

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 27 April 2012

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 27 April 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Project 5873 Executive Information Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the cost of employing an in-house photographer, when necessary, as opposed to the £400,000 cost of Project 5873 Executive Information Service - Provision of Photography Services for the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQW 9358/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): There are no professional in-house photographers in the employment of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Photography services are secured via secondary competition between six photographers who were successful following a tender competition which was administered by the Central Procurement Directorate of the Department of Finance and Personnel in accordance with procurement regulations. We believe it represents better value to use local photographers as required, rather than recruiting permanent photographic staff.

Project 5873

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the contract for Project 5873, why the figure of £400,000 is only an estimate.

(AQW 9566/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The contract is for an initial period of one year, with the option to extend by three further periods of one year each. The figure is based on all of the extension options being taken up.

Training Departmental Staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Mr Frew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what strategy is in place to train departmental staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

(AQW 10153/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are required to have an adequate and appropriate number of staff trained in the application of first aid to ensure all our staff have access to first aid services if required. Training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation is provided for those staff by the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance. Within OFMDFM, we currently have nine volunteer staff trained to provide first aid services. In addition, six staff working in Stormont Castle have been trained in Adult Life Support and use of automated external defibrillator resuscitation equipment which is located in the Castle.

Directional Signage at Glendermott Road/Ebrington Terrace

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when ILEX will install directional signage at Glendermott Road/Ebrington Terrace for the entrance to the Peace Bridge.

(AQW 10255/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Ilex is currently assessing a project to fit directional signage to the Peace Bridge.

Energy Efficiency Vires

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on proposals to concentrate energy efficiency vires in a single department.

(AQW 10271/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In February 2011, the Executive commissioned a review by the Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group (SEIDWG) of energy vires across departments to consider:

- (a) Whether there was a need to amend energy vires currently available to departments.
- (b) To explore the scope for consolidating and streamlining sustainable energy activities, as and where appropriate.

SEIDWG, having initiated the review, referred the issue to be taken forward by the Sustainable Development Champions' Group (SDCG) under the Chairmanship of OFMDFM, as a neutral department in respect of energy vires and in line with its role for co-ordination of cross-cutting, strategic policy issues.

A policy review was undertaken by DETI officials, and a paper was presented to SDCG on 20 January 2012, presenting evidence gathered by the review, and making recommendations. SDCG has agreed a set of recommendations in respect of the energy vires issue that we intend to bring forward for consideration by the Executive in the near future.

Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether any time limits have been set on how long the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse will take; and what are the estimated costs.

(AQW 10316/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 29 September 2011, the Executive announced the establishment of an Inquiry and Investigation into Historical Institutional Abuse here. The Executive have stated that the Inquiry and Investigation should conclude within two and a half years of its commencement. The Chair of the Inquiry must submit a report of their findings to the Executive within six months of the conclusion of the Inquiry.

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

Government Advertising in Weekly Newspapers

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the Executive has any plans to curtail Government advertising in weekly newspapers, with concentration on daily media outlets; and (ii) what consideration has been given to the impact on equality of access, given the limited and declining circulation of many of the daily press.

(AQW 10463/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In the current financial climate, advertising expenditure will be subject to the same scrutiny and control as other areas of expenditure. The Executive has agreed to introduce tight controls on advertising expenditure, open up classified advertising to competition and change the legislation to allow greater use of online and other media for classified advertising. Opening up classified advertising to competition will ensure compliance with procurement regulations and deliver better value for money.

A full equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the fundamental review of classified advertising (2006). As part of the consultation on the change in legislation, a further equality impact assessment will be carried out.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Guidance on the Use of Rivers by Farmers

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9541/11-15, to outline her Department's guidance on the use of rivers by farmers for access to fields.

(AQW 10455/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Under the Drainage (NI) Order 1973, my Rivers Agency has no remit or role regarding the use of rivers by farmers for access to fields.

Guidance on the Use of Rivers by Farmers

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9541/11-15, what protection her Department gives to rivers that are not designated under the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 and that are being used for access to fields by farm tractors and machinery.

(AQW 10456/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency is the statutory drainage and flood protection Authority for NI. Under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973, the Agency only has powers to maintain watercourses and sea defences which have been designated by the Drainage Council for NI. The maintenance of non designated watercourses falls to the riparian landowner, Rivers Agency has no remit or role regarding the use of rivers by farmers for access to fields.

Guidance on the Use of Rivers by Farmers

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9541/11-15, what advice her Department provides under the Water Framework Directive for the protection of rivers that are used for access to fields by farm tractors and machinery.

(AQW 10457/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The introduction of Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the north is the responsibility of the Department of Environment, who through NI Environment Agency (NIEA) are the Competent Authority. I would therefore refer my colleague Mr C McDevitt to address any queries he has on the WFD to NIEA.

EU Welfare of Laying Hens Directive

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9950/11-15, for an update on the current position of the 13 non-compliant member states and their efforts to ensure compliance.

(AQW 10604/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since the EU ban on conventional cages came into force on 1 January 2012, the Commission has done what it said it would do and has taken robust action to deal with the wide-scale non-compliance across the EU.

In addition to writing formal infraction letters to all 13 non-compliant Member States, the Commission is reviewing Member States' action plans on a monthly basis at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFAH). These action plans include the commitment that eggs from conventional cages may only go for processing in the Member State of origin and cannot be exported. These egg products must only be used in food products or industrial products manufactured within the Member State of origin and only these food products can then be exported.

The action plans also include the agreement that no new hens may go into conventional cages and any production sites using conventional cages must close by 31 July 2012. Evidence to date shows this measure seems to have worked as eggs are being kept in the Member States of origin and producers are either closing or moving to more welfare friendly systems of production.

This is one reason why there was a shortage of eggs used in processing across Europe in February and March, with processors and food manufacturers being hit the hardest. The shortfall in supplies of eggs from compliant systems for the table egg market, particularly when combined with an increased demand over the Easter period, has led to a considerable increase in wholesale egg prices. However, the Commission has confirmed that egg prices have started to fall again quite quickly in the last few weeks, potentially indicating that the market is now beginning to stabilise.

The Commission's Food and Veterinary Audit Office inspections for 2012 are being targeted at non-compliant Member States.

Single Farm Payments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers had not received their Single Farm Payment by (i) 1 April 2012; and (ii) 20 April 2012.

(AQW 10677/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As the 1 April 2012 fell on a Sunday, I am providing figures for Monday, 2 April 2012 and Friday, 20 April. In replying to the question on this basis, I can report that on 2 April 2012 and 20 April 2012, totals of 2,344(6.1%) and 2,075(5.4%) of the claims submitted under the 2011 Single Farm Payment were not finalised. Not all of the remaining claims may be due a payment because of ineligibility or the application of penalties under scheme rules.

Single Farm Payment

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers had received their Single Farm Payment by (i) December 2011; (ii) January 2012; (iii) February 2012; and (iv) March 2012.

(AQW 10678/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department had finalized 32,289 (85.3%) claims to SFP by the end of December 2011, 34,144 (90.2%) by January 2012, and 34,977 (92.4%) by the end of February 2012. A further 530 claims were finalized during March 2012 resulting in a total of 35,507 (93.8%), of all claims having been completed and over £247 million paid out to farmers at that time.

My Department is obliged to administer the SFP scheme in accordance with the EU rules and this means that the results of validation checks, including on-farm inspections, must be applied to individual claims in order to calculate the correct amount due before a payment can be released. Some assessments are complex, particularly for claims that have had an on-farm inspection, and take longer to clear. The remaining claims are outstanding for a number of reasons such as inspection results to be applied to claims, probate not yet completed or the farmer has not provided bank account details to allow payment to be credited to their bank account. Not all the remaining claims may be due to receive a payment because of ineligibility or the application of penalties under scheme rules.

Single Farm Payment Applications

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the approaching deadline for Single Farm Payment applications, how many farmers were awaiting updated copies of their farm maps 4 weeks before the deadline; and to explain the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 10679/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Maps were made available online as they were produced, with the first being online on 23 March. All maps produced were online from 5 April at the latest, which was more than 4 weeks before the deadline.

Maps were not produced for businesses which were the subject of an inspection in 2011. For these farmers, the inspection reports provide a more detailed, up-to-date and therefore more accurate assessment of eligible land on these holdings. These businesses received a letter advising them to use their inspection report to inform their Single Application.

Hard copy maps were posted to farmers from 30th March. The vast majority of maps (more than 99%) were posted by 18 April. All maps were posted by 20 April.

It had been planned that maps would issue by the end of the second week in April. The majority were posted in this timeframe, with the remainder posted in the following week. In my Press Release on the 12 April, I advised farmers who hadn't received their map at that stage that they could access it online or alternatively their local DARD Direct office could provide one for them.

As farmers had a range of sources through which to access their farm maps, either online, a posted hard copy or by getting a copy from a DARD Direct office, I cannot be certain how many did not have access to a copy 4 weeks before the deadline.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Fish Caught by Legal Netsmen

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what data has been recorded on the number of fish caught by legal netsmen over the last five years.

(AQW 10401/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): DCAL licensed netsmen are only required to provide numbers of fish caught for salmon and sea trout through the carcass tagging scheme.

DCAL is the fishery owner on Lough Erne and issues a small number of permits to netsmen operating there. It is a requirement of the permit that the netsmen provide returns on the weight of their catches.

Identification Measures to Mark Legal Nets in Lough Neagh

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what identification measures are used to mark legal nets in Lough Neagh; and to outline how the enforcement teams carry out their work.

(AQW 10505/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Regulations regarding the identification of legal fishing nets on Lough Neagh already exist and are clearly specified in the 1966 Fisheries Act and associated regulations.

Each net or row of nets of a single wall set net or trammel net used for the taking of trout and coarse fish on Lough Neagh must be marked at each end with a float not less than 30 centimetres in diameter, of a bright yellow colour projecting not less than 30 centimetres above the surface of the water.

Each float must have clearly and legibly painted or fixed in figures of not less than 12 centimetres in height, the number allocated to the licence-holder by the Department (or any number the Department has allocated to the net or row of nets of which the float shall be a mark) and at all times when the net or row of nets is in use such number must be clearly legible.

A team of 3 DCAL Fisheries Protection Officers, under the management of a Senior Fisheries Officer, operate from their base at Derrycrow on the southern shore of the Lough. They carry out regular boat and shore patrols of the Lough and its tributaries to detect, disrupt and deter those involved in illegal fishing activities.

When necessary Fishery Protection Officers based in other areas can be tasked to assist with operations with the Lough Neagh team.

Department Jurisdiction on Waters

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the waters on which her Department has jurisdiction, including loughs, river basins and shorelines.

(AQW 10506/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is responsible for the conservation and protection of fish in all inland waters within the DCAL jurisdiction and salmon in the coastal waters off the jurisdiction. The Department does not retain a definitive list of all waters in the jurisdiction.

The Crown Estate has jurisdiction over shorelines.

In terms of the direct provision of public angling, the Department manages all loughs, rivers and canals as listed on the following website as Public Angling Estate waters www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling

Netting Permitted in Lough Neagh

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she is considering reducing the period in which netting is permitted in Lough Neagh.

(AQW 10510/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The seasons which determine the period in which netting is permitted on Lough Neagh are defined in the 1966 Fisheries Act and subsequent Regulations.

At this time I am not actively considering a revision on the length of seasons as there is currently no data indicating a need for change.

Appointment of Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 10240/11-15, and given that the information requested was not provided in her answer, to detail (i) the job description deployed; (ii) the person specification; (iii) how the vacancy was made known; (iv) how many candidates were considered; (v) the criteria against which candidates were judged; (vi) what regard was given to avoiding any imbalance of religious belief; and (vii) what documentation exists pertaining to the appointment.

(AQW 10547/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The DCAL Special Adviser was appointed in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as amended.

Lottery Funding

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether Northern Ireland's full Lottery funding will be restored fully after the 2012 Olympics.

(AQW 10580/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The levels of Lottery funding will be returned to the pre-Olympics level position at the end of this financial year.

Boddagh and Black Boddagh Fish in the Lough Neagh Basin

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the estimated stock levels of (a) boddagh; and (b) black boddagh fish in the Lough Neagh Basin and its arterial rivers in each of the last ten years; and (ii) which rivers have spawning runs of each fish.

(AQW 10645/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) I am unable to estimate the stock levels of boddagh and black boddagh fish in the Lough Neagh basin.
- (ii) Trout spawn in all major catchments draining to Lough Neagh. The cues that determine if and when juvenile trout choose to migrate to feed in Lough Neagh are complex and will have genetic and environmental components. Likewise, the factors that determine the characteristics that trout develop whilst feeding and maturing in Lough Neagh, and when they return from feeding to spawn in rivers, are varied.

Netting in Lough Neagh

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she is considering reducing the period of time that netting is allowed in Lough Neagh.

(AQW 10726/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The seasons which determine the period in which netting is permitted on Lough Neagh are defined in the 1966 Fisheries Act and subsequent Regulations.

At this time I am not actively considering a revision on the length of seasons as there is currently no data indicating a need for change.

Trout Fishing Closed Season

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she is considering extending the trout fishing closed season to allow kelp a chance to return to the lough and regain their condition.

(AQW 10729/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Trout after they have spawned are referred to as Kelt and are not generally sought due to their physical appearance and lower body weight.

The current closed period for trout fishing in Lough Neagh operates from the 20 August until the 1 March the following year. This generally allows Kelt approximately 3 months to recover from spawning activity which takes place from mid October to the end of November.

I am not currently considering extending the closed season for trout fishing in Lough Neagh.

Department of Education

First Preference Choice of Nursery School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the current number of children who have not received their first preference choice of nursery school, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 10399/11-15)

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

GCSEs and A Levels

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils sat GCSEs and A Levels in each of the last three years, broken down by examination body.

(AQW 10402/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table. The data from which this information is drawn is held at subject level, not pupil level. As such this table shows the number of entries for GCSE and A-Level courses in each examination board. Individual pupils may make entries in several examination boards. Equivalent qualifications at either GCSE or A-Level are not included in the table.

A-LEVEL AND GCSE ENTRIES BY EXAMINATION BOARD 2008/09 TO 2010/11.

		Examination Board					
		EDEXCEL	WJEC	CCEA	OCR	AQA	TOTAL
2010/11	A-Level	2631	455	22918	859	4478	31341
	GCSE	1388	650	113157	4669	41585	161449

		Examination Board					
		EDEXCEL	WJEC	CCEA	OCR	AQA	TOTAL
2009/10	A-Level	2506	453	22197	892	4649	30697
	GCSE	724	783	110700	5939	45721	163867
2008/09	A-Level	3106	456	20497	842	5107	30008
	GCSE	700	680	111419	6084	46044	164927

Source: RM Data Solutions

Note: Excludes equivalent qualifications

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Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the resources expended by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, in each of the last three years, for the purposes of disseminating information and training to schools on examinations and assessment.

(AQW 10403/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have been advised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment that the information is not available in the format requested and would only be available at disproportionate cost.

Qualified Teachers Without Jobs

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education what steps he intends to take to ensure that the 8,500 qualified teachers without jobs can apply their skills in the education sector.

(AQW 10416/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Whilst there are currently around 8,500 teachers on the Substitute Teachers' Register (NISTR), not all those registered are currently seeking permanent employment; indeed, many wish to be employed on a substitute basis and are successful in securing a temporary post that suits their individual needs. On any given day, there will only be a certain number of teachers available for employment; the number varies from day to day depending on an individual teacher's personal preferences and on the number of teachers employed in schools on that day.

Furthermore, it does not necessarily follow that all those who have not secured a teaching post are currently unemployed. Statistics from the Department of Trade and Investment for February 2012 show that there were 27 claimants under the age of 30 whose occupation sought was teaching and who were unemployed for more than 26 weeks.

The issue of employment opportunities for teachers is something I take very seriously indeed, particularly given the current economic situation when employment opportunities in many areas are limited and there is increased competition for jobs in various walks of life. However, teachers are highly qualified professionals and, as such, possess skills and attributes that would prepare them for many jobs in related areas. Therefore, it is important that they are flexible in the choices that they make to determine their career paths.

I am also keen to ensure the numbers joining approved initial teacher education (ITE) courses reflect the needs of our school system. In light of falling rolls, my Department has reduced the overall intakes to ITE courses from 880 in 2004/05 to 663 in 2011/12 – a reduction of nearly 25%. I am currently giving careful consideration to the 2012-13 ITE intake numbers.

Over the years, my Department has also introduced a range of measures to maximise the employment opportunities of newly and recently qualified teachers and to discourage the employment of prematurely retired teachers. My Department has repeatedly advised employers that prematurely retired teachers

should only be re-employed to provide short-term cover where newly qualified teachers (NQTs) or experienced nonretired teachers are unavailable.

Most recently, my Department has introduced a flat rate of pay, based on salary levels applicable to NQTs, for substitution cover provided by prematurely retired teachers who have received discretionary compensation. Alongside complementary amendments to the Common Funding Scheme, this is intended to serve as a disincentive to prematurely retired teachers to seek re-employment.

On foot of the consultation on the review of teacher education, I am considering a draft strategy for the way forward for teacher education here which will include a proposal for the Department to develop a cost-effective scheme whereby NQTs not in full-time permanent teaching posts will have access to sufficient teaching experience in order to facilitate completion of Induction.

Derry City Council Area: Nursery School Places

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many children in the Derry City Council area have not received a nursery school place for the 2012/13 academic year; and (ii) how many places are still available in that area, broken down by electoral ward area.

(AQW 10490/11-15)

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

Pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to identify and support pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, given its significant impact on educational attainment.

(AQW 10497/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have statutory responsibility for identifying, assessing and meeting the special education needs (SEN) of the children in their area. They take into account the individual needs of each child and provide tailored support as appropriate.

The ELBs have advised that a range of measures are used to identify and support children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder including:-

- Guidance booklets for teachers and parents;
- Training for school staff on school/classroom management strategies and interventions;
- Advice and support from ELBs' Behaviour Support teams and Educational Psychology Services;
- Education other than at school may be provided in some cases.

Harbinson

Pupils Enrolled at each Primary School in the Glenravel Ward

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils enrolled at each primary school in the Glenravel ward in each of the last seven academic years.

(AQW 10504/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below.

ENROLMENTS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN THE GLENRAVEL WARD, 2005/06 – 2011/12

School name	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Clough Primary School	139	140	152	155	161	168	191

School name	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Glenravel Primary School	126	131	143	143	149	155	163
St Mary's Primary School Glenravel	86	87	78	75	74	72	66

Source: NI school census

Note:

1 Figures include children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

Cross-Border Pupils

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list the schools on both sides of the border that accept cross-border pupils.

(AQW 10527/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Legislation currently requires all schools in the north to give priority in admissions to children resident in the north. Any northern school can accept a child from the south, but only after it has first considered all applications from northern children and it has places available. In the south, there is no legal requirement for a school to prioritise southern over northern residents, so all schools can accept northern children in line with their admissions criteria.

A list of northern schools in 2011/12 which have children with addresses in the south is provided below.

The Department does not hold information on pupils in schools in the south of Ireland.

Primary schools with pupils who are resident in the south of Ireland, 2011/12

School name

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Artigarvan Primary School | ■ Longtower Primary School |
| ■ Aughnacloy Primary School | ■ Meadow Bridge Primary School |
| ■ Ballougry Primary School | ■ Nazareth House Primary School, Derry |
| ■ Barrack Street Boys' Primary School, Strabane | ■ Newtownhamilton Primary School |
| ■ Belleek(2) Primary School | ■ Oakgrove Integrated Primary School |
| ■ Bunscoil an luir | ■ Royal School, Armagh |
| ■ Christian Brothers' Primary School, Armagh | ■ Sion Mills Primary School |
| ■ Cortamlet Primary School | ■ St Anne's Primary School, Derry |
| ■ Culmore Primary School | ■ St Anne's Primary School, Strabane |
| ■ Enniskillen Model Primary School | ■ St Brigid's Primary School, Derry |
| ■ Florencecourt Primary School | ■ St Brigid's Primary School, Glassdrummond |
| ■ Gaelscoil na Daroige | ■ St Caireall's Primary School, Castlederg |
| ■ Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh | ■ St Columba's Primary School, Strabane |
| ■ Groarty Primary School | ■ St Davog's Primary School, Belleek |
| ■ Hollybush Primary School | ■ St Eithne's Primary School, Derry |
| ■ Holy Family Primary School, Ballymagroarty | ■ St John's Primary School, Derry |
| ■ Londonderry Model Primary School | ■ St Joseph's Convent Primary School, Newry |
| | ■ St Mary's Boys' Primary School, Strabane |

- St Mary's Girls' Primary School, Strabane
- St Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy
- St Ninnidh's Primary School, Derrylin
- St Patricks Primary School, Pennyburn, Derry
- St Ronan's Primary School, Lisnaskea
- St Tierney's Primary School, Roslea
- Steelstown Voluntary Maintained Primary School
- Strabane Controlled Primary School

Post-primary schools with pupils who are resident in the south of Ireland – 2011/12

School name

- Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar School, Newry
- Aughnacloy High School
- City Armagh High School
- Devenish College
- Erne Integrated College
- Holy Cross College, Strabane
- Immaculate Conception College, Derry
- Lisneal College
- Loreto Grammar School, Omagh
- Lumen Christi College, Derry
- Newtownhamilton High School
- Oakgrove Integrated College
- Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry
- St Aidan's High School, Derrylin
- St Brigid's College, Derry
- St Brigid's High School, Armagh
- St Catherine's College, Armagh
- St Cecilia's College, Derry
- St Ciaran's High School, Ballygawley
- St Colman's College, Newry
- St Columb's College, Derry
- St Comhghall's College, Lisnaskea
- St Eugene's College, Roslea
- St Eugene's High School, Castlederg
- St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
- St Joseph's Boys' School, Derry
- St Joseph's College, Enniskillen
- St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen
- St Mary's College, Derry
- St Mary's High School, Belleek
- St Mary's High School, Newry
- St Michael's College, Enniskillen
- St Patrick's High School, Keady
- St Paul's High School, Bessbrook
- St Peter's High School, Derry
- Strabane Academy
- The Royal School, Armagh
- The Royal School, Dungannon

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures may include boarders.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

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

(AQW 10535/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below:

2010/2011	i) Consultation documents	ii) Official reports
Cost (£)	11,559	5,349

The above costs do not include staff or postage costs as these are not calculated separately.

Children in the Upper Bann Area who have Received a Year of Pre-School Education

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what proportion of children in the Upper Bann area have received a year of pre-school education, funded by his Department, in each of the last three academic years.

(AQW 10545/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of children in funded pre-school education places located in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three academic years has been provided in the table below. Information on the total number of pre-school children living in Upper Bann is not available for all of the time periods specified and therefore it is not possible to present the proportions requested.

CHILDREN IN FUNDED PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PLACES LOCATED IN THE UPPER BANN CONSTITUENCY 2009/10 – 2011/12

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Children	1,487	1,565	1,583

Source: NI school census.

Note:

- 1 Figures relate to children in funded places in voluntary and private-pre-school centres, in nursery units, in nursery schools or in reception classes in primary schools.
- 2 Figures relate to schools and pre-school centres located in the Upper Bann constituency.

Relationship and Sexuality Education in Schools

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether his Department plans to standardise Relationship and Sexuality Education in schools, given that each school has different methods and means of delivery.

(AQW 10553/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has no plans to standardise the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in our schools.

The Revised Curriculum, which has been taught to all pupils of compulsory school age in grant-aided schools since 2009/10, provides teachers with the flexibility to use their professional judgement, across all curricular areas, to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of their pupils. During the development phase of the Revised Curriculum the Department was left in no doubt that teachers wished to have such a level of flexibility in delivering the curriculum in the classroom.

I consider this flexibility to be of particular importance in the delivery of RSE which needs to be taught in a sensitive matter, in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities.

Statutory Nursery School Places

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many statutory nursery school places were available after the (i) first; and (ii) second round of applications for the 2012/13 academic year, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 10572/11-15)

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

Enrolment Numbers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail the process by which a school can enrol more pupils than its maximum enrolment number.

(AQW 10586/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A school's permanent approved enrolment number is set each year by the Department following consultation with school Boards of Governors, and the Education and Library Board, and takes account of a number of factors including the teaching accommodation available at the school. By law, a school cannot exceed its approved enrolment number without first obtaining prior approval from the Department. If the Department agrees to this request, after consultation with the Education and Library and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, where appropriate, this is called a temporary variation of the enrolment number.

If a school wishes to request a temporary variation they must put their request in writing to the Department. The school must provide the Department with all relevant details of the pupil(s) they wish to admit above the enrolment number, including confirmation that the pupil(s) the school wishes to admit are next in line for a place after the application of the school's published admissions criteria.

The Department considers each request for a temporary variation on its own merits against a range of factors including the resulting proposed enrolment at the school against the available teaching accommodation. In order to maintain a viable school's estate, however, a key consideration of the Department must be the availability of places at other schools in the same educational sector within reasonable travelling distance of the address(es) of the pupil(s) for whom additional place(s) are being sought.

Temporary variations which are approved, apply for one academic year only.

Enrolment Numbers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last two years, to detail how many post-primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area have exceeded their maximum enrolment number and by what percentage.

(AQW 10587/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is provided in the table below.

	% Over Approved Enrolment Number	
	2010/11	2011/12
Ballyclare High School	0.3	0.2
Ballyclare Secondary School	2.4	4.4
Ballymena Academy	0.3	1.3
Cambridge House Grammar School	1.1	n/a
Carrickfergus Grammar School	n/a	1.1
Coleraine High School	1.4	0.4
Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle	3.2	2.2
Dalriada School	3.3	4.3
Dominican College, Portstewart	0.4	2.3
Dunclug College	1.7	5
Larne Grammar School	n/a	0.4

	% Over Approved Enrolment Number	
	2010/11	2011/12
Magherafelt High School	5.2	n/a
St Colm's High School, Draperstown	20.9	19.7
St Louis Grammar School	n/a	0.1
St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt	0.6	0.1
St Paul's College, Kilrea	10	8.5
St Pius X College, Magherafelt	0.8	2.1
Ulidia Integrated College	n/a	0.4

Note:

- The figures are derived from the difference between a school's approved enrolment number and the number of pupils enrolled at the school excluding the enrolments of pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs, and pupils in their first year of enrolment in a school following their admission on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body, as these are admitted over and above a school's approved enrolment number.
- A school can exceed its approved enrolment number for a number of reasons, such as:
 - the Department's approval of a temporary variation to a school's enrolment number for children seeking admission to sixth form in line with Departmental policy of supporting the increasing numbers of children wishing to undertake sixth form studies;
 - the admission of children on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body who have been enrolled in a school for more than 1 year as these are no longer supernumerary to a school's approved enrolment number; and
 - The Department's approval of a temporary variation to a school's enrolment number because of demographic pressure in an area in a particular year.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education what assessment he has made of the impact of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder on the educational attainment of (i) male; and (ii) female students.

(AQW 10591/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that there is a considerably higher prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in boys than girls and many of these children achieve a lower level of educational attainment. In order to meet the special educational needs of each child with ADHD, the Education and Library Boards, as the bodies with statutory responsibility for such provision, provide tailored support including:

- Guidance booklets for teachers and parents;
- Training for school staff on school/classroom management strategies and interventions;
- Advice and support from ELBs' Behaviour Support teams and Educational Psychology Services;
- Education other than at school may be provided in some cases.

Prompt Payment Targets

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the prompt payment targets, to detail the percentage of invoices across all Education and Library Boards paid within (i) 30 days; and (ii) 10 working days in the 2011/12 financial year.

(AQW 10606/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the percentages of invoices paid by the Education and Library Boards (ELB) within the prompt payment targets in the 2011/12 financial year are shown in the table below:

ELB	30 days %	10 days %
Belfast Education & Library Board	81.11	41.77
North Eastern Education & Library Board	83.34	58.43
South Eastern Education & Library Board	90.21	59.67
Southern Education & Library Board	89.21	47.85
Western Education & Library Board	85.38	48.72

School Provision in the Hollywood Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has for school provision in the Hollywood area in the next five years.

(AQW 10616/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As you are aware, I have commissioned the Education and Library Boards, working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and engaging with other school sectors, to develop plans for a sustainable and affordable pattern of schools which will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils.

Boards were asked to submit plans for the post-primary phase to the Department by the end of March. Initial draft plans have been received from all boards and are being assessed by the Department to determine whether they are consistent with the Terms of Reference. If the plans are consistent they will be issued for public consultation following which they will be considered for approval.

Plans for primary provision are due to be submitted by the end of June.

Until this work is completed I will not be in a position to comment on any individual school or area.

Amalgamation of the Former Convent of Mercy Girls Primary School and St Mary's Boys Primary School, Rostrevor

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of the £459,000 works to facilitate the amalgamation of the former Convent of Mercy Girls Primary School and St Mary's Boys Primary School, Rostrevor, to be known as St Bronagh's Primary School.

(AQW 10628/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Breakdown of £458,627.42, for 'enabling works' to facilitate amalgamation of the former Convent of Mercy Girls Primary School and St Mary's Boys Primary School, Rostrevor, to be known as St Bronagh's Primary School.

is as follows:-

Contractor	Consultants Fees
£393,830.09	£64,797.33

The 'enabling works' contract, included works to provide mobile classroom accommodation, works to the School Meals Accommodation, works to provide girls toilets and site works.

The £64,797.33 for Consultants fees included work carried out by, Project Manager, Architect, Quantity Surveyor, Consulting Engineer and Civil Engineer.

Implications of Welfare Reform on Entitlement to Free School Meals

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education what assessment his Department has carried out of the implications of Welfare Reform on entitlement to free school meals.

(AQW 10648/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The provision of free school meals has an important role to play in ensuring that children from nonworking and low income families receive a healthy, nutritious, meal each day in school. I am committed to ensuring that those families most in need continue to receive this benefit.

The Universal Credit, which the British Government intends to introduce next year as part of the welfare reform proposals, will replace a number of existing benefits which are currently used to determine eligibility for free school meals and clothing allowances. It will be necessary, therefore, to amend the eligibility criteria to take account of this change.

I have tasked my officials to explore the options available to me with a view to setting out proposals in the Autumn.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10653/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) In the period up to March 2015, I plan to introduce an Education Bill, a General Teaching Council for NI Bill, a Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Bill and a General and Vocational Qualifications Bill to the Assembly.

- (ii) There is a Programme for Government commitment to bring forward the Education Bill for scrutiny and approval of the Assembly in 2012/2013. However, the introduction of Bills in the Assembly will be subject to Executive agreement and potentially Executive prioritisation.
- (iii) An Education Bill will provide for the establishment and functions of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA); the dissolution of a number of existing statutory education bodies; and the transfer of their assets, liabilities, functions and staff to the ESA.

A General Teaching Council for NI Bill will repeal the existing General Teaching Council for NI provisions in the Education (NI) Order 1998 (as amended) and replace them in order to provide for: the extension of the existing remit of the Council to cover Further Education (FE) lecturers; additional disciplinary functions of the Council; and the establishment of the Council as a body wholly independent from Government.

A Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Bill will introduce legislative changes to support my Department's SEN and Inclusion policy following a policy review of SEN and Inclusion.

A General and Vocational Qualifications Bill will put in place new arrangements for the regulation of general and vocational qualifications.

Non-Education and Library Boards Bills and Invoice Payments

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of non-Education and Library Boards bills and invoice payments processed on behalf of his Department by Account NI between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 within (i) 30 calendar days; and (ii) 10 working days.

(AQW 10655/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of payments processed by Account NI on behalf of the Department of Education for the 2011/12 financial year, within 30 calendar days and 10 working days are:

Total number of invoices processed by Account NI	Number processed within 30 calendar days	Number processed within 10 working days
3,529	3,462	3,263

Implications of Welfare Reform on Entitlement to Free School Meals

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the number of children whose entitlement to free school meals will be affected by the changes proposed by Welfare Reform.

(AQW 10667/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: An estimate of the number of children whose entitlement to free school meals will be affected by the changes proposed by Welfare Reform is not available at this time.

No decisions on the future arrangements have been taken at this time.

The provision of free school meals has an important role to play in ensuring that children from nonworking and low income families receive a healthy, nutritious, meal each day in school. I am committed to ensuring that those families most in need continue to receive this benefit.

The introduction of Universal Credit will mean that I will have to introduce new criteria for eligibility for free schools meals. I have tasked my officials to develop proposals by the Autumn, only then will it be possible to determine the numbers affected, if at all.

Flexible Starting Age for Entry into Primary School

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what research his Department has carried out into the introduction of a flexible starting age for entry into primary school.

(AQW 10668/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not carried out research on the introduction of a flexible starting age for entry into primary school. However a key aspect of the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy is the transition from pre-school to the Foundation Stage of the revised curriculum, which aims to ensure children are introduced to education in a way and pace that takes account of their age and level of maturity.

During consultation on the draft Early Years Strategy reference to the school starting age has attracted interest. The draft Strategy acknowledges the flexibility provided by the Foundation Stage of the Curriculum in providing a range of educational approaches to meet the needs of individual children who learn at a different pace and in differing ways.

I am aware that we have one of the lowest school starting ages in Europe and therefore while I have currently no plans to make a change to the school starting age, following the publication of the Early Years Strategy, I will study the comments made and issues raised, including any implications these might have for the school starting age.

Flexibility of Deferring Children's Entry into P1

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what action his Department intends to take to allow parents the flexibility of deferring their children's entry into P1.

(AQW 10672/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Currently the only provision in education legislation which allows for a child to be retained in a nursery school, and not commence primary school upon reaching compulsory school age, is under Article 16 of the Education (NI) Order 1996 which relates to young children of compulsory school age with Statements of Special Educational Needs.

During consultation on the draft Early Years Strategy reference to the school starting age has attracted interest and therefore while I have currently no plans to make a change to the school starting age,

following the publication of the Early Years Strategy, I will study the comments made and issues raised, including any implications these might have for the school starting age.

Specific Coherent Strategy for Children with Autism

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to develop a specific coherent strategy for children with autism.

(AQW 10733/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Autism Act 2011 requires the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in co-operation with other departments, to prepare a coherent autism strategy for children with autism. The Department of Education is playing an active role in this process given the multi-agency aspects of services that must be addressed within the strategy.

Teachers and Classroom Assistants who Work with Children with Autism

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department intends to take to ensure that all teachers and classroom assistants who regularly work with children with autism have the appropriate training.

(AQW 10734/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The education and library boards are responsible for providing autism-specific training in mainstream schools and all boards deliver a range of autism-specific training for school staff.

In addition, the Middletown Centre for Autism has provided a comprehensive range of training opportunities for those supporting children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) across all schools. Each year schools receive a detailed prospectus of training courses available from the Centre.

The training provided by the Centre is tailored to the needs of educational professionals, school staff and parents. A range of sessions are specifically designed to the needs of staff in mainstream schools. In partnership with the inter-board ASD teams, the Centre also provides tailored whole school training for schools upon request.

Education: Area-based Planning

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education how he will ensure that consultation responses on Area Plans from Boards of Governors, which differ from the preferred option of the Education and Library Board, are considered as part of the consultation process.

(AQO 1756/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Area Planning is an important driver for achieving my Department's vision for education which is to ensure that every learner fulfils their full potential at each stage of development.

The Terms of Reference which issued on 15 December require active engagement with all sectors in the preparation and development of the area plans. The development of the area plans is an important process. All who wish, particularly schools, boards of governors and representative bodies should have an opportunity to submit views and ideas for consideration. I expect the Boards to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to allow this to happen.

In addition there will be public consultation on the draft area plans. This will allow all affected and interested parties the opportunity to comment and present their views before plans are finalised.

The Boards will be required to take account of any feedback and findings it and the planning group consider pertinent in finalising the Area Plan for consideration by my Department.

Schools: Closure

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the recent University of Ulster report 'The Economics of School Closures in Northern Ireland' which indicates that the potential

savings from closing post-primary schools to create larger schools would be just 0.9 percent of the annual schools budget.

(AQO 1757/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have only recently had sight of this report and am not in a position to comment on the its detail.

However, the analysis in the report is based on closing schools simply because they fall below the enrolment threshold.

This is clearly not the case.

A school's educational sustainability is assessed using the full set of six criteria in the Sustainable Schools policy and taking account of individual circumstances.

I do have a duty to make best use of public money and that must inform my considerations.

However, the principal aim of the Sustainable Schools policy is to ensure that children get a high quality education, regardless of their background or where they live.

Schools: Viability Audit

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education how he will ensure that Boards of Governors and parents are kept informed of any decisions which may flow from the Viability Audit.

(AQO 1758/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Viability Audits are a "snapshot" of the position of schools in terms of enrolments, quality of education or finances. They showed that many schools are under stress in one or more areas. This information will inform the area planning process currently underway.

However, I have asked the Boards to ensure that, where a school is demonstrating high levels of stress, steps are taken to protect the educational wellbeing of the pupils.

In some cases this will mean offering schools additional professional support or training. In other cases the managing authorities will want to consider the reshaping of education provision in order to secure high quality education for all pupils.

Any significant change to a school such as closure or amalgamation will be subject of a development proposal. This will ensure that those directly affected will be consulted.

All comments received are taken into consideration when I make my decision on the Proposal.

Any proposal for a closure or amalgamation must be reflected in emerging area planning recommendations.

Lurgan College

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education for an update on the future of Lurgan College following the completion, in March 2012, of the strategic area planning exercise.

(AQO 1759/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Draft area plans for the post-primary sector were received from the Education and Library Boards on the 30 March. My officials are now considering the draft plans and, when satisfied that they meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the Departmental policy framework, will authorise the Boards to proceed to public consultation.

I am not in a position at this time to comment on any specific school or potential project or what capital builds may be considered.

There is, however, a need to ensure that we continue to invest strategically in the schools' estate. When appropriate I will announce my future plans for capital investment.

Portadown College

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education whether the capital scheme for a new build at Portadown College will be approved.

(AQO 1760/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As I set out in my Statement to the Assembly on Monday 26 September 2011, I commissioned the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors to co-ordinate a strategic area planning exercise based on each ELB area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

To date I have received, from all Boards, draft area plans for Stand Alone Special Schools and draft area plans for post-primary provision. Primary area plans will be submitted by end June 2012. My officials are considering these plans against Departmental policies and are engaged in dialogue through the Area Planning Coordination Group that has been established.

No school will be looked at in isolation but must be considered in the context of the wider area.

Previously identified projects, such as the proposed new build for Portadown College, will be critically assessed alongside all other potential projects as part of the area planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed and may re-emerge if identified as a priority to support the area plan.

I am not in a position at this time to comment on any specific school or potential project or what capital builds may be considered.

There is, however, a need to ensure that we continue to invest strategically in the schools' estate. When appropriate I will announce my future plans for capital investment.

Education and Skills Authority Bill

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education when he expects to introduce the Education and Skills Authority Bill.

(AQO 1761/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Bill was sent to Executive colleagues for consideration on 6th March 2012. I will introduce it as soon as possible after receiving Executive agreement.

Teachers: Employment

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Education how many of the newly qualified teachers who graduated in 2010/11 have secured a permanent teaching position.

(AQO 1762/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There were 678 NI Graduates in financial year 2010/2011 of which 584 have registered with the General Teaching Council and 54 have secured permanent employment.

Department for Employment and Learning

Ministerial Cars and Drivers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of departmental staff who have availed of ministerial cars and drivers in each of the last three years; (ii) the cost of providing the service; and (iii) whether the benefit derived is subject to income tax.

(AQW 10335/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Responsibility for Ministerial transport was transferred from DFP to departments with effect from 1 April 2011. It was agreed that, when not

needed for Ministerial purposes, cars would be available for transport of officials. This provides good value for money. Based on records held, some 56 staff from my Department have made use of this provision since 1 April. It is not possible to break down the driver and car expenses to determine the cost of transporting officials. There are no income tax implications.

Wages for Young Apprentices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department is taking to improve wages for young apprentices.

(AQW 10383/11-15)

Dr Farry: Under ApprenticeshipsNI, all apprentices must be employed to avail of ApprenticeshipsNI training. Apprentices, as employees, are remunerated by their individual employers and the level of remuneration is as agreed between the apprentice and the employer. Employers participating in the ApprenticeshipsNI programme must adhere to the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. However, under ApprenticeshipsNI guidelines, they are encouraged to pay an apprentice a wage commensurate with the industry rate for the job.

Scottish Meat Training Qualifications

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what Scottish Meat Training qualifications can be awarded by the local Further Education colleges.

(AQW 10392/11-15)

Dr Farry: Scottish Meat Training, which is the training arm of the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Associations, offers training to the retail and wholesale meat sector. The qualifications offered by this organisation include Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and unique Federation Diploma & Craft Certificates.

Meat qualifications, at level 2 and level 3, delivered by Scottish Meat Training in Scotland and approved by the awarding organisation the Scottish Qualification Authority, are currently on the Qualification Credit Framework (QCF). As such, these courses could be offered by our further education colleges.

However, it is for each college to decide what courses and qualifications to offer, for example from the QCF, to meet the needs of learners and employers in their areas. My understanding is that, currently, the courses in question are not offered by further education colleges here.

Regarding apprenticeships, the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Association, of which Scottish Meat Training is a subsidiary, had previously worked in partnership with the Food and Drink Training Council (FDTC) to deliver the NVQ element only of the ApprenticeshipsNI Food Manufacture Framework (Food and Poultry). In May 2010 the contract was withdrawn from FDTC, and apprentices were transferred to other training suppliers to finish their apprenticeship.

Cost-Effectiveness of Away-Days and Team-Building Exercises

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 9949/11-15, what priority he gives to value for money when assessing the effectiveness of away-days and team-building exercises.

(AQW 10582/11-15)

Dr Farry: Value for money is a key part of the evaluation process for organisational development and team building events. Costs are tightly controlled and approval for any spend must be justified in advance of final plans being made. Plans must describe sound output-based objectives and modest resource requirements in line with the Department's internal organisational development policy. Year on year we continue to drive costs down while achieving the objectives of such events.

Graduate Employment

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the numbers of young people being encouraged to pursue a university education in the current climate when many graduates are unemployed.

(AQO 1765/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no substance to the argument that this is not the time to encourage young people to apply to higher education. The employment rate of graduates in Northern Ireland at 87% is considerably higher than that for non-graduates at 63%.

So this is exactly the time to invest in education because it is not a short-term matter. The raising of a country's intermediate and higher level skills base cannot be measured in weeks, months or even years. The focus should not, however, be exclusively on full-time undergraduate provision. The up-skilling of the existing workforce through flexible part-time higher education provision is also a priority. The emerging Strategies for Higher Education and Widening Participation will look beyond the confines of the current economic downturn and lay the foundations for future economic and social progress.

We must ensure that local employers remain competitive and the workforce is appropriately qualified.

However, I and my Executive colleagues also recognise the impact of the current economic situation and my Department has a range of programmes in place to enhance the employability of unemployed graduates.

The Executive has recently given policy approval for a range of new measures to tackle youth unemployment, and I am currently engaging with the Finance Minister regarding the resources needed to bring these into effect. These will complement the programmes already in place to enhance the employability of unemployed graduates.

In addition, in terms of preparing young people to make decisions on future career paths, schools play a significant role, and my Department's Careers Service provides impartial careers information and guidance on a range of opportunities, tailored to an individual's career aspirations and ability level, including higher education provision where appropriate. Careers advisers use up-to-date, relevant labour market information to ensure that young people entering higher education are well informed about the opportunities for the future.

DEL: Dissolution

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he is engaging with further and higher education institutions in relation to the dissolution of his Department.

(AQO 1773/11-15)

Dr Farry: Any decision about the future of my Department will be taken by the Executive and the Assembly, not by me. I remain fully focussed with my work programmes and continue to engage with both further education and higher education institutions on a wide range of issues.

Further Education: Working-class Communities

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what further action his Department can take to encourage people in working class communities to take up further education opportunities.

(AQO 1774/11-15)

Dr Farry: As the main providers of adult education throughout Northern Ireland, further education colleges continue to encourage working class communities to avail of further education opportunities delivered in their main campuses and network of around 600 community outreach centres. Colleges hold regular outreach events to encourage groups and individuals to avail of their cutting edge facilities and courses. Enrolment statistics for courses being delivered in the colleges show that those from more deprived areas in Northern Ireland are more than represented compared to their representation in the general population, whereby 22% of students came from the 20% most deprived areas compared to 14% from the 20% most affluent areas.

As major providers of Essential Skills, colleges continue to increase their capacity to deliver free, high quality programmes to adults, particularly those from working class communities. Such courses are now embedded across all DEL funded programmes from entry level to level 2.

My Department also developed and implemented the Learner Access and Engagement Pilot Programme. Through the Pilot, which concluded on 31 March 2012, colleges entered into contracts with third party organisations for the provision of learner support. This support was directed at 'hard to reach' adults who were economically inactive, with few or no qualifications, to encourage them to enrol on and complete further education courses.

PricewaterhouseCoopers have recently submitted a longitudinal evaluation of the programme which will be considered carefully and used to inform future policy decisions.

In addition to these measures, the NI European Social Fund (ESF) Programme provides opportunities to reduce economic inactivity and increase workforce skills, in particular for those groups at a disadvantage and those from working class communities. These groups include people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents, older workers, and young people not in education, employment or training. Currently under the NIESF Programme, 82 projects are delivering against these objectives throughout Northern Ireland.

DEL: Shared Society

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he ensures that all significant new policies introduced by his Department contribute positively to a shared society.

(AQO 1775/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am strongly committed to the creation of a shared and integrated society in Northern Ireland.

I am pleased to tell you that I have recently developed a shared future policy proofing tool in my Department and that shortly, all new policies introduced by my Department will be subject to assessment to determine whether they contribute positively to a shared society or inadvertently reinforce divisions or provide services on a segregated basis. Policies that tend towards separation will be avoided, while those that are neutral or positively advance a shared future will be favoured.

This policy tool is broader than the current good relations aspect of equality proofing. I believe that this approach represents a groundbreaking development in the policymaking process and demonstrates a solid commitment by my Department to building a shared future.

Europe 2020: Flagship Initiatives

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what work his Department is undertaking as part of the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative.

(AQO 1776/11-15)

Dr Farry: EUROPE 2020, the European Union strategy for Jobs and Growth, proposes three priorities:

- smart growth – developing a knowledge and innovation based economy;
- sustainable growth – promoting a more resource efficient, competitive economy; and
- inclusive growth – delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.

My Department plays a major role in contributing to this agenda by promoting research and development activity, raising the skills profile of the population and helping people address barriers which are preventing them from realising their full potential.

My Department provides more than £50m per annum in funding for higher education R&D and in supporting its translation into commercial opportunities and scientific breakthroughs.

It is recognised that enhancing the skills profile of the workforce helps to promote a more efficient and competitive economy. In that regard I have committed to delivering over 200,000 qualifications including 44,000 apprenticeships by 2015.

Through the operation of the employment service and the European Social Fund I am contributing to the delivery of economic social and territorial cohesion by helping people to prepare for an access to the labour market. My target is to assist 114,000 working age benefit clients into employment by 2015.

My Department also plays a full part in the Barroso Taskforce Working Group. It chairs the Competitiveness and Employment Group as well as being active participants in other groups.

I am committed through the activities of this group and my department's contribution to the work of the other thematic groups to ensuring that NI achieve its target of increasing its draw down of competitive EU funding by 20% by 2015.

DEL: Welfare Reform

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he will ensure that the dissolution of his Department will not have a negative impact on the delivery of Welfare Reform.

(AQO 1777/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is engaged in important functions which will continue irrespective of where the functions will ultimately lie.

The Department's role across all areas is to increase the skill levels of the working age population and, within the Employment Service, to address specifically the skills barriers of those who are unemployed to help them get into work.

The Member will recognise that Welfare Reform is primarily a matter for the Minister for Social Development.

I have responsibility for the development of the new Employment Programme to replace Steps to Work. This important programme will be integral to the success of the delivery of Welfare Reform and whilst it will complement the Welfare Reform programme, it is a separate initiative. The new Employment Programme should be in place by Autumn 2013 and the intervening period is a critical time for the Department.

I am also a member of the Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform. In addition my officials are involved in a variety of Welfare Reform fora including the Senior Sponsoring Group, Programme Board, Consultative Forum, Benefits Realisation workshop, Risk Review workshop, Steering Groups and meetings to ensure that policy, ICT and delivery issues are addressed.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Committee Papers Presented by the Department

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why papers to prepare members of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a presentation from her Department on 22 March 2012 were received less than 24 hours beforehand.

(AQW 9927/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): There will be occasions when it proves impractical to meet the set deadline for written briefings.

We will continue to prepare written briefings in the timeliest fashion possible.

Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what role the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association plays, and has played to date, in the process of allocating business developments to industrial parks, such as Bridgewater Park, Banbridge.

(AQW 10263/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is unaware of the involvement of the Northern Ireland Retail Trade Association.

Developing Local Business Parks

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how elected public representatives are involved in the process of developing local business parks, such as Bridgewater Park, Banbridge.

(AQW 10264/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has no role or involvement in retail business parks such as Bridgewater Park, Banbridge and cannot comment on any role undertaken by other elected public representatives.

Ministerial Cars and Drivers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of departmental staff who have availed of ministerial cars and drivers in each of the last three years: (ii) the cost of providing the service; and (iii) whether the benefit derived is subject to income tax.

(AQW 10334/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Responsibility for Ministers' cars was transferred to Departments with effect from 1st April 2011.

At this time it was agreed that when not needed for Ministerial purposes, cars would be available for other Departmental use, including the transport of officials. All use of the DETI Minister's car by DETI staff is solely for official purposes and as such there is no benefit to any DETI personnel in relation to their use.

The information sought on the number of DETI staff who have used the Minister's car in the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 and the cost of providing the service is not held centrally and therefore could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Strategic Energy Framework Targets

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much of the 1400-1800MW of renewable electricity required to meet the Strategic Energy Framework targets (i) will be from community owned wind farms or turbines; and (ii) will be invested in communities through community benefit funds.

(AQW 10409/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The 40% target is a technology neutral target and there are no requirements for technology specific targets within the 40%. While DETI receives information on the level of electricity generated from all renewable sources, not just wind, by way of monitoring progress against the 40% target, this does not include details of wind farm ownership.

Community benefits and the funds available for such are a commercial matter between the wind farm developer and the local community. No such details are held by DETI.

Deployment of Wind Farms

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much community benefit has been accrued through the deployment of wind farms, broken down by project; and how this compares to similar projects in Britain.

(AQW 10410/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am aware that a range of community benefits have been agreed between wind farm developers and communities, and also bi-laterally with individuals, throughout Northern Ireland. These arrangements have been developed and agreed on a voluntary basis and the information you request is not held by DETI.

Minimum Wage Levels

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what role her Department has in setting minimum wage levels.

(AQW 10460/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive has no statutory role in setting minimum wage levels. Schedule 3 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 includes 'the subject matter of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998' amongst the matters reserved to the UK Government. My officials do, however, engage with other Northern Ireland departments, the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Low Pay Commission to ensure that Northern Ireland circumstances are taken into account when the minimum wage is being set.

Minimum Wage Levels

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what opportunities exist for the Executive to vary minimum wage levels in Northern Ireland from that of the national level.

(AQW 10461/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None. The National Minimum Wage Act 1998 does not permit regional variation in the minimum wage.

Promoting NI2012

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much has been spent on promoting NI2012 (i) locally; (ii) in the Irish Republic; and (iii) overseas.

(AQW 10465/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the Member to the reply I gave to AQW 9224/11-15.

'Our Time, Our Place' Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 9647/11-15, to detail (i) the occasions when Co Fermanagh has featured as part of the NI2012 campaign; and (ii) what visitor attractions were promoted.

(AQW 10472/11-15)

Mrs Foster: To date Co. Fermanagh has featured extensively across the ni2012 campaign in various media channels across both the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland marketplace. These media channels have included TV, outdoor, local and national press, press releases and digital activation through ni2012.com and the NITB social media channels.

To date Co. Fermanagh has received £359,793 worth of media value through the ni2012 campaign, with a focus across a wide variety of visitor attractions including: Fermanagh Lakelands, The Happy Days International Beckett Festival, Waterway Ireland Classic Fishing Festival, Enniskillen Castle and Lough Erne Resort.

Funding Programmes for Broadband Provision

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what funding programmes are available for broadband provision; (ii) who is responsible for administering the programmes; and (iii) how much funding is allocated to each programme.

(AQW 10482/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A range of technologies are used to deliver broadband services in Northern Ireland. These include fixed line, wireless, mobile and satellite. Under funding packages such as the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund and the Remote Broadband Services Contract my Department has supported companies such as North West Electronics and Onwave to deliver widespread access to high speed fixed wireless and satellite options for those premises unable to obtain a fixed line service.

There are no programmes currently available in Northern Ireland for broadband provision. My Department is developing two further investments under our published Telecommunications Action Plan. These will deliver a broadband service of at least 2megabits per second and increase access to mobile voice and data services. A range of Northern Ireland Executive, UK Government and European funding streams will be used for their delivery.

Belfast is one of the ten UK cities named under the UK Government's £100m Super-Connected Cities initiative. Funding under this initiative is allocated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports. Belfast City Council will administer funding in Northern Ireland. The amount of funding will not be known until summer 2012.

Gas Wells

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how frequently the Health and Safety Executive will be required to inspect gas wells, should fracking proceed.

(AQW 10516/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Under the powers of the Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978, HSENI has the power to inspect any work activity, at any time and without prior notification.

The frequency of inspection of any exploration drilling project will be determined by a range of factors, including the type and number of drilling operations, the stage of development of the drilling and the levels of risk and management control. Inspection frequency will be assessed on a case by case basis and will include both announced and unannounced visits.

Any exploration drilling operator, will by law, need to give HSENI 30 days notification prior to the commencement of any drilling and also provide HSENI with daily drilling reports to allow monitoring.

As no detail is currently available in relation to proposed fracking activities it is impossible to determine the frequency at this time.

Expansion of Bridgewater Park, Banbridge

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her Department's position on the expansion of Bridgewater Park, Banbridge, with specific reference to the investment and job creation possibilities for Banbridge and the surrounding area as a result of the proposed Tesco Extra Superstore.

(AQW 10540/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has no role or involvement in retail business parks such as Bridgewater Park, Banbridge.

Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on the Performance of InvestNI

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the performance of InvestNI, how many of the reported 42,600 jobs that

were created in the last three years were attributable to the (i) Enterprise Development Programme; and (ii) Social Enterprise Programme.

(AQW 10543/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It should be noted that the 42,600 jobs reported by the NI Audit Office was based on a period of 9 years (2002/03 – 2010/11) and not 3 years, as stated in the question.

Both the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) and Social Enterprise Programme provided capability development support and were delivered by an External Delivery Organisation. As such, there were no jobs for either of the programmes included in the figure of 42,600.

However,

The EDP Monitoring Report, undertaken by KPMG, estimated that there were nearly 4,400 jobs created by the programme during its lifetime (1st April 2009 – 30th September 2011), and

There have been 742 jobs created since the Social Entrepreneurship Programme began in June 2006.

Recouping Grant Monies from Craigavon Borough Council

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 1338/11, for an update on any action either taken, or proposed to be taken, in relation to recouping grant monies from Craigavon Borough Council for the provision of biomass boilers.

(AQW 10584/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A writ of summons was served on Craigavon Borough Council in November 2011 and DETI continues to work with Craigavon Borough Council to resolve the matter.

Development of Wind Farms

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration she has given to the establishment of a not-for-profit body, akin to Renewable Energy Scotland or Community Energy Wales, to implement best practice in terms of community engagement and community benefit in the development of wind farms.

(AQW 10595/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Last year, my Department established a group on Planning & Renewable Energy with a remit to work together to ensure that renewable energy projects and installations are delivered in time to meet Executive renewable energy targets. It has been set up as a sub-group of the Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group (SEIDWG) and includes representatives from DETI and DOE. The sub-group will consider available guidance and good practice in other regions relating to community benefits and determine if additional government guidance or actions are required.

Public Register of Community Benefits from Wind Farm Projects

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration she has given to the development of a public register of community benefits from wind farm projects, similar to that currently being developed by the Scottish Government.

(AQW 10597/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer to the answer given in response to AQW 10595/11-15.

Proposals for Legislation

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, she has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10626/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI has identified its potential legislative requirements for the remainder of the mandate of the Assembly. However, these proposals are subject to consideration by the Executive and it would therefore not be appropriate or possible to pre-empt this consideration by providing the information you request.

Procurement Between Enterprise Northern Ireland and InvestNI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what were the terms of settlement in the action over procurement between Enterprise Northern Ireland and InvestNI; and what procurement changes have been made by InvestNI as a result.

(AQW 10745/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A settlement on the action taken by Enterprise NI (ENI) against Invest NI's procurement of the Business Start Programme was reached on the following basis:-

- The Parties, whilst continuing to differ in their views in relation to the issues raised in the litigation, have agreed that Invest NI will terminate the current procurement process, and that the legal action will end, on the basis that Invest NI will be going back out to the market with a revised proposal for the provision of a business start service.
- In seeking to agree a deal, ENI requested that Invest NI make a contribution to its legal costs, at an amount which Invest NI did not consider either realistic or feasible. Following negotiation, Invest NI agreed to make a proportionate contribution towards ENI's legal costs.
- A joint public statement was agreed by both parties.

The case was not abandoned or conceded by Invest NI. Invest NI remains firmly of the opinion that the process was transparent, fair and robust. Invest NI will continue to use Central Procurement Directorate to facilitate future procurement competitions.

T-Mobile: Network Service in the Glenariffe Area

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has discussed with T-Mobile its decision to switch off its network service in the Glenariffe area; and whether she will ask that the service be reinstated immediately.

(AQW 10817/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My officials have contacted T-Mobile to obtain further information. I also understand that the Member has also been in contact with the company, which is examining ways to restore services. The mobile telecommunications sector is a regulated and privatised market and it is a commercial decision for Mobile Network Operators to decide how to manage their networks and address coverage commitments associated with licensing conditions. I have agreed to sponsor the Mobile Operators Event on 2 May 2012. This forum presents an excellent opportunity for Members of the Legislative Assembly to raise matters such as this with the network operators.

Renewable Energy

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any discussions she has had with her counterparts in the Republic of Ireland about maximising all-island economic and employment opportunities within the renewable energy sector.

(AQO 1798/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have had no recent discussions with my ministerial counterparts in the Republic.

However my department maintains close contacts with the relevant departments on both policy and operational issues. In particular, Invest Northern Ireland has been working on a range of initiatives to maximise the economic opportunities from the renewable energy sector.

In recent years Invest Northern Ireland has co-published two studies on marine offshore energy in collaboration with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. It maintains links with the Marine

Institute in Dublin and Galway on renewable energy technologies and other organisations through the Marine Renewables Industry Association.

Vion Food UK

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that the recent jobs announcement at Vion Foods UK will have on the economy.

(AQO 1799/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The recent investment announcement by Vion Food UK Ltd at its Cookstown site will directly result in the creation of 164 new jobs in a disadvantaged area. In addition, the £11.5 million investment will see an increased capacity at the site which will enable the company to accept more pigs from local farmers. This will impact positively on other areas of the supply chain such as feed suppliers, haulage and distribution companies.

Jobs Fund

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Jobs Fund.
(AQO 1800/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The £19 million Jobs Fund was launched last year to help businesses create new, sustainable jobs that will tackle our current levels of unemployment.

To date there has been a very encouraging uptake across the range of Jobs Fund measures and this is already making a positive impact on the target of creating 4,000 new jobs by March 2014. The largest single project announced under the fund so far was the 336 job announcement by Capita Life and Pensions in Belfast. I also recently announced 164 new jobs at Vion Foods UK as part of an expansion at its operation in Cookstown.

The Jobs Fund also includes support for new business starts by residents of Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and by young people Not in Employment, Education or Training and this support has already led to the creation of more than 200 new jobs to date.

I hope to be in a position soon to confirm these job creation numbers for the first full year of operation. I am very confident that they will clearly demonstrate the immediate and positive impact the Jobs Fund is having on new job creation.

Film Production

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact of the UK Budget 2012 on the growth of the film industry in Northern Ireland.

(AQO 1801/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The proposed tax incentive for high end television drama announced in the Chancellor's recent Budget coupled with existing funding mechanisms including the Northern Ireland Screen Fund will greatly enhance the opportunity for Invest NI and Northern Ireland Screen to secure new high value cinematic television projects, such as 'Game of Thrones'. This production alone, over the first two series, has led to investment of approximately £40million across a range of activities and geographic locations in Northern Ireland.

Through the work of NI Screen, HBO have recently confirmed that the third series of Game of Thrones will be filmed in Northern Ireland and the agency continues to work on securing other significant productions for the current financial year.

When considered alongside the Paint Hall and the new Titanic Studios in Belfast; the Linen Mill Studio in Banbridge and the many stunning locations available, Northern Ireland is well placed to benefit from this proposed new incentive when further details become available later this year.

Film and Television Production

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to attract TV and film companies to work in Northern Ireland following the tax credit for this sector announced in the UK Budget 2012.

(AQO 1802/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI financial assistance to Northern Ireland Screen includes support for a range of high level marketing activities to attract internationally mobile film and TV projects to Northern Ireland. These include, among others, hosting events at the Cannes Film Festival and attendance at MIPTV and MIPCOM – two of the most important trade events in the production calendar. The proposed tax incentive for high end television drama announced in the Chancellor's recent Budget coupled with existing funding mechanisms including the Northern Ireland Screen Fund will greatly enhance the opportunity for Invest NI and Northern Ireland Screen to secure new high value cinematic television projects.

When considered alongside the Paint Hall and the new Titanic Studios in Belfast; the Linen Mill Studio in Banbridge and the many stunning locations available, Northern Ireland is well placed to benefit from this proposed new incentive when further details become available later this year.

Foreign Direct Investment

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the importance of Foreign Direct Investment to economic recovery.

(AQO 1803/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The NI Economic Strategy recognises that Foreign Direct Investment, FDI, can play an important role in Northern Ireland's economic recovery. In order to compete more effectively within the global economy we need to attract and embed greater levels and higher quality inward investment into Northern Ireland.

FDI is not only an important source of employment and increased prosperity, it can also provide Northern Ireland with extended market reach, new management skills, knowledge and opportunities for our locally-owned companies to enter global supply chains.

Over the last three years we have seen inward investors commit to over 130 new investments which promoted over 9,000 jobs.

Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the extent of the targets within the Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan.

(AQO 1804/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan 2012-2020 does not set specific targets but rather identifies the opportunity to develop up to 900MW of offshore wind and 300MW of tidal energy in Northern Ireland waters up to 2020 without significant impact on the environment or other marine users.

Informed by this, the current Crown Estate Offshore Renewable Energy Leasing Round is seeking a 600MW offshore wind project off the South Down coast and multiple tidal projects around Rathlin of up to 200MW. The successful development of these projects will contribute to the overall target within the Strategic Energy Framework of 40% renewable electricity by 2020 and to future targets beyond that date.

Food Harvest 2020

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any discussions she has had, or intends to have, with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about the potential economic opportunities for Northern Ireland within its Food Harvest 2020 strategy.

(AQO 1805/11-15)

Mr Foster: I have not had any discussions with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about the Food Harvest 2020 Strategy and none are currently planned to take place.

Fuel Costs

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that rising fuel costs is having on large energy users.

(AQO 1806/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Large energy users tend to negotiate individual contracts with their energy suppliers, hence it is difficult to quantify the impact of rising fuel costs. However such increases will be unwelcome, and may impact on their competitiveness.

As I advised the Assembly on 13 March, Invest NI, under its Selective Financial Assistance schemes, will consider, on a pilot basis, providing assistance to a limited number of large energy users who have proposals for capital expenditure which will make a significant impact on energy efficiency and therefore reduce their costs and improve competitiveness.

Department of the Environment

Former CEOs of District Councils

Mrs D Kelly asked Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years (i) how many former CEOs of district councils have obtained consultancy work through the Local Government Staff Commission; (ii) how many former CEOs were not recommended for consultancy work; (iii) the reasons why they were not recommended for this work; and (iv) to outline the process for selection.

(AQW 9560/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The information requested is as follows:

- (i) Three former CEOs had notified the Local Government Staff Commission that they were interested in consultancy work and subsequently obtained assignments
- (ii) None
- (iii) Not applicable
- (iv) Situations occasionally arise where a need for the short term injection of independent expertise for business or training purposes is identified by councils. To ensure it is possible to meet this need quickly, and in line with its responsibility on recruitment matters, the Staff Commission maintains a standing list of individuals suitable to carry out assignments on a consultancy basis. Councils decide which individual they wish to carry out the work identified.

The standing list compiled by the Commission following public advertisement and open competition in October 2009 has been periodically topped up with suitable applicants. A further open competition will be advertised in September 2012 to refresh the standing list which will comprise individuals identified as suitable.

Funding for Derelict Sites on the North Coast to Ballycastle

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will extend the funding for derelict sites on the North Coast to Ballycastle.

(AQW 10343/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I would very much like to extend the principle of my Portrush/Portstewart intervention to other districts suffering similar problems. The principle of such intervention remains one in which I believe and a goal towards which I continue to work.

Such projects can only be tackled, however, if supporting funding is available. One potential mechanism to take this type of initiative forward may be through in year monitoring rounds, or if unspent monies become available at the end of the financial year.

Statutory Off Road Notification Certificate

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment whether a Statutory Off Road Notification Certificate must be applied for annually for a vehicle that is permanently off the road.

(AQW 10378/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The law requires that the registered keeper of a vehicle must either license it or, if it is being kept off the road, make an annual statutory off-road notification (SORN).

The requirement to make a SORN on an annual basis ensures that vehicle keepers have to make contact with the Driver & Vehicle Agency at least once a year, and that helps to ensure that the vehicle details on the register are up to date. An accurate record is vital to support enforcement efforts, the work of the police and other enforcement agents, and road safety generally.

SORN also underpins the system of continuous registration that has contributed to the reduction in motor tax evasion to below 1%.

However, the Department for Transport, which has policy responsibility for vehicle licensing throughout the UK, is considering the issue under the Red Tape Challenge, and I am advised that removing the need for motorists to make an annual SORN is one of the measures being considered.

Planning Management Board Referrals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 4434/11-15, (i) how many of the 22 Planning Management Board referrals were in relation to large-scale residential development sites; and (ii) how many housing units were involved in each case.

(AQW 10419/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Of the 22 Planning Management Board referrals referred to in AQW4434/11-15, 11 applications include residential development as all or part of the proposal.

These are detailed below:

Reference	Number of residential units
Z/2009/0181	121
F/2007/0432	11
Q/2007/0720/F	28
Z/2006/2906	291
M/2006/1492	15
U/2006/0604	9
U/2006/0534	31
U/2006/0209	4
Y/2006/0087	93
W/2005/0668	45
H/2004/1285	26

It is important to note that in considering whether or not an application meets the criteria for a Management Board Referral, as set out in the 'Guidance to the Management Board Referral Process

within Planning Service' which was issued to Councils in May 2007, the Department will take into account a variety of factors such as the zoning in the area plan and the planning history; the number of residential units is only one of these factors.

Planning Management Board Referrals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 4434/11-15, (i) how many of the eight Management Board referrals, where the decision was overturned, were in relation to large-scale residential development sites; and (ii) how many housing units were involved in each case.

(AQW 10478/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Of the eight applications referred to in AQW4434/11-15, where the decision was overturned by the Planning Management Board, five applications include residential development as all or part of the proposal.

The numbers of units in each of the five applications, along with the detail of the decision change, are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of residential units in applications where the Management Board have overturned decisions, and the nature of the decision change

Reference	No. of units	Decision Change
F/2007/0432	11	Approval recommendation changed to Refusal; Appeal dismissed
Q/2007/0720	28	Approval recommendation changed to Refusal; Appeal withdrawn
M/2006/1492	15	Approval recommendation changed to Refusal
U/2006/0209	4	Approval recommendation changed to Refusal
W/2005/0668	45	Approval recommendation changed to Refusal

Taxis: Licensing

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment how he will ensure that the introduction of legislation to require taxi operators to be licensed by his Department will not disproportionately affect smaller businesses.

(AQO 1700/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The consultation on fees for taxi operator licensing which took place in early 2011 resulted in the department further reviewing the proposed fees as the proposals received mixed support in the responses, whilst the concept of operator licensed was overwhelming endorsed in the responses. In listening to the taxi industry I have reduced the fees and made provision for 1, 3 or 5 year licences to make the licensing regime more affordable particularly for the small operator.

On 15 March I agreed to the introduction of taxi operator licensing as from 1 September 2012, as I believe that these new regulations will form the foundation for a modern taxi industry which is customer focused and able to deliver a first class taxi service to Northern Ireland. I also consider that the taxi industry will benefit from increased customer confidence and the more targeted enforcement that is provided for by the regulations.

In recognition of the impact that the current economic climate has had on the taxi industry I have set aside departmental monies which I will use to offset some of the costs of obtaining a taxi operator licence. This means that I have been able to reduce the fee by £100 for all applications received between 1 September and 31 October 2012. This reduction will particularly benefit small operators as a one year operator licence for those that fall into this category will cost £95.

Retail Outlets: Border Regions

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment what account is taken of cross-border impacts when retail impact assessments are being considered for major out-of-town retail outlets in border regions.
(AQO 1704/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the consideration of all major retail applications it is important to determine the catchment population the proposed development will serve. Where the catchment extends into the Republic of Ireland, my Department takes into consideration the effect of cross border expenditure which is drawn to the proposed development when it is assessing the potential retail impact of the proposed retail development. The Department will examine where trade is drawn from for each application, be it from other jurisdictions or other towns, cities or other places. Where it is considered appropriate transboundary consultation will be undertaken in line with The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2012 with the relevant Government authorities (in the RoI) to ensure a full and comprehensive assessment of the application.

European Union Habitats Directive

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of our performance in meeting the obligations of the European Union Habitats Directive, particularly in relation to Strangford Lough.
(AQO 1705/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The European Commission's Habitats Directive has made a significant contribution to nature conservation throughout Europe since it came into operation in 1992. It has presented us with many challenges in Northern Ireland but overall I consider our performance has been very satisfactory.

The most visible outcome of the Directive has been the identification and designation of 55 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Northern Ireland. Once two additional marine SACs at the Skerries and Causeway and at the Maidens have been confirmed, I shall be satisfied that Northern Ireland is moving positively to complete its obligations.

SACs and Special Protection Areas designated under the related Birds Directive together comprise the Natura 2000 Network of European Sites. These sites are afforded protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1995 (as amended) which transpose the Habitats Directive in Northern Ireland.

Article 17 of the Habitats Directive also commits each Member State to reporting to the EC, every six years, on progress that has been made within its territory on restoring and/or maintaining favourable conservation status of both habitats and species that are of particular Community interest. This reporting obligation generates a substantial work programme, involving detailed scientific survey of each SAC and subsequent data assessment. NIEA is presently engaged in the third reporting cycle covering the period 2007 to 2012, and the resultant report is due for submission to the EC in June 2013.

Strangford Lough has been designated as both an SAC and SPA. To ensure that its features of European importance were widely known and understood, the Department produced a Statutory Management Scheme for the Lough in 2001, in conjunction with the then Strangford Lough Management Committee.

Members will know of the ongoing issues in relation to restoring the Modiolus reefs in the Lough from damage. Members will be aware that the Commission is not satisfied that sufficient progress is being made in implementing a Restoration Plan that was agreed in 2006. I have had several meetings with the DARD Minister on this issue and we shall shortly be meeting again. The situation is serious. The Commission has initiated a pilot case infringement action. I believe there is now a need for a decisive approach to recognise the risk of significant financial penalties, to fully demonstrate the right response to the Modiolus damage, think and act innovatively in respect of fishing interests and ensure this issue is resolved once and for all.

Planning Application Referred to a Management Board

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average length of time between a planning application being referred to a Management Board and a decision being made on whether it meets the criteria.

(AQW 10559/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the business year 2011-12, 19 planning applications were referred to the Management Board. With regard to these applications, the median time period between a planning application being referred to the Management Board and a decision being made as to whether it meets the criteria is 43 working days.

In responding to this question, the median has been used as the measure of “average” processing performance, in line with standard planning reporting practice.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Servants: Full-time Trade Union Officials

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 5792/11-15, what is the gross annual cost to the public purse of employing these 28 officials.

(AQW 6628/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The gross annual cost to the public purse of employing the 28 trade union representatives is £915,459. This figure represents the total of the current annual salary spine points, the employers' National Insurance Contributions and the employers' pension contributions of the trade union representatives.

I have asked officials to review this with Departments.

Civil Servants: Bonuses

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the number of civil servants who received bonuses; and (ii) the total amount of the bonuses paid, broken down by Department.

(AQW 9774/11-15)

Mr Wilson: For each of the last three years, (i) the number of civil servants who received bonuses and (ii) the total amount of bonuses paid, broken down by Department is demonstrated in the table.

Department	Year	Number of Staff	Total Amount
DARD	2009/10	144	69,800
	2010/11	261	41,901
	2011/12	96	53,056
DCAL	2009/10	68	17,525
	2010/11	77	20,550
	2011/12	25	9,100
DE	2009/10	202	41,750
	2010/11	161	35,370
	2011/12	126	36,197

Department	Year	Number of Staff	Total Amount
DEL	2009/10	116	43,253
	2010/11	142	46,472
	2011/12	44	13,100
DETI	2009/10	41	21,220
	2010/11	44	28,250
	2011/12	35	19,850
DOE	2009/10	129	51,457
	2010/11	8	3,950
	2011/12	0	0
DFP	2009/10	332	117,730.20
	2010/11	466	140,595
	2011/12	475	146,693
DHSSPS	2009/10	95	38,085
	2010/11	57	27,300
	2011/12	69	24,750
DOJ	2009/10	287	76,966
	2010/11	393	93,323
	2011/12	347	78,169
DRD	2009/10	164	72,975
	2010/11	98	32,400
	2011/12	74	30,550
DSD	2009/10	1,245	235,066
	2010/11	805	176,370
	2011/12	841	216,560
OFMDFM	2009/10	40	13,850
	2010/11	44	13,200
	2011/12	34	11,928
PPS	2009/10	394	53,972
	2010/11	120	35,298.80
	2011/12	213	34,816

Note: 2011/12 information is provided for the year to date up to the end of February 2012

Construction Sector Jobs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to provide the data on which he based his claim that the projects announced on the 14 February 2012 will generate in excess of 2,500 construction sector jobs; and (ii) to provide a breakdown of (a) the number of jobs relating to each project; and (b) the different grades and specifications of the workers involved.

(AQW 10307/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In my statement to the Assembly on 14th February I announced the outcome of the Executive's deliberations on how to address the financial consequences of the Irish Government's decision to materially revise its funding commitment to the A5 and A8 road schemes. I gave details of the investment in two sections of the A5, the A2 Greenisland Road scheme; the A8 Belfast to Larne dual carriageway; the next phase of the Altnagelvin Hospital refurbishment; and acceleration of both the new Omagh Hospital and Phase B of the Ulster Hospital. The experience of the two departments concerned in these projects (DRD and DHSSPS) and their consultation within the industry, including the Construction Employers Federation, indicates that these projects have the potential to create in excess of 2,500 construction sector jobs.

I am not in a position to provide a detailed breakdown of the individual jobs relation to each project, or the different grades and specifications of the workers involved.

Devolved Powers to Set Petrol and Diesel Duty Rates

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what analysis his Department has carried out on the benefits having devolved powers to set petrol and diesel duty rates.

(AQW 10500/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel has not carried out any analysis on the benefits of having devolved powers to set petrol and diesel duty rates.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Bonus Payments Received by Senior Managers in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total amount of bonus payments received by senior managers in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10347/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): No bonuses were paid to the senior management in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in any of the last three years. My Department took the decision not to allow bonus payments in this period in light of the current economic climate.

Hospital Security Staff

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many security staff are employed on a full-time basis at each hospital.

(AQW 10349/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of security staff employed on a full-time basis by hospital was provided by the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts and is given in the table below. These figures have not been validated by the Department.

NUMBER OF SECURITY STAFF EMPLOYED ON A FULL-TIME BASIS BY HOSPITAL AS AT MARCH 2012

Trust	Hospital	Headcount
Belfast	Belfast City Hospital	21
	Mater Hospital	8
	Musgrave Park Hospital	22
	Royal Victoria Hospital	39
Northern	Antrim	2
	Causeway	1
	Holywell	2
South Eastern	Downe	2
	Lagan Valley	5
	Ulster	19
Southern	Craigavon Area	See notes below.
	Daisy Hill	
Western	Altnagelvin	See notes below.
	Erne	
	Tyrone & Fermanagh	
	Tyrone County	

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 The Northern Trust have a contract with Securitas Ltd who provide 2 full-time staff in Antrim Area Hospital who cover 3pm to 6am, 1 full-time staff in Causeway Hospital who covers 10pm to 6am and 2 full-time staff in Holywell Hospital who cover 5pm to 6am.
- 2 Security at Craigavon Area Hospital and Daisy Hill Hospital is provided by the portering service. These staff carry out a range of duties including security; therefore they do not provide security on a full-time basis.
- 3 Security at the Altnagelvin Hospital is provided by the portering service on a 24/7 basis. These staff carry out a range of duties including security; therefore they do not provide security on a full-time basis.
- 4 Security at the Erne Hospital is a contracted-in service and security staff are not directly employed by the Western HSC Trust. The contracted workers are part-time.
- 5 Only part-time staff are employed to provide security at Tyrone & Fermanagh and Tyrone County Hospitals.

Hospitals and Hospital Grounds No Smoking Zones

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 9711/11-15, why smoking cannot be prohibited immediately at all Health and Social Care Trust properties.
(AQW 10352/11-15)

Mr Poots: As stated in my response to AQW 9711/11-15, the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 only covers public and workplaces which are enclosed or substantially enclosed. In order for the Department to prohibit smoking entirely on all Health and Social Care Trust properties, the introduction of new legislation would be required, a process which would take at least six months to complete.

My Department is already engaged in a comprehensive programme of legislative change with regards to tobacco control. In addition to banning the sale of tobacco from vending machines, which took effect

from 1 March 2012, I will be commencing regulations to ban the display of tobacco products in shops later this year. The Northern Ireland Executive has also recently agreed to the drafting of a Tobacco Retailer Sanctions Bill which I hope to introduce to the Assembly in November.

In light of this, I feel that it is more appropriate at present for the matter of smoking on Trust grounds to be addressed by individual Trusts through their workplace smoking policies. It should focus on prohibiting smoking at the entrance to hospitals.

Proposals to move towards smoke-free Trust grounds will require effective planning in order to ensure that the needs of patients and staff are considered and that effective implementation measures are put in place.

Prisoners Overdosing on Prescription Medicines

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10076/11-15, (i) to provide a breakdown (a) of the prescription medicines that were used; and (b) by gender; and (ii) whether a risk assessment was carried out on each prisoner.

(AQW 10353/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is set out below:

(I)(A) THE PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES THAT WERE USED

Year	Prescription medicines used
2009/10	Betahistine Dihydrochloride, Peptac Liquid, Topiramate, Tramadol, Diazepam, Co-Codamol, Floxetine, Chlorpromazine, Diclofenac, Zispin, Efexor, Paracetamol, Pregabalin, Mitrazapine, Migraleve, Ventolin Inhaler, Lansoprasole, Lyrica, Phenergan, Seroquel
2010/11	Naproxen, Paracetamol, Epilim, Co-Codamol, Diclofenac Tramadol, Diazepam, Sertraline, Tegretol, Amitryptaline, Chlorpromazine, Mitrazapine, Pregabalin, Citalopram, Ventolin Inhaler, Propranolol, Lyrica, Zopiclone, Thiamine, Buspar, Laxoberal
2011/12	Co-Codamol, Paracetamol, Pregabalin, Diazepam, Tegretol, Seroquel, Epilim, Tramadol, Naprosyn, Amitryptaline, Zispin, Peppermint Oil capsules, Chlorpromazine, Carbocisteine, Ventolin Inhaler, Zopiclone Mitrazapine, Hyoscine Butylbromide, Quetiapine Fumate

(I)(B) THE GENDER OF PRISONERS WHO OVERDOSED ON PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES¹

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Female	6	7	8
Male	17	18	27

1 These figures include confirmed overdoses along with alleged and suspected overdoses on prescription medicines.

(ii) All prisoners who are prescribed medication are subject to a comprehensive risk assessment to determine their suitability to be in possession of their own medication. The risk assessment takes into account the prisoner, the medication and the location.

Gay Men's Clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why a replacement consultant has not been sought for the Gay Men's Clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 10355/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast HSC Trust recently advertised for a locum consultant to cover maternity leave at the gay men's clinic, which is part of the genito urinary medicine (GUM) clinic; however, this recruitment exercise was unsuccessful. As an interim measure, until the consultant returns from maternity leave, the remaining GUM consultant staff have taken on additional work to cover the work associated with the vacant post but unfortunately it had not been possible to cover the gay men's clinic in the evening. All patients are now given appointments for GUM clinics during the day. The Trust has confirmed it intends to reinstate the evening clinic when the consultant returns from maternity leave.

Quality, Improvement and Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all the establishments and agencies defined by the Quality, Improvement and Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 are subject to the same registration process, including the application form and inspection process, under the Regulation and Improvement Authority (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

(AQW 10356/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (the Order) requires any person who carries on an establishment or agency, as defined within the Order to be registered with the RQIA. The Order requires such persons to make an application to the RQIA providing information as prescribed in Regulations and to provide any other information which RQIA reasonably requires.

The Regulation and Improvement Authority (Registration) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, as amended, require the same registration process to be completed for all establishments and agencies on a form approved by RQIA.

The Regulation and Improvement Authority (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, as amended, provides for frequency of inspections of regulated establishments and agencies, which varies according to the particular establishment or agency. Nursing Homes, Children's Homes and Residential Care Homes must be inspected at least twice annually (to include one announced and one unannounced visit), whereas other establishments and agencies are inspected annually and in the case of voluntary adoption agencies every three years.

Ban on Cigarette Vending Machines

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the compliance with the recent ban on cigarette vending machines.

(AQW 10361/11-15)

Mr Poots: As you are aware, regulations prohibiting the sale of tobacco products from vending machines, were introduced from 1 March 2012.

While there are no official figures available, unofficial reports from district council enforcement officers indicate high levels of compliance with the new legislation.

Dentists

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why dentists are required to use procedures and equipment that are deemed unnecessary by their counterparts in England and Scotland.

(AQW 10364/11-15)

Mr Poots: The majority of equipment and procedures used by dentists are not prescribed by my department. Certain specific types of equipment are underpinned by regulation and guidance such as radiological equipment and decontamination equipment. Radiological equipment is governed through regulations and is mandatory. England Scotland and Northern Ireland have issued separate guidance, within the last two years, on local decontamination in dental practices. This guidance is based on a broad evidence base ranging across; acts & regulations, codes of practice, British, European & International standards, research papers, official publications and expert opinion.

The guidance in Northern Ireland is largely consistent with that in the rest of the United Kingdom and was drafted with input with experts in local decontamination from across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland using the best available information available at the time. There are some areas of the guidance which rely purely on expert opinion and there is some variance in this expert opinion across the United Kingdom countries.

In response to concerns recently raised by the British Dental Association (BDA) regarding variations in the guidance, my department issued an offer to the BDA on the 9 March 2012 to discuss the matter further and reach a common understanding on the guidance and deliver a way forward. My departmental officials await a response from the BDA on this offer.

Ballymena Health and Care Centre

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5129/11-15, to detail the sources of capital funding secured for the completion of the new Ballymena Health and Care Centre.

(AQW 10374/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have set aside almost £25m funding for this project, to be met from the Departmental capital budget of £947.6m over the current Budget 2010 period ending in March 2015.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) which Ministers are part of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Sexual and Domestic Violence; and (ii) how many times and when it has met in the last 12 months.

(AQW 10377/11-15)

Mr Poots: Membership of the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Domestic and Sexual Violence is comprised as follows:

- Minister Poots - Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety;
- Minister Ford - Department of Justice;
- Minister Wilson - Department of Finance and Personnel;
- Minister McCausland -Department for Social Development;
- Minister O'Dowd -Department of Education;
- Minister Farry - Department for Employment and Learning, and
- Junior Minister Anderson and Junior Minister Bell - Office of the

First and Deputy First Minister.

IMG has met on three occasions, 21 May 2008, 30 September 2009 and 29 June 2010. The group has not met in the last 12 months but is due to meet again in May 2012. In the intervening periods between IMG meetings, any issue requiring ministerial involvement is dealt with by written correspondence.

Action for Children's Annual Review 'Child Neglect 2011'

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, what strategies he intends to introduce to address Action for Children's annual review 'Child Neglect 2011' which stated that neglect is a primary or contributory reason in 50 percent of child protection registrations, the highest proportion when compared with other regions in the UK,
(AQW 10387/11-15)

Mr Poots: Safeguarding children, including children experiencing neglect in Northern Ireland, is a Programme for Government commitment. My department will ensure that account is taken of the findings and recommendations of Action for Children's report, Child Neglect in 2011: An Annual Review, in the course of developing and implementing a range of child safeguarding strategic initiatives to deliver on that commitment. These include the revision of existing child safeguarding policy and the establishment of a new child Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, both of which have the potential to begin to address the problem of child neglect in Northern Ireland on a multi-disciplinary and inter-agency basis by ensuring that it identified and responded to at an earlier stage. A new Social Work Strategy for Northern Ireland, launched on 16 April 2012, will also make a significant contribution to this agenda.

This will build on a number of other strategies already in place, which are relevant to tackling neglect. These include: Care Matters in Northern Ireland, which outlines a strategic vision for wide-ranging improvements in services to children and young people in and on the edge of care; and Families Matter which gives priority to early intervention and prevention in family support services.

In addition, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), which is led by the Health and Social Care Board and includes representation of key children's agencies at the most senior level, is another mechanism of ensuring that a more integrated, evidence-based approach is taken to planning and coordinating the delivery of early help to families in Northern Ireland. Action for Children is represented on the CYPSP.

Treating Patients in Independent Clinics

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment of the expenditure incurred in the last two years to treat patients in independent clinics; (ii) whether waiting lists and meeting Government targets have been a contributory factor in the decisions to treat patients in independent clinics; and (iii) for his assessment of value for money when patients are treated in independent clinics.

(AQW 10394/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is important that people receive the appropriate care in a timely way. Supplementing healthcare capacity through the use of the independent sector is used as a short term measure to deliver improvements in waiting times.

Use of the independent sector is targeted at reducing waiting times across a wide range of services, particularly where there is insufficient in-house capacity. In recent years Independent Sector services have made a very significant contribution in ensuring people receive treatment in a timely manner.

The Health and Social Care Board is responsible for negotiating and managing contracts with the independent sector on behalf of the five trusts in Northern Ireland. Contracts for the procurement of assessment and/or treatment services are negotiated through a competitive tendering process aimed at ensuring best value for money. The Board carries out pre-contract quality assurance checks before contracts are let.

Investigations into Incidents at Hospitals

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what advice he has given to Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure the independence of investigations into incidents at hospitals.
(AQW 10415/11-15)

Mr Poots: Current guidance from the Department to the HSC on conducting incident reviews is contained in circular HSS (SQSD) 18/2007 – Conducting Patient Service/Look Back Exercises. This was issued in March 2007 and gives advice on how to conduct an independent incident review. A copy of the guidance can be accessed at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_hss__sqsd__18-07_patient_service_review_guidelines_-_final_feb07.pdf

Further guidance is contained in circular HSS (SQSD) 34/2007- HSC Regional Template and Guidance for Incident Review Reports. This was issued to the HSC in September 2007. A copy of the guidance can be accessed at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hsc_sqsd__34-07_guidance.pdf

It is intended to carry out a review of the 2007 guidance within the next twelve months.

Umbilical Cord Blood

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether facilities exist to process umbilical cord blood, and if not, whether there are plans to obtain the necessary facilities.
(AQW 10424/11-15)

Mr Poots: Umbilical cord blood can currently be processed and stored at the Belfast Cord Blood Bank, which is part of the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service.

Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to update and renew the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2013, given that it expires in 2013.

(AQW 10437/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2013 was published in December 2008 and contains provision for review of its Action Plan after 5 years. My Department has requested an interim progress report from the Public Health Agency, through the Sexual Health Improvement Network, to assess progress made towards achieving the Strategy's aim, objectives, targets and actions; identify any issues related to timescales and consider the need for any new objectives, targets or actions. Recommendations made to the Department on the basis of the findings will help inform decisions to update or renew the Strategy.

Dental Officers Employed by the Business Services Organisation

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many dental officers are currently employed by the Business Services Organisation; and (ii) whether this figure will change following the proposed amendments to the Statement of Dental Remuneration.

(AQW 10438/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Business Services Organisation does not employ any dental officers. However, the Health and Social Care Board employs 1 dental adviser and 4 dental officers who carry out a range of duties across the Health and Social Care Board and Business Services Organisation. It is not anticipated that this figure will change following the proposed amendments to the Statement of Dental Remuneration.

Waiting List for Reversal Colorectal Surgery

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people, at 1 April 2012, were on the waiting list for reversal colorectal surgery and what was the longest waiting time on the list.

(AQW 10466/11-15)

Mr Poots: At midnight on 31st March 2012, provisional inpatient waiting time data report that there were 17 patients on the waiting list for reversal colorectal surgery. The patient with the longest waiting time had been waiting 35 weeks.

Non-Animal Alternatives in Scientific Research

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he has taken to promote the use of non-animal alternatives in scientific research.

(AQW 10469/11-15)

Mr Poots: Animal experimentation is only permitted when there is no means of obtaining necessary knowledge other than by authorised animal experiments.

When assessing research proposals, the Department's Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act Inspector ensures that full consideration is given to alternatives, not only the replacement of procedures with others which do not use animals, but also the reduction of the number of animals used and the refinement of procedures to minimise pain and suffering. These three principles – replacement, reduction and refinement, known as 'the 3Rs' – are well established in the research community.

Animal Experiments

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to encourage universities to release more information on the animal experiments that they have undertaken.

(AQW 10471/11-15)

Mr Poots: Section 21 (7) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 requires appropriate information with respect to the use of protected animals for experimental or other scientific purposes to be published and to be laid before the Assembly each year. The universities provide DHSSPS with the information required for these purposes.

In addition to meeting this obligation, the universities also meet with school groups to discuss the use of animals in scientific experiments.

Testing of Household Products on Animals

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to follow the decision, taken by authorities in the rest of the UK, to ban the testing of household products on animals.

(AQW 10473/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland no animals are being used for the testing of household products and my Department is not aware of any plans or proposals to do such testing in Northern Ireland.

I have no plans at present to bring forward legislation to ban such testing.

Fire and Rescue Service's Capital Programme

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 9871/11-15, in relation to the Fire and Rescue Service's Capital Programme, to detail the estimated cost of (i) red fleet; (ii) vehicles; (iii) information, communication and technology; (iv) preparing a business case for (a) a replacement fire station; and (b) refurbishing a fire station; and (v) preparing a business case for a replacement for Cushendall Fire Station.

(AQW 10479/11-15)

Mr Poots: NIFRS has a rolling programme for the replacement of red fleet, vehicles and ICT.

For 2012/13 NIFRS's indicative Capital Programme includes the following proposed expenditure:

(i) Red Fleet;

During 2012/13 NIFRS plans to spend some **£1.5m** replacing and upgrading the Emergency Red Fleet.

(ii) Vehicles;

During 2012/13 NIFRS plans to spend some **£0.6m** replacing and upgrading Rapid Response vehicles and ancillary vehicles.

(iii) Information, Communication and Technology;

During 2012/13 NIFRS plans to spend some **£1.3m** replacing and upgrading the ICT infrastructure.

(iv) preparing a business case for (a) a replacement fire station; and (b) refurbishing a fire station; (c) a replacement for Cushendall Fire Station.

A number of staff within NIFRS are involved in these processes across various directorates in addition to other duties and responsibilities. The input for each business case is specific to the project under consideration and the costs and time spent on development depend on the individual circumstances such as site feasibility studies, surveys etc. NIFRS does not maintain timesheets or costings in respect of such individual activities and therefore cannot provide an estimate of costs for such workstreams. In addition, input and commentary may be provided by departmental officials. No costing information is available at this level of detail.

Patients Transferred to the Republic of Ireland for Treatment Associated with Eating Disorders

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have been transferred to the Republic of Ireland for treatment associated with eating disorders in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10484/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the number of patients transferred to the Republic of Ireland for treatment associated with eating disorders in each of the last three years.

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of patients transferred	2	0	0

Source: HSC Board

Patients Transferred to England for Treatment Associated with Eating Disorders

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10200/11-15, how many patients received treatment associated with eating disorders prior to being transferred.

(AQW 10486/11-15)

Mr Poots: Of the 39 patients transferred to England for treatment associated with eating disorders between 2009/10 and 2011/12, all would have received treatment in Northern Ireland prior to transfer. Patients care is only authorised for transfer after the Health and Social Care Board has approved an Extra Contractual Referral which has been received from a consultant within the HSC in Northern Ireland. The consultant will make a referral if, in their clinical judgement, the patient requires specialist services.

Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety who completed the assessment on the 'Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan: October 2010 to March 2012' and when was it completed.

(AQW 10487/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Tackling Violence at Home Action Plan covered an 18 month period from 1 October 2010 to 31 March 2012. Implementation of the Action Plan has been taken forward through various working and sub-groups, comprising key statutory and voluntary stakeholders.

The Regional Strategy Group on Domestic Violence is responsible for monitoring progress of actions and associated activities.

DHSSPS and DOJ are currently in the process of updating the final status of the actions within the Action Plan.

Draft Action Plan on Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence 2012-13

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which stakeholders were involved or consulted during the development of the Draft Action Plan on Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence 2012-13.

(AQW 10489/11-15)

Mr Poots: A joint Action Plan on Domestic and Sexual Violence has been developed to cover the period April 2012 to September 2013.

This Action Plan was developed on a collaborative basis in consultation with key statutory and voluntary sector organisations to ensure continued progression towards achieving the overall aims and objectives contained in the “Tackling Violence at Home” and “Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse” Strategies.

Actions for inclusion in the Action Plan were comprehensively considered by the relevant governance groups including the Regional Strategy Group on Domestic Violence; the Prevention and Support Sub Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence; the Protection and Justice Sub Group on Domestic Violence; and the Protection and Justice Sub Group on Sexual Violence. These groups comprise representation from key statutory and voluntary stakeholders.

Draft Action Plan on Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence 2012-13

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on whose advice was an action point for ‘Work Place Policies’ not included in the Draft Action Plan on Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence for 2012-13.

(AQW 10491/11-15)

Mr Poots: To date, the 5 Domestic Violence Partnerships (DVPs) have been at the forefront in delivering on actions with regard to workplace policy initiatives. DVPs in conjunction with their member organisations and in liaison with employer representative bodies, continue to actively promote workplace policies to offer support to employees who are experiencing domestic violence.

As the promotion of workplace policies with employers is now mainstreamed as an integral part of the work undertaken by the DVPs, an action in the Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2012-2013 was not considered necessary. This allows for new and emerging work to be prioritised and to feature in the Action Plan.

All actions for inclusion in the Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2012-2013 were carefully considered by the relevant governance groups which include representation from key statutory and voluntary stakeholders.

NICS Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the NICS Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence was last reviewed and what amendments were made.

(AQW 10492/11-15)

Mr Poots: The NICS Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy has not been reviewed since it was introduced in 2006.

NICS Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times the NICS Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence has been accessed in each of the last five years.

(AQW 10493/11-15)

Mr Poots: The NICS Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy was introduced in 2006. It is not possible to ascertain the number of times it has been accessed in the last 5 years.

Patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the process followed by Health and Social Care Trusts when diagnosing and treating patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, including the treatments which are licensed for (i) adults; and (ii) children.

(AQW 10494/11-15)

Mr Poots: In all Trusts assessment and treatment for ADHD for children and young people are dealt with by experienced paediatricians, and are in line with guidance published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Initial referral for assessment can come from a number of different sources, including GPs, Health Visitors, and education professionals.

Following referral, assessment for ADHD will always include a general assessment of mental health in order to exclude other causes for attention deficits such as mood disorders, anxiety or conduct disorder. Assessment involves detailed medical history, developmental history and history of childhood and school attendance and a cognitive assessment (if poor academic ability indicates it) in order to rule out learning difficulties or disabilities. Conners' Rating Scale questionnaires are used to assess attention and hyperactivity across all environments. The assessment may include school observation and liaison with any appropriate agencies involved e.g., GPs, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Educational Psychologists.

Where ADHD is diagnosed, treatment programmes include: psychological therapies such as psycho education, family support, cognitive behavioural therapy and other behaviour management strategies; and licensed medications including Concerta XL (methylphenidate), Equasym XL (methylphenidate) and Strattera (atomoxetine).

There is currently no dedicated service in Northern Ireland for adults with ADHD. However, mental health services may be able provide interventions and support to alleviate some of the presenting symptoms.

Psychiatrist Treatment Waiting Times for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average psychiatrist treatment waiting times for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 10495/11-15)

Mr Poots: The figures requested are not available centrally within the DHSSPS, and they could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Waiting Times for an Initial Diagnosis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average waiting times for an initial diagnosis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in each Health and Social Trust area, including the average waiting times for a review appointment.

(AQW 10496/11-15)

Mr Poots: The figures requested are not available centrally within the DHSSPS, and they could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Lifeline

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many calls have been made to Lifeline in each month since its establishment.

(AQW 10509/11-15)

Mr Poots: Calls made to Lifeline each month since its establishment are as follows:

Feb 08	Mar 08	April 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08
4435	5281	3048	4727	5677	4312	5939	4474	4684	4917	5226

Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09
6939	8376	9059	5380	6239	6990	6172	6086	4882	6632	8492	7528

Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	July 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	Oct 10	Nov 10	Dec 10
8660	7465	7082	6626	8230	7654	7109	6870	8359	8708	7629	6836

Jan 11	Feb 11	Mar 11	April 11	May 11	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sept 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	Dec 11
8141	8396	7204	6625	8456	8314	8708	7893	7638	9042	8083	8657

Jan 12	Feb 12	March 12
9685	8092	9596

Meals on Wheels Service

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 9894/11-15, whether Health and Social Care Trusts will consider reimbursing customers for charges levied above those stated in the departmental circular.

(AQW 10512/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has received no complaints from those in receipt of the Community Meals service with regard to the charge levied, and I have no plans to ask the Trusts to reimburse clients who paid above the charge set out in the Circular.

Lapatinib Drug

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) whether a specific patient, or her doctor, has been informed why the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust decided not to fund the drug Lapatinib, which was recommended by her doctor to combat cancer, and which has already been prescribed for a number of patients; (ii) whether the criteria used by the Trust to make such decisions are published; and (iii) whether there is an appeal mechanism for such decisions or when an appeal mechanism will be introduced.

(AQW 10518/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised that the decision not to fund the drug Lapatinib in this specific case is the subject of a judicial review. It would be therefore not be appropriate for me to comment further on this case.

With regards the criteria used to make such decisions, the HSC Board wrote to all Health and Social Care Trusts on the 30 March 2012 disseminating the Individual Funding Request (IFR)/ Extra Contractual Referral (ECR) protocols to all relevant staff. Information on the criteria being applied is contained within the protocols which are available to the public on request. The protocols include guidance on the procedure if a request is declined.

Patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the process followed by each Health and Social Care Trust when diagnosing patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, from initial GP appointment to treatment.

(AQW 10533/11-15)

Mr Poots: In all Trusts assessment and treatment for ADHD for children and young people are dealt with by experienced paediatricians, and are in line with guidance published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Initial referral for assessment can come from a number of different sources, including GPs, Health Visitors, and education professionals.

Following referral, assessment for ADHD will always include a general assessment of mental health in order to exclude other causes for attention deficits such as mood disorders, anxiety or conduct disorder. Assessment involves detailed medical history, developmental history and history of childhood and school attendance and a cognitive assessment (if poor academic ability indicates it) in order to rule out learning difficulties or disabilities. Conners' Rating Scale questionnaires are used to assess attention and hyperactivity across all environments. The assessment may include school observation and liaison with any appropriate agencies involved e.g., GPs, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Educational Psychologists.

Where ADHD is diagnosed, treatment programmes include: psychological therapies such as psycho education, family support, cognitive behavioural therapy and other behaviour management strategies; and licensed medications including Concerta XL (methylphenidate), Equasym XL (methylphenidate) and Strattera (atomoxetine).

There is currently no dedicated service in Northern Ireland for adults with ADHD. However, mental health services may be able provide interventions and support to alleviate some of the presenting symptoms.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the cost to his Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.
(AQW 10538/11-15)

Mr Poots: The costs requested are:

- (i) The total cost to the department of producing consultations was £5840. This cost was incurred in producing an easy-read version of the Equality Impact Assessment for new Mental Capacity Legislation and Service framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing. As the department publishes its consultation documents on its website, these costs are kept to a minimum.
- (ii) The cost of producing official reports for this year was £6,221.50.

For breakdown of costs, see below

DHSSPS Official Reports produced during 2010/11

- Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals 2009 - £493.75
- DHSSPS Resource Accounts 2009-10 - £1,354.80
- HSC Pension Scheme Resource Accounts for year ended 31 March 2010 - £1,131.25
- HSC Superannuation Resource Accounts 2009-10 - £1,060.45
- NI HSC Pension Scheme Resource Accounts 2009-10 - £1,131.25
- DHSSPS Resource Accounts 2008-09 - £1,050.00

Total Cost for 2010/11 - £12,061.50

Asymptomatic Testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether asymptomatic testing for sexually transmitted infections can be integrated into GP practices, given the difficulties for patients accessing genito-urinary medicine services.

(AQW 10554/11-15)

Mr Poots: With advances in testing procedures, it is now possible for GP Practices to perform check-ups on patients who are asymptomatic. In light of these advances a six month pilot, using a new model of sexual health care which will provide a sexual health check, is currently being undertaken in 12 GP Practices in the North Down area. Following an evaluation on its acceptability to patients and cost effectiveness, consideration will be given to the potential for rolling the service out across a wider area.

Financial Support for Nursing and Residential Care

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his Department's assessment of the cost of bringing the financial support for nursing and residential care up to the same standard as that provided in Scotland.

(AQW 10563/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2007, the Assembly debated the possibility of introducing free personal care for care home residents. At that time, the cost of free personal care was estimated to be in excess of £30m and my predecessor in office declared it unaffordable. For my part, while I support the principle behind free personal care, you will appreciate that I have to conclude that it is not affordable within the resources currently available to me.

Cancer Patients

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of cancer patients since 1 March 2012 (i) who have been diagnosed with cancer and are due to receive radiotherapy; (ii) who have started radiotherapy treatment; and (iii) who had an appointment to start radiotherapy, but have received notification that their treatment will be delayed.

(AQW 10575/11-15)

Mr Poots: Radiotherapy treatment services in Northern Ireland are provided on a regional basis by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

I have been informed by the Belfast HSC Trust that between the period 1 March 2012 to 20 April 2012:

- 535 patients were referred to the Trust for radiotherapy treatment following a cancer diagnosis;
- During this period, 529 patients have commenced radiotherapy treatment;
- Following one of the Trust's eight linear accelerators (LINC) being taken out of use between the 2 April 2012 and 20 April 2012, as the result of a diagnosis of a fault, a total of 14 patients who had been scheduled to start radiotherapy received notification that their treatment would be deferred by between one and three working days.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently being treated for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

(AQW 10589/11-15)

Mr Poots: The figures requested are not available centrally within the DHSSPS, and they could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Policy and Services for Children with ADHD were examined under the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. The Review's report "A Vision of a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service" estimated the prevalence of this disorder within the children's population to be between 3-7%. Taking account of children's population trend from 2001 to 2010, it is estimated that 9,600 children in Northern Ireland are affected by this disorder.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time between diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the commencement of treatment.

(AQW 10590/11-15)

Mr Poots: The figures requested are not available centrally within the DHSSPS, and they could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Policy and Services for Children with ADHD were examined under the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. The Review's report "A Vision of a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service" estimated the prevalence of this disorder within the children's population to be between 3-7%. Taking account of children's population trend from 2001 to 2010, it is estimated that 9,600 children in Northern Ireland are affected by this disorder.

Victims of Human Trafficking

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services his Department provides to support victims of human trafficking.

(AQW 10593/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts (Trusts) have a central role and responsibility with regard to the recovery, support and rehabilitation of child victims of human trafficking and, with the Department of Justice and others, in the recovery and longer term support of adult victims.

Recovered child victims of trafficking are deemed to be "children in need" under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and therefore the responsibility for provision of care and support to these children, including access to health and social care services falls to Trusts.

For recovered adult victims, the Department of Justice has a contract with Migrant Helpline, together with their delivery partner Women's Aid, to provide accommodation and a range of support services to the adult victim. Longer term access to health and social care services will be determined by the individual's immigration status and is subject to human rights considerations.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10636/11-15)

Mr Poots: At this time, I have already stated my intention, subject to the agreement of the Executive, to bring forward a number of Bills during the current Assembly mandate. The table below provides detail on the purpose of each legislative proposal. At this stage, I am not in a position to provide dates for the introduction of the Bills.

Legislation	Purpose
Tobacco Retailer Sanctions	To strengthen sanctions against retailers who regularly break the law with regards to underage sales of tobacco products.
Amendment to the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (NI) 2009	To ensure that the range of services which the Business Service Organisation (BSO) is charged with providing has a proper regulatory base, and to allow for some expansion in the BSO's range of client bodies.
Amendment to the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2008	To provide DHSSPS with the necessary powers to create Dental, Ophthalmic and Pharmaceutical Performers' lists.
Amendment to the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001	To introduce a more flexible range of sanctions to support the move to a "Fitness to Practice" model for the management of conduct processes in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
Mental Capacity (Health, Welfare and Finance)	To provide substitute decision-making arrangements and safeguards for people lacking mental capacity to make decisions for themselves in respect of health, welfare and finance.
Adoption and Children	To modernise the legal framework for adoption to better meet the needs of children and families and provide better quality, consistent and efficient services for everyone affected by adoption.
Devolution of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007	To devolve some powers currently vested in the Secretary of State under the Vetting and Barring Scheme in relation to work with children and vulnerable adults.
Amendment to the Fire and Rescue Order (NI) 2006	To change the composition of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board

Non-Health and Social Care Trust Bills and Invoice Payments

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of non-Health and Social Care Trust bills and invoice payments processed on behalf of his Department by Account NI between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 within (i) 30 calendar days; and (ii) 10 working days. **(AQW 10654/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The table below details the number of non-Health and Social Care Trust bills and invoice payments processed on behalf of my Department by Account NI between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 within (i) 30 calendar days; and (ii) 10 working days.

Total (non HSC) Invoices Paid on Behalf of DHSSPS by Account NI Between 1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012	Total Paid within 30 working days	Total Paid within 10 working days
6,586	6,175	5,180

Value for Money Audit of Domiciliary Care

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) why the value for money audit of domiciliary care has been cancelled; and (ii) how the cost of domiciliary care will be funded.
(AQW 10670/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) To commission a value for money audit of domiciliary care at this time would risk duplication and generate confusion due to the extensive work programme currently taking place as a result of Transforming Your Care (TYC). TYC sets out the need to reform the whole of health and social care to improve quality, sustainability and safety for patient and clients. It is wide ranging and will undoubtedly include domiciliary service provision.
- (ii) The funding of domiciliary care provision will be considered as an integral part of the overall service-wide transformational change programme outlined in the TYC report, which includes a focus on increasing the services provided at home and in the community.

Social Work Students

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many social workers who registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council have not commenced an assessed year in employment; and (ii) how many social work students will be admitted to study at Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster in the 2012/13 academic year.
(AQW 10694/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 2006 newly qualified social workers are required to register with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) for their Assessed Year in Employment (AYE).

This is a workplace support system designed to assist the transition from student to confident practitioner.

Presently there are 145 social workers registered with the NISCC who have not yet commenced their AYE year.

The planned intake for the 2012/13 academic year will be 260 places in total available at QUB and UU.

Provision of Insulin Pumps for People with Diabetes

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether his Department has a policy on the provision of insulin pumps for people with diabetes; (ii) whether each Health and Social Care Trust provides insulin pumps; and (iii) how many have been provided by each Trust in each of the last five years.
(AQW 10700/11-15)

Mr Poots: In June 2009 my Department endorsed for implementation in the HSC the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's Technology Appraisal No. 151 which sets out recommendations on the use of insulin pump therapy. Details of the NICE guidance can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/TA151>.

- (i) [//www.nice.org.uk/TA151](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA151).
- (ii) All Health and Social Care Trusts with the exception of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust provide insulin pumps.

- (iii) I refer you to AQW 9863/11-15 which provides unvalidated information supplied by HSC Trusts about insulin pumps, covering the period 2009/10-2011/12. Validated information on the number of insulin pumps provided by each Trust in the last five years is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Countries in Great Britain from which Northern Ireland Received Blood

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the countries in Great Britain that Northern Ireland received blood from in (a) February 2012; (b) March 2012; and (c) April 2012 to date; and (ii) the amount of blood received in each month.

(AQW 10717/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland has not received any blood from Great Britain since 1 February 2012.
Department of Justice

Department of Justice

Republican Separated Prisoners Protest

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9793/11-15, why the prisoners on protest have not had their republican separated status removed in accordance with the compact.

(AQW 10338/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Prisoners engaged in the ongoing protest in Roe House have not had their separated status removed. The management of the ongoing protest in Roe House is subject to regular review and it has been determined that the most appropriate way of managing this breach of the terms of the separated contract is through the use of Rule 32 (restricted association).

Where it is deemed necessary for the maintenance of good order or discipline, or to ensure the safety of officers, prisoners, or any other person, the governor may arrange for the restriction of a prisoner's association. Prisoners subject to restriction of association can avail of their basic entitlement to visits; telephone; and one hour daily exercise; but are not permitted to participate in evening association.

Furthermore, to remove a prisoner's separated status and return him to integrated conditions could prejudice the safety of that prisoner.

Case Number 11/016273 at Lisburn Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to case number 11/016273 at Lisburn Magistrates Court, to detail (i) the cost in legal aid of this case and the previous case which was dismissed and then re-listed; (ii) the estimated final cost of the case; (iii) the number of (a) legal firms; and (b) counsel that have been instructed; and (iv) the total cost to date, excluding legal aid, of this case.

(AQW 10340/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) In respect of the original case, £708 (including VAT of £118) has been paid to the solicitor. The fees paid to counsel totalled £550 (no VAT was payable).
- (ii) As case number 11/016273 has not yet concluded, it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the final legal aid costs of the case at this stage.
- (iii) One firm of solicitors has represented the Defendant in both sets of proceedings. A different counsel has been instructed for the second hearing.
- (iv) It is not possible to provide actual costs in respect of court and judicial costs. However, the costs associated with the current proceedings are currently estimated at £5,214.

The Public Prosecution Service has identified billed costs and fees to date of approximately £10,850 and £180 for the original contest.

The PSNI have confirmed that there are no additional police costs associated with the current proceedings.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9853/11-15, how many breaches of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders are alleged to have occurred per case.

(AQW 10341/11-15)

Mr Ford: Pursuant to my answer to AQW9853/11-15, the 18 prosecutions involve 41 charges of breach of a Sexual Offences Protection Order as detailed below:-

Number of cases with 1 charge	Number of cases with 2 charges	Number of cases with 3 charges	Number of cases with 5 charges	Number of cases with 6 charges	Number of cases with 7 charges	Total
9	4	2	1	1	1	18

Training Departmental Staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice what strategy is in place to train departmental staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

(AQW 10407/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice, in keeping with the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1982, has a Health & Safety Policy and Plan in place.

Within the policy, Arrangement 5 – First Aid, details a requirement that each Departmental Head of Division has responsibility for ensuring that they have a sufficient number of trained and qualified First Aiders within their Business Area. Guidance on the ratio of First Aiders to staff numbers is also included.

First Aid training provided to Departmental staff is registered with Health and Safety Executive (NI) and includes a module on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

Ministerial Cars and Drivers

Mr Copeland asked Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of departmental staff who have availed of ministerial cars and drivers in each year since April 2010; (ii) the cost of providing the service; and (iii) whether the benefit derived is subject to income tax.

(AQW 10435/11-15)

Mr Ford: Department of Justice staff do not avail of the services of ministerial cars and drivers.

Prisoners on Day Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 10167/11-15, given that the identity of the victim and the accused are protected, to explain how stating whether the accused was on day release when the alleged offences were committed breaches the reporting restrictions that no details pertaining to the identification of the defendant and injured party will be published or released to the media.

(AQW 10453/11-15)

Mr Ford: Due to the relatively low number of young people in custody at any one time, the release of any information specific to a particular case, when combined with local knowledge or other information, could potentially lead to identification of the defendant and/or injured party and therefore constitute a breach of any reporting restrictions.

Top Ten Legal Aid Earning Counsel

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 10282/11-15, how many cases each counsel (i) won; and (ii) lost.

(AQW 10525/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Top Four Legal Aid Earning Companies

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 10283/11-15, how many cases each legal company (i) won; and (ii) lost.

(AQW 10529/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Paramilitary Activity at the Funeral of Seamus Coyle in Londonderry

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether he has sought a report on the paramilitary activity, including the firing of a rifle, at the funeral of Seamus Coyle in Londonderry on 17 April 2012; and what action he expects to be taken and by whom.

(AQW 10632/11-15)

Mr Ford: I was made aware of this incident shortly after it occurred.

The policing response is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, and I understand that an Investigating Officer has been appointed.

Department for Regional Development

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to NI Water tender C071, (i) on how many occasions in the last year has the head of NI Water's M&E function met with embedded contract staff, broken down by Mechanical and Electrical area; (ii) to detail (a) the reason for; (b) the location of; and (c) who requested these meetings; and (iii) whether the current and previous CEOs of NI Water were made aware of these meetings.

(AQW 10371/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I would refer the Member to my answer to AQW 8815/11 on 12 March 2012. I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the meeting on 27 January 2012, referred to in that answer, was the only occasion in the past year that the head of its Mechanical and Electrical Services met with contractor employees.

Department for Social Development

Jobseekers Allowance

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will review the inequity for people who have accumulated a small occupational pension and move from the contribution based Jobseekers Allowance to income-based Jobseekers Allowance and their pension is utilised to reduce their benefit by virtue of means testing, whereas under the contribution based allowance arrangements the first £50 per week is not taken into account.

(AQW 10012/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Government believes that it is right to take a more generous approach to the treatment of occupational pensions in contributory benefits, which entitlement is based on insurance principles and depends on the contributions made during recent paid employment. Income based benefits, on the other hand, take account of all means available to the claimant to meet their immediate financial needs. There are no plans to change this approach.

Housing on the St Patrick's Barracks Site, Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development why there has been a delay in transferring the housing on the St Patrick's Barracks site, Ballymena, to the Housing Executive.

(AQW 10369/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The site is currently owned by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and I understand they are finalising their business case to transfer the site to my Department. Once that transfer takes place, the site will be made available to Fold Housing Association who have already been appointed to develop it for social housing.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether he sought Legal Counsel's view on the implementation of the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme including the risk of a judicial review and its implications on specific equality groups; and (ii) how many legal opinions he obtained.

(AQW 10396/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Answers to the questions raised attract legal professional privilege. As is the norm across Departments, that privilege is not waived in this instance.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration he has given to the advice from Legal Counsel on the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme and what action he has taken as a result of that advice.

(AQW 10397/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My answer to AQW 10396/11-15 also refers. I have considered advice from many quarters in relation to the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme and the new arrangements for regional support to the voluntary and community sector. Taking account of issues raised following my speech at NICVA on 8th September I have decided to extend existing regional support arrangements by 6 months through to September 2012 allowing more time for change to happen. In addition I have agreed that the efficiencies arising as a result of the challenging Comprehensive Spending Review settlement should be phased in over the remaining 3 years of the CSR period thereby easing the impact of efficiencies.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the Equality Impact Assessment his Department carried out on the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme.

(AQW 10398/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Arrangements for regional support and the key recommendations arising from the review of the Regional Infrastructure Programme were subject to equality screening in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The purpose of that screening was to determine if the policy had an impact or was likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity for any of the equality categories stipulated in the Act.

The formal equality screening exercise indicated no adverse impacts or significant implications for equality of opportunity. A copy of the screening document was published on the Departments website in November 2011.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the consultation with the voluntary and community sectors in relation to the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme.
(AQW 10412/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My assessment is that the Department consulted widely across the voluntary and community sector. This included an analysis of existing arrangements taking account of the views of organisations currently funded and a range of sub regional stakeholders, a pre-consultation stakeholder event to involve representatives from currently funded organisations, funding departments, local councils and sub-regional bodies, and a full formal consultation issued to all stakeholders and made available to the public. Over 2,000 organisations were invited to respond to the formal consultation, generating a total of 326 responses.

Fundamental Change in Policy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether a fundamental change in policy within his Department requires Executive approval.
(AQW 10427/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Those matters which should be brought to the attention of the Executive are set out in paragraph 2.4 of the Ministerial Code.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the adequacy of the consultation with the voluntary and community sectors on the decision to appoint one organisation or a consortia to deliver generic and thematic infrastructure under the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme.
(AQW 10428/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is important to note that the Department plans to appoint a total of five organisations/consortia, one to deliver each of the five elements of regional support to the voluntary and community sector namely; (a) generic regional support services, (b) regional support for voluntary advice services, (c) regional support for volunteering, (d) regional support for women in disadvantaged areas and (e) regional support for faith based engagement.

Whilst a single partner/consortium approach did not form an explicit part of the consultation, the need for better collaboration, joined up working and a reduction in duplication did emerge in the responses to the formal consultation and are also enshrined within the Concordat between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government, recently agreed by the NI Executive. Taking account of the Concordat and of the responses expressed at consultation, one of the key recommendations arising from the review of regional infrastructure support arrangements was that, in circumstances where two or more organisations wish to deliver an element of regional support services, then that should happen by way of a joined up collaborative approach resulting in a single application for funding, thereby helping to reduce potential duplication and overlap. I am satisfied as regards the adequacy of consultation with the voluntary and community sector on this issue.

Departmental Policy Subject to Judicial Review

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the process for informing the Executive if a departmental policy is assessed as being likely to be subject to judicial review.
(AQW 10429/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Where a Minister considers it necessary that the Executive should be informed that an application for judicial review has been made and/or granted in relation to any matter within his or her responsibility, he or she may write to Executive colleagues to advise them of this.

Decontamination Contract for Fort George

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 9869/11-15, why the decontamination contract for Fort George, which was due to have been awarded by the end of 2011, will now only be entering the tendering phase in September 2012, with tenders to be returned by January 2013.

(AQW 10588/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Fort George Project is a New Engineering “Design and Construct” Contract. The ‘Design’ and Construct’ elements are tendered separately. Following a competitive tender process at the end of 2011, the “Design” element was awarded to Consulting Engineers White Young Green in February 2012. White Young Green will produce the remediation strategy for Fort George, following which, they will produce the tender documents relating to the engagement of a remediation contractor.

It is expected that the “Construct” element will enter the tender process in September 2012 with tenders to be returned by January 2013. The entire Fort George decontamination project is due for completion at the end of 2013.

However, the timeframes for projects of this nature are flexible as the level of variables are high until various tests and technical strategies are produced and agreed with the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency and City Council’s Environmental Health.

Selling Single Storey Housing Executive Properties to Long-Term Tenants

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the policy on selling single storey Housing Executive properties to long-term tenants.

(AQW 10603/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive’s statutory House Sales Scheme permits eligible tenants to purchase single storey Housing Executive properties, where these properties are ground floor flats or three or more bedroom bungalows. From September 2002, tenants of one and two bedroom bungalows, whose tenancy commenced on or after 1 September 2002, are not permitted to purchase their home. This policy was put in place in order to protect the future limited supply of properties suitable for elderly and disabled people.

Anti-Social Behaviour Policies

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to ensure that Housing Associations maintain consistent anti-social behaviour policies.

(AQW 10622/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing legislation in Northern Ireland provides all social housing landlords, including registered housing associations, with a common set of statutory tools for tackling anti-social behaviour affecting or caused by their tenants or others residing with or visiting their tenants.

The Department’s Housing Association Guide sets out the standards expected of all registered housing associations. The Guide places a requirement on all registered housing associations to have published policy and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour and provides a model statement of policy and procedures by way of guidance.

Within the Department’s inspection process, the Inspection Team reviews the anti-social behaviour policies and practices in place within registered housing associations to ensure that they comply with the Department’s guidance and that they are being applied effectively and consistently

Anti-Social Behaviour or Neighbourhood Disputes

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the merits of a standardised information sharing protocol for Housing Associations in relation to addressing anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood disputes.

(AQW 10624/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Section 13 of the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 introduced new powers for the disclosure of information to and between all social housing landlords, including registered housing associations, in respect of anti-social behaviour.

An information-sharing protocol is not necessary to support the operation of these powers although it may prove helpful in certain circumstances. In light of this, I support the production of an information-sharing protocol in the housing association movement and I understand that the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations is working with its members to bring this about.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Recording Equipment in Committee Rooms

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission why the recording equipment in committee rooms remains switched on at weekends and during the Christmas, Easter and Summer recesses.

(AQW 10277/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly broadcast team turn off non-essential equipment where possible in order to comply with the Assembly environmental policy to reduce and prevent power wastage. However, some infrastructural and recording equipment remain on standby for the following reasons:

- a) Even if Assembly business is not scheduled, the broadcast team and others with maintenance responsibility for the system carry out essential system checks which are only possible when the system is not in use.
- b) The system generates test signals which the Assembly broadcaster team - who constantly receive our signals - rely upon to prove the system is working correctly.
- c) The broadcast system is actually designed to be left running - as a "no fail" system with failover procedures in place and our broadcast guidance requires the system to remain powered on.
- d) It has been proven that switching professional broadcast equipment on and off can reduce reliability and lifespan.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 27 April 2012

(AQW 10267/11-15)

Pupils from the south can already apply for admission to a post-primary school in the north. Currently 256 young people (including boarders) who live in the south attend post-primary schools here and all applicants for the 2011/12 school year were accepted for places.

This is reflective of how people in the border areas live and avail of services, including education. My Department and the Department of Education and Skills are both planning for schools into the future and it is important to do so in a sustainable way that is able to meet parental preference in the border region. At the North South Ministerial Council education sectoral meeting in February 2012 it was agreed that the Departments will jointly conduct a survey in the autumn of potential cross border pupil movement to inform school planning.



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