreement on the EU budget for 2014-20 will be an important and necessary precursor to a deal on CAP reform.

Throughout the negotiations, I will continue my approach of engaging directly with the Commission, with Defra and the Devolved Administrations, with MEPs and with the Irish Agriculture Minister, (including through the North/South Ministerial Council). My goal remains a well funded, flexible and simplified CAP that meets our local needs.

Youth Unemployment: Rural Areas

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has taken any steps to address the problem of youth unemployment in rural areas.

(AQO 2117/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: With your permission Mr Speaker, I will answer questions 8 and 12 together as they both relate to youth unemployment in rural areas, which is a key priority for me as Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Through the Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation framework, my department is supporting two rural youth initiatives aimed at increasing employability and promoting entrepreneurship.

Through the Youth Employability Programme – marketed as BOOST - unemployed rural young people will have an opportunity to develop skills to increase their employability and improve their chances of securing a job. The Programme includes: face to face workshops, an interactive support package, access to a network of 'Employment Mentors' and the provision of industry endorsed certification (from the Federation of Small Businesses - FSB) on completion. BOOST will target almost 1,500 unemployed young people by working with partner agencies such as the job centre networks, libraries, the Rural Development Council, the Rural Support Networks, Local Action Groups, Local Councils, Local Enterprise Agencies, Rural Colleges and sports centres.

I am also supporting the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme which aims to develop business potential among vulnerable young people in rural areas. These areas will be identified using multiple deprivation criteria and will recruit 600 vulnerable young people onto the Programme by undertaking various outreach events and workshops in the areas identified. The RYE programme will create the foundations for the development of future rural businesses through upskilling, networking, mentoring and sharing of ideas to stimulate business creation.

I am confident that these innovative initiatives will help to address the problem of youth unemployment in rural areas and in doing so will also help reduce rural youth migration and increase the sustainability of rural communities.

Balmoral Show

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the benefits that the Balmoral Show brings to the agricultural sector.

(AQO 2119/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Balmoral Show is the largest agriculture and food show in the North of Ireland, attracting around 70,000 visitors each year. As such, the show provides a platform for local livestock breeders to showcase the high quality of livestock in Ireland and it is an excellent place for agricultural businesses to promote their products and services, develop new market opportunities and engage with a considerable and diverse audience. In 2012 there were almost 500 trade stands, with over 80% of these exhibitors returning year after year. This I believe highlights the commercial benefits of the show to the agricultural sector.

Increasingly the Show is becoming an important place to showcase the best of food and drink produced in the north and there has been a steady increase over the years to almost 60 exhibitors from this sector in 2012. A number of these are diversifying farm businesses exhibiting their products for the first time to the large number of local and international buyers who attend the show.

The show brings together exhibitors from across a wide spectrum of fields including livestock and livestock services, farm machinery, food and drink, equestrianism, horticulture and a wide range of business support services, including the government departments' exhibition. It provides visitors from the agricultural sector the opportunity to see and learn more about a wide range of products and services all in the one venue.

There are also key social aspects involved in attending Balmoral show. For many it is a good day out and an opportunity to meet and network with people from different farming backgrounds. It also allows urban dwellers an opportunity to experience all that is good about our industry.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure 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 12181/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):

- i) There are currently (as at 31 May 2012) 10 arm's length bodies/ quangos attached to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
- ii) This compares with:
 - (i) 10 in May 2008
 - (ii) 10 in May 2009
 - (iii) 10 in May 2010
 - (iv) 10 in May 2011

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure 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 12220/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Percentage Absence Rate for Sickness Absence

Financial Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Absence Rate	3.1%	3.4%	*

* 2011/12 absence statistics are not yet available, and will be published by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) in September-October 2012.

My Department does not have an agreed target rate of sickness set out in any memoranda of understanding with the trade unions.

Arm's-Length Bodies Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether all the pension schemes that are in place across her Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12306/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Employment by the Board of Trustees of the National Museums NI and Employment in the NI Museums Council are listed at Schedule 1 to the Superannuation (NI) Order 1972 as eligible employments covered for pension purposes by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI).

Pensions in payment and preserved pensions in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) are Consumer Price Indexed. This includes pension benefits that were earned by contributions before the change of indexation from the Retail Price Index which took effect in April 2011.

NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee

The following Arms Length Bodies are members of the NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) pension scheme:

- Arts Council NI
- Libraries NI
- Sport NI
- Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

Prior to April 2011, Pensions Increase was based on the increase in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). From April 2011, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) replaced RPI as the measure of inflation used to apply cost of living increases.

Standard scheme benefits

For active members of the scheme and those who left after 1 April 2011, all accrued benefits will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

For deferred and pensioner members who left prior to 1 April 2011, the increase to their benefits will be measured by RPI up to April 2011 and then CPI thereafter.

Additional pension benefits

For contracts that commenced after 1 April 2012, the pre and post retirement increase to benefits is CPI.

For contracts that commenced prior to 1 April 2012, the current guidance applies a pre and post retirement increase of RPI. However, this guidance is currently under review.

North/South Pension Scheme

The staff within the following North/South bodies are eligible for the North/South Pension scheme:

- Waterways Ireland
- Foras na Gaeilge
- Ulster-Scots Agency

Waterways Ireland

Retired members of the scheme who were based in NI have, to date, had their benefits based on Retail Price Index.

Foras na Gaeilge and Ulster-Scots Agency have no retired members of the scheme based in NI.

Other**NI Screen**

NI Screen are currently outside of the above mentioned schemes and are not linked to either the Consumer or Retail Price Indexes.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at her Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12356/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The current total annual cost is £172,118.75. This figure is based on the assumption that all appointed Board members serve for a full year.

Fracking Impact on Waterways

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has raised, or plans to raise, with her Executive colleagues, any concerns she has about the impact that fracking will have on waterways, fish stocks and fisheries in Co Fermanagh.

(AQW 12445/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I currently have no plans to raise any concerns about the impact of fracking with my Executive colleagues.

DETI has established a Shale Gas Forum to address concerns about hydraulic fracturing. Inland Fisheries Group officials will represent the interests of the DCAL at the Forum.

Funding for North West 200

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding her Department has allocated to the North West 200 in each of the last three years; and for what purpose was the funding used.

(AQW 12449/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the last three financial years my Department, through Sport NI, has provided £162,654 exchequer funding to the organisers of the North West 200, the Coleraine and District Motor Club for safety purposes. Details are set out below:

Date	Purpose	Amount
2009	Tarmac Surfacing of NW200 Paddock	£99,500.00
2010	Work at Station Corner on NW200 circuit	£18,992.80
2010	New chicane built at Mather's Cross on NW200 circuit	£19,168.37
2011	Recticel safety bales	£12,355.20
2011	Metal crowd control barriers for paddock area	£12,637.72
Total		£162,654.09

Department of Education

Nursery Provision in the Lurgan Area

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education for an update on proposals to deal with the shortage of nursery provision in the Lurgan area.

(AQW 11166/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): My Department has worked closely with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) throughout the pre-school admissions process. The SELB Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) is satisfied that sufficient places are available in the Lurgan area to meet demand from children in their final pre-school year.

Statutory Nursery Provision in the Portadown Area

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education whether his Department is considering a number of development proposals for the establishment of additional statutory nursery provision in the Portadown area.

(AQW 11555/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2011 the Southern Education and Library Board published four Development Proposals for new/additional statutory nursery provision in the Portadown area at Bocombra Primary School, Edenderry Nursery School, Portadown Integrated Primary School and Seagoe Primary School.

I have now considered each of the proposals and I am pleased to inform you that I have recently approved the provision of a new/additional 26 place part-time unit at each of the four schools from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Apprenticeship Programmes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education 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 12009/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently no apprenticeship programmes available within the Department of Education.

Land for the Purposes of Capital Builds

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the approvals given by his Department to authorities to procure land for the purposes of capital builds in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12034/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Approvals given to school authorities to procure land for capital projects are detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	School Name
2009-10	Carrick Primary School, Warrenpoint
	Foyle College Ebrington Primary School/, Derry
	Magherafelt Primary School
2010-11	Colaiste Feirste, Belfast
	Bangor Grammar School
	Strathearn Grammar School , Belfast
	St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle
2011-12	St Columba's Primary School, Straw

Nursery Provision in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposals to address the shortage of nursery provision in the North Down area.

(AQW 12256/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and units and in voluntary/private settings participating in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme.

The Pre-School Admissions Process is a 2 stage process which completed on 1 June 2012 when letters issued to those parents/guardians of children who remained unplaced having stipulated further preferences at Stage 2 of the admissions process. The letter also contained a list of pre-school settings in the Board area in which vacant places remain.

In an effort to place as many children as possible, parents whose children were unplaced at Stage 1 but who chose not to list further preferences also received a letter from their ELB advising them of where places remained available.

Across the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) area, of the children whose parents applied at Stage 2 of the process 12 remain unplaced, 9 of whom applied for places in Bangor.

The SEELB has brought new providers in to the Programme and has increased the number of places allocated to existing settings where necessary.

The SEELB is continuing to liaise with new providers and will continue to work with parents over the coming months to ensure that, as far as possible, all eligible children are able to avail of a funded pre-school place in September.

I expect the number of unplaced children to fall further in the coming weeks as there is natural movement in the system before the new school term commences.

Children in the North Antrim Constituency Not Going to School

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many children in the North Antrim constituency have been identified as not going to school, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 12278/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The figures provided are based on pupils living in the North Antrim constituency as opposed to attending schools located in the North Antrim constituency.

All pupils living in the North Antrim constituency are under NEELB therefore it is not relevant to break figures down by ELB.

(i) Primary School

The absence level for primary school pupils living in the North Antrim constituency was 4.4% of the total half days in 2010/2011. Of all primary school enrolments living in the North Antrim constituency, 3.4% had less than 85% attendance.

(ii) Post Primary School

The absence level for post primary school pupils living in the North Antrim constituency was 6.7% of the total half days in 2010/2011. Of all post primary enrolments living in North Antrim constituency 10.8% had less than 85% attendance.

(iii) Special Schools

The absence level for special school pupils living in the North Antrim constituency was 7.3% of the total half days in 2010/2011. Of all special school enrolments living in the North Antrim constituency, 14.5% had less than 85% attendance.

Detailed analysis of the 2010/2011 school attendance statistics, including North of Ireland averages can be found on the DE website at:

http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance_at_grant-aided_primary__post-primary_and_special_schools_2010_11__detailed_statistics.pdf

Irish-Medium Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10780/11-15, what was the practice governing payments for the leasing or renting of premises prior to the issue of Circular 2012/01. **(AQW 12334/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: Prior to the issue of Circular 2012/01, there was not a standardised approach to dealing with payments for the leasing or renting of premises. Education and Library Boards have employed differing practices in the past, which included:

- Liaison with Land & Property Services regarding rental valuations
- Liaison with the school concerned
- Confirmation via the Common Funding Formula allocations that the property referred to a grant-aided school in receipt of recurrent funding
- Consideration and certification of the Lease between the Landlord and Board of Governors

Each Education and Library Board is required to comply with appropriate payment and governance procedures.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) initial recurrent financial allocation; and (ii) outturn recurrent expenditure for each of his Department's arm's-length bodies, in each of the last three financial years. **(AQW 12339/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the initial recurrent financial allocations and the outturn recurrent expenditure for my Department's arms length bodies, in each of the last three financial years are provided in the tables below:

(I) INITIAL RECURRENT FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
BELB	209,363	225,768	224,419
NEELB	296,002	302,435	299,991
SEELB	256,397	263,122	261,832
SELB	317,348	327,334	324,909
WELB	298,388	304,323	295,228
Staff Commission	376	382	346
CCMS	3,626	3,482	3,431
CCEA	22,047	21,883	24,010
YCNi	3,781	4,089	4,743
Total	1,407,328	1,452,818	1,438,909

(II) OUTTURN RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
BELB	231,897	252,826	251,554
NEELB	304,284	314,560	314,848
SEELB	268,833	278,033	283,895
SELB	326,719	341,821	339,575
WELB	311,142	325,285	314,608
Staff Commission	421	553	301
CCMS	5,611	4,460	4,120
CCEA	21,043	21,231	21,327
YCNi	4,457	4,470	4,692
Total	1,474,407	1,543,239	1,534,920

Notes:

- 1 Initial allocations are taken from Initial Resource Allocation Plans.
- 2 ELB figures relate to schools recurrent budgets including Youth.
- 3 The 2010/11 figures and 2011/12 outturn figures will include allocations for voluntary severance costs approved under the Savings Delivery Plan.
- 4 2011/12 outturn is based on Provisional Outturn.

Diary Commitments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education to detail his diary commitments for Friday 25 May 2012.
(AQW 12365/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I spent Friday 25th May attending to constituency business.

Proposed Review of the Common Funding Formula

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what discussions his Department has had with other UK jurisdictions on the proposed review of the Common Funding Formula.
(AQW 12426/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have commissioned a wide ranging independent review of the Common Funding Scheme, led by Sir Robert Salisbury. The aim of the Review is to ensure that the Common Funding Scheme is fit for purpose, sufficiently targets social needs and is consistent with, and supports, Departmental policy objectives.

The review panel will consider evidence from a wide range of sources, including practice in other jurisdictions.

5 or More GCSEs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children who obtained 5 or more GCSEs in English and Maths in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) religious background; and (ii) gender in each council area.
(AQW 12458/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly library.

5 or More GCSEs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children entitled to free school meals who obtained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and Maths, in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) religious background; and (ii) gender in each council area.
(AQW 12459/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly library.

2 or More A Levels

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children entitled to free school meals who obtained 2 or more A levels at grades A*-E, broken down by (i) religious background; and (ii) gender in each council area.
(AQW 12460/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly library.

2 or More A Levels

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children who obtained 2 or more A levels at grades A*-E, broken down by (i) religious background; and (ii) gender in each council area.
(AQW 12461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly library.

5 or More GCSEs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children who obtained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and Maths, in each of the last three years in (i) Belfast; (ii) Derry; and (iii) all other areas, broken down by (a) religious background; and (b) gender.

(AQW 12465/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly library.

Funded Pre-School and Nursery Places

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of funded pre-school and nursery places currently available at each facility in the Lurgan area; and (ii) the number of children on the waiting list for each facility.

(AQW 12497/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the number of funded pre-school places available in each setting in the Lurgan area for the 2012/2013 academic year.

Name of Pre-School	Total Places Available 2012/13	No. of places available at the end of Stage 2 of the Admissions Process
Ballyoran Primary School nursery unit	52	0
Carrick Primary School(Lurgan) nursery unit	52	0
Dickson Primary School nursery unit	26	0
Donacloney Primary school nursery unit	26	0
Drumgor Primary School nursery unit	52	0
Drumnamoe Nursery School	104	0
Edenderry Nursery School	52	0
Harrison Nursery School	52	0
Hart Memorial Primary School nursery unit	52	0
King's Park Primary School nursery unit	78	0
Lurgan Model Primary School nursery unit	26	0
Maralin Village Primary School nursery unit	26	0
Millington Nursery School	78	0
Portadown Integrated Primary School nursery unit	26	0
Seagoe Primary School nursery unit	26	0
St Anthony's Primary School nursery unit	78	0
St Brendan's Primary School nursery unit	52	0
St Francis' (Lurgan) Primary School nursery unit	78	0
St John the Baptist Nursery School	52	0
St Patrick's (Aghacommon) Primary School nursery unit	26	0

Name of Pre-School	Total Places Available 2012/13	No. of places available at the end of Stage 2 of the Admissions Process
Tullygally Primary School nursery unit	52	0
Aghagallon Playgroup	19	1
Derrytrasna Playgroup	10	0
Little Acorns Playgroup, Derrymore	25	5
Little Oaks Pre-School Playgroup	45	0
Loughshore Playgroup, Maghery	14	4
Naiscoil Chois Locha	24	0
Naiscoil na Banna	11	0
Peatlands Playgroup	24	0
Trinity Park Pre-School Nursery	52	8

At the end of Stage 2 of the Pre-School Admissions Process, the letter to those parents/guardians whose application for a funded place for their child had been unsuccessful detailed those settings where places may remain available. The letter did not specify the actual number of places in each setting as changes may have occurred at provider level about which the Southern Education and Library Board had not yet been informed.

The Board has advised that they do not hold details of the number of children on waiting lists. This is a matter for individual providers.

Funded Pre-School and Nursery Places in the Ozanam Centre, Lurgan

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) what steps he is taking to introduce funded pre-school and nursery places in the Ozanam Centre, Lurgan; and (ii) when the centre should expect the places to be available.

(AQW 12498/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The allocation of places to voluntary and private providers at local level is a matter for each education and library board's Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG). The Southern Education and Library Board's PEAG considered a request from Ozanam Daycare Ltd for funded pre-school places under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP) for the 2012/13 academic year in the context of the overall level of funded pre-school provision in the Lurgan area. As the PEAG was satisfied that sufficient funded provision was available to meet demand the group's request was turned down. This view was subsequently confirmed by the fact that Drumnamoe Nursery School was unable to fill all of their places with final pre-school age children, a voluntary provider already in the PSEEP had to be withdrawn as a result of insufficient applications and another voluntary provider still had places available at the end of the Admissions Process.

The SELB PEAG will continue to keep the position regarding the level of funded pre-school provision under review and if, as a result of an increase in demand between now and September, additional funded places are required, will review the position in the context of all those voluntary and private providers in the area, including Ozanam Daycare Ltd, who have expressed an interest in participating in the PSEEP

Scheme for the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education for his Department's assessment of the statement, in section 7.6.10 of the Scheme for the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools, that all relevant documentation will be retained for two years; and whether this complies with the accountability requirements of the Government's Codes of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

(AQW 12537/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that, as a general principle, records should be kept for as long as they are needed by the authority for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests. CCMS has determined that two years is an appropriate time for the personal records associated with recruitment and selection exercises to be retained. This complies with the recommendations in the Employment Practices Code published by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Area-Based Planning Process

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department, the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have taken to explore cross-border models as part of the Area-Based Planning process to date.

(AQW 12546/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Terms of Reference for Area Planning (available to view on the DE website at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/area-planning/area-planning-terms-of-reference.htm>), specify that, in delivering an area plan, the Boards, working with CCMS and engaging extensively with other school sectors, should explore opportunities for cross border planning.

The 2 Education and Library Boards that border the south of Ireland have advised that they recognise the potential for cross-border co-operation but that there has as yet been no development work on this issue.

Within the context of an ongoing joint study of north-south education cooperation, Ministers agreed at the last North-South Ministerial Council, held on 1st February 2012, to proceed with a joint survey to inform cross-border pupil movement and school planning. The survey, which will take the form of a questionnaire, is being developed by the Department of Education in the North and the Department of Education and Skills in the South. The results will inform the process by establishing potential demand for cross-border schooling.

Applicants to Post-Primary Schools

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of applicants to each post-primary school using selection and the number of successful applicants for the 2012/13 academic year; and (ii) the current maximum enrolment number for Year 8 in each post-primary school.

(AQW 12547/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In accordance with my Department's policy on post-primary transfer, which is not supportive of unregulated entrance tests, no information is collected about any aspect of tests conducted in contravention of that policy. Hence it is not possible to provide information referenced to a test grade or score.

With that exception, the following tables provide the information requested for schools that are selective, partially selective and non-selective, referenced to each school's admissions number, which defines the number of permitted Year 8 admissions. The number of pupils transferring to a school that uses academic selection as a criterion equates to the number of pupils admitted to such a school.

When considering the extent to which applicants have been able to gain admission to a selective or partially selective school, it should be noted that the same pupil may appear as an applicant against

more than one school due to the way in which the transfer procedure facilitates the sequential processing of applications to a number of schools until each application is successful.

SCHOOLS WITH A SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Abbey Grammar School, Newry	125	200	129	71
Antrim Grammar School	105	143	105	38
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	110	171	110	61
Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch	120	169	120	49
Ballyclare High School	186	217	186	31
Ballymena Academy	176	244	176	68
Banbridge Academy	184	260	184	76
Bangor Grammar School	125	158	125	33
Belfast High School	136	167	136	31
Belfast Royal Academy	200	246	200	46
Bloomfield Collegiate School	100	127	100	27
Cambridge House Grammar	140	160	140	20
Campbell College	110	93	93	0
Carrickfergus Grammar School	116	155	116	39
Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh	135	158	135	23
Coleraine Academical Institution	125	149	125	24
Coleraine High School	120	141	120	21
Collegiate Grammar School, Enniskillen	70	80	70	10
Dalriada School	125	177	125	52
Dominican College, Belfast	150	171	150	21
Dominican College, Portstewart	69	93	69	24
Down High School	128	172	128	44
Foyle College	125	159	125	34
Friends' School	140	313	140	173
Glenlola Collegiate School	157	185	157	28
Grosvenor Grammar School	155	237	155	82
Hunterhouse College	100	167	100	67
Larne Grammar School	110	126	110	16

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Limavady Grammar School	130	158	130	28
Loreto College, Coleraine	120	159	120	39
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	125	157	125	32
Lumen Christi College	120	226	120	106
Methodist College	240	301	240	61
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	96	145	96	49
Omagh Academy	95	100	95	5
Our Lady & St Patrick's College, Knock	180	266	180	86
Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry	120	162	120	42
Portora Royal School	70	68	68	0
Rainey Endowed School	100	116	100	16
Rathmore Grammar School	180	257	180	77
Regent House School	210	254	210	44
Royal Belfast Academical Institution	150	176	150	26
Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry	120	162	120	42
St Colman's College, Newry	125	181	125	56
St Columb's College, Derry	220	266	220	46
St Dominic's High School, Belfast	141	204	141	63
St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore	95	133	95	38
St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena	139	204	139	65
St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel	80	97	80	17
St Malachy's College, Belfast	150	203	150	53
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	175	172	172	0
St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt	153	161	153	8
St Michael's College, Enniskillen	100	131	100	31
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	195	243	195	48
St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh	110	129	110	19

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick	96	96	96	0
Strathearn School	110	172	110	62
Sullivan Upper School	150	197	150	47
The Royal School, Armagh	100	114	100	14
The Royal School, Dungannon	93	98	93	5
Thornhill College, Derry	200	225	200	25
Victoria College	130	199	130	69
Wallace High School	170	291	170	121
Wellington College	110	170	110	60

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to the position at the conclusion of the transfer procedure on 28 May 2012.
- 2 The transfer procedure involves parents expressing a number of preferences on the Transfer Form, which equates to multiple applications to schools. It follows therefore that an applicant may appear within the total applications figure of more than one school within this table.
- 3 St Joseph's Grammar School's approved admissions number includes admission to the school's Irish Medium Unit which has a non-selective intake.
- 4 Four additional places were approved by the Department of Education in respect of Abbey Grammar School, Newry, which permitted that school to lawfully admit pupils in excess of its admissions number.

SCHOOLS WITH A PARTIALLY SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Lagan College (35% selective intake)	200	284	200	84
Slemish Integrated College (35% selective intake)	120	231	120	111
Strabane Academy (50% selective intake)	110	98	98	0

Notes:

- 1 Figures relate to the position at the conclusion of the transfer procedure on 28 May 2012.
- 2 The transfer procedure involves parents expressing a number of preferences on the Transfer Form, which equates to multiple applications to schools. It follows therefore that an applicant may appear within the total applications figure of more than one school within this table.
- 3 Although these schools only admit a proportion of their intake with reference to a test, the total applications figure refers to both the school's selective and non-selective intake. The Department is unable to provide a breakdown of these figures.

SCHOOLS WITH A NON-SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Ashfield Boys' High School, Belfast	110
Ashfield Girls' High School, Belfast	113
Aughnacloy College	46
Ballee Community High School	100
Ballycastle High School	92
Ballyclare Secondary School	180
Ballymoney High School	130
Banbridge High School	136
Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	242
Belfast Boys' Model School	151
Belfast Model School for Girls	160
Blackwater Integrated College	80
Brownlow College	90
Carrickfergus College	160
Castlederg High School	90
Christian Brothers' Secondary School, Belfast	100
City of Armagh High School	115
Clounagh Junior High School	220
Colaiste Feirste, Belfast	100
Coleraine College	103
Cookstown High School	180
Corpus Christi College, Belfast	100
Craigavon Senior High School	310
Cross & Passion College, Ballycastle	130
Crumlin Integrated College	75
Cullybackey High School	130
De La Salle College, Belfast	163
De La Salle Secondary School, Downpatrick	86
Dean Maguire College, Carrickmore	80
Devenish College, Enniskillen	120
Downshire School	160
Dromore High School	148
Drumcree College	150

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Drumglass High School	90
Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh	96
Dunclug College, Ballymena	110
Dundonald High School	120
Dunluce School	110
Dunmurry High School	80
Edmund Rice College	120
Erne Integrated College, Enniskillen	70
Fivemiletown High School	69
Fort Hill College, Lisburn	160
Garvagh High School	70
Glastry College	110
Glengormley High School	210
Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast	140
Holy Cross College, Strabane	300
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	160
Immaculate Conception College	105
Integrated College Dungannon	90
Kilkeel High School	145
Killicomaine Junior High School	227
Knockbreda High School	120
Larne High School	135
Laurelhill Community College, Lisburn	175
Limavady High School	140
Lismore Comprehensive School	210
Lisnagarvey High School	100
Lisnaskea High School	60
Lisneal College, Derry	178
Little Flower Girls' School, Belfast	107
Lurgan Junior High School	250
Magherafelt High School	100
Malone College, Belfast	130
Markethill High School	93

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Monkstown Community School	164
Movilla High School, Newtownards	180
Nendrum College, Comber	80
New-Bridge Integrated College, Loughbrickland	80
Newry High School	92
Newtownabbey Community High School	130
Newtownbreda High School	170
Newtownhamilton High School	35
North-Coast Integrated College, Coleraine	80
Oakgrove Integrated College, Derry	130
Omagh High School	100
Orangefield High School, Belfast	100
Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney	80
Our Lady of Mercy Girls' School, Belfast	110
Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim	150
Priory College, Holywood	85
Rathfriland High School	66
Sacred Heart College, Omagh	170
Saintfield High School	68
Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle	80
Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt	80
St Aidan's High School, Derrylin	66
St Benedict's College, Randalstown	100
St Brigid's College, Derry	125
St Brigid's High School, Armagh	90
St Catherine's College, Armagh	155
St Cecilia's College, Londonderry	129
St Ciaran's High School, Ballygawley	125
St Colman's High School, Ballynahinch	95
St Colmcille's High School, Crossgar	90
St Colm's High School, Draperstown	68
St Colm's High School, Twinbrook	132
St Columban's College, Killeel	105

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
St Columbanus' College, Bangor	90
St Columba's High School, Portaferry	104
St Comhghall's College, Lisnaskea	86
St Eugene's College, Roslea	54
St Eugene's High School, Castledearg	62
St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen	60
St Gemma's High School, Belfast	84
St Genevieve's High School, Belfast	160
St John's High School, Dromore	90
St Joseph's Boys' High School, Newry	100
St Joseph's College, Belfast	120
St Joseph's College, Coalisland	135
St Joseph's College, Coleraine	98
St Joseph's College, Enniskillen	74
St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	120
St Joseph's Secondary School, Derry	140
St Killian's College	140
St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast	356
St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan	164
St Mark's High School, Warrenpoint	150
St Mary's College, Irvinestown	62
St Mary's College, Derry	135
St Mary's College, Portglenone	70
St Mary's High School, Belleek	46
St Mary's High School, Downpatrick	125
St Mary's High School, Lurgan	155
St Mary's High School, Newry	100
St Mary's, Limavady	170
St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, Claudy	100
St Patrick's College Banbridge	125
St Patrick's College, Ballymena	150
St Patrick's College, Bearnageeha, Belfast	135
St Patrick's College, Dungannon	100

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
St Patrick's College, Maghera	190
St Patrick's High School, Dungiven	90
St Patrick's High School, Keady	160
St Patrick's High School, Lisburn	106
St Paul's College, Kilrea	54
St Paul's High School, Bessbrook	207
St Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan	150
St Peter's High School, Derry	120
St Pius X College, Magherafelt	140
St Rose's Dominican College, Belfast	108
Strangford Integrated College	80
Tandragee Junior High School	105
The High School, Ballynahinch	76
Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus	80

Pupils Transferring into Post-Primary Schools

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) number of pupils transferring into post-primary schools, which used selection, in the 2012/13 academic year as an enrolment criterion; and (ii) the number of pupils who were (a) successful; and (b) unsuccessful in obtaining a place, broken down by the grade achieved in the selection tests.

(AQW 12548/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In accordance with my Department's policy on post-primary transfer, which is not supportive of unregulated entrance tests, no information is collected about any aspect of tests conducted in contravention of that policy. Hence it is not possible to provide information referenced to a test grade or score.

With that exception, the following tables provide the information requested for schools that are selective, partially selective and non-selective, referenced to each school's admissions number, which defines the number of permitted Year 8 admissions. The number of pupils transferring to a school that uses academic selection as a criterion equates to the number of pupils admitted to such a school.

When considering the extent to which applicants have been able to gain admission to a selective or partially selective school, it should be noted that the same pupil may appear as an applicant against more than one school due to the way in which the transfer procedure facilitates the sequential processing of applications to a number of schools until each application is successful.

SCHOOLS WITH A SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Abbey Grammar School, Newry	125	200	129	71

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Antrim Grammar School	105	143	105	38
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	110	171	110	61
Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch	120	169	120	49
Ballyclare High School	186	217	186	31
Ballymena Academy	176	244	176	68
Banbridge Academy	184	260	184	76
Bangor Grammar School	125	158	125	33
Belfast High School	136	167	136	31
Belfast Royal Academy	200	246	200	46
Bloomfield Collegiate School	100	127	100	27
Cambridge House Grammar	140	160	140	20
Campbell College	110	93	93	0
Carrickfergus Grammar School	116	155	116	39
Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh	135	158	135	23
Coleraine Academical Institution	125	149	125	24
Coleraine High School	120	141	120	21
Collegiate Grammar School, Enniskillen	70	80	70	10
Dalriada School	125	177	125	52
Dominican College, Belfast	150	171	150	21
Dominican College, Portstewart	69	93	69	24
Down High School	128	172	128	44
Foyle College	125	159	125	34
Friends' School	140	313	140	173
Glenlola Collegiate School	157	185	157	28
Grosvenor Grammar School	155	237	155	82
Hunterhouse College	100	167	100	67
Larne Grammar School	110	126	110	16
Limavady Grammar School	130	158	130	28
Loreto College, Coleraine	120	159	120	39
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	125	157	125	32

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Lumen Christi College	120	226	120	106
Methodist College	240	301	240	61
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	96	145	96	49
Omagh Academy	95	100	95	5
Our Lady & St Patrick's College, Knock	180	266	180	86
Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry	120	162	120	42
Portora Royal School	70	68	68	0
Rainey Endowed School	100	116	100	16
Rathmore Grammar School	180	257	180	77
Regent House School	210	254	210	44
Royal Belfast Academical Institution	150	176	150	26
Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry	120	162	120	42
St Colman's College, Newry	125	181	125	56
St Columb's College, Derry	220	266	220	46
St Dominic's High School, Belfast	141	204	141	63
St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore	95	133	95	38
St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena	139	204	139	65
St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel	80	97	80	17
St Malachy's College, Belfast	150	203	150	53
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	175	172	172	0
St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt	153	161	153	8
St Michael's College, Enniskillen	100	131	100	31
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	195	243	195	48
St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh	110	129	110	19
St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick	96	96	96	0
Strathearn School	110	172	110	62
Sullivan Upper School	150	197	150	47

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
The Royal School, Armagh	100	114	100	14
The Royal School, Dungannon	93	98	93	5
Thornhill College, Derry	200	225	200	25
Victoria College	130	199	130	69
Wallace High School	170	291	170	121
Wellington College	110	170	110	60

Notes:

- 5 Figures relate to the position at the conclusion of the transfer procedure on 28 May 2012.
- 6 The transfer procedure involves parents expressing a number of preferences on the Transfer Form, which equates to multiple applications to schools. It follows therefore that an applicant may appear within the total applications figure of more than one school within this table.
- 7 St Joseph's Grammar School's approved admissions number includes admission to the school's Irish Medium Unit which has a non-selective intake.
- 8 Four additional places were approved by the Department of Education in respect of Abbey Grammar School, Newry, which permitted that school to lawfully admit pupils in excess of its admissions number.

SCHOOLS WITH A PARTIALLY SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number	Total Applications	Total Admitted	Total Not Admitted
Lagan College (35% selective intake)	200	284	200	84
Slemish Integrated College (35% selective intake)	120	231	120	111
Strabane Academy (50% selective intake)	110	98	98	0

Notes:

- 4 Figures relate to the position at the conclusion of the transfer procedure on 28 May 2012.
- 5 The transfer procedure involves parents expressing a number of preferences on the Transfer Form, which equates to multiple applications to schools. It follows therefore that an applicant may appear within the total applications figure of more than one school within this table.
- 6 Although these schools only admit a proportion of their intake with reference to a test, the total applications figure refers to both the school's selective and non-selective intake. The Department is unable to provide a breakdown of these figures.

SCHOOLS WITH A NON-SELECTIVE INTAKE

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Ashfield Boys' High School, Belfast	110
Ashfield Girls' High School, Belfast	113

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Aughnacloy College	46
Ballee Community High School	100
Ballycastle High School	92
Ballyclare Secondary School	180
Ballymoney High School	130
Banbridge High School	136
Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	242
Belfast Boys' Model School	151
Belfast Model School for Girls	160
Blackwater Integrated College	80
Brownlow College	90
Carrickfergus College	160
Castlederg High School	90
Christian Brothers' Secondary School, Belfast	100
City of Armagh High School	115
Clounagh Junior High School	220
Colaiste Feirste, Belfast	100
Coleraine College	103
Cookstown High School	180
Corpus Christi College, Belfast	100
Craigavon Senior High School	310
Cross & Passion College, Ballycastle	130
Crumlin Integrated College	75
Cullybackey High School	130
De La Salle College, Belfast	163
De La Salle Secondary School, Downpatrick	86
Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore	80
Devenish College, Enniskillen	120
Downshire School	160
Dromore High School	148
Drumcree College	150
Drumglass High School	90
Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh	96

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Dunclug College, Ballymena	110
Dundonald High School	120
Dunluce School	110
Dunmurry High School	80
Edmund Rice College	120
Erne Integrated College, Enniskillen	70
Fivemiletown High School	69
Fort Hill College, Lisburn	160
Garvagh High School	70
Glastry College	110
Glengormley High School	210
Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast	140
Holy Cross College, Strabane	300
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	160
Immaculate Conception College	105
Integrated College Dungannon	90
Kilkeel High School	145
Killicomaine Junior High School	227
Knockbreda High School	120
Larne High School	135
Laurelhill Community College, Lisburn	175
Limavady High School	140
Lismore Comprehensive School	210
Lisnagarvey High School	100
Lisnaskea High School	60
Lisneal College, Derry	178
Little Flower Girls' School, Belfast	107
Lurgan Junior High School	250
Magherafelt High School	100
Malone College, Belfast	130
Markethill High School	93
Monkstown Community School	164
Movilla High School, Newtownards	180

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
Nendrum College, Comber	80
New-Bridge Integrated College, Loughbrickland	80
Newry High School	92
Newtownabbey Community High School	130
Newtownbreda High School	170
Newtownhamilton High School	35
North-Coast Integrated College, Coleraine	80
Oakgrove Integrated College, Derry	130
Omagh High School	100
Orangefield High School, Belfast	100
Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney	80
Our Lady of Mercy Girls' School, Belfast	110
Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim	150
Priory College, Holywood	85
Rathfriland High School	66
Sacred Heart College, Omagh	170
Saintfield High School	68
Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle	80
Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt	80
St Aidan's High School, Derrylin	66
St Benedict's College, Randalstown	100
St Brigid's College, Derry	125
St Brigid's High School, Armagh	90
St Catherine's College, Armagh	155
St Cecilia's College, Londonderry	129
St Ciaran's High School, Ballygawley	125
St Colman's High School, Ballynahinch	95
St Colmcille's High School, Crossgar	90
St Colm's High School, Draperstown	68
St Colm's High School, Twinbrook	132
St Columban's College, Killeel	105
St Columbanus' College, Bangor	90
St Columba's High School, Portaferry	104

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
St Comhghall's College, Lisnaskea	86
St Eugene's College, Roslea	54
St Eugene's High School, Castlederg	62
St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen	60
St Gemma's High School, Belfast	84
St Genevieve's High School, Belfast	160
St John's High School, Dromore	90
St Joseph's Boys' High School, Newry	100
St Joseph's College, Belfast	120
St Joseph's College, Coalisland	135
St Joseph's College, Coleraine	98
St Joseph's College, Enniskillen	74
St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	120
St Joseph's Secondary School, Derry	140
St Killian's College	140
St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast	356
St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan	164
St Mark's High School, Warrenpoint	150
St Mary's College, Irvinestown	62
St Mary's College, Derry	135
St Mary's College, Portglenone	70
St Mary's High School, Belleek	46
St Mary's High School, Downpatrick	125
St Mary's High School, Lurgan	155
St Mary's High School, Newry	100
St Mary's, Limavady	170
St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, Claudy	100
St Patrick's College Banbridge	125
St Patrick's College, Ballymena	150
St Patrick's College, Bearnageeha, Belfast	135
St Patrick's College, Dungannon	100
St Patrick's College, Maghera	190
St Patrick's High School, Dungiven	90

School Name	Approved Admissions (Year 8) Number
St Patrick's High School, Keady	160
St Patrick's High School, Lisburn	106
St Paul's College, Kilrea	54
St Paul's High School, Bessbrook	207
St Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan	150
St Peter's High School, Derry	120
St Pius X College, Magherafelt	140
St Rose's Dominican College, Belfast	108
Strangford Integrated College	80
Tandragee Junior High School	105
The High School, Ballynahinch	76
Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus	80

Internships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many internships are available in his Department; and if none, what plans he has to introduce an internship scheme.

(AQW 12550/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Corporate Human Resources (CHR), Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is responsible for facilitating a placement programme for interns within NICS Departments. CHR currently works with Queen's University Belfast (QUB), School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy, and individual Departments are invited to submit bids for interns. Department of Education (DE) has been chosen to accommodate a successful intern for the first semester of the 2012/13 academic year.

Teacher Training Colleges

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education what assessment is carried out, during the first year at Teacher Training Colleges, to ensure that prospective teachers are capable of performing the duties associated with teaching.

(AQO 2143/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Assessment for first year students engaged on the BEd primary and post-primary programmes at St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College falls into two categories: academic and college-based assessment; and school-based assessment.

Academic and college-based assessment is concerned with the students' academic and professional development and learning and is directly related to preparation for classroom-based practice. Assessment tasks are aimed at preparing students to have a sufficiently developed degree of competence to enable them to work in classroom settings during the School Experience element of the programme. The BEd programmes comprise various modules and each module is assessed by written and practical work. Students need to pass all modules before proceeding to Year 2 of the course.

School-based assessment provides for classroom practice and the development of teaching skills. This school based training is an integral part of the course and plays an important role in providing students with a real life experience of learning and teaching in classrooms and schools. First year students spend between 6 and 7 weeks in schools and are visited on at least 2 occasions by College staff

who observe their teaching in the classroom. In consultation with school partners, students are then assessed on their suitability for teaching.

In addition, whilst on school-based training, students are required to prepare a school experience file each year for their period of school based work. This requires them to demonstrate high levels of planning which indicate their thorough understanding of both the Curriculum and how children learn effectively. This file emphasises not only the importance of professional development but also classroom practice.

Cost of Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Education to outline the number of judicial reviews that have been established involving the Southern Education and Library Board, in relation to the cost of transport for children with special educational needs.

(AQW 12582/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has indicated that there have been no judicial reviews in relation to the cost of transport for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need.

Pre-School or Nursery Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the 1400 applicants who failed to obtain a pre-school or nursery place in the first tranche for the 2012/13 academic year, to list the locations of the pre-school or nursery facilities where they failed to obtain a place, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 12586/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is not readily available and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education whether the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools is exempt from complying with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, from a teacher, for notes of interviews which took place between two and six years prior to the FOI request being made.

(AQW 12598/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools is a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and, therefore, subject to the duties of the Act.

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to reduce (i) the number of QUANGOs; and (ii) the operational cost of QUANGOs.

(AQW 12599/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority will replace 8 existing bodies: 5 Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Youth Council and the Staff Commission

By the end of the budget period, through the establishment of the ESA and other measures, my Department's savings delivery plan aims to achieve savings of £45 million per year.

Teacher Education Places

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education to detail the criteria used to determine the reduction in initial teacher education places for each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 12604/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department determines intakes to courses of initial teacher education (ITE) on an annual basis. Intakes are not allocated for each Education and Library Board; rather, they are allocated

to each of the ITE providers. In overall terms, the provision made available at the individual institutions is aimed at meeting the differing needs of our schooling system and ensuring that appropriate routes are made available.

The process of determining intakes to ITE courses is informed by a range of statistical data including information provided through the operation of a statistical model known as the Teacher Demand Statistical Model (TDSM).

The intakes are not informed purely by short-term supply and demand issues but by 4 key factors:

- the overall forecast demand for teachers;
- the forecast need for teachers in specific priority or shortage areas;
- the need to maintain and develop the capacity for local ITE providers to educate teachers in the future to meet the diverse needs of our pluralist school system; and
- the need to provide opportunities for young people.

The overall reduction of 63 places (56 post-primary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and 7 primary PGCE places), which have fallen to Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (UU), takes account of the need to reduce ITE numbers, given the anticipated impact of the Budget settlement for Education; the Public Account Committee's recommendation in relation to the oversupply of teachers; the current position in relation to difficulties faced by newly and recently qualified teachers in gaining permanent employment; and the anticipated level of demand for teachers in future years.

The reductions to intakes this year have focused largely on the one-year post-primary PGCE courses in order to expedite reductions in supply to the post-primary sector. 2010 School Census data have shown that post-primary enrolments have already fallen from 147,902 in 2010/11 to 146,747 in 2011/12, and will continue to fall to 136,716 in 2016/17 before rising to 137,053 in 2017/18. Primary/nursery enrolments have however started to increase over the same period, rising from 170,724 in 2011/12 to an expected level of 186,110 in 2017/18.

Whilst primary enrolments are on the rise, account has had to be taken of the number of teachers trained for this sector who are currently seeking employment on the NI Substitute Teacher Register – some 4,500 teachers as at end of March 2012. I have, therefore, cut the UU's one-year primary PGCE intake by 7 places as a means of expediting reductions in supply to the primary sector.

The Open University (OU) also provides post-primary PGCE courses. In recognition of the OU's unique distance learning flexible PGCE provision, I decided that their comparatively small allocation of 20 places should remain unchanged. In reducing QUB's and UU's intakes, I decided that the overall reduction of 63 places should be apportioned on the basis of last year's intake allocations to the Universities.

Barnardo's NI Policy and Practice Briefing No.15 on Community Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Barnardo's NI Policy and Practice Briefing No.15 on community schools.

(AQW 12606/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am supportive of the principles underpinning the community schools approach, as set out in Barnardo's Policy and Practice Briefing No. 15, and recognise the benefits and opportunities that collaborative and partnership working can bring not only for pupils, but for schools and the wider community.

In recognition of this, I have provided £0.7m to fund Full Service provision and £11.8m for the Extended Schools (ES) programme in 2012-13. The ES funding includes an additional £1.2m that I announced in the Assembly last month and underpins my commitment to this invaluable programme. The funding provided is used to help address local needs and strengthen links between schools and the local communities they serve by establishing schools as hubs of the community, engaging effectively with statutory agencies and both voluntary and community organisations. Evaluations of both programmes have demonstrated emerging success in helping remove barriers that prevent children and young people from reaching their full potential.

Supporting a comprehensive Full Service Community School approach would require significant additional funding which would need to be considered in light of other priorities and take account of the difficult budget settlement for education.

Schools: Admissions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how his Department (i) supports parents throughout the process of allocation of school places, particularly where a child has not been placed in any school; and (ii) ensures that parents are made aware of the support available to them.

(AQW 12618/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the responsibility of the Education and Library Boards to administer the arrangements for the placement of children in grant-aided schools. Articles 9 and 17 of the Education (NI) Order 1997 require the Education and Library Boards to administer and publicise the arrangements for admissions to schools. To this end the Education and Library Boards annually publish booklets issued to all parents setting out admissions arrangements in the case of primary schools and transfer procedure arrangements in the case of transfer from primary to post-primary school.

Where a child remains unplaced at the end of the admissions/transfer procedures the relevant Education and Library Board will provide the parent/guardian with a list of schools with places still available and ask them to nominate further preferences. The Education and Library Board will continue to liaise with the parent/guardian until the child has been placed in a school.

Amalgamation of St Mary's Junior High School, St Paul's Junior High School and St Michael's Grammar School in Lurgan

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education whether he has received, from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the plans for the amalgamation of St Mary's Junior High School, St Paul's Junior High School and St Michael's Grammar School in Lurgan; and to outline the timescale for the implementation of the amalgamation.

(AQW 12620/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Any significant change to the schools' estate, such as a school closure, amalgamation or establishing a new school would require the publication of a statutory Development Proposal to support that intent. To date no such proposal has been published in respect of these schools.

Potential projects such as the amalgamation of St Mary's Junior High School; St Paul's Junior High School and St Michael's Grammar School will be critically assessed as part of the area planning process which I commissioned the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors to undertake.

To date I have received draft area plans for Stand Alone Special Schools and for post-primary provision. It is anticipated that the plans for post-primary provision will be published for public consultation in July 2012.

Until work on the area plans has been completed and the plans have been approved, I am not in a position to comment on any specific school or potential proposals.

Pre-School Applications

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Education how many pre-school applications were received from the BT4 and BT5 areas for each of the last 3 academic years.

(AQW 12666/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is not readily available and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education which schools have been awarded UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award.

(AQW 12676/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education is aware that a number of schools are working with UNICEF to achieve the Rights Respecting Schools Award. However the Department does not collate information on schools participating in the awards scheme.

It is matter for individual schools to decide which resources, programmes or services they consider appropriate to support their curricular provision, including whether to take part in the Rights Respecting Schools Awards.

QUANGOS

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many QUANGOS, that are attached to his Department, have been created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

(AQW 12689/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The only public body attached to my Department which has been created as a result of legislation passed by the Assembly since 2007 is the Exceptional Circumstances Body. This body began operating in June 2010 and was constituted under regulations passed by the Assembly in 2010. The statutory duty on my Department to make these regulations and establish this body and the Exceptional Circumstances process is contained in the Education (NI) Order 2006.

New Controlled Irish-Medium Primary School in Dungiven

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the rationale for the creation of the new controlled Irish-medium primary school in Dungiven, including the associated costs; (ii) the level of consultation was carried out in advance with parents and local Boards of Governors; and (iii) the rationale for the closure of the Irish-medium unit at St Canice's Primary School, Dungiven.

(AQW 12737/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I approved a Development Proposal (DP) for the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain after a careful consideration of the case presented measured against the requirements of the Sustainable Schools policy. I was satisfied that sufficient evidence was presented to demonstrate that a viable controlled Irish-medium school can be developed. For the school to qualify for funding the Western Education and Library Board must ensure that a number of standard conditions in line with the Sustainable Schools Policy are met on opening.

Consultation is an integral part of the statutory DP process - prior to publication, consultation with those directly affected by the proposal is undertaken by the proposer and consultation with schools considered likely to be affected is undertaken by the publishing Education and Library Board. Post publication, a statutory 2 month objection period ensues during which time anyone who wishes to do so may offer their views directly to the Department. In this instance, comments received were overwhelming in favour of the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain.

The Irish-medium unit at St Canice's Primary School has closed in light of parental support for the new Gaelscoil Neachtain.

5 or More GCSEs

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of school leavers with hearing loss/deafness who achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* - C, broken down by Education and Library Board area, between (i) 1995-2000; (ii) 2000-2005; (iii) 2005-2010; and (iv) 2010-2012.

(AQW 12738/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The special education need type was included in the school leavers survey from the 2003/04 academic year onwards, therefore information for 1995 to 2003 is not available.

The table below contains information from 2003/04 to 2010/11.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH HEARING LOSS/DEAFNESS ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSES A*-C (INC. EQUIVALENTS) FROM 2003/04 TO 2010/11 BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD OF SCHOOL

	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	NI
2003/04 to 2005/06	56.8	38.5	37.5	40.0	30.2	41.1
2006/07 to 2008/09	48.8	48.4	50.0	38.8	48.4	45.9
2009/10 to 2010/11	57.9	45.8	68.2	45.9	50.0	53.1

Source: School Leavers Survey

Data excludes special and independent schools

Nursery Provision: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to tackle the shortage of nursery provision in the North Down area.

(AQO 2127/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and units and in voluntary/private settings participating in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme.

The Pre-School Admissions Process is a 2 stage process which completed on 1 June 2012 when letters issued to those parents/guardians of children who remained unplaced having stipulated further preferences at Stage 2 of the admissions process. The letter also contained a list of pre-school settings in the Board area in which vacant places remain.

In an effort to place as many children as possible, parents whose children were unplaced at Stage 1 but who chose not to list further preferences also received a letter from their ELB advising them of where places remain available.

Across the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) area, of the children whose parents applied at Stage 2 of the process 12 remain unplaced, 9 of whom applied for places in Bangor.

The SEELB has brought new providers in to the Programme and has increased the number of places allocated to existing settings where necessary.

The SEELB is continuing to liaise with new providers and will continue to work with parents over the coming months to ensure that, as far as possible, all eligible children are able to avail of a funded pre-school place in September.

I expect the number of unplaced children to fall further in the coming weeks as there is natural movement in the system before the new school term commences.

Schools: South Antrim

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Education, following his recent funding announcement, when he will make an announcement on his capital priorities for the South Antrim area.

(AQO 2128/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Recommendations from the area planning process will in due course inform priorities for capital investment.

Potential capital projects such as those for the South Antrim area will be critically assessed as part of this to determine how they contribute to the overall infrastructure needed.

However, in the short-term I am considering an interim process to identify major school projects, consistent with and supportive of the area planning work, in which capital investment can be made in the coming period.

Until then I cannot comment on individual school proposals.

C2k: Computer Hardware

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education why C2k no longer supports the servicing of C2k network printers or the upgrade of other computer hardware.

(AQO 2129/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: C2k consulted with school and education stakeholder representatives in developing the Statement of Requirements (SoRs) for the new contract. Many schools have invested in multi-function devices for photocopying, scanning and network printing. These are maintained as part of the School's photocopying contracts. It was therefore decided that printers would not be included in the SoRs. However, at least one printer in each school will be maintained until the end of the current academic year to allow time to adjust.

C2k provides all schools with core provision equipment, including PCs.

Post primary schools had PC replacement in the academic year 2009/10 and Northgate will support or replace (if necessary) existing core PCs throughout the lifetime of the contract.

Primary schools will however receive an upgrade of their core PCs, as a much longer period of time has elapsed since their original installation.

Schools also have laptops provided by C2k, which will be supported up to April 2014 at which point C2k must decide on future arrangements.

Some schools enhanced their core C2k provision by purchasing additional PCs or laptops using their delegated budgets. All costs associated with these would always have fallen to the school. However, these machines do not need to be scrapped. Schools can purchase security software, allowing them to access all on-line elements through their browser. This software will cost in the region of £35 per PC over a 3 year period, all schools have been informed.

Vocational Education: Wolf Review

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education what assessment his Department has made of the 'Review of Vocational Education - The Wolf Report'.

(AQO 2130/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Though it did not extend to the north, the Department has considered the Wolf report with interest. I already have in place a suite of policies designed to raise educational standards and tackle underachievement with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. I firmly believe that we can best serve the needs of all our young people by ensuring they have access to a broad and balanced range of courses to meet their needs, aspirations and the needs of the economy from Key Stage 4. Under the entitlement framework at least a third of courses offered must be applied and at least a third general

by 2013, be at Level 2 or 3 and have clear progression pathways. Accordingly, much of the report as it applies to school provision, is not relevant here.

Integrated Education

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether he will establish targets through the Shared Education initiative, Area Learning Communities and the Area-based Planning process, to facilitate and encourage integrated education as highlighted in the Good Friday Agreement.

(AQO 2131/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. I take that duty very seriously.

I also recognise that parental preference is central to the selection of schools for children.

The Programme for Government includes a range of commitments on advancing shared education. Integrated schools will continue to have an important role in achieving that. However, they are one of many ways of delivering shared education; such as partnerships, co-location, or shared campus projects, like Lisanelly.

I do not consider it appropriate to prescribe targets for integrated schools, or any other approach. Finding local solutions to local need is the way forward.

Nursery Provision: East Belfast

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education how many children, in the East Belfast constituency, have not been allocated a nursery school place in the 2012/13 academic year.

(AQO 2132/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and units and in voluntary/private settings participating in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme.

Pre-School Admissions are administered in a two stage process. The Belfast Education and Library Board and South-Eastern Education and Library Board have advised that at the end of Stage 1 of the process on 30 March, 39 children who had applied to pre-school settings in the East Belfast constituency remained unplaced at that stage.

None of the parents/guardians of these children chose to state further preferences for consideration during Stage 2 of the process.

Both the BELB and SEELB will continue to liaise with new providers and to work with parents over the coming months to ensure that, as far as possible, all eligible children are able to avail of a funded pre-school place in September.

Teachers: Support

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education how he proposes to streamline the mechanism for supporting teachers, who are experiencing professional difficulties, in a way that protects the rights of both teachers and children.

(AQO 2133/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A revised procedure, Supporting Effective Leadership in Schools, is currently being finalised by the Teacher Negotiating Committee. This procedure is designed to provide the appropriate support, advice and guidance to a Principal whose work is giving cause for concern. This will address any identified weaknesses and provide the opportunity for the Principal to become effective.

It is proposed that a Principal remains in post while he/she receives support to improve his/her practice. If there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Principal's work is unsatisfactory to such an extent as to be seriously detrimental to the pupils' safety, welfare or educational progress, the Principal may be suspended on a precautionary basis.

It is anticipated that this procedure will be finalised by the end of June. Once finalised, this procedure will then be used as the template for the Teachers/Vice-Principals procedure. It is anticipated that agreement on this will be reached over the Summer.

Bytes Project

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the relationship between his Department and the Bytes Project.

(AQO 2134/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not have a direct relationship with the Bytes Project; it is one of a number of voluntary youth service organisations which is currently funded by the Youth Council.

Funding was previously provided directly to Bytes by DE. However, in line with the aims of convergence planning and in order to strengthen accountability, the funding arrangements for the organisation were passed to the Youth Council in 2010. It is, therefore, for the Youth Council to determine the level of funding for Bytes in line with DE priorities, its published funding scheme and the available budget.

Educational Standards

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Education how his Department's policies have demonstrably raised educational standards over recent years.

(AQO 2135/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The evidence shows that the policies that I and my predecessor put in place to raise educational standards have been working. These include the Every School a Good School policy for school improvement, and Count, read: succeed, the strategy for improving literacy and numeracy.

The most recent statistics available show continued improvements in pupil attainment. At Key Stage 2, 82.4% of pupils achieved the expected level in English, an increase of 4.4 percentage points from 2006. In maths 82.9% achieved the expected level, an increase of 2.9 percentage points from 2006.

Amongst school leavers 59.5% achieved 5+ GCSEs at A* - C or equivalent qualifications including GCSEs in English and maths. This was an increase of 6.9 percentage points from 2006.

The challenge now is to ensure the effective implementation of these policies by all schools so that the improvement in educational outcomes continues, with particular emphasis on how they contribute to raising standards for those pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

Department for Employment and Learning

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 11514/11-15, why St Mary's University College, Belfast was not included as part of the proposed merger from the outset.

(AQW 12207/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The merger was proposed by the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College in April 2008. St. Mary's University College was not included as part of the proposed merger from the outset as it had no wish to merge with any other institution. The proposal was subsequently put out to public consultation in March 2011.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning 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 12223/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) corporate and individual departmental sickness absence targets were set by the Minister of Finance and Personnel and the trade union (NIPSA) was advised accordingly.

The table below sets out the targets and the actual absence rates over the last 3 years.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Target (days lost)	10.4	10.1	9.5
Actual (days lost)	10.7	10.6	11.4*
(% of working days lost)	(4.8%)	(4.8%)	(5.2%)

* Please note this figure is provisional and is subject to change between now and the publication of the Financial Year NICS absence report for the year 2011/2012.

Introduction of Universal Credit

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the introduction of Universal Credit will change their departmental estate requirements.

(AQW 12233/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's estate requirements in terms of Jobs & Benefits offices and Jobcentres will need to be assessed in light of the ongoing work of the Universal Credit Programme which is being led by the Department for Social Development. At this stage it is too early to say what the overall impact of Universal Credit will be on the estate requirements of all impacted organisations, including the impact on the existing network of local offices.

Step Ahead Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he intends to bid for money for the Step Ahead Programme in the June Monitoring Round.

(AQW 12281/11-15)

Dr Farry: I did not submit any bid for money in the June Monitoring round in relation to a Step Ahead initiative within the Steps to Work programme.

Student Loans

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why some Northern Ireland students start repaying their student loans when they earn a salary of £15,795 per annum, whilst others do not make any repayments until they earn more than £21,000 per annum.

(AQW 12293/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that, from April 2012, the repayment threshold for new and continuing students from Northern Ireland (and Scotland) has increased from £15,000 to £15,795 and will increase annually in line with inflation. In England and Wales, the repayment threshold for continuing students who commenced their studies before September 2012 has also increased to £15,795 and will increase annually in line with inflation. However, the repayment threshold for new students who commence their studies from September 2012 will be £21,000.

The rationale for not increasing the repayment threshold to £21,000 for Northern Ireland domiciled students is based on the fact that tuition fees at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions are being maintained at current levels, subject only to annual inflationary increases. For Northern Ireland domiciled students studying in the rest of the United Kingdom, tuition fee loans of up to £9,000 are available to meet the significantly increased fees, however, the funding was not available to increase the repayment threshold.

It is recognised that these changes will result in Northern Ireland domiciled students reaching the repayment threshold more quickly than their English and Welsh counterparts. However, while the repayment threshold will be higher in England and Wales for new students, it is also important to bear in mind that the interest rate on student loans will also be significantly higher there. In England and Wales, variable interest rates of up to 3% above inflation (i.e. Retail Price Index inflation) will apply whereas interest rates for Northern Ireland domiciled students will continue to be based on the current rate of Retail Price Index inflation. At present, the rate of interest payable by Northern Ireland domiciled students is 1.5%.

I can further advise that Northern Ireland domiciled students have a shorter period of time in which to pay back their loans in comparison to students from England and Wales. This is a more advantageous arrangement for Northern Ireland domiciled students because any outstanding loan balance they have is written off after 25 years in contrast to new English and Welsh students whose outstanding loan balance will not be written off until 30 years have elapsed. In other words, new English and Welsh students have five more years than students from Northern Ireland to make repayments on their loans before they are written off.

Training for Success

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the necessity for Specialist Support Provision within the Training for Success contract; and at which target group these services are aimed.

(AQW 12335/11-15)

Dr Farry: Training for Success (TfS) targets 16-17 year olds with a flexible menu that allows young people to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individual tailored training, personal development and employability skills. The programme is open to all young people, including those with a disability or additional support needs. There is extended eligibility of up to age 22 for those with a disability and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

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- second or third generation unemployed;
- low level of motivation;
- history of trouble and conflict with authority;
- possible involvement in illegal or anti-social activities;
- poorly developed or unrealistic career goals;

- health related problems;
- alcohol, solvent or drug related abuse or dependencies;
- inability to relate to peers;
- homelessness;
- parenting;
- pregnancy;
- the responsibility of caring for other family members; and
- other psychological/physiological problems requiring help and support.

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TfS recognises the importance of providing a range of support to those who require it with the aim of assisting them in their learning by keeping them engaged in learning and achieving the best possible outcomes. The Department has engaged Specialist Support Providers to work in conjunction with Training Suppliers to ensure that the necessary support is provided.

The Department covers the cost of specialist support for each young person assessed as having specialist support needs. In addition, the Department pays an enhanced weekly training fee to Training Suppliers in respect of TfS participants with a disability to help a Supplier provide significant additional input of resources such as specialist equipment.

To assist potential participants with a disability, a Pre-Entry Training Support referral process is in place whereby support needs can be identified prior to entry to training in order that specialist support can be in place as soon as possible after joining the TfS programme.

Of those who commenced training in each of the last three years, specialist support was provided to 1,185 in 2009/10, 1,192 in 2010/11 and 1,035 in 2011/12. This equates to 20%, 19.7% and 17.1% of those who commenced training over the respective 3 years.

Currently funding is up to a maximum of £1,000 annually per participant towards the provision of specialist support where the need has been identified in the participant's Personal Training Plan.

Prior to re-tendering, the Department received feedback from a number of training suppliers indicating that the arrangements for additional learning support were insufficiently flexible under the existing arrangements. In light of this request the funding for additional learning support under the new contract arrangements will be allocated directly to the new contracted training suppliers.

Feedback from training suppliers has indicated that individuals requiring additional learning support, in the main, are on the Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work Level 1 strands of the TfS programme. It is for this reason that the Department will introduce under the new contract arrangements a weekly fee of £3.00 payable in respect of each participant on these strands. This will ensure that the funding is targeted at those who need it most. It will allow suppliers a greater flexibility to provide a wider service to those individuals that need assistance. Under the current arrangements, the Department's average spend on additional learning support is typically in the region of £300k per annum. The new arrangements will double this funding.

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In designing the new TfS programme model, the Department consulted with Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Organisations and training suppliers. Specialist Support providers were advised separately of the new programme model and the rationale for greater flexibility around the provision of additional learning support. Specialist Support Providers also attended information seminars on the new programme model.

Training for Success

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have availed of Specialist Support Provision, in each of the last three years; and what this figure represents as a percentage of the Training for Success cohort in each year.

(AQW 12336/11-15)

Dr Farry: Training for Success (TfS) targets 16-17 year olds with a flexible menu that allows young people to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individual tailored training, personal development and employability skills. The programme is open to all young people, including those with a disability or additional support needs. There is extended eligibility of up to age 22 for those with a disability and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

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Training for Success

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the annual funding, per participant, that was available to training suppliers for Specialist Support Services, under the terms of the Training for Success programme, up to March 2012.

(AQW 12338/11-15)

Dr Farry: Training for Success (TfS) targets 16-17 year olds with a flexible menu that allows young people to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individual tailored training, personal development and employability skills. The programme is open to all young people, including those with a disability or additional support needs. There is extended eligibility of up to age 22 for those with a disability and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

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In designing the new TfS programme model, the Department consulted with Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Organisations and training suppliers. Specialist Support providers were advised separately of the new programme model and the rationale for greater flexibility around the provision of additional learning support. Specialist Support Providers also attended information seminars on the new programme model.

Training for Success

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much annual funding, per participant, is available for training suppliers to Specialist Support Services, under the terms of the new contract for the Training for Success programme.

(AQW 12341/11-15)

Dr Farry: Training for Success (TfS) targets 16-17 year olds with a flexible menu that allows young people to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individual tailored training, personal development and employability skills. The programme is open to all young people, including those with a disability or additional support needs. There is extended eligibility of up to age 22 for those with a disability and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

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The Department covers the cost of specialist support for each young person assessed as having specialist support needs. In addition, the Department pays an enhanced weekly training fee to Training Suppliers in respect of TfS participants with a disability to help a Supplier provide significant additional input of resources such as specialist equipment.

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In designing the new TfS programme model, the Department consulted with Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Organisations and training suppliers. Specialist Support providers were advised separately of the new programme model and the rationale for greater flexibility around the provision of additional learning support. Specialist Support Providers also attended information seminars on the new programme model.

Training for Success

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation took place with training providers and specialist support suppliers on the new Training for Success programme model. **(AQW 12342/11-15)**

Dr Farry: Training for Success (TfS) targets 16-17 year olds with a flexible menu that allows young people to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individual tailored training, personal development and employability skills. The programme is open to all young people, including those with a disability or additional support needs. There is extended eligibility of up to age 22 for those with a disability and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

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Feedback from training suppliers has indicated that individuals requiring additional learning support, in the main, are on the Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work Level 1 strands of the TFS programme. It is for this reason that the Department will introduce under the new contract arrangements a weekly fee of £3.00 payable in respect of each participant on these strands. This will ensure that the funding is targeted at those who need it most. It will allow suppliers a greater flexibility to provide a wider service to those individuals that need assistance. Under the current arrangements, the Department's average spend on additional learning support is typically in the region of £300k per annum. The new arrangements will double this funding.

Training Suppliers were of the view that the current arrangements for disability specialist support should continue. Under the new arrangements funding of up to a maximum of £1,000 annually per participant will be made available to provide disability specialist support.

In designing the new TFS programme model, the Department consulted with Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Organisations and training suppliers. Specialist Support providers were advised separately of the new programme model and the rationale for greater flexibility around the provision of additional learning support. Specialist Support Providers also attended information seminars on the new programme model.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 11774/11-15, what representations his Department made in response to those received from the board of St Mary's University College, Belfast.

(AQW 12360/11-15)

Dr Farry: The position stated by the Governing Body of St. Mary's University College that it is opposed to inclusion in any merger with Stranmillis University College and Queen's University is not new. This is the position that St. Mary's has held since the merger was first proposed. No representation was required from my Department, however, the potential for St. Mary's and the other teacher training providers to enter into a more shared or integrated system for teacher training in Northern Ireland will be explored during the second stage of the Study of the Teacher Education Infrastructure.

On-Going Judicial Review

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what contingency plans are in place, with training providers and Specialist Support Providers, should the on-going judicial review continue beyond September 2012.

(AQW 12383/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ability to award new contracts for Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI has been significantly delayed due to an ongoing legal challenge. The Department in conjunction with Central Procurement Directorate has lodged an appeal against a judgement by the Commercial Court in relation to a decision by the evaluation panel in respect of the stage 1 Selection criteria. The appeal has been listed for hearing at the Court of Appeal on the 20 and 22 June 2012.

The way forward will depend on the outcome of the above hearing with the ultimate contingency being a continued extension of the existing contracts with training providers and specialist support providers.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12387/11-15)

Dr Farry: At least one pension scheme utilised by my Department's arm's-length bodies is not exclusively Consumer Price Indexed (CPI): in Ulster Supported Employment Limited, the scheme in operation uses RPI as the basis for calculation, and there is a cap in place of 5%. This is a private scheme, run by trustees on behalf of the disabled employees and clients. It is funded by employee and employer contributions, which includes around 300 host company employers and clients. There is no grant in aid contribution for this scheme and it is not part of any NICS system.

Employees of certain DEL arm's length bodies are members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee pension scheme (NILGOSC), the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS), and the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). These are the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Department of Education and Department of Finance and Personnel respectively; information on whether these schemes are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed may be obtained from these Departments. As Tribunal NDPBs, you may wish to note that judicial staff positions within the Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal are pensionable under the provisions of the Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993; information on the scheme may be obtained from the Department of Justice.

Unemployed Adults on Essential Skills Courses

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why his Department is to stop paying a £10 weekly incentive to unemployed adults on Essential Skills courses.

(AQW 12435/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department intends to stop paying the £10 weekly training bonus as it has proved ineffective in encouraging participants on Steps to Work (StW) to participate on Essential Skills provision within the programme.

While the percentage of participants undertaking Essential Skills courses through the programme in June 2009 was 11.7%, by December 2011 this percentage had actually reduced to 10.6%. The numbers of StW participants choosing this route, 2,957 at December 2011, account for only ten per cent of all StW participants and represent a tiny minority of the overall numbers doing so through Further Education Colleges and other provision. During the period September 2008 to January 2012 approximately 75,000 people attended these courses to address their essential skills needs and did so without financial incentives.

A survey of participants with identified Essential Skills needs on other Steps to Work provision showed that the payment of a financial incentive did not encourage participants to undertake Essentials Skills training.

The Essential Skills bonus payment of £100, payable to participants who achieve a qualification, is being retained. In addition, in common with all other StW participants, those undertaking Essential Skills training will continue to receive a £15.38 weekly payment on top of existing benefits together with any travel costs in excess of £4 per week.

The proposal to remove the additional £10 bonus payment to Essential Skills participants was initially proposed by the Lead Contractors delivering the programme when they were asked to consider which aspects of the programme were least effective.

Parents on Accredited Back-to-Work Courses

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why parents on accredited back-to-work courses cannot avail of funded childcare provided by a regulated after schools service and can only avail of funded childcare through registered childminders.

(AQW 12612/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that participants on Steps to Work, my Department's main adult return to work programme, and other Departmental employment and training programmes, who qualify for assistance towards childcare costs are eligible for funding for childcare provided by either a registered childminder, an immediate family relative or a breakfast/homework/after schools club.

Funding Allocated to the Condition Management Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the total funding allocated to the Condition Management Programme in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust since its inception.
(AQW 12625/11-15)

Dr Farry: Since the introduction of the Condition Management Programme (CMP) in October 2005, through to 31 March 2012, just under £5.8M has been allocated to CMP Providers operating within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area of operations. Discussions between DEL and the NHSCT are scheduled to agree the total funding allocation for the current 2012/13 financial year and an interim payment of £500K has been released pending determination of the full allocation.

Third Level Education Courses in the Republic of Ireland

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department has had any discussions with its counterpart in the Republic of Ireland, or the Central Admissions Office, in relation to making third level education courses in the Republic of Ireland more accessible to students from Northern Ireland.

(AQW 12811/11-15)

Dr Farry: I met with my counterpart, Ruairi Quinn TD, in September 2011 and discussed the possibility of working together to stimulate cross-border student mobility. I agreed that my officials would work with their counterparts in the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to develop a programme of collaboration on areas of mutual benefit in both further and higher education.

On the specific issue of A-level and Leaving Certificate equivalences, I am aware of the decision of some universities in the Republic of Ireland to require four A-levels at the highest A grade, now the A* grade, for high demand courses such as medicine and law. This issue has been raised previously with Minister Quinn, by the Minister for Education, John O'Dowd MLA, and is the basis of ongoing discussions between the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA). A joint CCEA/IUA report on the subject, with recommendations, is expected in the coming weeks. My Department and the Department of Education will consider those recommendations and will work with the relevant parties in determining the way forward on this issue.

DEL: June Monitoring

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the bids he has made in the June Monitoring Round.

(AQO 2141/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning has made two bids in the June Monitoring Round as follows:

- Bid 1 in the amount of £5.84m in relation to Youth Unemployment and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs); and
- Bid 2 in the amount of £8.0m in relation to Steps to Work.

Essential Skills

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has put in place to monitor the take-up of Essential Skills courses for adults following removal of the £10 weekly payment for participants.

(AQO 2142/11-15)

Dr Farry: Raising the Essential Skills of adults continues to be a top priority for my Department. The uptake of these courses across all provision is monitored continually and reported in the Departmental quarterly statistical bulletins. In relation to the Steps to Work programme statistics show that the numbers choosing this route, 2,957 at December 2011, account for only ten per cent

of all Steps to Work participants and represent a tiny minority of the overall numbers doing so through further education colleges and other provision. During the period September 2008 to January 2012 approximately 75,000 people attended these courses to address their essential skills needs and did so without financial incentives. To date the £10 weekly payment has not been effective in increasing the numbers doing Essential Skills in the Steps to Work programme – and was initially proposed by the Lead Contractors delivering the programme when they were asked to consider which aspects of the programme were least effective.

Education Maintenance Allowance: Prevocational Schemes

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of entitlement to Education Maintenance Allowance for young people who participate in pre-vocational schemes.
(AQO 2144/11-15)

Dr Farry: I recognise that some young people most in need are not in receipt of any allowance, which could prove to be an effective incentive to begin or continue to move towards a positive destination.

I now plan to introduce a training allowance, subject to the availability of resources, for those young people participating on existing pre-vocational schemes funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) targeted at those who are in the NEET category

Youth Unemployment

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what progress is being made in reducing levels of youth unemployment.
(AQO 2145/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Labour Market Report for May indicates that unemployment among 18 to 24 year olds is 17.9%: an increase of 0.1% on May 2011. It is therefore imperative that we move quickly to put in place the range of measures agreed by the Executive in March.

My officials are working on this as a matter of priority. I have made a bid for funds in the June monitoring round to allow early progress this year.

I have engaged with employers and employers' representative bodies and I have been encouraged by the positive response and some are already offering opportunities. I will launch the new Offer formally in September but expect all strands of the Offer to be operational before then.

The focus initially will be on building quality before we begin to expand the number of opportunities available. By March 2015 we intend to have 6,000 work experience, work-based training and job opportunities available for 18 to 24 year olds annually.

NEETS Strategy

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions have taken place within the Children and Young People's Ministerial Subgroup regarding the strategy for people who are not in education, employment or training which was recently submitted to the Executive.
(AQO 2146/11-15)

Dr Farry: An up-date on the development of the strategy for those young people not in education, employment or training has been provided at each meeting of the Ministerial Sub Committee on Children and Young People over the last two years.

I circulated a draft of the strategy, 'Pathways to Success', to my Executive colleagues in advance of the Executive's formal consideration of the strategy. The Executive endorsed the strategy on 31 May. I also made an oral statement to the Assembly yesterday.

The next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People takes place on Wednesday 20 June and I will continue to take the lead on the implementation of the strategy at this and future meetings.

Holylands, Belfast

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Department's consideration of the report commissioned by Belfast City Council on the Holyland area.

(AQO 2147/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has considered the report in detail, particularly those recommendations which emphasise the need to ensure a coherent approach to where and how students will live within the city in the medium and long term future.

I hosted the Holyland Stakeholder Forum this morning, where the key recommendations of the report were discussed.

Departmental officials will be involved in all relevant groups, such as the Student Housing Group and the Neighbourhood Management Forum, to take forward these recommendations.

Higher Education: 'Graduating to Success'

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the balanced programme of redeployment, efficiency improvements and additional funding which will finance the delivery of 'Graduating to Success – A Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland'.

(AQO 2148/11-15)

Dr Farry: Implementation of the strategy is still at the very early stages and detailed costs have yet to be prepared for each of the projects. However, where possible my Department will, in the first instance, seek to identify possible funding through efficiency savings, or the internal redeployment of financial or other resources.

Where the implementation groups identify aspects that will require additional finance, my Department will undertake the necessary economic appraisals and the preparation of funding bids. Additional funding will be subject to affordability considerations and the outcome of future spending reviews by government.

St Mary's University College, Belfast: QUB Merger

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any objections made by the Board of St Mary's University College, Belfast in relation to inclusion in any potential merger with Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQO 2149/11-15)

Dr Farry: I believe that St. Mary's University College has stated its objections to the merger when it was asked to consider being part of the merger, in its response to the public consultation on the proposed merger and in various meetings with me and/or my officials. St. Mary's identifies itself as a specialist institution with a distinctive mission. It has signalled that it seeks to maintain its autonomy to protect what it considers to be its distinct ethos and identity.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre will be open before the beginning of the 2012 Irish Open.

(AQW 11936/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The new Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience is nearing completion and is due to open, on schedule, at the beginning of July 2012.

Apprenticeship Programmes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the apprenticeship programmes available within her Department; (ii) the apprenticeship programmes provided by her Department; (iii) the number of people currently enrolled in these programmes; and (iv) the number of places available on the programmes.

(AQW 12086/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Programme-Led Apprenticeship (PLA) programme was introduced by the Department for Employment and Learning in September 2009. This is an intervention measure to assist young people who have been unable to find employment as apprentices during the economic downturn. While my Department, along with other NICS Departments, can contribute to this programme through the provision of work placements, we currently have no uptake on the programme.

Additionally the Department, through Invest NI, supports young people by sponsoring and working in partnership with the Prince's Trust. The Trust's Food Leadership Programme seeks to match youth unemployment to job opportunities in the Food Sector. Invest NI also recently sponsored the Prince's Trust's "Getting Started in a Creative Industry" initiative, targeted at young people between 16-25 who had disengaged from education.

Visitor Numbers to the North Coast

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has had any discussions with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the importance of the Causeway Hospital to visitor numbers to the North Coast.

(AQW 12317/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have not held any discussions with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the importance of the Causeway Hospital.

European Funding Opportunities

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what existing and future European funding opportunities are available to small and medium-sized enterprises.

(AQW 12345/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department acts as Managing Authority for the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland 2007-2013 which offers a wide range of support to SMEs. It is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and provides assistance for research and innovation, business competitiveness and enterprise.

Invest NI also helps SMEs to access the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) which is focused on research, technological development and demonstration activities.

In terms of future opportunities, my officials are working with DFP on the development of a successor to the Competitiveness Programme for the 2014-2020 period. This will retain a core focus on the competitiveness of SMEs. My Department is also taking steps to ensure that NI businesses, including

SMEs can benefit from future EU initiatives such as the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs Programme (COSME), and Horizon 2020 (the successor to FP7).

Job Losses in the Banking Sector

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to minimise job losses in the banking sector.

(AQW 12351/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Banking is a reserved matter and, as such, my Department has no statutory oversight of the banking sector. However, I recognise the importance of growing the financial sector in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the main Northern Ireland banks make an important contribution to financial sector employment here.

I was therefore concerned to learn of the recent announcements in relation to job losses in the banking sector here. I met with representatives from the Irish Bank Officials' Association, the Finance Union, in March to discuss these developments. I emphasised how important it is that senior management in these banks are seen to be behaving in a responsible manner as they take forward staffing cuts. I and the Finance Minister will continue to monitor developments and engage with any relevant parties as and when appropriate.

International Usage of Firms of Solicitors from Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what work is ongoing between InvestNI and the Law Society to increase international usage of firms of solicitors from Northern Ireland.

(AQW 12373/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI engages with all relevant stakeholders to help raise the profile of the legal profession within overseas markets both in terms of securing opportunities for existing law firms in the region and attracting new inward investment.

Examples of initiatives where The Northern Ireland Law Society and Invest Northern Ireland have worked together are:

- Hosting representatives from the ABA (American Bar Association) – Section of International Law for a conference in Belfast in October 2011.
- Delivering a seminar on Invest NI support available for local law firms who wish to grow their business and develop overseas opportunities.

Invest Northern Ireland continues to have ongoing discussions with the Law Society to explore new initiatives, initially in the GB marketplace, that would help grow and diversify the legal sector in Northern Ireland.

Cost of Legal Services Incurred by the Tourist Board

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the total cost of legal services incurred by the Tourist Board in the last three years; and to outline the procurement process for these services.

(AQW 12375/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The total spend for legal services for the last three years is as follows:

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£37,246	£38,959	£34,199

Legal services were tendered through the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in December 2006 (Reference S/15061/06); and again through CPD in October 2010 (Reference Project 2042).

Broadband in Rural Areas

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures her Department has taken to ensure that rural businesses not only have access to high speed Broadband, but are also free to choose from a range of broadband providers.

(AQW 12419/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has delivered a number of initiatives in recent years that were either entirely or substantially aimed at providing high speed broadband access for business and residential consumers located in rural areas. This included:

the £51million Next Generation Broadband Project which rolled out the highest level of fibre-to-the-cabinet technology in the UK;

the £1.9million Northern Ireland Broadband Fund which has seen significant roll-out of fixed-wireless broadband services through providers such as North West Electronics and Net 1 Ltd; and

the remote Broadband Services contracts, previously with Avanti Communications and now with Onwave Ltd, through which satellite broadband services have been made available region-wide.

These initiatives mean that those living, working or conducting business in rural areas have access to services, from a number of providers, that offer download speeds of between 2Mbps and 100Mbps. The associated contracts require that access to infrastructure or services is available on a wholesale basis in order that other broadband providers can deliver their own brand of services.

Sustainable Energy Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the move, from Belfast to Scotland, of the Sustainable Energy Programme which is carried out by the Energy Saving Trust, resulting in the transfer of four energy advice jobs from Enniskillen to Chiswick.

(AQW 12444/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I understand that the NI Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEA), run by the independent Utility Regulator, has never directly funded energy efficiency telephone advice services: the Energy Saving Trust has been employed only as a programme administrator for NISEP.

The Department of Social Development is responsible for the promotion of energy efficiency in the domestic sector in Northern Ireland. I understand that the NI Housing Executive funds an energy efficiency advice line run by Bryson Energy.

Events Funding Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 9650/11-15, whether evaluations of these festivals have been carried out; and (ii) if so, are the results published.

(AQW 12446/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Post event evaluations have been conducted. The results are not published, due to their commercially sensitive nature.

Dairy Industry

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the dairy industry in relation to milk products entering new export markets.

(AQW 12488/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On 28 May 2012 I met with representatives of Dairy UK which is the trade association that represents the interests of milk producers, producer co-ops and dairy companies in the UK. The discussions concerned 12 key policy areas which include the role of government in assisting milk producers in exploiting export markets.

I am committed to working with milk producers to enable them remain competitive and sustainable and to increase export sales in this sector. Since April 2009 dairy companies in Northern Ireland have participated in 24 trade events organised by Invest NI which targeted Dubai and the USA among many others.

I would encourage local dairy producers to continue to utilise these opportunities to explore new markets and to increase exports thereto.

'Most Favoured Nation' Status

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress her Department has made towards achieving 'Most Favoured Nation' status in international markets for the food and drinks industry.

(AQW 12492/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The principle known as most-favoured-nation status is governed by the World Trade Organisation Agreements and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, import and export controls with any place outside the United Kingdom are a reserved matter.

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme Fund

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact on competition within the renewable energy market of allocating the entire Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme fund to one company, Carillion,

(AQW 12513/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The NI Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) is run by the independent Utility Regulator. I understand that it is incorrect to say that the entire fund has been allocated to one company: the majority of NISEP funding is awarded to energy efficiency schemes and only 10% for renewable energy projects. Any organisation which meets the qualifying criteria can apply for NISEP funding. I also understand that a temporary suspension of customer applications for several renewables schemes has been agreed with Power NI to allow the Utility Regulator an opportunity to consider the concerns raised.

The recent launch of my Department's Renewable Heat Premium Payments and the continued support of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation should ensure that there is a market for renewable energy products in Northern Ireland.

Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the conclusion in Lord Whitty's report 'Energising Northern Ireland' that priority should be given to the consolidation of the existing gas networks rather than major new projects.

(AQW 12534/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Responses to the Department's 2011 consultation on extension of the natural gas network noted overall support from the energy industry and the wider community for bringing gas to the new areas outlined in the consultation paper, i.e. the main towns in the West and North West of Northern Ireland, namely Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen/Derrylin and Strabane, and towns in East Down such as Saintfield, Ballynahinch, Crossgar and Downpatrick.

Extension of the natural gas network to new areas does not preclude increasing the availability of natural gas in existing licensed areas, where continued connection of new business and domestic consumers is ongoing by the respective licensees in accordance with their business models. To delay extension of the gas network to new areas until there is greater gas penetration in existing gas licence areas leaves consumers in the West and East Down without the potential for connecting to gas to reduce their energy costs, improve security of energy supply, and in particular, to enhance business competitiveness.

Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the conclusion in Lord Whitty's report 'Energising Northern Ireland' that development of renewable fired electricity generation for heating and networks should be focussed on the south and west of Northern Ireland, where natural gas networks will not be economically viable.

(AQW 12564/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is committed to developing a more secure, diverse and sustainable heating market in Northern Ireland. The development of the renewable heat market and the natural gas network will provide greater choice and competition in the heat market as well as supporting wider energy goals, including reduced carbon emissions, increased energy security, and opportunities for green jobs. I have recently announced the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme for the domestic sector and I hope to make further announcements in due course on a longer term Renewable Heat Incentive for non-domestic applications.

With regards to the economic viability of proposals to extend the natural gas network, following completion of an economic and technical feasibility study on gas extension in 2010, and a consultation exercise in 2011, the Department has recently appointed consultants to prepare a more detailed business case in respect of taking natural gas to towns in the West and to East Down.

Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the conclusion in Lord Whitty's report 'Energising Northern Ireland' that heating oil should be included within the remit of the Utility Regulator.

(AQW 12565/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have no plans to extend the powers of the independent regulator to cover heating oil. This would impose sizable regulatory costs on a competitive oil supply and distribution sector that would have to be borne by consumers. It would be a significant departure from the rest of the United Kingdom and most European Union countries – where the sector also is not regulated.

Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the conclusion in Lord Whitty's Report 'Energising Northern Ireland' that, in relation to natural gas, any extension of the pipelines should be based on rigorous cost benefit and that at present, neither the proposed western extension nor the major gas storage facility seem to be justifiable.

(AQW 12595/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In 2010, DETI in co-operation with the Utility Regulator completed an economic and technical feasibility study on gas network extension to 6 towns in the west of Northern Ireland. Following a consultation in summer 2011 on gas network extension, the Department is in the process of completing a more detailed business case in respect of gas extension to towns in the West and to East Down. This will provide further detailed information on the costs and benefits associated with taking natural gas to new areas in Northern Ireland.

The two gas storage projects being considered in East Antrim are commercial projects, with no financial input from Government. A gas storage facility in Northern Ireland would enhance our security of energy supply.

Pay Day Loan Companies

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the increasing number of pay day loan companies and the high number of people unable to repay borrowings from them, what consideration he has given to introducing legislation which requires credit status checks to be carried out in advance of approval.

(AQW 12613/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Payday lenders are required to be licensed under the Consumer Credit Act (CCA) 1974 and the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is responsible for issuing such licences. The policy responsibility for this matter is reserved and the Department for Innovation, Business and Skills (BIS) is the relevant GB department. On 24 May 2012, BIS announced that it had reached agreement with those organisations representing the main payday lenders on a range of improvements to be made to their customer codes of practice. The improvements to their codes of practice include a commitment to undertake sound, proper and appropriate affordability assessments and credit vetting as part of each loan application. These updated codes of practice are to take effect from 25 July 2012.

QUANGOS

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many QUANGOS, that are attached to her Department, have been created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

(AQW 12687/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None.

Employment: South Down

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs InvestNI has created in the South Down constituency in the last three years.

(AQO 2150/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During the period 1st April 2009 and 31st March 2012, Invest NI offered almost £9million of assistance to businesses in the South Down Parliamentary Constituency area, including 572 locally-owned projects, which, in total, contributed towards planned investment of over £41million and the promotion of 480 new jobs.

Invest NI works with businesses to promote new jobs but it is ultimately the responsibility of the company to ensure that those jobs are delivered on the ground; therefore, not all of promoted jobs are created immediately, since some projects can take up to 5 years to fully mature.

Invest NI also assisted the creation of nearly 270 new jobs through the Enterprise Development Programme, formerly the Start a Business programme, delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Northern Ireland.

Employment

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what initiatives her Department has planned for the creation of more jobs.

(AQO 2157/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The central aim of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy is to grow employment and increase prosperity for all, through a focus on export-led economic growth.

All the actions and commitments included within the Economic Strategy will contribute to the achievement of this aim.

My Department will contribute to rising levels of employment by directly supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs. DETI will also work with DEL to develop and implement a strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation.

Agri-Food Strategy Board

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the forward work programme of the Food Strategy Board.

(AQO 2158/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Agri-food Strategy Board held its first meeting on 6 June 2012 and work is currently underway on a forward work programme.

As set out in the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15, the aim is to develop an agreed strategic plan for the Agri-food sector this year.

Mobile Phone Coverage: Rural Areas

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the situation in Gortin, Co Tyrone and other rural areas following the withdrawal of mobile phone coverage by the company 'Everything Everywhere'.

(AQO 2161/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Currently there is a rationalisation and upgrade programme by Everything Everywhere which has involved the switching off of T-Mobile sites across Northern Ireland.

I understand that the company is aware of a few small pockets on the network where coverage has been lost and is currently seeking to find workable solutions working with the local communities involved.

Giant's Causeway: Interpretive Centre

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the work to build a new interpretive centre at the Giant's Causeway.

(AQO 2162/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre will open first week in July 2012 and will include a section on interpretation.

Tourism: Northern Ireland Products

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps are being taken to ensure that Northern Ireland specific tourism products are available to, and stocked by, retail outlets in which the Northern Ireland Tourist Board can influence the sale of such material.

(AQO 2163/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is committed to the development of quality local products and produce, to ensure that all aspects of the visitor experience reflect the unique assets of Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board recognises the important role the Tourism Information Centre Network plays in shaping the visitor experience. Tourism Information Centres are wholly owned and managed by their operators, which in most cases is the local council.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board does not have jurisdiction, nor does it exercise any influence on any retail outlet in Northern Ireland encouraging the sale of goods.

Department of the Environment

Ten-Day Prompt Payment of Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the ten-day prompt payment of invoices performance target for his Department's arm's-length bodies, to detail (i) whether it is based on calendar or working days; and (ii) when the ten-day count commences.

(AQW 11230/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to the Better Payments Practice Code as set out in Annex 4.6 of Managing Public Money. In response

to the current economic position, Departments, their agencies and NDPBs are required to take all appropriate steps to pay businesses within 10 days, as well as reporting at least annually on this commitment. Payments are deemed to be late if they are made outside the agreed terms, or where no terms are agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

District councils are bodies corporate and are not NDPBs of the Department. However, within the Accounts Direction issued annually by the Department, district councils are encouraged to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment. In their annual return, councils are asked to advise of their own target for paying invoices and also to have arrangements for reviewing this target.

The Department of the Environment has two Arms length bodies, the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC).

In relation to 11230 both of these bodies report prompt payments on calendar days; NILGOSC commence the 10 days from receipt of invoice, whereas LGSC record from the date of the actual invoice.

In relation to 11231 NILGOSC had 498 invoices paid during 2011/2012, with 11 considered as late. LGSC had 526 invoices paid during 2011/2012, with none paid late.

In relation to 11232 councils' performance in relation to the 10 day payment is recorded in the table below.

In relation to 11233 the LGSC agrees standard payment terms of 30 days from receipt of invoice. NILGOSC agrees standard payment terms of 10 days from date of invoice. None of the 26 District Councils has agreed standard payment terms longer than 30 days.

AQW 11232/11-15 PROMPT PAYMENT REPORT – 10 DAY TARGET

Council	2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %	2010/2011 No of invoices
Antrim	12	10	963
Ards	10	24	2,769
Armagh	11	17	1,623
Ballymena	10	12	1,379
Ballymoney	6	6	325
Banbridge	N/A	6	258
Belfast	6	9	4,878
Carrickfergus	14	14	862
Castlereagh	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coleraine	8	8	113
Cookstown	53	61	3,367
Craigavon	4	3	472
Derry	26	25	5,453
Down	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dungannon	30	32	1,922
Fermanagh	N/A	16	1,391

Council	2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %	2010/2011 No of invoices
Larne	3	7	772
Limavady	12	19	1,230
Lisburn	5	9	1,229
Magherafelt	39	46	6,249
Moyle	16	14	479
Newry & Mourne	5-10	5-10	N/A
Newtownabbey	20	22	3,322
North Down	N/A	N/A	N/A
Omagh	33	33	1,864
Strabane	12	12	563

Clearly the 10 day target is not being achieved across the full breadth of Councils, with poor performance in case after case. I shall write to Councils to further advise of their obligations, shall publish the figures annually and shall assess what further I can do in this matter.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of invoices paid by his Department's arm's-length bodies in the 2011/12 financial year; and how many of the invoices were paid late.

(AQW 11231/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to the Better Payments Practice Code as set out in Annex 4.6 of Managing Public Money. In response to the current economic position, Departments, their agencies and NDPBs are required to take all appropriate steps to pay businesses within 10 days, as well as reporting at least annually on this commitment. Payments are deemed to be late if they are made outside the agreed terms, or where no terms are agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

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The Department of the Environment has two Arms length bodies, the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC).

In relation to 11230 both of these bodies report prompt payments on calendar days; NILGOSC commence the 10 days from receipt of invoice, whereas LGSC record from the date of the actual invoice.

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Ten Day Prompt Payment of Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the ten day prompt payment of invoices performance target, to detail (i) the performance of each council in the (a) 2009/10; and (b)

2010/11 financial years; and (ii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 11232/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to the Better Payments Practice Code as set out in Annex 4.6 of Managing Public Money. In response to the current economic position, Departments, their agencies and NDPBs are required to take all appropriate steps to pay businesses within 10 days, as well as reporting at least annually on this commitment. Payments are deemed to be late if they are made outside the agreed terms, or where no terms are agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

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Standard Payment Terms

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the standard payment terms his Department's arm's length bodies seek to agree with business suppliers; and which councils agree payment terms longer than the standard payment terms.

(AQW 11233/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to the Better Payments Practice Code as set out in Annex 4.6 of Managing Public Money. In response to the current economic position, Departments, their agencies and NDPBs are required to take all appropriate steps to pay businesses within 10 days, as well as reporting at least annually on this commitment. Payments are deemed to be late if they are made outside the agreed terms, or where no terms are agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

District councils are bodies corporate and are not NDPBs of the Department. However, within the Accounts Direction issued annually by the Department, district councils are encouraged to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment. In their annual return, councils are asked to advise of their own target for paying invoices and also to have arrangements for reviewing this target.

The Department of the Environment has two Arms length bodies, the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC).

In relation to 11230 both of these bodies report prompt payments on calendar days; NILGOSC commence the 10 days from receipt of invoice, whereas LGSC record from the date of the actual invoice.

In relation to 11231 NILGOSC had 498 invoices paid during 2011/2012, with 11 considered as late. LGSC had 526 invoices paid during 2011/2012, with none paid late.

In relation to 11232 councils' performance in relation to the 10 day payment is recorded in the table below.

In relation to 11233 the LGSC agrees standard payment terms of 30 days from receipt of invoice. NILGOSC agrees standard payment terms of 10 days from date of invoice. None of the 26 District Councils has agreed standard payment terms longer than 30 days.

AQW 11232/11-15 PROMPT PAYMENT REPORT – 10 DAY TARGET

Council	2009/2010 %	2010/2011 %	2010/2011 No of invoices
Antrim	12	10	963
Ards	10	24	2,769
Armagh	11	17	1,623
Ballymena	10	12	1,379
Ballymoney	6	6	325
Banbridge	N/A	6	258
Belfast	6	9	4,878
Carrickfergus	14	14	862
Castlereagh	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coleraine	8	8	113
Cookstown	53	61	3,367
Craigavon	4	3	472
Derry	26	25	5,453
Down	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dungannon	30	32	1,922
Fermanagh	N/A	16	1,391
Larne	3	7	772
Limavady	12	19	1,230
Lisburn	5	9	1,229
Magherafelt	39	46	6,249
Moyle	16	14	479
Newry & Mourne	5-10	5-10	N/A
Newtownabbey	20	22	3,322
North Down	N/A	N/A	N/A
Omagh	33	33	1,864
Strabane	12	12	563

Clearly the 10 day target is not being achieved across the full breadth of Councils, with poor performance in case after case. I shall write to Councils to further advise of their obligations, shall publish the figures annually and shall assess what further I can do in this matter.

MOT Tests

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is aware of the concerns of motorists whose vehicles are factory fitted with high intensity discharge and LED lights, but are not fitted with a headlamp washing system, and their notifications of refusal following recent amendments to MOT tests. **(AQW 11235/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: I fully understand the concerns of motorists when changes are made at European level to vehicle testing requirements. However, the standards that are applied in Northern Ireland are those that are in operation throughout Europe.

The requirement to have headlamp washers fitted with high intensity discharge (HID) or light emitting diode (LED) headlamps has existed for a number of years under the type approval regulations. However, the requirement for these to be checked in annual tests was introduced only through European Commission Directive 2010/48/EU, of 5 July 2010.

In Northern Ireland, in line with the approach adopted in Britain, these items were included in the annual test from 1 February 2012 to 30 April 2012 on an advisory basis. From 1 May 2012 the absence of a headlamp washer system where one is required, or a defect in a mandatory washer system, has been a reason for failure.

The impact of the recent changes on pass rates has been minimal to date. However, the position will continue to be monitored very closely.

Goldmine at Cavanacaw, Omagh

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the goldmine at Cavanacaw, Omagh, what action he intends to take in response to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's findings that the planners' inaction was wholly unacceptable and that the Planning Service failed to take appropriate timely enforcement action commensurate with the breach of planning control, given the very significant impact this had on local residents including the complainants. **(AQW 11304/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: I have already made it very clear that the planning system has to act properly, move quickly and give confidence to all. If there is a failure to live up to these standards, it is right and necessary that Planning and the Department are held to account and be seen to be held to account. That is the value and importance of the Ombudsman investigating complaints.

The complaint in this matter is very serious. Local people and families endured heavy vehicle movements for weeks and months on end during 2008 and 2009, when DOE had a role and powers to step in. My Department accepts the findings and conclusions, and we will act upon them. I have asked for an update every six weeks on how the conclusions are being acted on.

There are a very large number of effective and attentive planning officials. But there are also times when, in my judgement, the course of least resistance has been adopted. The flipside of good planning is good enforcement. That should be the standard now and in the future.

Planning Applications for Minerals Extraction or Minerals Plant/Machinery

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery, between May 2002 and May 2007, were (i) approved; and (ii) refused. **(AQW 12165/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: Between May 2002 and May 2007, 172 planning applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery were processed.

- (i) 153 of these applications were approved.
- (ii) 19 of these applications were refused.

Planning Applications

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his Department's policy on enforcement action when the conditions of a planning application are not met and when these conditions had been imposed to meet former planning policy statements and would not be imposed now under current planning policy guidance.

(AQW 12178/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement 9 – the Enforcement of Planning Control sets out the general policy approach that the Department will follow in taking enforcement action against unauthorised development in Northern Ireland.

The Department's key objectives for planning enforcement are to

- Bring unauthorised development under control;
- To remedy any undesirable effects of unauthorised development including where necessary, the removal or cessation of unacceptable development and;
- To take legal action, where necessary against those who ignore or flout planning legislation.

Where a breach of planning control has been established and the Department has tried and failed to resolve the breach, formal enforcement action may be taken where it is considered expedient to do so. Where planning permission has been granted subject to conditions, and one or more of these conditions has not been complied with, a breach of condition notice can be served.

A planning condition should only be imposed out of necessity and if it is likely that a failure to comply with it will be damaging and justify enforcement action. In the event that circumstances have changed since the original condition was imposed the Department will, assess the situation on a case by case basis and have regard to the prevailing planning policy at the time.

Location of the Flood Plain

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment what detailed information his Department provides to applicants on the location of the flood plain when granting planning approval.

(AQW 12179/11-15)

Mr Attwood: When determining planning applications where flood risk is known to exist, the Department will pay particular regard to current planning policy set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 Planning and Flood Risk. This policy can be viewed on the Department's website.

In relation to detailed information on the location of a flood plain, all planning applications are determined with reference to the Strategic Flood Map (NI) which can be inspected at the Rivers Agency website.

It is the responsibility of the applicant however to consider flood risk issues at a given site. It is in their interests to do this as early as possible in the planning process. In order to facilitate the identification and consideration of flooding or drainage issues and enable proper scoping of potential risks, early discussion with DOE Planning and Rivers Agency is recommended.

Where a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of a planning application and mitigation measures are agreed with DARD Rivers Agency the following informative may be attached to planning approvals:-

The applicant is advised that the site is located within an area of identified flood risk and the onus is on the applicant to ensure that any mitigation measures are addressed.

Measuring Prompt Payment Performance Figures

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment whether existing departmental guidance states that all local councils, when measuring prompt payment performance figures, either contractual or aspirational, should count the days elapsed from the date an invoice is first received.

(AQW 12189/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer you to the Assembly Questions previously requested under AQWs 11232/11-15 and 11233/11-15.

In relation to departmental guidance the Department's annual Accounts Direction to all councils includes encouragement to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment being made by Northern Ireland Executive Departments.

In relation to the reporting of performance figures, AQW 11232/11-15 provided a table detailing the number and percentage of invoices paid within 10 days. Councils are not currently required to report on the 10 day target. DOE shall write to Councils and again advise of the 10 day target. I am not aware of councils having changed their reporting period from calendar to working days, but shall ascertain details of this when DOE write as above. The number of councils who use the invoice date and alternatively the invoice received date when measuring performance is in the table below. I would again reiterate that this is reported on against the 30 days target stated in their annual accounts.

I believe that prompt payment is crucial not least in the current environment. Upon receipt of the above information, I will assess the situation further. If there are cases of undue delay in payment, I would encourage details being forwarded to my office

Invoice Date	Invoice Received Date
Antrim Borough Council	Ards District Council
Ballymena Borough Council	Armagh City & District Council
Ballymoney Borough Council	Belfast City Council
Banbridge District Council	Carrickfergus Borough Council
Craigavon Borough Council	Castlereagh Borough Council
Lisburn City Council	Coleraine Borough Council
Magherafelt District Council	Cookstown District Council
	Derry City Council
	Down District Council
	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
	Fermanagh District Council
	Larne Borough Council
	Limavady Borough Council
	Moyle District Council
	Newry & Mourne District Council
	Newtownabbey Borough Council
	North Down Borough Council
	Omagh District Council
	Strabane District Council

Pre-1960 Vintage Cars: MOT Tests

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to exempt pre-1960 vintage cars from MOT tests, as is planned in England.

(AQW 12193/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department's Driver and Vehicle Agency does not currently make concessions in the MOT tests of pre-1960 vintage cars. However, you will be aware that at its meeting on 22 March 2012 the Environment Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the Department's consultation on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing. You may recall that the responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

You may also recall that the Committee was content with the Department's proposed way forward, which is to develop policy on the basis of the consultation responses that would make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. The Department is progressing its detailed consideration of the appropriate way forward, to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met in the detail of the policy.

10-Day Prompt Payment Performance Figures

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment (i) which local councils submitted their 10-day prompt payment performance figures in line with Annex 4.6.3 of Managing Public Money, and reported figures on the basis of working days; and (ii) which local councils changed their reporting period from calendar days to working days.

(AQW 12194/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer you to the Assembly Questions previously requested under AQWs 11232/11-15 and 11233/11-15.

In relation to departmental guidance the Department's annual Accounts Direction to all councils includes encouragement to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment being made by Northern Ireland Executive Departments.

In relation to the reporting of performance figures, AQW 11232/11-15 provided a table detailing the number and percentage of invoices paid within 10 days. Councils are not currently required to report on the 10 day target. DOE shall write to Councils and again advise of the 10 day target. I am not aware of councils having changed their reporting period from calendar to working days, but shall ascertain details of this when DOE write as above. The number of councils who use the invoice date and alternatively the invoice received date when measuring performance is in the table below. I would again reiterate that this is reported on against the 30 days target stated in their annual accounts.

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Craigavon Borough Council	Castlereagh Borough Council
Lisburn City Council	Coleraine Borough Council
Magherafelt District Council	Cookstown District Council

Invoice Date	Invoice Received Date
	Derry City Council
	Down District Council
	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
	Fermanagh District Council
	Larne Borough Council
	Limavady Borough Council
	Moyle District Council
	Newry & Mourne District Council
	Newtownabbey Borough Council
	North Down Borough Council
	Omagh District Council
	Strabane District Council

Pre-1960 Vintage Cars: MOT Tests

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what concessions are made in the MOT tests of pre-1960 vintage cars.

(AQW 12195/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department's Driver and Vehicle Agency does not currently make concessions in the MOT tests of pre-1960 vintage cars. However, you will be aware that at its meeting on 22 March 2012 the Environment Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the Department's consultation on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing. You may recall that the responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

You may also recall that the Committee was content with the Department's proposed way forward, which is to develop policy on the basis of the consultation responses that would make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. The Department is progressing its detailed consideration of the appropriate way forward, to ensure that the requirements of the Directive are met in the detail of the policy.

Planning Applications for Minerals Extraction or Minerals Plant/Machinery

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery, between May 2002 and May 2007, were approved retrospectively.

(AQW 12234/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Between May 2002 and May 2007 the Department approved 153 applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery. With regard to establishing those that were approved retrospectively in the period of this question (2002-2007), the Department does not hold this information in a form that is readily available and could only be compiled at a disproportionate cost.

Planning Applications for Minerals Extraction or Minerals Plant/Machinery

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery, between May 2002 and May 2007, were refused retrospectively.

(AQW 12235/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Between May 2002 and May 2007 the Department refused 19 applications for minerals extraction or minerals plant/machinery. With regard to establishing those that were refused retrospectively, the Department does not hold this information in a form that is readily available and could only be compiled at a disproportionate cost.

Invoices Paid within 10 Days

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment which local councils, when reporting the number of invoices paid within 10 days, counted the number of days that elapsed from the date the invoice was first received, and which ones used another date as the starting date.

(AQW 12275/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer you to the Assembly Questions previously requested under AQWs 11232/11-15 and 11233/11-15.

In relation to departmental guidance the Department's annual Accounts Direction to all councils includes encouragement to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment being made by Northern Ireland Executive Departments.

In relation to the reporting of performance figures, AQW 11232/11-15 provided a table detailing the number and percentage of invoices paid within 10 days. Councils are not currently required to report on the 10 day target. DOE shall write to Councils and again advise of the 10 day target. I am not aware of councils having changed their reporting period from calendar to working days, but shall ascertain details of this when DOE write as above. The number of councils who use the invoice date and alternatively the invoice received date when measuring performance is in the table below. I would again reiterate that this is reported on against the 30 days target stated in their annual accounts.

I believe that prompt payment is crucial not least in the current environment. Upon receipt of the above information, I will assess the situation further. If there are cases of undue delay in payment, I would encourage details being forwarded to my office

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Lisburn City Council	Coleraine Borough Council
Magherafelt District Council	Cookstown District Council
	Derry City Council
	Down District Council
	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
	Fermanagh District Council
	Larne Borough Council
	Limavady Borough Council
	Moyle District Council
	Newry & Mourne District Council
	Newtownabbey Borough Council

Invoice Date	Invoice Received Date
	North Down Borough Council
	Omagh District Council
	Strabane District Council

Cars Impounded for Breach of Regulations

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the value of the cars that have been impounded for breach of regulations and have subsequently been sold; and (ii) the value of the sales.

(AQW 12282/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The arrangement for the removal and disposal of unlicensed motor vehicles is contained within the UK-wide contract, which is awarded and administered by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea.

DVLA has advised that under the previous wheel clamping contract, under which the revenue from the sale of unclaimed vehicles was remitted to DVLA, information was not recorded about the value of impounded cars that were subsequently sold. In relation to the current wheel clamping contract, the revenue from the sale of unclaimed vehicles is retained by the contractor and the value of such sales is not held by DVLA. I shall write to DVLA to advise that I believe this information should be also held by DVLA as a matter of public interest and accountability.

Marine Bill

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to list the groups he has met in relation to the Marine Bill.

(AQW 12300/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have met a wide range of stakeholders in the course of developing the Marine Bill. The following groups have been represented:

- B9 Energy Offshore Developments Ltd;
- Belfast Harbour;
- Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside;
- Irish Federation of Sea Anglers;
- Marine Conservation Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group;
- Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum;
- Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation;
- Northern Ireland Marine Task Force;
- Seafish;
- Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership;
- Ulster Wildlife Trust;
- WWF; and
- sixth formers representing Holy Cross College, Lumen Christi College, Glenlola Collegiate, Down High School, Methodist College and St. Malachy's College.

Changes to Scottish Law on the Control of Snares

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the recent changes to Scottish law on the control of snares.

(AQW 12314/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am aware of the recent changes in the law in Scotland on the control of snares introduced by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. The Department's planned consultation on proposed regulations to control the use of snares will seek views on whether or not the types of controls introduced in Scotland will be relevant to Northern Ireland.

Roadside Enforcement Initiative

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the areas where the Roadside Enforcement Initiative has been carried out in the last 12 months, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 12320/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) has primary responsibility for the enforcement of regulations pertaining to commercial goods vehicles, coaches, buses and taxis. DVA has been proactive in targeting a wide range of illegal activities within each of these transport sectors. The Agency also supports the Police Service of Northern Ireland in roadside operations to assess modified cars.

With regards to roadside enforcement activities, the table below details the number of inspections carried out at the roadside broken down by vehicle category over the 12 month period of 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012.

Enforcement activities are recorded by townland and therefore it is not possible to provide the requested information broken down by constituency. The information is presented by County and separately for Belfast, where a significant proportion of enforcement initiatives are carried out.

County/Area	Goods	Bus	Taxi	Car
Antrim	412	77	273	29
Armagh	308	50	92	10
Londonderry	429	179	498	84
Down	146	89	219	54
Tyrone	455	146	209	49
Fermanagh	92	28	89	27
Belfast	205	265	800	15
Total	2047	831	2180	268

I am to meet with officials to consider the profile of enforcement activity.

Nesting Birds' Habitats

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how the High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 affects nesting birds' habitats.

(AQW 12328/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The High Hedges Act requires a District Council to issue a remedial notice in respect of a complaint about a hedge that the council has decided is adversely affecting the reasonable enjoyment of a domestic property. The notice specifies what action must be taken to remediate the problem and to ensure it does not re-occur. The Department has provided the following advice to District Councils

with regard to the protection of wild birds and their habitats that should be considered when drafting a remedial notice:

Councils must take into account whether any protected birds, animals or plants are present in the hedge and how they would be affected by any works, having regard not only to relevant legislation but also to local Biodiversity Action Plan policies; whether appropriate advice has been taken to ensure that the proposed remedial action will not result in the hedge dying; or the potentially seasonal nature of the work since hedge cutting should be avoided during the bird nesting season (March – August) if birds are nesting in the hedge.

2012-13 European Climate Change Priorities

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of the Environment for their assessment of the benefit of new Climate Change legislation in helping to achieve their 2012-13 European Climate Change Priorities.

(AQW 12347/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Policy development to support the proposed Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill is currently under way. The Bill may not be introduced to the Assembly before early 2014 but I am attempting to accelerate this timescale. As such, it will not impact directly on achievement of the key objectives under the Climate Change and Energy thematic priority of the European Priorities 2012-13: Winning in Europe document, although it will be a key driver to meeting similar objectives in future European Priorities.

However, one of the overall key aims of the 2012-13 document is to "...work to strengthen our European engagement to realise fully the opportunities which the EU presents, to influence and shape future policy and build our positive profile". The development of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill shows a high level of political commitment to contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions on these islands, in Europe and, indeed, globally. Positioning ourselves as a world leader in carbon reduction will clearly help us to become more influential within Europe and build our positive profile, not just in 2012-13 but for many years to come.

I have met with the Climate Chaos Coalition, farming groups and others on the issue of emissions. I believe a Northern Ireland Bill is necessary and should have challenging targets on the face of the Bill. That is why I sought and received positive advice in this regard from the London Committee on Climate Change.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12388/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The DOE has two arm's-length bodies with pensionable employees – the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC).

The pension scheme applicable to these bodies is the Local Government Pension Scheme. In this scheme pensions increases prior to April 2011 were based on the increase in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). From April 2011, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) replaced RPI as the measure of inflation used to apply cost of living increases.

In relation to the standard scheme, active members of the scheme, and those who left after 1 April 2011, all accrued benefits will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For deferred and pensioner members who left prior to 1 April 2011, the increase to their benefits will be measured by RPI up to April 2011 and then CPI thereafter.

In relation to those who contracted with the scheme for additional pension benefits, for contracts that commenced prior to 1 April 2012, the current guidance from the Government Actuaries Department applies a pre and post retirement increase of RPI. However, this guidance is currently under review.

For contracts that commenced after 1 April 2012, the pre and post retirement increase to benefits is based on the CPI, again in accordance with the guidance from the Government Actuaries Department.

Bridge at Grange Lane, Mallusk

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment why he has not yet met with elected representatives on site to discuss the bridge at Grange Lane, Mallusk.

(AQW 12499/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am very much aware of the problems of the bridge at Grange Lane, Mallusk, and accordingly tasked a senior departmental official to meet with Danny Kinahan MLA and a number of residents on 5 April 2012 to explain the Department's position. I have been particularly attentive to this issue and reject any suggestion to the contrary.

Legally my Department can only provide emergency funding in relation to expenditure incurred by a council in taking immediate action to safeguard life or property, or to prevent suffering or severe inconvenience once an emergency or disaster has taken place. To date, such funding is not available where there has been an ongoing issue. Furthermore, my Department can only provide funding to local councils and has no powers to provide funding to private owners.

I will continue - as before - to discuss how this issue can be resolved. However, to date there have been no verified costs produced, no firm details about who would have legal responsibility following repair works (etc).

My office has successfully demonstrated a willingness to test the limits of DOE competence. However, it must be recognised that DOE - and DOE alone - does not necessarily have all the answers to this issue.

Bus Companies Operating from Republic of Ireland

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the rules that apply to bus companies, which operate from Republic of Ireland, when providing bus services in Northern Ireland; and (ii) how these rules affect the types of the services they can provide.

(AQW 12916/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Transport Act (NI) 1967 requires an operator who provides passenger transport services in Northern Ireland to hold a NI bus operator's licence. However, EU Regulation 1073/2009 allows operators licensed in other EU Member States, including Ireland, to provide passengers services which are delivered wholly within NI on a "temporary basis". This arrangement is known as cabotage.

As Regulation 1073/2009 does not explicitly define "temporary", the Department has sought legal advice on the types of service which could be deemed temporary in nature and therefore could be undertaken by bus operators from other Member States. The advice concluded that the following could not be deemed as being "temporary" in nature and therefore could only be delivered by a NI licensed operator:

- A permanent service i.e. one subject to a long term arrangement or contract,
- A frequent service i.e. one involving daily trips such as journeys to and from school including over a number of days,
- A regular service i.e. weekly trips to specific events,
- A series of services delivered by the same operator to the same hirer

This means that operators licensed in other Member States can only undertake bus services within NI on an ad hoc basis.

My officials have provided this information in the form of an Advice Sheet to all Northern Ireland Government Departments. In providing this advice to all departments, I have made it clear that, if operators from the Republic wish to register as licensed operators here, DOE will work closely with such operators to enable this to happen, in good time and consistent with required standards.

In particular, my department has liaised with the Department of Education in this matter. My intention through all of this has been to ensure safety and compliance with the law and protect users not least children.

I have also liaised with the Transport Minister in Dublin, Leo Varadkar, including concerning the European Commission's view on this situation. Liaison will continue with the Commission, through various channels, on the matter.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Remuneration Packages for Public Servants Working within InvestNI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proposals he has (i) received; and (ii) approved for the restructuring of the remuneration packages for public servants working within InvestNI, since coming into office.

(AQW 12198/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): I refer the Member to AQW 1/11-15.

Peace III Funding

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much Peace III funding has been claimed to date; and how much remains to be claimed.

(AQW 12329/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Total expenditure to date under the PEACE III Programme is £112,032,454, leaving a balance of £177,438,682 remaining.

Write-Off of Rates Debt

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what was the level of write-off of rates debt in 2011/12; and how this compares with the previous three years.

(AQW 12438/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below provides the amount of rating debt written off in 2011/12 and in each of the previous three years.

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Amount Written-Off (£000s)	21,823	15,222	10,207	5,845

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Departmental Guidance HSC(f)27/2012

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many responses to Assembly Written Questions (AQW) will require revision following the publication of departmental guidance HSC(f)27/2012; and (ii) to list the AQW reference numbers of (a) responses to be revised; and (b) responses already revised.

(AQW 12152/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):

- (i) Figures in relation to the 10 day prompt payment compliance of HSC bodies have been requested in the following Assembly Written Questions:
- Aqw 7815/11-15
 - Aqw 6297/11-15
 - Aqw 2225/11-15
- (ii) None of the responses have been revised following the publication of departmental Circular HSC (F)27/2012. I do not plan to retrospectively revise these responses since the information provided was based on extant HSC guidance at that time.

Payment of Invoices

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to Aqw 7815/11-15, which Health and Social Care Trusts, when reporting the number of invoices paid within 10 days, counted the number of days elapsed from the date the invoice was first received or used another date as the starting date.

(Aqw 12154/11-15)

Mr Poots: The starting dates used by the six Health and Social Care Trusts when calculating compliance with the 10 day prompt payment target are shown in the following table:

Trust	Starting date used
NIAS, South Eastern Trust	Date when the invoice is first received in the Trust.
Southern Trust, Northern Trust, Belfast Trust	Date when the invoice is first received in the Trust. Where there is a dispute which delays payment of the invoice, and resolution is the responsibility of the supplier, the date of resolution is used.
Western Trust	Date when the invoice is first received in the Trust. Where there is a query on the validity of the invoice (for example incorrect price or goods not delivered), the date used is either when a revised invoice is received or when the goods are subsequently delivered.

Long-Term Residential Care for People with Severe Learning Difficulties

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision is in place for long-term residential care for people with severe learning difficulties.

(Aqw 12237/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recognise that the provision of flexible and appropriate care and support is vital in supporting people with a learning disability to live within our communities. Such services range across advice and support, health care services, day care services, respite and short break services and residential care. Services are provided to meet the specific assessed needs of the individual.

I can advise that, through continued implementation of the Bamford Action Plan, my Department, in collaboration with other Departments and Agencies, is working to deliver care and support to all those with a learning disability assessed as having a need.

In addition, my Department has recently completed a consultation on a Learning Disability Service Framework which details what people with a learning disability can expect in terms of care and support to meet their individual needs in ways that they understand.

Bangor Diabetic Clinic

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Bangor Diabetic Clinic.

(AQW 12299/11-15)

Mr Poots: Within the context of “Transforming Your Care” the South Eastern HSC Trust has recently reviewed all outpatient clinics for long-term conditions. I am advised that at a recent meeting it was agreed that the Trust and the Health and Social Care Board would work to develop primary care partnerships with consultants and GPs. This will enable work to be taken forward towards the reinstatement of the Bangor Diabetes Clinic.

Full-Time Child Immunologist

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to recruit a full-time child immunologist; and if not, to outline the reasons for his position on this issue.

(AQW 12330/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am unaware of plans to recruit a full-time child immunologist at present. The appointment to any specialist post is a matter for HSC Trusts based on the commissioner’s assessment of need. For a highly specialised post such as this, it is also prudent to assess the availability of potential candidates before commencing recruitment.

Counselling and Psychotherapy Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to regulate counselling and psychotherapy services.

(AQW 12333/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans for regulating counselling and psychotherapy services at present. The regional group, taking forward implementation of my Department’s Strategy for the Development of Psychological Therapy Services, are developing a framework of standards but it is expected that services would only be commissioned from those accredited by one of the professional bodies.

Accident and Emergency Department of the Belfast City Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were employed at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Belfast City Hospital when it was closed, broken down by post.

(AQW 12343/11-15)

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

STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNIT AT BELFAST CITY HOSPITAL PRIOR TO ITS CLOSURE IN NOVEMBER 2011

Grade	Belfast City Hospital Nov 11	
	HC	WTE
Consultant	4	4.00
Staff Grade/Associate Specialist	2	2.00

Grade	Belfast City Hospital Nov 11	
	HC	WTE
Specialist Registrar	3	3.00
Band 7 Nurse	4	3.71
Band 6 Nurse	8	7.20
Band 5 Nurse	26	23.79
Nurse Support staff	5	4.17
Occupational Therapist	1	1.00
Domestics / Porters	7	5.07
Band 4/5 Admin / Medical Secretary	3	1.97
Band 2/3 Admin	21	14.67
Total	84	70.58

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

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

Accident and Emergency Department of the Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were employed at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Royal Victoria Hospital on (i) 1 April 2011; and (ii) 1 April 2012, broken down by post.

(AQW 12344/11-15)

Mr Poots: The current position of A&E staff at the Royal Victoria Hospital has been provided in answer to AQW 12048/11-15. Both these figures (at May 2012) and figures at April 2011 are presented below.

STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNIT AT ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BELFAST BY GRADE AT APRIL 2011 AND MAY 2012

Grade	April 2011		May 2012	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Consultant	7	7.00	12	11.00
Staff Grade/Associate Specialist/Specialty Doctor	3	3.00	4	4.00
Specialist Registrar	7	7.00	6	6.00
Foundation House Officer	6	6.00	9	9.00
Band 7 Nurse	6	5.76	11	10.47
Band 6 Nurse	6	5.84	15	14.04
Band 5 Nurse	29	24.84	52	46.90
Nurse Support staff	7	6.12	14	12.29
Band 4/5 Admin/Medical Secretary	4	3.59	7	5.96

Grade	April 2011		May 2012	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Band 2/3 Admin	11	11.00	29	25.59
Total	86	80.15	159	145.25

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

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

Private Sector Health Providers

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that private sector health providers often employ Health Service staff who are working outside their Health Service contracts, and who often use Health Service facilities, for his assessment of whether Health Service management could use their resources more imaginatively and efficiently to gain better value for money from the public purse.

(AQW 12362/11-15)

Mr Poots: All public servants should strive to use resources efficiently and effectively to achieve value for money for the public purse.

The management of private practice in the health service is the responsibility of the HSC Trusts. Trusts must have appropriate procedures in place to ensure that private practice is conducted in accordance with the financial principles and procedures set out in the Management of Private Practice in Health Service Hospitals in Northern Ireland Handbook.

HSC consultants have a contractual obligation to their Trust to ensure any private practice should be undertaken in accordance with the standards of practice set out in the Code of Practice agreed between the Department and the BMA in 2003.

Private Consultants

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances are given to patients who are referred to a private consultant, that the private consultant is as qualified and experienced in a particular specialty as the Health Service consultant to whom the patient was originally referred.

(AQW 12363/11-15)

Mr Poots: Unless there is a clinical reason why a specific consultant should be the one to see the patient, patients referred to local Trusts for assessment or treatment are considered to have been referred to the specialty rather than to a named consultant. No specific assurances are given to patients transferred to Independent Sector providers as part of waiting list initiatives. However, the HSC has in place a series of quality control mechanisms to ensure that clinicians used are of an appropriate quality.

In general, Independent Sector providers in Northern Ireland are staffed by local NHS consultants working in a private capacity. They are subject to regulation and are registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the related Independent Healthcare Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. They will also comply with the standards identified in 'Standards for Better Health (Dept. Of Health, 2005)' and 'Quality Standards in Health & Social Care (DHSSPS, 2006).

Arm's-Length Bodies Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12389/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department has responsibility for the HSC Pension Scheme and the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

With regard to the HSC Pension Scheme pensions in payment and deferred awards

are index linked under the Pensions (Increase) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971, which currently up-rates public sector pensions in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The only exception to this is the indexation of Additional Pension Benefits purchased before April 2011, which continue to be uprated in line with the Retail Price Index.

With regards to the Firefighters Pension Scheme pensions in payment and deferred awards are also index linked under the Pensions (Increase) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. The Firefighters' Pension Scheme currently states that Additional Pension Benefits should be up-rated in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI), however, the Department has consulted on proposals to amend this and this change will be applied retrospectively to April 2011.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at his Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12411/11-15)

Mr Poots: The total cost of remuneration for board members of the 18 Health and Social Care (HSC) Bodies for which I have responsibility is £1,168,465. This is based on a full complement of membership on each body, however the final outturn figure in respect of each financial year may be slightly less as members leave and new members take time to be appointed. This figure also includes the cost of the Chair Designate of the Safe Guarding Board for Northern Ireland to be established in September 2012.

A full list of HSC Bodies, appointees and the remuneration received by each member can be found in the OFMDFM Annual Report <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/making-government-work/public-appointments.htm> (pages 168 - 193 refer to my department).

Live Births at Each Acute Hospital

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many live births were recorded at each acute hospital, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12416/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of live births at each acute hospital, in each of the last three years, is shown in the table below.

Hospital	Financial Year		
	2008/09	2009/10*	2010/11
Altnagelvin Area	2,824	2,786	2,892
Antrim	3,009	2,742	2,822
Causeway	1,426	1,432	1,425

Hospital	Financial Year		
	2008/09	2009/10*	2010/11
Craigavon Area	3,844	3,943	4,023
Daisy Hill	2,186	2,106	2,081
¹ Downe	0	<5	51
Erne	1,352	1,294	1,286
Lagan Valley	1,133	1,066	864
Mater Infirmorum	1,270	1,154	1,199
Royal Maternity	5,355	5,478	5,570
Ulster	3,462	3,504	3,723

Source: KP19 return

1 Downe Midwife Led Unit opened on 22nd March 2010

* In line with Branch policy, cell sizes less than 5 have been masked to protect patient confidentiality.

Pest Extermination Companies

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total paid, by each Health and Social Care Trust, to pest extermination companies, in each of the last three years. **(AQW 12442/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The table below sets out the total paid to pest extermination companies – as provided by Health and Social Care Trusts for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 (rounded to nearest £). The figures provided by Western Trust and South Eastern Trust include VAT, the figures provided by the other Trusts, do not include VAT.

	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust £	Northern Health & Social Care Trust £	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust £	Southern Health & Social Care Trust £	Western Health & Social Care Trust £
2009/10	27,324	16,690	32,321	14,831	11,364
2010/11	48,212	15,641	39,678	17,111	18,018
2011/12	47,093	15,020	28,748	22,240	15,172

Waiting Times in the Antrim Area Hospital

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the waiting times in the Antrim Area Hospital for the (i) short stay ward; (ii) clinical decision ward; and (iii) corridor ward located outside the clinical decision ward between 1 September 2011 and 30 April 2012, broken down by intervals of 1 hour up to 24 hours.

(AQW 12475/11-15)

Mr Poots: For the purposes of this question, it has been assumed that waiting times refers to the time between the decision to admit the patient to the short stay ward and the time the patient leaves the emergency care department.

It is also important to note that there will always be a period of time required to arrange a suitable hospital bed following the decision to admit a patient from an emergency care department.

- (i) Information on the waiting times for admission to the short stay ward in the Antrim Area hospital is detailed in the table overleaf. Between 1 September 2011 and 30 April 2012, the majority (1,122, 86.9%) of patients were admitted to the short stay ward in Antrim Area hospital within 2 hours of the decision to admit being taken.
- (ii) The 'clinical decision ward' within the Antrim Area hospital, closed in June 2011.
- (iii) There is no 'ward located outside the clinical decision ward' within the Antrim Area hospital.

**WAITING TIMES FOR ADMISSION TO THE SHORT STAY WARD IN ANTRIM AREA HOSPITAL
(1 SEPTEMBER 2011 – 30 APRIL 2012) 1**

Length of Wait	Number of Patients
Under 1 hour	923
1 to 2 hours	199
2 to 3 hours	65
3 to 4 hours	27
4 to 5 hours	26
5 to 6 hours	16
6 to 7 hours	7
7 to 8 hours	4
8 to 9 hours	7
9 to 10 hours	3
10 to 20 hours	14
More than 20 hours	0
Total	1,291

Source: Northern Health & Social Care Trust

- 1 In order to prevent personal disclosure, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the waiting times for all of the timebands requested. As a consequence, information on waiting times for those waiting longer than 10 hours has been aggregated to (i) 10 to 20 hours, and (ii) More than 20 hours.

Antrim Area Hospital Admissions

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the performance figures on emergency care published by his Department, to detail the number of patients at the Antrim Area Hospital admitted to the (i) short stay ward; (ii) clinical decision ward; and (iii) corridor ward located outside the clinical decision ward, between 1 September 2011 and 30 April 2012.

(AQW 12478/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Between 1 September 2011 and 30 April 2012, 614 patients left the Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department to be admitted to the short stay ward.
- (ii) The 'clinical decision ward' within the Antrim Area hospital, closed in June 2011.
- (iii) There is no 'corridor ward located outside the clinical decision ward' within the Antrim Area Hospital.

Multi-Agency Sexual Health Promotion Network

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail who is involved in the multi-agency Sexual Health Promotion Network and when do they meet.

(AQW 12486/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Sexual Health Improvement Network comprises a number of representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. The list is shown below.

The Network meets two to three times per year.

SEXUAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

Members	Organisation
Annemarie McClure	Opportunity Youth/ Co-chair Faith Group
Audrey Simpson	Family Planning Association
Bernadette Cullen (Chair)	Public Health Agency
Bernie Hannigan	Research & Development, Public Health Agency
Brenda Bradley	Health & Social Care Board, Pharmacy
Bryan Nelson	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Carmel Kelly	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Carol Emerson	Genitourinary Medicine (GUM), Royal Victoria Hospital
Caroline Bloomfield	Public Health Agency
Claire Galloway	Genitourinary Medicine (GUM), Causeway
Colette Brolly	Public Health Agency
Deirdre McNamee	Public Health Agency
Deirdre Webb	Public Health Agency
Diane McIntyre	Public Health Agency
Dickie Barr	Love for Life
Elizabeth Gilhooly	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Fiona Carey	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Gabrielle O'Neill	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Gail Malmo	Public Health Agency
Gary Crothers	Aids Care Education & Training
Gemma Lutton	Northern Health & Social Care Trust
Gerard Collins	Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety
Gerard Rocks	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Harry McAnulty	Rainbow Project
Janet Moore	Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety
Janice Armstrong	Public Health Agency
Jason White	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

Members	Organisation
Joe Brogan	Health & Social Care Board, Pharmacy
John Duffy	Health & Social Care Board, Social Services
John O'Doherty	Rainbow Project
Jonathon Fyfe	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Jonathon Hill	General Practitioner Practice, QUB
Judith Cairns	Love for Life/ Co-chair Faith Group
Julie Neill	Health Intelligence, Public Health Agency
Lyn Donnelly	Health & Social Care Board, Southern Local Commissioning Group
Lynda Vladeanu	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Madeline Heaney	Public Health Agency
Maelisa Kennedy	Voice of Young People in Care
Maeve Cross	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Maeve Hully	Patient and Client Council
Margaret Gordon	Northern Health & Social Care Trust
Margaret Rose McNaughton	Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety
Maria Dowds	Health & Social Care Board
Maria Lohan	Queens University Belfast
Marie Hutton	Western Health & Social Care Trust
Mark McBride	Public Health Agency
Mary Crawford	Brook Northern Ireland
Mary Donnelly	Health & Social Care Board, Primary Care
Mary Potter	Department of Education Northern Ireland, Pupil Support
Matthew Dolan	Health & Social Care Board, Pharmacy
Michael Owen	Public Health Agency
Naresh Chada	Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety
Neil Irvine	Consultant in Health Protection, Public Health Agency
Nicola McGarrell	Police Service Northern Ireland
Olive Matthews	Department of Employment and Learning Northern Ireland
Orlaith Hendron	Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative
Pauline Baird	North Eastern Education & Library Board
Pauline Leeson	Children in Northern Ireland
Peter Wright	Ulster Chemist Association
Roisin O'Neill	Western Health & Social Care Trust
Rory Thompson	HIV Support Centre

Members	Organisation
Say Quah	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Sharon Hamill	Church of Ireland Youth Department
Sharon Lawlor	Department of Education Northern Ireland, Curriculum Support
Stephen Jackson	Department of Education Northern Ireland
Steve Williamson	Cara Friend
Ursula Meehan	North Eastern Education & Library Board

Equality and Diversity Courses for Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent to date on equality and diversity courses for staff.

(AQW 12490/11-15)

Mr Poots: HSC Trusts have a statutory responsibility to provide Equality and Diversity Training to their employees. This is provided by Trust Human Resources/Equality staff as part of their normal duties. The cost of providing this training could be obtained by asking each HSC Trust to undertake a special manual exercise, however, this could only be completed at a disproportionate cost.

Paramedics

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many paramedics are currently employed by (a) the Ambulance Service; and (b) his Department's arm's-length bodies; (ii) how many paramedics are required to ensure full coverage in (a) the Ambulance Service; and (b) his Department's arm's-length bodies; and (iii) what recruitment is currently taking place or is planned.

(AQW 12496/11-15)

Mr Poots: Paramedics are only employed by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health & Social Care Trust (NIAS) and are registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC). NIAS have advised that as at 31st March 2012 there were a total of 426 (423.58 whole-time equivalent) Paramedics in post. This figure also includes Paramedic supervisors and Rapid Response Vehicle Paramedics. There are other posts within NIAS which require the post-holder to be a registered Paramedic, for example Area Managers, however these staff would not routinely be providing ambulance cover and are therefore not included in the figures above.

According to NIAS, the whole-time equivalent of Paramedics required to ensure full coverage was 433.0 as at 31st March 2012.

Recruitment for 18 paramedics in training is currently underway. It takes two years to train a Paramedic to the standard required for HPC registration. The 18 vacancies are in addition to a number of trainees already in the Trust.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the percentage of sickness absence in each of the Health and Social Care Trusts in each year since April 2010; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between his Department and the trade unions.

(AQW 12511/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department's Human Resources Directorate monitors sickness absence levels across all HSC Trusts on a biannual basis. The table below details the overall percentage of sickness absence in each Trust and the overall regional average for the reporting periods available.

There is no memorandum of understanding between my Department and the Trade Unions regarding an agreed rate of sickness absence. A target of 5.2% for Trust-level average sickness absence was set in Priorities for Action 2010/2011, to be achieved by the end of March 2011. Data for the monitoring period October 11 to March 12 is currently being compiled.

HSC Trusts	April 10 – September 10	October 10 – March 11	April 11 – September 11
Northern	4.93%	5.46%	5.20%
Western	4.94%	5.01%	4.65%
Belfast	5.56%	6.01%	5.12%
Southern	4.59%	5.25%	4.86%
South Eastern	5.53%	5.57%	4.83%
NIAS	6.71%	7.21%	6.35%
Regional Average	5.38%	5.75%	5.17%

Information relating to sickness absence monitoring is published on a bi-annual basis and can be accessed on the departmental website:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hrd/wpu/wpu-monitoring.htm>

Inver House, Larne

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) rehabilitation beds; and (ii) palliative care beds are available at Inver House, Larne.

(AQW 12521/11-15)

Mr Poots: During the period from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 there were an average of 14 rehabilitation beds and 4 palliative care beds available at Inver House, Larne.

The average number of available beds is defined as the average number of beds during the year in wards which are open overnight, measured at midnight. Hospitals may also have a number of beds in wards which are only open during the day. Beds reserved for day care admissions or regular day admission are not included.

Inver House, Larne

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which services have been relocated to the upper floor of Inver House, Larne since November 2008.

(AQW 12523/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the first floor of Inver House is currently vacant. However following the completion of the required refurbishment to this floor the Northern Trust plans to relocate staff from the Directorate of Primary & Community Care for Older People's Services into this part of the building. This relocation will involve the Larne Primary Care Integrated team and the Whitehead Intermediate Rehabilitation and Stroke Service Team.

Cost of Private Nursing Care

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how the interest rate charged on deferred payments to recover the cost of private nursing care is calculated; (ii) what is the current interest rate; (iii) whether there is a standard interest rate applied across Northern Ireland; and (iv) how the policy compares with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 12575/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland has not introduced a formal deferred payment scheme whereby a financial contribution linked to a specific asset can be deferred for an agreed length of time; however, HSC trusts have the discretion to defer payment for nursing /residential care and charge either, a lesser agreed percentage rate, or a standard 8%. This interest rate is taken from other similar situations elsewhere in the legal system. Councils in Scotland, England and Wales have been able to offer Deferred Payments since 2002, but it is not a statutory duty.

Need for an Air Ambulance

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the feasibility study on the need for an air ambulance.

(AQW 12853/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has now presented the final version of its feasibility study on the provision of a helicopter emergency medical service/air ambulance in Northern Ireland to my Department.

This is an important matter and I will, therefore, wish to consider carefully the implications of the report's findings and recommendations for my Department's policy on the provision of this service.

Department of Justice

Ackah and Deane Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11467/11-15, given that the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board Report of 2009/10 states that the Prison Service needs to complete a review of its Code of Conduct and Discipline, why, three years after the Pearson Report raised this issue, the review is not yet complete.

(AQW 12222/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Review of the Code of Conduct and Discipline is a complex piece of work which has taken time to complete in the context of several reports including Pearson and the work of the Prison Review Team which concluded in October 2011. The review of the COCD is almost complete and will shortly be the subject of consultation with our Trade Union partners.

NIPS are currently developing a new Professional Code of Conduct.

Ackah and Deane Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11467/11-15, on which dates did the Ackah and Deane report begin and conclude.

(AQW 12266/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Ackah and Deane review began in August 2009 and concluded with receipt of their report in December 2009.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to detail the percentage of sickness absence in his Department in each year since April 2010; and the agreed target rate of sickness as set out in any memoranda of understanding between his Department and the trade unions.

(AQW 12283/11-15)

Mr Ford: 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.

The sickness absence rate for the Department of Justice for the 2010/11 year was 11.0 days. However this figure is currently being reworked by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to include Northern Ireland Prison Service staff so this rate is subject to change.

2011/12 absence statistics are not yet available, and will be published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in September – October 2012.

There are no agreed target rate of sickness agreed in any memoranda of understanding between my Department and the trade unions.

John Gallagher

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether he plans to order an investigation into why John Gallagher was able to live in Strabane, having absconded from the Central Mental Hospital in Dublin; and (ii) whether the relevant authorities in the Republic of Ireland were aware of the situation or made any efforts to have him returned to their jurisdiction.

(AQW 12310/11-15)

Mr Ford: John Gallagher was tried in the Republic of Ireland for the murder of his former girlfriend and her mother in 1988. He was found guilty but insane and was committed to a mental hospital in Dublin. In 2000 he absconded to England and subsequently he moved to Strabane. Last month he returned voluntarily to hospital in Dublin.

Any application for an extradition warrant to the Republic of Ireland would be a matter for the Irish authorities to consider in the first instance and would be subject to their own legislation. I have recently discussed the case with the Minister for Justice and Equality. Given its cross-jurisdictional nature, I am looking into the circumstances of the case and the legal issues involved. I will inform the Assembly as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I understand that there are currently six extradition warrants in train for the extradition of offenders from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland.

Recommendation 13.5 in the Ackah and Deane Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11517/11-15, to outline the pressures facing the Northern Ireland Prison Service that have prevented delivery of the training; and whether he can asseverate that this will not impact on the credibility of disciplinary procedures and hearings that have been conducted since the publication of the Ackah and Deane report.

(AQW 12311/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that the pressures facing the Northern Ireland Prison Service referred to in my response to AQW/11517/11-15 related to the operational demands on Establishments with high prisoner numbers resulting in the difficulty to release staff for training.

In terms of the credibility of disciplinary procedures and hearings staff involved in the application of the current Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD) do so in accordance with current agreed guidelines.

Republican Action Against Drugs

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions have been secured, in each of the last three years, as a result of people being forced to leave their homes through the actions of Republican Action Against Drugs.

(AQW 12350/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not available. Court sentencing and conviction datasets do not hold information on the circumstances in which offences were committed.

Outstanding Fines

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice to detail the (i) number; and (ii) total value of all fines which are currently outstanding.

(AQW 12352/11-15)

Mr Ford: As at 30 May 2012, there were 46,810 fines outstanding with a total value of £7,810,712.

A fine is treated as outstanding from the point when it is imposed and a period of time is allowed for payment.

Recommendation 13.5 in the Ackah and Deane Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11517/11-15, and given that this recommendation was not implemented, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service conduct, disciplinary and grievance procedures are fit for purpose.

(AQW 12364/11-15)

Mr Ford: Staff involved in the application of the current Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD) do so in accordance with agreed guidelines. Furthermore staff are aware of their responsibilities in the implementation of the NIPS Grievance procedure.

On this basis I am content that current procedures are applied in accordance with the agreement reached with relevant Trade Union Associations.

John Gallagher

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether (i) the Northern Ireland authorities were made aware that John Gallagher was living in Strabane; (ii) any agency sought his return to the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) any arrest warrant, including a European Arrest Warrant, was sought.

(AQW 12367/11-15)

Mr Ford: John Gallagher was tried in the Republic of Ireland for the murder of his former girlfriend and her mother in 1988. He was found guilty but insane and was committed to a mental hospital in Dublin. In 2000 he absconded to England and subsequently he moved to Strabane. Last month he returned voluntarily to hospital in Dublin.

Any application for an extradition warrant to the Republic of Ireland would be a matter for the Irish authorities to consider in the first instance and would be subject to their own legislation. I have recently discussed the case with the Minister for Justice and Equality. Given its cross-jurisdictional nature, I am looking into the circumstances of the case and the legal issues involved. I will inform the Assembly as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I understand that there are currently six extradition warrants in train for the extradition of offenders from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12390/11-15)

Mr Ford: The majority of the pension schemes in place across the Department of Justice's arms-length bodies are Consumer Price Index linked.

For these schemes, I can confirm that the change to the Consumer Price Index applies both for pensions in payment and preserved pension benefits attributable to contributions paid before the change from Retail Price Index for this scheme.

There are 2 exceptions within Department of Justice arm's-length bodies:

- 1 NI Police Fund operates a small flexible stakeholder pension scheme.
- 2 The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust's pension arrangement is a Group Personal Pension Scheme.

Trial of David and Sarah Johnston

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for a breakdown of the costs, to date, of the trial of David and Sarah Johnston; and for an estimate of its final cost.

(AQW 12406/11-15)

Mr Ford: The known costs to date include:

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
PPS Prosecution ¹	£150,000
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ²	£7,034.80
Court Costs - Judiciary & Staff Costs, Jury & Facilities	£33723
Total	£190,757.80

- 1 Exact costs are not known as yet as fees for counsel and witness expenses have not yet been finalised.
- 2 Represents the fees paid in relation to proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

The legal aid bills for the Crown Court proceedings have yet to be submitted for assessment and payment.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has indicated that it not possible to identify the costs associated with this case.

Temporary Release of Martin Corey

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he consulted the Secretary of State on the temporary release of Martin Corey, given that his licence was revoked.

(AQW 12408/11-15)

Mr Ford: Compassionate temporary release is granted under Rule 27 of the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995, subject to a satisfactory risk assessment. I am not required to consult with the Secretary of State in relation to a period of temporary release for any prisoner and therefore did not do so in this case.

Crimes against Older People

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what new laws or strategies his Department has to combat crimes against older people.

(AQW 12425/11-15)

Mr Ford: Tackling crime against older and vulnerable people is a commitment for my Department within the Programme for Government. As part of this commitment I intend to develop and build on work already underway to build community confidence in sentencing.

The Lord Chief Justice in his Programme of Action, is enhancing the structures by which the judiciary ensure consistent and appropriate sentences. I have also recently announced that two lay members will be included on the Lord Chief Justice's Sentencing Group, one of whom will be representative of the views of victims, to help increase transparency and confidence in sentencing. My Department will also be bringing forward a community engagement strategy.

My Department has also taken a number of actions which will support the work of the wider justice agencies and Government in tackling crimes against older and vulnerable people and addressing the fear of crime.

The Community Safety Strategy, which will be published in the coming months, includes a commitment to help older and vulnerable people feel safer, and will include proposals which build on existing successful initiatives at regional and local level to tackle crime and fear of crime, including support for intergenerational projects and Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

At local level, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships will ensure that local statutory bodies and agencies deal with the anti-social behaviour and crime-related issues that matter in their area; and work in partnership with the community to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour and crime.

Compensation for Criminal Damage Claims

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how much the Compensation Agency has paid out in compensation for criminal damage claims, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 12429/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is outlined in the table below.

Financial Year	2010/11	2011/12
Total of Compensation Paid	£4,418,587.00	£5,968,702.00

Criminal Injury Compensation

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how much the Compensation Agency has paid out in criminal injury compensation, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 12430/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is outlined in the table below.

Financial Year	Criminal Injuries 1988 Order	Tariff Scheme (introduced 2002)	Total of Compensation Paid
2010/11	£8,026,404	£12,309,889	£20,336,293
2011/12	£4,176,046	£11,907,083	£16,083,129

Criminal Damage Claims

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice how many criminal damage claims have been received in the last two years; and how many of those claims have been successful.

(AQW 12431/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is outlined in the table below.

Financial Year	Criminal Damage Claims Received	Successful Claims to date
2010/11	803	251
2011/12	768	154

Criminal Injury Claims

Mr D McIlveen asked Minister of Justice how many criminal injury claims have been received in the last two years; and how many of those claims have been successful.

(AQW 12432/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is outlined in the table below.

Financial Year	Criminal Injuries 1988 Order Claims Received	Successful claims to date under 1988 Order	Tariff Scheme (introduced 2002)	Successful claims to date under Tariff
2010/11	21	3	5,403	1,471
2011/12	16	0	5,260	323

Ackah and Deane Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that the recommendations contained in the Ackah and Deane report have not been implemented by the Prison Service following the death in custody of Colin Bell, for his assessment of whether this jeopardises the credibility of all disciplinary actions carried out since his death.

(AQW 12467/11-15)

Mr Ford: I would refer the Member to the responses I provided to AQW/12364/11-15; AQW/12311/11-15; and AQW/11517/11-15. All disciplinary actions carried out since the death of Colin Bell have been conducted in accordance with the procedures previously agreed with the relevant Trade Union Associations.

Victim Impact Statements

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice whether it is common practice for a family member, or estate executor, to be denied the opportunity to make a victim impact statement at the trial of someone accused of a crime against an individual, who was victim of the crime prior to their death.

(AQW 12470/11-15)

Mr Ford: Victim impact statements have been available to the courts for some time in Northern Ireland. If bereaved family members or another party acting on the victim's behalf wish to make a statement they can forward it to the Public Prosecution Service to include in the prosecutorial papers as an evidence statement to present to the court before sentencing and after a finding of guilt.

Given that there is no formal process for the making of victim impact statements, I recently consulted publicly on how to improve their use and intend to implement a new victim impact scheme, incorporating the provision of victim impact statements and victim impact reports, and the use of community impact assessments, by January 2013.

People Found Guilty of Physical, Mental or Financial Attacks on Older People

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice whether there are any plans to impose harsher penalties on people found guilty of physical, mental or financial attacks on older people.

(AQW 12476/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have made a commitment in the Draft Programme for Government to tackle crime and the fear of crime against older and vulnerable people. All crime is to be condemned, but such crimes are particularly abhorrent. As part of my commitment I intend to develop and build on work already underway to build community confidence in sentencing.

Sentencing decisions in the individual case are a matter for the judiciary. In making these decisions, judges are guided by sentencing guidelines which already indicate that the courts should treat the age and vulnerability of the victim, and the abuse of a position of trust, as aggravating factors. The Lord

Chief Justice, in his Programme of Action, is enhancing the structures by which the judiciary ensure consistent and appropriate sentences. But I believe more needs to be done to increase transparency and confidence in sentencing, which is why I have recently announced that two lay members will be included on the Lord Chief Justice's Sentencing Group, one of whom will represent the views of victims. My Department will also be bringing forward a community engagement strategy.

Trial of Someone Accused of a Crime

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice to outline the process for a family member, or estate executor, to attend the trial of someone accused of a crime against an individual prior to their death. **(AQW 12477/11-15)**

Mr Ford: All criminal courts in Northern Ireland are open to the public (other than proceedings in the Youth Court) unless the trial Judge directs otherwise.

Internships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many internships are available in his Department; and if none, what plans he has to introduce an internship scheme. **(AQW 12483/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice currently has thirteen internships in place.

The Department also provides internship opportunities in accordance with the NICS Work Experience policy which can be found on the NICS Recruitment Service website:

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/pages/content.aspx?Page=work-experience>

Within the provisions of the NICS policy, Corporate HR, DFP coordinates internships on behalf of the Executive Departments. The Department of Justice recently offered an opportunity, via Corporate HR, for the Queens University Belfast Politics, International Studies and Philosophy Internship scheme, 2012-13 academic year. However, due to the high level of interest from the Executive Departments compared to the number of successful students, it has not been possible to assign an intern to the position identified within the DOJ.

Construction of the New Policing College

Mr McGlone asked Minister of Justice what opportunities will be available for local contractors to sub-contract work in the construction of the new policing college.

(AQW 12494/11-15)

Mr Ford: There will be substantial opportunities for local suppliers and contractors both to supply materials and to carry out sub-contracted services to the main contractor. With projects of this scale it is normal practice for local companies to advertise themselves to the main contractors during the bidding phases of the contract.

There will then be further opportunities for local companies as the college is prepared for operations in the run up to 2015.

The Desertcreat Programme Team is making all efforts to ensure public awareness of the nature of the programme and the procurement stages. Any enquiring contractor or supplier can obtain up to date information on any aspect of the new college's development, by contacting the Programme Team on info@desertcreatcollege.org or through the website www.desertcreatcollege.org.

The Programme Office Team will publish updates on procurement opportunities via the website and its facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/desertcreatcollege> as well as the normal statutory channels, such as the ISNI portal on www.isni.gov.uk/contracts.

People Attending Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the scenes at Strabane Magistrates' Court on 31 May 2012, when people in the gallery shouted, cheered and applauded for two men accused of terrorist offences, what action he intends to take to prevent the glorification of terrorism by people attending court, or have them prosecuted for engaging in this activity.

(AQW 12535/11-15)

Mr Ford: The conduct and management of proceedings during a court hearing is entirely a matter for the judiciary. I am satisfied that the current statutory powers that are available to deal with disruptive behaviour in court are adequate.

I am advised by my officials that there was no disturbance in the public gallery during the sitting of Strabane Magistrates' Court on 31 May 2012.

Victims of Human Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the mitigation that victims of human trafficking can put forward as a defence in cases of coerced labour or prostitution; and whether legal aid will be made available to all victims in these cases.

(AQW 12571/11-15)

Mr Ford: The mitigation that victims of human trafficking can put forward may be relevant at the stage when a decision is being made about prosecution or at the trial. The first is a matter for the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the latter for the court.

In respect of the former I would note the PPS has issued for consultation a Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Human Trafficking. This incorporates a section on prosecuting suspects who might be trafficked victims. The policy states that should evidence or information be available to the prosecutor to support the fact that the person has been trafficked and has committed the offence whilst in a coerced situation this will be considered as a strong public interest factor mitigating against prosecution.

Criminal legal aid is available to anyone who appears in court charged with committing a criminal offence, subject to two prescribed tests. These are, firstly, whether it appears to the court that the financial means of the person charged are insufficient to enable them to pay for their own legal representation and, secondly, whether it appears to the court that it is desirable in the interests of justice that the person should have legal aid funding to defend the case.

Legal Aid

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to introduce legislation to allow his Department to recover legal aid claimed by defendants in cases in which they have subsequently been found guilty.

(AQW 12580/11-15)

Mr Ford: I intend to make new rules, the Criminal Legal Aid (Recovery of Defence Costs Orders) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2012, in the next few weeks to enable the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission to recover some or all of the costs of legal aid from convicted defendants in the Crown Court, where it appears that defendants have the means to pay for these costs. Where the Court considers that a convicted defendant has the means to pay such costs, it will have the power to make a Recovery of Defence Costs Order.

Criminal Offences in the Republic of Ireland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department is aware of any other people, residing in Northern Ireland, who have been convicted of criminal offences in the Republic of Ireland and have absconded without completing their sentences.

(AQW 12615/11-15)

Mr Ford: John Gallagher was tried in the Republic of Ireland for the murder of his former girlfriend and her mother in 1988. He was found guilty but insane and was committed to a mental hospital in Dublin. In 2000 he absconded to England and subsequently he moved to Strabane. Last month he returned voluntarily to hospital in Dublin.

Any application for an extradition warrant to the Republic of Ireland would be a matter for the Irish authorities to consider in the first instance and would be subject to their own legislation. I have recently discussed the case with the Minister for Justice and Equality. Given its cross-jurisdictional nature, I am looking into the circumstances of the case and the legal issues involved. I will inform the Assembly as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I understand that there are currently six extradition warrants in train for the extradition of offenders from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland.

Gallery Area at Court Hearings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that members of the public, who are seated in the gallery area at court hearings, are not allowed to talk or interfere with the court process, what discussions he has held with the (i) Chief Constable; and (ii) Lord Chief Justice with a view to addressing the matter of supporters of terrorists being permitted to cause disturbances by shouting, cheering and applauding during hearings.

(AQW 12685/11-15)

Mr Ford: The conduct and management of proceedings during a court hearing is entirely a matter for the judiciary. I am satisfied that the current statutory powers that are available to deal with disruptive behaviour in court are adequate.

Case Number 12/046196 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how the defendant, in case number 12/046196 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court, has been charged with committing an alleged rape on 19 April 2012 whilst he was a prisoner in Hydebank Young Offenders Centre.

(AQW 12686/11-15)

Mr Ford: The alleged offence took place in 2011 and not 2012 as stated on the charge sheet. This clerical error will be amended subject to the direction of the District Judge (Magistrates' Court).

Offender's Levy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the Offender's Levy, whether deductions will be made from the benefits or salaries of those people who have been fined but refuse to pay, in the same way that people, who receive a custodial sentence, will have the levy deducted from their prisoner earnings.

(AQW 12702/11-15)

Mr Ford: Collection and enforcement of the levy, from offenders in the community, will be made in the same way as an existing court fine.

Currently there is no provision to secure fine payment from direct deductions from income, but proposals to allow for such deductions are being developed for inclusion in a Justice Bill, which I am planning to introduce to the Assembly by January 2013.

Serious Case Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9924/11-15, whether he plans to order a Serious Case Review into the handling of these cases.

(AQW 12823/11-15)

Mr Ford: The appropriate agencies are already reviewing aspects of the case and I have asked to see the outcome of that review in due course.

Department for Regional Development

Funding Allocated to Minor Road Surface Repairs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the funding allocated to minor road surface repairs, in each Roads Service division, for each year since 2007/08.

(AQW 12103/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service has advised that the initial allocations to each Roads Service Division for carriageway patching since 2007/08 were as follows:

Roads Service Division	07/08 (£k)	08/09 (£k)	09/10 (£k)	10/11 (£k)	11/12 (£k)	12/13 (£k)
Northern	3,575	3,460	3,784	3,596	3,443	3,459
Southern	4,321	4,315	5,086	4,980	5,472	5,055
Eastern	3,617	3,827	3,949	3,916	3,600	4,163
Western	4,916	5,015	5,075	5,697	5,379	5,695
Total	16,429	16,617	17,894	18,189	17,894	18,372

Logistics Solutions for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10721/11-15, what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on improving logistics solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises.

(AQW 12146/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not had discussions with the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment on improving logistics for small and medium sized enterprises.

Transport Research Laboratory

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the findings of the recent research carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory, on behalf of the Department for Transport.

(AQW 12172/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that my Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety education and engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network.

Roads Service takes account of all research relating to the network. Whilst the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) literature review on "the role of infrastructure in the causation and reduction of injuries to cyclists" is worthwhile in highlighting possible conflict points and hazards, the TRL admits that it was difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the literature.

When developing and implementing the cycling strategy and cycle network, as set out in both the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), Roads Service continues to liaise with various interested bodies, such as, Sustrans, Travelwise, DOE Road Safety Branch, Translink, etc, to develop a cycle network that is as safe as possible and fully integrated with other modes of transport.

The Road network, which has been developed over many years, must serve many different purposes including the movement of freight, passenger movement and also leisure travel. The needs of cyclists

and pedestrians are taken into account during the development of a road scheme, in order to provide high quality cycle/pedestrian facilities, where possible.

Roads Service will continue to prioritise, design and implement safety measures for cyclists in accordance with the Department of Transport's policy and guidelines, which have undergone considerable research and are well established.

Optimal Road Speed

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the optimal road speed to maximise traffic flow.

(AQW 12175/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that optimal road speeds are used on some parts of the UK motorway network to benefit the flow of traffic, improve road safety and promote reliable journey times. However, there is no single optimal speed due to variables such as, the volume of traffic, the measured speed of vehicles and the distance between vehicles. These variables are measured by loops in the carriageway, with the information collected being fed into algorithms which determine the optimal speed in relation to the prevailing traffic conditions. This technology was first used in the UK on a section of the M25 motorway around London and has since been applied by the Highways Agency to other parts of their motorway network, including the M42 at Birmingham.

In Northern Ireland, Roads Service has introduced a system of variable mandatory speed limits on the M1 from the Black's Road junction to the Clifton Street junction, on the Westlink.

Cost of Repairing Vandalised Bus Shelters

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of repairing vandalised bus shelters, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 12190/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Maintenance of the bus shelters, provided by Adshel through its contract with my Department's Roads Service and most District Councils, is funded by the company at its own expense. My Department therefore does not hold information on the costs incurred by Adshel in fulfilling its contractual commitments. Roads Service has a small budget of approximately £1,000 per year to maintain 58 bus shelters that were provided by my Department, prior to the commencement of the Adshel contract.

I can further advise that Translink's Rural Transport Unit pays an annual maintenance fee of £3,000 to Adshel for the upkeep of four bus shelters owned by it.

Damaged Street Lighting Appliances

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the importance of replacing, rather than removing, damaged street lighting appliances to safeguard the public, given the current levels of anti-social behaviour.

(AQW 12251/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it will generally replace a damaged street light that has been removed for public safety. However, if the damage is the result of excessive or repeated vandalism, and it results in an electrical hazard to the public, or the cost of repeated reinstatement has become prohibitive, the street light may be removed as a temporary measure.

Review of Public Administration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development 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 12262/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Executive agreed in September 2009 that the following public realm aspects of local roads functions should transfer from Roads Service to Local Government:

- Pedestrian permits;
- Permitting local events to be held on roads;
- Alleygating; and
- Off-street parking/on-street parking enforcement.

However, it was envisaged that under such a transfer, policy responsibility for parking would remain with my Department.

It was originally envisaged these functions would transfer to Local Government by May 2011. However, the Executive agreed in June 2010 to re-frame the timetable for the reform of Local Government and that these functions should transfer by 2015. The Environment Minister is currently consulting with his Executive colleagues on the range of functions that could transfer to Local Government. During those discussions, I indicated my preference to retain responsibility for off-street parking/on-street enforcement due to the financial implications for my Department arising from the transfer of these functions.

In the interim period, my Department has introduced legislation which, with the exception of cycle races, road races and parades, will enable local Councils to close roads for special events. Officials from my Department and Local Government are developing guidance that will enable Councils to undertake this function later this financial year.

In addition, the Department of the Environment has introduced legislation which enables Councils, with the approval of my Department, to make orders for the erection of alley gates on relevant roads. This legislation came into operation on 1 April 2012.

Sickness Absence

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development 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 12284/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Sickness targets for the NI Civil Service are set by the Minister of Finance and Personnel.

My Department's sickness absence targets and rates for the last three years are set out in the table below. Absence statistics for 2011/12 are not yet available, but will be published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in the autumn.

Year	Category	Target (working days lost)	Actual number of working days lost	Percentage of available working days lost
2009/10	Non-industrial staff	8.5	6.7	3.0 %
	Industrial staff*	13.4	13.0	5.9 %
2010/11	All Departmental staff #	8.0	8.5	3.9 %
2011/12	All Departmental staff #	7.9	Not yet available	Not yet available

- * Internal Departmental target
- # Combined absence targets for industrial and non-industrial staff were introduced by the NI Civil Service in 2010/11

There are no agreed sickness absence targets between my Department and the Trade Unions.

Sheepbridge Park and Ride Car Park Near Newry

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development when Roads Service staff last cleared litter from the Sheepbridge Park and Ride car park near Newry.

(AQW 12291/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My department's Roads Service has advised that this area was cleared of litter, brushed and strimmed in preparation for the arrival of the Olympic torch in Newry City on the 5th June 2012.

Sheepbridge Park Car Park Near Newry

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to extend the Sheepbridge Park car park near Newry.

(AQW 12292/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Park and Share facility at Sheepbridge is currently marked out for 25 vehicles. However, following recent representations on the matter, I asked Roads Service to monitor usage at this facility. Observations during that period indicated that between 33 to 45 vehicles were parked in the vicinity of this site.

Roads Service officials have advised that up to 25 additional spaces could be provided at the Sheepbridge location at an estimated cost of around £60k without having to acquire additional land.

However, as the Member may be aware, Roads Service has much smaller budget allocations over the next two years and there is currently no funding earmarked for additional Park and Share facilities at this location.

Nevertheless, I have asked Roads Service to proceed with some initial development work so it will be in a position to take advantage of any funding opportunities that may arise in the future.

Pedestrian Crossing Where the Comber Greenway Crosses the Sandown Road, Belfast

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration has been given to installing a pedestrian crossing at the point where the Comber Greenway crosses the Sandown Road, Belfast.

(AQW 12332/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it would be more appropriate to consider the provision of a toucan crossing at this location, so that it could also be used by cyclists.

Roads Service officials further advise that they have identified this site, along with other locations on the Greenway, as areas where toucan crossings would provide benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists.

While Roads Service has no immediate plans to provide such a facility on Sandown Road, it will be considered for inclusion in a future works programme, subject to positive outcomes to technical feasibility studies and the availability of funding at that time.

Cost of Legal Services Incurred by NI Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost of legal services incurred by NI Water in the last three years; and to outline the procurement process for these services.

(AQW 12374/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the total cost of legal fees incurred in the three years up to 31 March 2012 was £4.8 million (exclusive of VAT).

All NIW legal services are procured by way of open tender competition.

Cost of Legal Services Incurred by Translink

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total cost of legal services incurred by Translink in the last three years; and to outline the procurement process for these services.

(AQW 12376/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the relevant legal fees incurred during the 3 years in question are as set out in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total £k	233,541	337,189	363,420

Translink is a public utility which complies with the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006. As such, Translink procures its legal service needs through competitively tendered framework agreements (or Panels). These panels cover distinct and separate areas of the business such as prosecutions, claims, liability matters, and employment matters (such as Tribunal work).

New Railway Station at the Waterside in Derry

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the provision of a new railway station at the Waterside in Derry; and to outline the level of interest and commitment to providing a halt to accommodate passengers using the recently opened Peace Bridge.

(AQW 12379/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advise that they are working with Ilex to carry out a joint 'Londonderry Railway Station Feasibility Study' in order to identify the preferred location and concept layout of a new or refurbished station. As part of the study Translink will consider options to continue using the existing location, acquiring and re-using the old station building and also a new build option, including consideration of a site in close proximity to the Peace Bridge. It is Translink's intention to hold a public consultation event in Londonderry as part of the decision-making process. The study is expected to be completed during 2012.

The study is being undertaken at this stage so that suitable steps can be taken to protect any identified preferred site taking account of the views of local stakeholders.

It should be emphasised that there is no funding within the current capital programme for a station to be built or refurbished.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at his Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12413/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The current total annual cost of remuneration for Non Executive Board Members of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHCo) and Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is approximately £229,108 (there is limited provision for additional payments in respect of additional

attendance requirements). The salaries and allowances paid to the Executive Directors are in respect of their roles as full time employees of NITHC/Translink and NIW rather than for their Director/Board roles.

Full details of the amounts paid to Board members are published in the Annual Report and Accounts of each body.

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12436/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that its pension scheme was established under the Trust and Pension law through a Trust Deed and Rules and uses the Retail Price Index.

Translink has advised that with effect from 1 April 2011, all benefit indexation covering NILGOSC and other retirement benefit schemes operating have been based on the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index. This covers all benefits earned.

Grange Lane and Trench Lane Bridge, Mallusk

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 2066/11-15, and in light of the statement that Roads legislation does not permit my Department to spend public money on what the Minister's department perceives to be a 'privately owned structure', whether the ongoing discussions between the various agencies and Departments opens up the possibility for public money, including funding from his Department, to be made available to erect the bridge on an inter-departmental funding basis.

(AQW 12451/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As I advised the Member in my response to his Assembly Question, AQO 2066/11-15, Grange Lane and Trench Lane, Mallusk, including the bridge over the Ballymartin River, are in private ownership. They are not, therefore, the responsibility of my Department's Roads Service.

Roads Service recently sought to clarify what commitments, if any, had been given by Newtownabbey Borough Council or other Departments in respect of this issue. However, it has not been possible to establish the up-to-date position.

I understand that Newtownabbey Borough Council wrote to Minister Attwood on 1 February 2012, seeking emergency status and associated support for the replacement bridge, and that they are awaiting a response. I also understand that the Council has not made a financial commitment to the project. However, if a funding package could be secured, the Council would be willing to provide project management expertise.

While I appreciate the concerns and difficulties experienced by local residents, my Department is unable to contribute funding for the replacement or repair of private structures.

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to reduce (i) the number of QUANGOs; and (ii) the operational cost of QUANGOs.

(AQW 12463/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is not responsible for any QUANGOs. Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) is a public corporation. Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is legally a government owned company and regulated utility, although financially, it is treated as a non departmental public body as part of the public expenditure regime

Internships

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many internships are available in his Department; and if none, what plans he has to introduce an internship scheme.

(AQW 12481/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Civil Service internships are managed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel. At present, no such internship opportunities have been identified within my Department. The position will be reviewed in 2013.

I should, however, point out that DRD provides a considerable level of support to relevant students and staff through other workplace-based learning opportunities and through Further Education assistance.

Management Level Posts in Translink

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 11792/11-15, how many management level posts currently exist in the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company compared with three years ago.

(AQW 12493/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advise that there are 11 management level posts in the NI Transport Holding Company(NITHC). This includes the 9 Senior Executives for the group as a whole. The numbers remain unchanged from 2009. Additionally you should note that the figures given to you under AQW 11792/11-15 of 82 managerial posts included the NITHC management level posts referred to here.

Free Travel for People Aged Over 60

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how many additional buses or trains are provided to manage free travel for people aged over 60.

(AQW 12520/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information required to answer this question is not available.

Translink provides services closely matched to the travel demand patterns of its passengers and where concessionary travel for over 60s now represents a considerable section of total passenger numbers, no service can be specifically attributed to 60+ concession travel only. Where concession travel contributes to the overall levels of usage and helps sustain frequency of services, all passengers, especially the fare paying passengers, benefit from that frequency of service.

In 2011/12 there were 2.5m passenger trips undertaken by holders of a 60+ pass on buses and 0.5m on trains. In the same period there were a total of 66.5m passenger trips on buses and 10.7m on trains.

Annual Grass Cutting Rota

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to ask Roads Service to move from an annual grass cutting rota to a more flexible scheme that works on a needs basis.

(AQW 12557/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service cuts grass on areas, deemed to be part of the public road, to prevent overgrowth onto carriageways and footway surfaces and obstruction of sightlines and traffic signs. Such grass cutting operations are carried out for road safety reasons and not for cosmetic or amenity purposes.

The present policy provides for two cuts a year in rural areas and five cuts in urban areas. The area to be cut is one swathe width, approximately 1.2m wide, with the complete area required for sightlines to be cut as necessary. This maintains a balance between road safety and environmental protection.

I currently have no plans to ask Roads Service to deviate from this policy.

Translink: 60+ SmartPass

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 2070/11-15, to detail (i) how the usage information from (a) Translink; and (b) each of the other operators was quantified; (ii) the nature of the information assessed by the independent external auditors; and (iii) the amounts accredited for the 60+ concessionary fare schemes by each of the operators, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 12569/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) Usage information provided by Translink and other operators is quantified by use of fares and reimbursement adjustments.
- (ii) The information assessed by the independent external auditors is the information held by operators necessary to meet the documentation standard as set out in the schemes terms & conditions. These conditions have been agreed with the Department of Finance and Personnel and NI Audit Office. This includes:-
 - the claims sheets provided to the department;
 - a record of all tickets issued and reconciled against money received;
 - the annual accounts; and
 - a copy of the published timetable.
- (iii) Interpreting the 60+ scheme to refer to all age related concessions over the age of 60 the overall amounts accredited to Translink and private operators ,as a group for the last two years, is as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12
Translink	£23,992,000	£25,759,000
Private Operators*	£498,000	£524,000

* Note: Due to current invoicing arrangements the amounts shown above for Private Operators includes all concession types. That is it includes an amount for child concessions but these will be relatively small.

QUANGOs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development how many QUANGOS, that are attached to his Department, have been created as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2007.

(AQW 12651/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is not responsible for any QUANGOs. None of my Department's arm's length bodies were created after 1 April 2007 as a result of legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Department for Social Development

Housing Benefit or Temporary/Emergency Accommodation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how much was paid to private landlords through the housing benefit or temporary/emergency accommodation in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency; and (ii) what this figure represents as a percentage of his Department's annual housing budget.

(AQW 10912/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): 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 shows the amount of estimated Housing Benefit paid to private landlords for temporary/emergency accommodation by Housing Executive District Office, for the last five years. In relation to part (ii), Housing Benefit is not part of the Department's annual housing budget.

HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION COSTS 2007-2011

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated
Antrim District Office	12,135	39,123	93,379	108,111	127,877
Armagh District	49,484	26,393	59,989	50,788	67,833
Ballycastle District Office	9,833	22,001	27,097	52,083	40,587
Ballymena District Office	71,061	32,560	94,997	119,572	187,450
Ballymoney District Office	627	34	3,299	7,298	21,386
Banbridge District	20,761	19,094	41,001	35,398	40,089
Bangor District Office	28,497	34,438	98,345	104,447	156,169
Belfast Area Programme	542,800	315,152	587,286	522,330	656,823
Carrickfergus District Office	416	3,981	6,393	1,459	2,309
Castlereagh District Office	15,574	11,291	34,998	73,041	131,645
Coleraine District Office	6,848	5,928	21,368	37,265	38,716
Collon Terrace District	71,842	52,919	206,934	272,522	328,657
Cookstown District	0	2,327	6,590	2,469	930
Downpatrick District	86,601	57,958	184,863	204,420	246,473
Dungannon District	244,618	210,164	340,876	306,150	275,306
Fermanagh District	155,230	108,559	176,232	118,094	180,682
Larne District Office	2,400	435	9,612	12,392	13,758
Limavady District	302	180	1,808	3,030	-189

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated	HB estimated
Lisburn District 1	112,921	82,601	334,524	346,505	469,952
Lisburn District 3	53,234	40,571	119,955	108,105	168,507
Lurgan District	46,801	28,293	70,207	69,699	92,175
Magherafelt District	2,219	1,169	14,542	12,400	12,845
Newry District	106,526	134,280	337,833	459,380	576,063
	21,061	10,718	18,992	8,605	13,073
	770	5,386	28,828	19,976	27,254
Newtownards District	15,486	20,432	65,433	94,022	194,019
Omagh District	972	3,974	17,862	27,935	49,058
Portadown District	12,759	12,293	31,302	46,416	81,159
Strabane District	940	0	797	4,393	5,797
Waterloo Place District	179,034	149,417	294,384	317,782	463,390
Waterside District	14,293	11,889	24,632	54,076	100,138
Total	1,886,043	1,443,558	3,354,358	3,600,164	4,769,931

Notes

- 1 Housing Benefit is an estimate as information is not held in this format.
- 2 Housing Benefit is calculated by estimating the total cost using number of properties @ NI average charge and deducting actual top-up paid

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.

Cost of Childcare

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the economic rationale for both parents being in employment when the cost of childcare is greater than the salary of one of the parents. **(AQW 11344/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: It is not the role of Government to make any assessment of the economic rationale for how much a couple choose to pay for childcare costs. It is entirely their choice.

Assistance with childcare costs is available for eligible parents through Working Tax Credits and, under the proposed Universal Credit, help with childcare costs will be available to eligible parents regardless of the number of hours worked.

Religious and Gender Composition of Civil Servants

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) religious; and (ii) gender composition of the civil servants at each grade in his Department in (a) 2000; (b) 2005; and (c) the most recent year for which figures are available.

(AQW 11802/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Recruitment and promotion exercises for General Service posts (i.e. administrators and managers) are managed on a corporate basis by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) through the HRConnect outsourced service. All Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) recruitment and promotion competitions are delivered in line with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code and Commissioners regulate all recruitment to and within the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that the 'merit principle' is adhered to.

DFP also provides statutory monitoring returns to the Equality Commission on its workforce composition for the NICS.

The religion of NICS staff is not held. However, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order

1998 (FETO), information is collected on the perceived community background of staff and applicants for posts in the NICS annually at the 1 January. Using this data, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has provided the information requested, broken down by grade, in the table at Annex I.

ANNEX 1

(I) COMMUNITY BACKGROUND PROFILE

General Service Grade (or equivalent)	DSD Community Profile (2000)			DSD Community Profile (2005)			DSD Community Profile (2011)		
	Protestant	Roman Catholic	%Roman Catholic within Grade	Protestant	Roman Catholic	%Roman Catholic within Grade	Protestant	Roman Catholic	% Roman Catholic within Grade
*G7+	52	19	27	43	56	57	48	65	58
DP	59	50	46	70	108	61	77	118	61
so	117	131	53	180	206	53	186	242	57
EOI	187	238	56	290	408	58	254	372	59
EOII	686	909	57	808	1069	57	809	1083	57
AO	1360	1706	56	1512	2214	59	1503	2005	57
AA	553	877	61	407	640	61	314	396	56
Total	3014	3930	57	3310	4701	59	3191	4281	57

(II) GENDER PROFILE

General Service Grade (or equivalent)	DSD Gender Profile in 2000			DSD Gender Profile in 2005			DSD Gender Profile in 2011		
	Male	Female	%Female within Grade	Male	Female	%Female within Grade	Male	Female	%Female within Grade
G5+	17	1	6	17	3	15	10	6	38
SP/G7	46	10	18	52	32	38	63	35	36
DP	74	36	33	92	89	49	89	108	55
SO	141	111	44	188	204	52	197	239	55
EOI	177	256	59	263	443	63	268	365	58
EOII	568	1053	65	677	1229	64	727	1184	62
AO	984	2159	69	1262	2511	67	1377	2167	61
AA	651	925	59	468	600	56	381	343	47
Total	2658	4551	63	3019	5111	63	3112	4447	59

Notes:

1. All figures relate to permanent staff within the Department and includes both full & part time staff i.e. headcount. All figures relate to permanent NICS staff and exclude staff on a career break.
2. The community background profile does not include staff whose community background cannot be determined and therefore the total count for community background and gender will not match.

General *G7+-. A disclosure control has been applied to the community background profile such that the G5+ and SP/G7 categories have been amalgamated

Social Mobility

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, given that social mobility is higher in societies such as Scandinavian countries compared with societies such as the UK and USA (i) to detail the academic research he has consulted which supports his analysis that the proposals to cut welfare will reduce intergenerational poverty; (ii) for his Department's estimate of the current level of social mobility; and (iii) for his Department's assessment of the level of social mobility after welfare reforms are implemented.

(AQW 11841/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The Coalition Government's proposals to reform the welfare regime are designed, through incentivising work, to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. The introduction of Universal Credit is aimed at supporting those into work by ensuring that people generally keep a higher proportion of their earnings and reflects research findings, from organisations such as Joseph Rowntree Foundation, that work is an important route out of poverty. This assertion is also supported by initial statistical analysis undertaken by my Department which estimates that over 34,000 people including 10,000 children will be lifted out of poverty by 2017 as a result of these benefit changes. Lifting these children out of poverty will, not only, improve their immediate circumstances but will greatly enhance their life chances thereby reducing the likelihood that they will experience poverty in adulthood and continue the cycle of deprivation onto future generations. Also, of equal importance, our actions will provide a second chance for those who have already reached adulthood and who have, most probably, been living in poverty for all, if not the majority, of their lives.

Increasing a family's income however will not of itself solve the root causes of intergenerational poverty, that is why I continue to work with my Executive colleagues to develop a more co-ordinated and effective anti-poverty strategy, one which properly links economic and social policies in the recognition that growing the economy and tackling worklessness must go hand in hand.

- (ii) & (iii) My Department does not hold information at present that would allow an assessment of the level of social mobility either now or after welfare reform is implemented.

People in Full-Time Work who are Classified as Living in Poverty

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of people in full-time work who are classified as living in poverty; (ii) the number of children, with parents in full-time work, who are classified as living in poverty; and (iii) for his assessment of how welfare reform will impact on the level of poverty for adults and children in such circumstances.

(AQW 11842/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The total number of individuals in full-time employment, who are part of a household which is considered to be in low-income or poverty, was 48,700 in 2009/10. This includes both full-time employees and the full-time self-employed. The figure is presented on a Before Housing Costs basis.
- (ii) The number of dependent children who live in a household where either one parent or both parents are in full-time work, and where the household is considered to be in low-income or poverty, was 58,400 in 2009/10. The figure is presented on a Before Housing Costs basis.

These results are produced using the Family Resources Survey datasets for Northern Ireland, and the Households Below Average Income dataset for Northern Ireland.

- (iii) A completed Equality Impact Assessment on Welfare Reform was published on my Department's website on 4th May. It did not, however, specifically consider the impact on the level of poverty. However, my officials are currently working with a statistical modelling tool (the Policy Simulation Model) developed by Department for Work and Pensions as data becomes available from other

Government Departments such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to further identify the impact of welfare reform. Using a read across from Department for Work and Pensions' figures, we estimate that Universal Credit will lift over 34,000 individuals, including 10,000 children out of poverty. At this stage, it is not possible to give a definitive breakdown by category.

Early Years Strategy

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what co-operation his Department has had with the Department of Education in relation to an early years strategy.

(AQW 12046/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department to date has had no discussions with the Department of Education specifically in relation to an early years strategy.

I am personally committed to early interventions and I have met with Minister O'Dowd to discuss a number of issues including nurture units and improving educational attainment, as my Department has the lead responsibility for the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy. The Strategy includes a commitment to address a range of social deprivation issues which affect a young person's life chances.

I believe increased cooperation and collaboration between key Departments is essential for the successful development and implementation of an early years strategy. I would therefore welcome the opportunity for my Department to contribute to the development of an early years strategy.

Boards of Department's Arm's Length Bodies

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social 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 12159/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no former senior civil servants, from deputy secretary grade to permanent secretary grade serving on my Department's arm's-length bodies in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

Reforms to Child Maintenance

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the imminent introduction of charges to be borne by parents who are paying child maintenance as a result of reforms to child maintenance; and what guarantees he can give that this will not have a detrimental effect on children.

(AQW 12168/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Charging is designed to act as an incentive for parents to consider their options and where possible work collaboratively to make a family-based arrangement. It is considered fair and in line with the principles of parental responsibility to ask parents to contribute towards the cost of their application and ongoing maintenance payments given the significant financial benefit of child maintenance.

There is evidence that contact between the non-resident parent and his/ her children is more likely where there is an amicable relationship with the parent with care and if maintenance is being paid. The introduction of charges is intended to encourage parents to consider their options and what is in the best interests of their children and moving away from costly, adversarial state imposed solutions towards mutually agreed family based agreements will deliver better outcomes for children.

Child Maintenance Payment Arrears

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of parents, who now reside outside Northern Ireland, who are currently in child maintenance payment arrears; and (ii) the total amount of arrears owed to his Department by these parents.

(AQW 12169/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- i) As at 31 March 2012, 2024 parents who now reside outside Northern Ireland currently owe arrears of child maintenance.
- (ii) The total amount of arrears owed by parents residing outside of Northern Ireland at the end of March 2012 was £14.1m.

Child Maintenance financial and accounting records are maintained on the Department's Child Maintenance Computer Systems. There are two child support systems in operation and both systems have a long history of problems. As a result of the underlying problems in the IT systems, the Department is unable to generate a complete and accurate listing of individual cases. Consequently the information supplied cannot be validated. The accuracy and completeness of this information is therefore limited.

Child Maintenance Payment Arrears

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how he ensures that people with child maintenance payment arrears, who have relocated to an address outside Northern Ireland, are pursued; and (ii) what links his Department has with agencies in other EU countries in relation to pursuing arrears. **(AQW 12171/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Where people with child maintenance arrears relocate to an address outside Northern Ireland but remain habitually resident (or are treated as being habitually resident) in the United Kingdom my Department will continue to employ the full range of enforcement powers at its disposal to actively pursue the outstanding arrears.

It may be possible for the parent with care to make an application for a Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Order to their local magistrate in order to obtain maintenance and/or outstanding child maintenance arrears from those who relocate outside the Department's jurisdiction.

- (ii) My Department has no direct links with agencies in other EU countries in relation to pursuing arrears.

Administration of Child Maintenance Payments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development what historical arrangements have existed within his Department in relation to charging parents for the administration of child maintenance payments; and to detail the rationale for not collecting such fees at present. **(AQW 12173/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: There is provision for the charging of fees in the Child Support (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. Fees were charged from the establishment of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency (CSA) in 1993 until 1995. Due to well publicised problems with the complexity and delivery of the initial Child Support Scheme charging of fees was temporarily suspended from 18 April 1995. Charges for fees up to and including 17 April 1995, remained payable. As performance and service delivery continued to fall a long way short of expectations, in April 2001 the power to charge fees was revoked. Outstanding fees already charged up to 17 April 1995 were still payable until 5 August 2008, when all outstanding fees were extinguished.

Child Maintenance Payment Arrears

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the amount of child maintenance payment arrears as a result of his Department's charge for DNA testing; and (ii) the level of arrears recovery in each month of the last three years, broken down by constituency. **(AQW 12174/11-15)**

Mr McCausland:

- (i) Information detailing the amount of outstanding fees owed by non-resident parents in respect of DNA testing is not available for both of the current child maintenance schemes. However, in

relation to the statutory scheme introduced in 2003, as at 31 March 2012, fees in excess of £54,000 were owed by non-resident parents in respect of DNA testing.

- (ii) The level of arrears recovery in each month of 2009/ 2010 and 2010/ 2011 is detailed in the table below. Data for the financial year ending March 2012 has not yet been validated. It has not been possible to provide a breakdown of this information by constituency.

CHILD MAINTENANCE ARREARS COLLECTED IN MONTH

2009/2010		2010/2011	
April	252,586	April	225,404
May	296,503	May	239,289
June	278,236	June	225,276
July	254,211	July	197,493
August	239,578	August	212,036
September	252,135	September	201,687
October	268,343	October	231,181
November	272,065	November	218,329
December	275,920	December	193,608
January	223,167	January	202,853
February	205,537	February	226,766
March	249,110	March	267,520
Total	3,067,391	Total	2,641,442

Areas at Risk Pilot Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Areas at Risk Pilot Programme, whether he has taken into account the overall evaluation of the Programme, which found that the timescale was unrealistic in achieving sustainable development for those areas identified. **(AQW 12200/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Areas at Risk programme is a short term initiative providing funding for up to two years, with its remit to increase community cohesion and capacity, strengthen community infrastructure and to afford communities the opportunity to achieve a more sustainable approach to community participation and development. My Department commissioned Community Evaluation Northern Ireland (CENI) to conduct an evaluation of the pilot programme and this was fully considered in the development of the way forward for the pilot.

The evaluation found that the Projects involved in the Areas at Risk believed that the timescale should be extended. However, there remains other areas that have not yet benefited from this intervention. Therefore in order to maximise the resources available and to target the maximum number of areas possible given the limitation of the budget the timescale for the programme has not been extended.

Areas at Risk Pilot Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Areas at Risk Pilot Programme, what safeguards were put in place to prevent the pilot areas returning to Areas at Risk after 31 March 2012, given that the short timescale was identified as a major inhibitor to the projects. **(AQW 12201/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Areas at Risk programme is intended to be a short term initiative, with its remit, to increase community cohesion and capacity, strengthen community infrastructure and to afford communities the opportunity to achieve a more sustainable approach to community participation and development.

The very purpose of this short term programme, which has benefitted 27 areas to date, is to assist and empower communities to enable them to strengthen their capacity which would allow them to work towards sustainability and thus prevent further decline. It was further expected that alternate funding avenues would be sourced, particularly from those organisations with primary responsibility for programmes and or projects.

Areas at Risk Pilot Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development, given that some areas in the Areas at Risk Pilot Programme have advanced to the final stages of significant capital investment and that his Department has withdrawn funding from them, for his assessment of the benefits of continuing funding in these cases to achieve a positive legacy through economic and community investment and reduced dependency on the public purse.

(AQW 12204/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Through short term funding of up to two years, the Areas at Risk programme afforded projects the opportunity to increase community cohesion and capacity and strengthen community infrastructure. It was expected that this period of support would enable communities to build relationships with those organisations with lead responsibility for delivering services and programmes that seek to achieve economic and community investment in their areas. Through this process it was further expected that alternate funding avenues would be opened, particularly from those organisations with primary responsibility for programmes and capital projects.

Officials from my Department have recently completed a review of the Areas at Risk pilot programme and I have approved the recommendations from that review. In order to maximise the limited resources available and to support as many deprived areas as possible consideration will not be given to any extensions to funding and new applications will not be accepted from areas that have already benefitted from the Programme

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in each constituency are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

(AQW 12244/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At February 2012, there was a total of 188,642 people receiving Disability Living Allowance. The table shows the breakdown of this total, based on Parliamentary Constituency-

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of DLA Recipients
Belfast East	7,774
Belfast North	13,266
Belfast South	7,709
Belfast West	17,014
East Antrim	7,442
East Londonderry	7,864
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	9,680
Foyle	14,460

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of DLA Recipients
Lagan Valley	8,854
Mid Ulster	10,363
Newry and Armagh	12,316
North Antrim	8,948
North Down	6,345
South Antrim	9,116
South Down	11,999
Strangford	8,738
Upper Bann	12,937
West Tyrone	12,983
No Constituency Specified	834
Total	188,642

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.

Workless Households

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total number of workless households and the percentage of households where no one has ever worked.

(AQW 12246/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the most recent period for which information is available (April – June 2011), the Labour Force Survey estimated that there were 121,000 households in Northern Ireland in which no adult worked. Of the estimated 569,000 households in Northern Ireland, 12,000 households (2.0 per cent) were households where no adult has ever worked.

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.

Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development 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 12290/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information sought for each year is set out in the last four editions of the OFMDFM Public Appointments Annual Report available from their website or via the following link:-

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/making-government-work/public-appointments/public-appointments-annual-reports.htm>

Social Housing for the Newmarket Street Area of Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what social housing provision is being assessed for the Newmarket Street area of Coleraine.

(AQW 12319/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The five year housing need projection up to 2016 has identified a need for 230 units for Coleraine Town. Newmarket Street is located within the Coleraine Central Local Housing Area and has a projected need for 58 units of mainly older person accommodation.

Housing Associations are actively seeking an appropriate site to address this identified need

Homelessness in the North Antrim Area

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the levels of homelessness in the North Antrim area, broken down by people who are (i) in sheltered accommodation; (ii) not in sheltered accommodation; and (iii) homeless, but sleeping at friends' houses.

(AQW 12324/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to temporary accommodation which is offered by the Housing Executive to any homeless applicant with an apparent priority need pending their homelessness assessment; and to those who are accepted as full duty homeless applicants pending permanent re-housing.

Table 1 below details the number of homeless acceptances for the Housing Executive District Office areas of Ballymoney, Ballymena and Ballycastle for the last financial year.

Table 2 below details the number of people provided with temporary accommodation during the last financial year. The Housing Executive only holds statistics for those who accept temporary accommodation. They do not record those who refuse temporary accommodation or make their own temporary accommodation arrangements.

TABLE 1 – HOMELESS ACCEPTANCES 2011/12

Housing Executive District Office	Ballycastle	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Total
Accepted as Homeless	62	359	103	524

TABLE 2 – TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION 2011/12

Housing Executive District Office	Housing Executive Hostels	Voluntary Hostels	Private Sector Accommodation	Total
Ballycastle	0	1	22	23
Ballymena	20	85	93	198
Ballymoney	5	10	30	45
Total	25	96	145	266

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.

Housing Executive Homes: Heating

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive homes, broken down by district council area, are reliant on (i) the basic electricity supply; and (ii) storage heaters such as Economy 7, for their sole source of heating; and when these heating systems will be replaced to reduce the likelihood of fuel poverty.

(AQW 12353/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by district council area. In relation to (i) the Housing Executive is not aware of any homes reliant on a basic electricity supply to heat their homes. In relation to (ii) the Housing Executive has been implementing a programme to replace electrical heating systems, including Economy 7 systems, with a more efficient heating system and as a result they have reduced the number of their homes with electrical heating systems, including Economy 7, from a peak of 26,000 to the current level of 8,432. The table below gives details of these properties by NIHE district office area.

District Office Area	Electrical Heating systems including Economy 7
East Belfast	369
North Belfast	809
Shankill	241
South Belfast	293
West Belfast	412
Antrim	86
Ballycastle	9
Ballymena	318
Ballymoney	53
Carrickfergus	89
Coleraine	477
Larne	241
Newtownabbey 1	405
Newtownabbey 2	192
Armagh	170
Banbridge	76
Dungannon	60
Fermanagh	100
Lurgan Brownlow	486
Newry	218
Portadown	185
Bangor	408
Castlereagh	980
Downpatrick	306
Lisburn Antrim St.	397

District Office Area	Electrical Heating systems including Economy 7
Lisburn Dairyfarm	17
Newtownards	357
Collon Terrace	212
Cookstown	35
Limavady	103
Magherafelt	45
Omagh	40
Strabane	17
Waterloo Place	98
Waterside	128
Northern Ireland Total	8432

There are currently 2,851 and 1,131 dwellings with electrical heating systems, including Economy 7, included in the Housing Executive's heating replacement programmes for 2012/13 and 2013/14 respectively. The number of actual starts will depend on funding and progress with individual scheme designs/approvals.

Housing Executive tenants in houses and low rise flats are offered gas central heating if situated in a gas supply area and oil central heating if outside a gas supply area. A number of tenants have refused a conversion from electric to oil for economic/affordability reasons. In high rise flats where gas and oil are not feasible new electric heating systems are currently being piloted in South Belfast and Lisburn where initial reaction from tenants has been positive

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Housing Executive Properties in Doon Park, Killynure Road, Carryduff

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether there is a scheme to replace windows in Housing Executive properties in Doon Park, Killynure Road, Carryduff; and (ii) when this scheme will commence.

(AQW 12382/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of the Housing Executive's review of double glazing, I have agreed what category groups and schemes should now proceed. The scheme in Doon Park, Killynure Road, Carryduff should commence in autumn 2012.

Community Groups in the North Antrim Area

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding his Department has awarded to community groups in the North Antrim area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 12434/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has awarded £3,803,675.03 in the last five years to community groups in the North Antrim area. Please see attached Annex A which provides a breakdown of funding for each of the last five years.

ANNEX A
NORTH ANTRIM COMMUNITY GROUPS FUNDING

Community Group	Project	2007/08 £	2008/09£	2009/10£	2010/11£	2011/12£
Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund						
Ballykeel Business Development Ltd	Ballykeel Business Centre – Phase 2 Extensions	6,707.00				
Ballykeel Environmental Action Team (BEAT) Ltd	Ballykeel Community Co-ordinator	33,160.55	33,662.05	34,623.53	28,311.58	
Ballykeel Environmental Action Team (BEAT) Ltd	BEAT (NI) Ltd	73,373.28	65,746.33	60,492.00	83,663.89	70,508.62
Braid Amateur Boxing Club	Braid ABC	11,213.28	12,481.34	12,481.34	7,092.81	5,699.00
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Pre Schools	22,590.35	44,170.82	66,236.37	11,341.14	
Children's High Intensity Play care Services (CHIPS)	After School Club and Summer Scheme	91,455.20	90,262.61	90,916.71	88,034.24	
Children's High Intensity Play care Services (CHIPS)	Feasibility Study		5,000.00			
BB Community Transport	BB Community Transport Pilot Scheme	5,850.00				

Community Group	Project	2007/08 £	2008/09£	2009/10£	2010/11£	2011/12£
Ballee Flute Band	Ballee School of Music		7,456.00			
Ballee Community Association	Ballee After Schools	35,058.25	40,809.92	36,530.02	22,937.93	
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Childcare Facility	80,028.63	162,090.18			
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Community Childcare Services				41,886.71	14,406.39
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Community Development Officer		28,834.43	42,636.41	42,922.49	14,406.44
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Entrance Features			56,318.88		
Ballee Community Association	Ocean Youth Trust	1,426.28				
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Visual Art			1,606.00		
Ballee Community Association	Ballee Learning Support Programme			3,480.00		
Ballee Community Association	Bringing Ballee Together 60+ Luncheon Club					
Ballykeel 1 Community Association	Improve your English & Maths		1,112.00	4,225.64		

Community Group	Project	2007/08 £	2008/09£	2009/10£	2010/11£	2011/12£
Ballykeel 1 Community Association	Be Safe at Home		2,045.00			
Ballykeel 1 Community Association	Challenging Anti-Social Behaviour			1,000.00		
Ballykeel 1 Community Association	Ballykeel Mature Adults Interactive Luncheon Club			6,800.00	10,200.00	5,211.00
Total Neighbourhood Renewal Investment		360,862.82	493,670.68	417,346.90	336,390.79	110,231.45
Dunclug Dedicated Community Chest Fund						
Dunclug & District Residents Association	W5 Day Trip	382.48				
Dunclug & District Residents Association	Fire Service LIFE Project		2,500.00			
Dunclug & District Residents Association	Cross Community Christmas Event		811.00			
Parents and Kids Together (PAKT)	Corrymeela Residential	6,029.76				
Parents and Kids Together (PAKT)	Corrymeela Programme		15,384.12			

Community Group	Project	2007/08 £	2008/09£	2009/10£	2010/11£	2011/12£
Northend United Youth Football Club	07/08 football Season	2,396.47				
Northend United Youth Football Club	Easter Tournament	5,000.00				
Northend United Youth Football Club	Scotland Cup International Festival			7,590.00		
Dunclug Partnership	Media Skills	5,845.56	10,764.99	4,002.96		
Dunclug Partnership	Analysis of Ethnic Minorities	8,613.44	4,003.75			
Dunclug Partnership	Shared Future Concert II	2,166.88		1,030.00		
Dunclug Partnership	Community Cohesion					
Dunclug Partnership	Development of a Strategic Plan				2,193.40	
Total Dedicated Community Chest		30,434.59	33,463.86	12,622.96	2,193.40	
Northern Ireland Housing Executive Funding						
Armoy Community Association	Shared Neighbourhood Programme					4,500.00
Castle Community Association	Shared Neighbourhood Programme					6,342.00
Liscolman	Re-Imaging project					5,000.00
Mosside	Re-Imaging project		1,050.00			

Community Group	Project	2007/08 £	2008/09£	2009/10£	2010/11£	2011/12£
Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum	Bi-lingual Advocacy				2,000.00	
Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum	Ballykeel Re-Imaging project					2,000.00
Dervock & District Community Association	Re-Imaging project		2,000.00			
Glebeside	Better Bonfires Initiative					500.00
Total Northern Ireland Housing Executive		0.00	1,050.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	18,342.00
Voluntary and Community Unit Funding						
Programme						
Community Investment Fund		64,335.00	74,937.00			
Community Investment Fund 2009/2012				68,974.40	66,226.00	65,564.00
Community Volunteering Scheme 2006/2010		33,054.40	33,985.00	12,295.00		
Community Support Programme		198,409.00	203,076.00	248,311.00	227,257.00	209,274.12
Areas at Risk Pilot Programme			166,907.36	202,959.30	90,395.00	
Volunteer Bureaux Initiative 2010 - 2011					10,761.00	6,345.00
Total Voluntary And Community Unit		295,798.40	478,905.36	532,539.70	394,639.00	281,183.12
Total Dsd Funding Allocated Per Year		687,095.81	1,007,089.90	964,509.56	735,223.19	409,756.57

Arm's-Length Bodies: Pension Schemes

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether all the pension schemes that are in place across his Department's arm's-length bodies are exclusively Consumer Price Indexed, including the benefits that were earned by contributions before the change from the Retail Price Index; and to detail any exceptions.

(AQW 12437/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department has 3 arm's length bodies - the NI Housing Executive, ILEX Urban Regeneration Company and the Charity Commission for NI. The Housing Executive and ILEX are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme for Northern Ireland (LGPSNI), which is administered by the NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee. The Charity Commission does not currently have a pension scheme in place.

Prior to April 2011, LGPSNI increases were based on the Retail Price Index (RPI), but from April 2011 the Consumer Price Index (CPI) replaced the RPI as the measure of inflation used to apply cost of living increases. For active members of the scheme and for those who left after 1 April 2011, all accrued benefits will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For deferred and pensioner members who left prior to 1 April 2011, the increase in their benefits will be measured by RPI up to 31 March 2011 and by CPI thereafter.

Remuneration for Board Members of Arm's-Length Bodies and Quangos

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current total annual cost of remuneration for board members at his Department's arm's-length bodies and quangos.

(AQW 12455/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total cost of remuneration in 2011-12 for board members in this Department's 3 executive arm's length bodies is detailed in the following table.

Body	Remuneration Costs of Board members (2011-12 Financial Year)
ILEX Urban Regeneration Company	£96,614
NI Housing Executive	£122,539
Charity Commission for NI	£18,000
Overall Total	£237,153

QUANGOS

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to reduce (i) the number of QUANGOs; and (ii) the operational cost of QUANGOs.

(AQW 12462/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has immediate plans to abolish 2 of its 7 "Quangos". Other Bodies are also subject to review.

The operation of all Quangos is subject to value for money considerations on an individual basis. For example there has been a fundamental review of the NI Housing Executive, the outcome of which will be presented to the Assembly in due course.

Average Rent Paid by Tenants of Oakley Housing Association

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what is the average rent paid by tenants of Oakley Housing Association for a two-bedroom property.

(AQW 12508/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The average rent paid by Oaklee tenants for a two-bedroomed property is £67.87

Double-Glazing Scheme and the Pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development, given the concerns he has raised in relation to the double-glazing scheme and the pilot boiler replacement scheme, for his assessment of the Housing Executive's ability to delivering further energy efficiency measures.

(AQW 12516/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive are the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland, and have a long and proven track record in delivering grant funded schemes to tackle fuel poverty through energy efficiency measures. For example, my Department's Boiler Replacement pilot scheme was very successful. It assisted approximately 1700 people to have their boilers replaced with newer, more efficient ones and provided employment for over 640 small installers. I have also announced on 25 May 2012, a £12million boiler replacement scheme to improve energy efficiency in 16,000 homes across Northern Ireland. This will be run by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and applications will be invited from September 2012.

Social and Affordable Homes in the Fermanagh District Council Area

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) social; and (ii) affordable homes he envisages being built in the Fermanagh District Council area, as part of the Programme for Government target; and what potential sites have been identified in the area for social or affordable housing.

(AQW 12519/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Programme for Government target is to deliver 8,000 new social and affordable homes by 2015, broken down as 6,000 social and 2,000 affordable homes.

The Table below sets out the Social Housing Development Programme for the Fermanagh District Council area for the 3 year period 2012/13 – 2014/15.

Programme Year	Housing Association	Location	Dwellings	Need Group
2012/13	Ark	PSNI Site, 9 Main St, Belcoo	10	General
2012/13	Clanmil	Ballaghmore Heights Backlands, Enniskillen	14	General
2013/14	Apex Housing	Belleek	7	General
2014/15	Apex Housing	Cavandale Phase 2 Enniskillen	10	General

Thirty nine units were also completed between April 2011- March 2012, with fifty three units on site at March 2012.

Affordable homes are demand led and cannot be identified as the member requests.

Alongside the sites noted above, the former MOD site at Grosvenor Barracks in Enniskillen has been acquired for the provision of social/affordable housing and has the capacity to accommodate approximately 200 units.

Former Girdwood Barracks Site in North Belfast: Social Housing

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) on which date his Department informed the Northern Ireland Housing Executive that phase one (100 houses) of the former Girdwood Barracks site in North Belfast would no longer proceed as part of the Social Housing Development Programme; and (ii) the explanation that was given for this decision.

(AQW 12522/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On 24 June 2011 the Housing Executive was advised that I had formally approved the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) for 2011/12.

That approval transferred the site at Girdwood to the section of the Programme reserved for “strategic sites” such as Titanic Quarter and the Sirocco site, as this section lists those sites that will become available for social housing at some future date once more detailed plans for their development are available.

Former Girdwood Barracks Site, North Belfast

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the names of individuals and organisations who attended meetings which he personally attended, excluding meetings he had with departmental officials, where the former Girdwood Barracks site, North Belfast, was discussed.

(AQW 12527/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In my capacity as Minister for Social Development I have attended meetings with representatives from local schools and the Mater Hospital where the former Girdwood Barracks site was discussed.

Average Rent Paid by Northern Ireland Housing Executive Tenants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what is the average rent paid by Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants for a two-bedroom property.

(AQW 12544/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive does not calculate rents based on the number of bedrooms but on the number of bed spaces. Typically a two-bedroom house could have two, three or four bed spaces.

The table below details typical weekly rents by the number of bed spaces across property types.

Property Type	Number of bed spaces		
	2	3	4
Detached House	£58.00	£64.62	£66.28
Semi detached house	£53.02	£59.65	£61.31
Terrace house	£51.37	£58.00	£59.65
Flat/maisonette (2 storey or less)	£43.08	£49.71	£51.37
Flat/maisonette (3 storey or more)	£38.11	£44.74	£46.40

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Rent for Bungalows in Bloomfield, Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what rent is currently being paid by Housing Executive tenants for bungalows in Bloomfield, Bangor.

(AQW 12563/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The weekly rent payable for the respective bungalows within Bloomfield are as follows:

	Rent
Balloo Road	£54.68
Bloomfield Road South	£53.02
Ballyree Drive	£49.71

The differential in rental levels reflects differences in layout and specification within the dwellings.

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Decamping Residents of the Long Streets, North Belfast

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his plans for decamping residents of the Long Streets, North Belfast over the next three years when the area is being developed.

(AQW 12570/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Notices of intention to vest have been served in the area effective from 13 April 2012 and I am now considering the objections received and the need, or otherwise for a Public Inquiry.

There are a number of new build schemes programmed to complete, e.g. Parkside, Coulter's previous car park at 25 – 49 Antrim Road and Whitewell, which may be available for clearance. In addition there will be on-going re-lets available in the neighbouring estates which will assist with any re-housing of tenants. This will all be taken into account when the Housing Executive draw up clearance plans for the area which will of course be subject to community consultation.

Former Girdwood Barracks Site in North Belfast: Social Housing

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many social houses are scheduled to be built on the former Girdwood Barracks site, North Belfast in the (i) 2012/13; (ii) 2013/14; and (iii) 2014/15 financial years.

(AQW 12572/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On 21 May I was pleased to announce the agreement of a concept plan for the much needed regeneration of the Girdwood site in the heart of North Belfast.

The concept plan for Girdwood provides for the regeneration of the site to deliver a range of shared development opportunities to support social, sports, economic and residential development. The site will provide: a multi-use pitch for football, gaelic and rugby; an indoor sports arena; a commercial building to house a range of business and social economy enterprises; and, residential development.

The residential element of this concept plan will be delivered by a Housing Association with the support of the Housing Executive. The actual number of units to be developed will ultimately be dictated by housing need and of course will also be dependent on planning permission. In that respect it is too early to say exactly what will be delivered and when.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Ms Ruane asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding allocated to Disabled Facilities Grants in the last year.

(AQW 12590/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total Housing Executive expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants in the last financial year, 2011/12, was £13,564,463.

Housing Executive Houses Fitted with Carbon Monoxide Monitors

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) how many Housing Executive houses are fitted with carbon monoxide monitors; (ii) the cost of fitting the monitors; (iii) how many of the monitors have been replaced or are due to be replaced; and (iv) why the replacements were necessary.

(AQW 12593/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to (i) a total of 27,273 carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in Housing Executive homes as at 7 June 2012; (ii) the cost of supplying and fitting each detector was £29.50; (iii) of these, approximately 13,500 detectors need to be replaced and to date 7,401 have been replaced at no extra cost to the Housing Executive and (iv) the replacements are necessary because the Housing Executive specification requires the detectors to meet EU standards (BS50291:2001) and a batch of detectors which were supplied to their contractors did not meet this requirement. The detectors in question surpass the previous standard (BS7860:1996) and are acceptable to sell in the United Kingdom but do not meet the EU standard.

Photographs Taken by Publicly Funded Photographers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 11009/11-15, to detail the number of photographs taken by publicly funded photographers in which he has appeared in his Ministerial role and which included a member of (i) Sinn Fein; (ii) the SDLP; (iii) the UUP; and (iv) the Alliance, 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 12630/11-15)

Mr McCausland: i) One, (ii) One, (iii) Three, (iv) NIL. [Prior to all visits my Private Office contacts local constituency offices to make representatives aware of the visit.]

Customer First Model

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the concerns raised that the Customer First Model will have a detrimental impact on vulnerable user groups in the West District, whether he would suspend the planned roll-out of the Model, in that area, until an equality impact assessment has been carried out on its effect upon staff and customers.

(AQW 12637/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am aware the Social Security Agency recently announced the continued roll-out of the Customer First initiative across the rest of the Social Security Working Age Network.

On 8 March 2011, my predecessor, Minister Alex Attwood advised the Assembly on the outcome of the evaluation of the Social Security Agency's Customer First Pilot in what was previously known as North District.

The Evaluation report concluded that from an Equality perspective, there were no differential impacts for any of the Section 75 groupings for either customers or staff as a result of the new customer service delivery arrangements. Furthermore, the initiative had proven to deliver significant service improvements, which when rolled out would be made available to all customers of the Agency. I am therefore surprised why the member would suggest that vulnerable user groups in the west of Northern Ireland would suffer detrimental impact as this had not been shown to be the case for vulnerable customers in the east of the province.

Minister Attwood in concluding his statement indicated that the roll-out of Customer First would now be an operational matter for the Agency.

I have also been advised by senior Agency Officials that the Agency will continue to work with Trade Union Side and staff to consider measures which may militate against any adverse impact such as reasonable daily travelling distances. Agency officials will continue to work with local representatives to ensure they are kept informed as Customer First is rolled out.

Future of the Social Fund

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development if his Department has made any plans for the future of the Social Fund

(AQW 12667/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In line with national plans for the reform of Social Fund, Northern Ireland and the other devolved administrations have been tasked with designing new discretionary support provision to replace Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses and household. It is anticipated that within the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill (Northern Ireland) 2012 going through the Assembly, Social Fund will be abolished from April 2013.

At its meeting on the 26th April 2012, the Executive agreed to my Department developing new discretionary support and officials within my Department have been working on the development of a replacement scheme. To inform decision making, the Social Security Agency has commissioned the Social Fund Reform Research Study, which included consultation with a wide range of stakeholders about the nature of discretionary support they would wish to see in the future. Based on the findings from the research, work is ongoing on the design of the new scheme and associated eligibility criteria. The remaining elements of the current Social Fund, including regulated elements, will be incorporated within the new Universal Credit for delivery as customers migrate to the new benefit.

Double-Glazing Scheme for Housing Executive Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development whether the double-glazing schemes for Housing Executive properties will be completed during this mandate.

(AQW 12707/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have ensured that in the Programme for Government the Northern Ireland Executive gave a commitment that the thermal efficiency of all Housing Executive properties would be improved by 2014/15 through the provision of double glazing. However I also need to ensure that this programme delivers best value for money and the work is in line with industry standards. I therefore wrote to the Housing Executive's Chief Executive asking him to rigorously and urgently review this specification. The review will be completed urgently and will not have an impact on the target date of 2015, and although there may be slight delays while this is carried out, all homes will remain in the programme and no tenant who was promised double glazing will lose out. It is estimated that around 30,000 homes will be included in the Housing Executive's double glazing programme and this will be completed in the current CSR period.

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