

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 5 October 2012**

**Volume 77, No WA4**



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

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Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 5 October 2012

## Written Answers to Questions

### Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

#### Draft Executive Papers

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many draft Executive papers, which have been circulated to ministerial colleagues by Ministers, have yet to be placed on the agenda for an Executive meeting; (ii) the date on which the paper was circulated; and (iii) the subject matter of each paper.

**(AQW 13716/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** The content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

#### Executive Papers

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what guidelines pertaining to timeframe govern the circulation of final Executive papers to Ministers prior to the Executive meeting at which any such paper is due to be discussed; and how many times since 2007 these timeframes have been breached.

**(AQW 13717/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We would refer you to the answer we gave to AQW 13716/11-15.

#### Draft Executive Papers

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail, from May 2007 to date (i) the date each approved draft Executive paper was circulated to Ministers; (ii) the date on which each respective paper was discussed at the Executive; and (iii) the subject matter of each paper.

**(AQW 13718/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** As we have indicated previously, the content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

#### Members of the Maze Regeneration Board

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the declarations of political interests by members of the Maze Regeneration Board, (i) to which political party has Joe O'Donnel made donations; (ii) to which MLA is Jack Gallagher a part-time assistant; (iii) for which party is Paul Stewart a councillor; and (iv) to which party has Tony Gallagher provided administrative help at election time.

**(AQW 14128/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The information requested was publicly released on 14 September and is on the Executive's website at:

[www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-140909-further-announcement-mlk.htm](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-140909-further-announcement-mlk.htm) .

### **Land Disposal Arrangements for the Maze Site**

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what are the income projections from the land disposal arrangements for the Maze site.

**(AQW 14211/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The newly established Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation will take forward the regeneration of the site and will consider how to maximise the site's economic potential.

### **Visits by European Commissioners**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of visits by European Commissioners to Northern Ireland in 2011.

**(AQW 14293/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** In 2011 there was one visit, by Mr Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, who opened the Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry on 25 June 2011.

### **Welfare Reform Advisory Group**

**Mr Durkan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Programme for Government commitment to establish a Welfare Reform advisory group.

**(AQW 14370/11-15)**

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

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

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

The Group has already met on six occasions and is currently finalising its preliminary report. We expect to receive the Group's report shortly.

### **Travel and Subsistence Costs**

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 116/11-15, what was the total travel and subsistence costs incurred by their Department on trips outside Northern Ireland in each year of the 2007-11 mandate.

**(AQW 14404/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Information is not held on the departmental accounting system at the level of detail requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

## The Gathering in 2013

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they intend to initiate a gathering of parliamentarians and former parliamentarians from Britain and Ireland as a contribution to The Gathering in 2013.

**(AQW 14489/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We consider that an event to bring together parliamentarians as part of the initiative “the Gathering” would be more appropriately a matter for consideration by the relevant legislatures.

## Women’s Participation in Public Life

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will commission an official audit of women’s participation in public life including the judiciary, policing and truth recovery mechanisms such as, public inquiries within this Assembly term.

**(AQW 14507/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Women’s representation in political and public life is one of the strategic objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy which will be reviewed in the near future.

## Proposed John Lewis Development at Sprucefield

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the mid-inquiry meeting which the Planning Appeals Commission was to hold in September on the proposed John Lewis Development at Sprucefield.

**(AQW 14772/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its independent tribunal status, its Chief Commissioner has been asked to provide a response directly to you, and we understand that she has written to you in the following terms:

*“In November 2009, Sprucefield Centre Limited applied to the Department of the Environment for planning permission for retail, restaurant and associated infrastructural development at Sprucefield, Lisburn. The proposals involved a John Lewis department store and unit shops. The Department designated this as a major planning application in accordance with Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) 1991 Order and requested the Commission to hold a public inquiry.*

*The inquiry opened on 7th June 2010 but was adjourned on the same day. There were persistent complaints from objectors to the proposed development about the adequacy of the environmental statement and its addenda. Following judicial review proceedings, the applicants submitted further environmental information to the Department in July 2011 and February 2012. The Department has now advised the Commission that it has all the environmental information necessary to meet the requirements of the European Union Directive and domestic Regulations on environmental impact assessment.*

*A mid-inquiry meeting was held on 11th September 2012 at which applicants confirmed that they wish to submit an updated retail statement and consolidated transport and environmental information to the Commission by late November 2012. They also wish to submit a new statement of case in February 2013. The other parties to the inquiry will be entitled to comment on the new information and evidence. The Commissioners have established a detailed timetable leading to the resumption of the inquiry on Monday, 15th April 2013 in the Commission’s premises at Park House, 87-91 Great Victoria Street, Belfast.*

*I would be happy to provide any further information you require arising out of this response or to meet you to discuss the matter if you would find that more suitable”.*

# Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## Prosecutions for Cruelty to Animals

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many prosecutions have been secured for cruelty to animals in each of the last two years, broken down by council area.

**(AQW 14223/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** Table A below details the number of convictions for animal welfare offences relating to farmed animals over the last 2 calendar years. My Department does not hold a breakdown of this information by council area.

**TABLE A – FARMED ANIMAL WELFARE CONVICTIONS**

Year	Number of people convicted
2011	4
2010	17

My Department enforces the legislation in relation to farmed animals only. However, information provided recently by the Public Prosecution Service to my officials shows that since July 2011, 11 people have been convicted for offences under the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 in relation to other animals.

## Fishing Stocks in the Irish Sea

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures her Department has taken to enhance and protect fishing stocks in the Irish Sea.

**(AQW 14258/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department enhances and protects fish stocks in the following ways.

Our Sea Fisheries Inspectorate fully enforces the rules of the common fisheries policy to avoid over exploitation of fish stocks and reduce damage to non-target species and juvenile fish. This includes compliance with fish quotas, days at sea restrictions, closed areas, minimum landing sizes, and various fishing net specification requirements.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) collects fisheries data and carries out fish stock surveys that contribute to Irish Sea stock assessments issued by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas. These assessments are then used to set sustainable levels for fish quotas and days at sea. AFBI also carries out a range of research and monitoring of the general marine environment that is used to improve and monitor its management.

My Department also funds additional scientific research through the European Fisheries Fund. This includes trials of fishing methods that help to reduce by-catches of unwanted fish, thereby allowing non - target fish to survive unharmed. As a result of these trials our entire prawn fishing fleet will be equipped with highly selective fishing gear before the end of this year that will move us significantly closer to achieving our aim of eliminating discards of unwanted fish.

## Ban on Commercial Fishing of Bass

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether she is aware of the views of commercial fishermen in relation to the increased number of Bass appearing in coastal waters; and (ii) what consideration her Department has given to rescinding the ban on commercial fishing of Bass to ensure a fair quota for commercial fishermen.

**(AQW 14280/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am aware of the concerns of commercial fishermen in the south of Ireland who have not been able to land sea bass for many years and who may be affected by the creation of a new Total Allowable Catch (TAC) based on recent landings. Currently there is no prohibition on commercial fishermen in the north and therefore the current EU proposal will not affect our fishermen. You will be aware of our proposed "Protection and Conservation of Sea Bass Regulations". Whilst these introduce a number of measures to conserve Sea Bass they will continue to allow the small by-catches of sea bass to be landed and recorded and therefore contribute to any future adjustments of a Sea Bass TAC if introduced.

### Executive Papers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 13791/11-15, and excluding the specific content of the Executive papers, to detail the (i) quantity (ii) dates; and (iii) general topic of the papers awaiting approval.

**(AQW 14286/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As outlined in response to AQW 13791/11-15, all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

### Planning and Delivering Large Capital Infrastructure Projects

**Mr Newton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) for her assessment of the benefits of annualised budgets when planning and delivering large capital infrastructure projects such as the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme; and (ii) what consideration she has given to holding the funding for projects as allocated project budget that could be spent over an agreed number of years.

**(AQW 14320/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** (i) While I can see the attraction of project funding, particularly for major capital schemes, we must operate within the constraints of the financial framework provided by the Executive. The Department currently allocates its capital budgets on a programme basis, profiled by financial year. The Department's capital plans are also included in the draft Investment Strategy (ISNI) which includes indicative budget allocations up to 2021. This is the financial framework within which all Departments operate and is considered best practice.

The benefits of annualised budgets are:

- The annualised budget period aligns with the accounting period, within which the annual accounts will measure the actual spend relative to the budget allocations.
  - Immediate focused goals and solid plans will be set in place; variances from the goals will be identified at an early stage within the Department's in-year financial management processes. This will result in early corrective actions being taken and improved motivation to meet the financial goals.
  - The in-year monitoring rounds provide the opportunity for budget reallocations to be made, on the basis of priorities. These reallocations may be within my own department or returned to the Centre for reallocation by the Executive.
- (ii) As the Department's budget is set on an annual basis within the constraints of the financial framework provided by the Executive, the holding of budgets for future years' spend is not an option.

### Flooding

**Mr Newton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to recent flooding, (i) for her assessment of the need for a more integrated response and better co-ordination between agencies; (ii) what lessons have been learnt; and (iii) whether clear roles and responsibilities have been identified and agreed with the agencies involved.

**(AQW 14322/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am satisfied that Rivers Agency co-operated as well as could be expected with other government agencies and local councils given the nature and speed of the flooding event. Intensive short duration rainfall over urban areas is exceptionally challenging as it causes flooding to develop before it is possible to mobilise any meaningful response. There is however still scope to improve further the response to flooding in respect of the resources deployed to assist the public on the ground and the integration and coordination between the agencies involved. This issue, along with clarity on roles and responsibilities for all agencies involved, is something the Rivers Agency has been working on and the active role that Belfast City Council played in distributing sandbags during the flooding event is welcomed. I am hopeful the current report commissioned by the Executive as a response to the flood event and being produced by the Government's Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit will highlight the need for all responders to work closely together.

### Relocation of the Departmental Headquarters

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) criteria; (ii) assessment process; and (iii) business case used to determine Ballykelly as the location of her Department's new headquarters.

**(AQW 14338/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** In relation to the decision to relocate to Ballykelly, there were a number of steps taken before reaching my final decision. The first stage in the process was to develop a long list of potential locations. The list was taken from the new Regional Development Strategy. Using the 23 local government districts my officials scored each against a defined set of criteria. This included 9 different socio-economic factors considering such things as unemployment levels, deprivation and earnings levels, as well as practical considerations such as the number of public sector and civil service jobs already sited in the area.

The top two areas in this analysis were both in the North West. I made my decision to relocate to Ballykelly based on two further factors namely the availability of the Executive- owned site at Shackleton Barracks and the availability of buildings on that site which could potentially be converted to office accommodation. Using this site and the buildings available has the potential to reduce the cost of this relocation from the £26m that is the estimated cost of a new build.

I have asked my officials to provide me with a business case that outlines the options for relocating my Departmental headquarters to Ballykelly. The business case will consider such issues as value for money and potential savings.

### Relocation of Departmental Headquarters

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, excluding Ballykelly, to list the locations assessed and evaluated for her Department's headquarters.

**(AQW 14340/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** In reaching my decision on the location for the DARD Headquarters my officials considered all relevant Executive strategies and policies and developed a long list of potential locations. The agreed long list of potential locations was made up of the 23 areas outlined in the Regional Development Strategy: Shaping Our Future. Each of these 23 local government districts were then against a defined set of criteria.

**TABLE 1: LONG-LIST OF POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR THE FUTURE DARD HQ**

Antrim	Coleraine	Limavady
Ards	Cookstown	Lisburn
Armagh	Craigavon	Newry & Mourne
Ballymena	Derry	Newtownabbey

<b>Antrim</b>	<b>Coleraine</b>	<b>Limavady</b>
Banbridge	Down	North Down
Belfast	Dungannon	Omagh
Carrickfergus	Fermanagh	Strabane
Castlereagh	Larne	

### **Relocation of Departmental Headquarters**

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what private sector design and build project options were assessed and evaluated prior to Ballykelly being selected for the new headquarters.

**(AQW 14343/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I have asked my officials to produce a business case detailing the options for a new headquarters on the site at Ballykelly. This will include a procurement strategy which will inform the most appropriate mode of delivery.

The Department will seek advice from Central Procurement Division, in DFP to inform the options within the procurement strategy.

### **Regulations on Slurry Tanks**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the connection between the rising number of farm deaths and the changes in scale, size, and capacity of, and regulations on, slurry tanks.

**(AQW 14344/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Health and Safety Executive (HSENI) has reported that 6 deaths associated with slurry tanks have occurred in the last 10 years. However, there is no association between the deaths and changes in scale, size, and capacity of, and regulations on, slurry tanks.

The risk from inhalation of slurry gasses when slurry is mixed, rather than the slurry tanks, poses the greatest threat to farmers. Slurry gas is invisible and heavier than air and in high concentrations its effect is to render any person who is exposed unconscious almost immediately.

### **Third Tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme**

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if her Department will consider including safety measures at slurry tank mixing and emptying points within the third tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme.

**(AQW 14395/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As you are aware I launched Tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Programme on 4th September. The eligible items included in this tranche were consulted on with Industry representatives and a number of items whilst not specific to slurry tanks were added under the enhanced occupational safety and business efficiency.

If there is a further tranche of the FMP we will consult with stakeholders on safety items which could be included specifically in relation to slurry tank mixing.

However Safety equipment is only part of the solution to creating a safe working environment for farmers and their families. The recent tragic events only confirm my belief that Health and Safety awareness must be incorporated into the day to day activities of the entire farm family. I am keen that my department develops a new health and safety short course directed towards the farming family. My Department is working closely with HSENI to progress this as quickly as possible.

## Forest service: Fire Breaks

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how often do the Forest Service maintain the fire breaks in its forest estate.

**(AQW 14418/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Forest Service manages the risk of fire to forests through its Emergency Fire Plan which was developed in co-operation with the NI Fire and Rescue Service. Fire breaks form one component of the management of risk.

The most effective fire breaks identified on Forest Service land tend to be natural features such as rivers and streams and these are not maintained. Additionally, forest roads provide a man-made fire break and are also identified as a protection measure, with maintenance carried out in line with routine road maintenance requirements. Occasionally, fire traces which have vegetation removed may be utilised as fire breaks although these traces are normally a temporary measure and are not maintained.

Unfortunately, many of these fire breaks proved ineffective during the gorse fires of May 2011 due to the abnormal conditions caused by two very cold winters, a prolonged dry spell and very strong winds with reports of fires jumping county roads. I acknowledge the hard work, dedication and professionalism of NI Fire and Rescue staff and my staff in Forest Service who worked in close cooperation to reduce the potential for further damage to property during these very difficult and dangerous fire incidents.

## Testing of Area 7a

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the observers involved in the testing of Area 7a were withdrawn from the Sentinel Fishery on 7 September 2012 when it had been agreed that they would remain in position until 15 September 2012.

**(AQW 14419/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department and AFBI were approached by industry to have a data collection project that would involve 3 vessels fishing for a week. The agreed objectives were (1) to target cod with semi-pelagic gear to be able to compare catch rates to that previously observed and (2) to determine whether there was a higher than previously observed abundance of older fish.

The 3 vessels were each given authorisation letters covering a 3 week period to enable them to participate in the project. This was done to ensure that the fishing trips could be undertaken at the time the skippers judged was best to do so.

By 7th September the 3 vessels involved had each been on 2 fishing trips involving more than 20 fishing/observer days. DARD and AFBI were unable to allocate any more resources to this project which had already exceeded the time anticipated and suggested by industry. AFBI has confirmed that it has more than sufficient information to address both project objectives.

## Lack of Days at Sea

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she has taken to resolve the problem of a lack of days at sea for the Portavogie fishing fleet in the Clyde (west coast) fishery.

**(AQW 14420/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Under the Cod Recovery Plan Member States are allocated an amount of fishing effort that can be taken in each sea area. This year due to a change in fishing patterns much more effort than usual has been expended by Scottish and local vessels in the West of Scotland. If the same amount of effort is expended in the second half of the year as was expended in the first half we would greatly exceed our effort allowance and would face a reduction in our effort allocation for 2013/14. The reduction might be greater than a one for one reduction depending on the extent of any effort overshoot.

Officials met with industry representatives in July 2012 to discuss possible options for managing fishing effort in the West of Scotland for the remainder of the year. A number of options were discussed but all would have created difficulties for certain parts of the fleet. The option that was introduced should benefit the Portavogie fleet to a greater extent than the others considered. This option allocated the remaining effort to those vessels that normally fish in the West of Scotland during the autumn and winter. The allocation was on a flat rate basis of 15 days per eligible vessel.

The options for acquiring additional effort are very limited and that is why the focus is on trying to live within our allocation. However we are trying to secure spare effort from other Member States. The English fleet also has some spare effort that we can use. Our share of any additional effort will only be in proportion to our overall share of West of Scotland effort which is 20%.

We can't make a decision on changing allocations until we are able to assess the effect of the restricted allocation that was introduced in August. Officials expect to be able to discuss this with the industry on 2nd October.

### Allocation of Days at Sea

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the methodology used in determining the allocation of fifteen days at sea for fishermen on the Clyde (west coast) fishery.

**(AQW 14422/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The table presented below details the methodology that was used to allocate 15 days at sea to those vessels in our fleet that normally fish in the West of Scotland from August to February 2012/13.

	<b>Kilowatt days</b>
NI TR2 2012 Basic Allocation	593170
NI TR2 Total Available Buy back	197723
NI Transfer to TR2 from NI TR1	38077
Total TR2 Available	828970
NI TR2 Used to 31st July (estd.)	540000
Remaining effort available (Aug-Jan)	288970
Power of NI WoS TR2 Fleet (Kilowatts)	(18526)
Days at Sea per eligible TR2 Vessel	15.6

The maximum effort available to the prawn fleet (TR2 effort) in the West of Scotland comes from various sources such as, the basic annual allocation under the Cod Recovery Plan (basic allocation), effort that is "bought-back" through the adoption of cod conservation measures (buy-back), and spare effort not used by whitefish vessels (TR1 Effort). The remaining effort for use in the year is the maximum, less that amount used to date. The amount used at the end of July was an estimate as there is always some delay in the Administrations receiving log sheets and these being placed on our data systems. The amount of effort remaining in kilowatt days was then divided by the total vessel power (kilowatts) of all the vessels that fished in the West of Scotland between August and February 2011/12. An allocation of 15 days each was made on this basis.

### Farm Safety Action Plan

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the Farm Safety Partnership Action Plan.

**(AQW 14426/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Farm Safety Partnership has agreed the following actions for 2012 -13:

### **Raising Awareness**

- 60 Focus Farmers are delivering a short (5-10 minutes) health and safety message at the start of each visit to their farm. On average 3500 farmers visit focus farms each year.
- CAFRE is also delivering a short (5-10 minutes) health and safety message at training events and is distributing advisory leaflets prepared by HSENI.
- CAFRE is allocating space to HSENI for displays at the large scale Greenmount open days. This has included the Grassland Event in May and the recent Horticulture 2012 event. A further five events are planned.
- The UFU, in partnership with HSENI, is delivering health and safety presentations at UFU Regional Group meetings.
- The UFU focused on health and safety issues in the industry at its stand in Balmoral Show.
- The UFU is encouraging the insurance industry to offer discounts to farmers who have attended formal health and safety courses.
- The HSENI will deliver a health and safety awareness day for farmers.

### **Training**

- DARD officials are currently developing a Health and Safety training programme for the farming family.
- HSENI has organised practical health and safety demonstrations at major regional agriculture shows.
- HSENI has worked with the organisers of regional agriculture shows regarding the safe operation of machinery during demonstrations and the safe handling of livestock.

### **Education**

- CAFRE is ensuring health and safety is an integral part of provision within education programmes for those people entering the industry
- CAFRE is continuing to work with HSENI in carrying out inspections of farms where CAFRE students are placed for work experience.

## **Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute**

**Mr Rogers** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the level of income generated, during the 2011/12 financial year, for work carried out on behalf of the private sector by her Department's Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Newforge.

**(AQW 14470/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Agri-food and Biosciences Institute generated £3,060,356 worth of revenue for work carried out on behalf of the private sector, during the 2011/12 financial year.

## **Funding for Centennial Events**

**Mr Rogers** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what funding is available for rural community groups that are celebrating centennial events associated with their institutions.

**(AQW 14471/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Funding is available under Measure 3.3 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-13, Encouragement of Tourism Activities, for new festivals, which could conceivably include events of the kind mentioned, subject to a competitive application process. In order to qualify for funding, such festivals are required to demonstrate that they are open to the wider community. This measure is delivered in South Down by the Down Rural Area Partnership (DRAP).

## Relocation of Departmental Headquarters

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many new posts will be created as a result of moving her Department's headquarters to Ballykelly.

**(AQW 14473/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** One of the main reasons for relocating my Departmental Headquarters is to ensure a more equitable spread of high quality public sector jobs across all of the north. It is too early in the process to speculate whether there will be any new posts created, however this relocation will provide greater employment and career progression opportunities for people in the North-West.

People currently living in the North-West who are working in Civil Service posts in the Greater Belfast area will be afforded the opportunity of taking up posts closer to home and will in future be able to go for promotion with a prospect of being able to remain in a location in the North-West.

Furthermore, the NICS Terms and Conditions of Employment also ensure that staff in non-mobile grades do not have to move to a new post if it is an unreasonable distance from their current work location. My Department does not expect all the staff currently in those posts to transfer to Ballykelly and so this may open up some employment opportunities for people living in the North-West. At this stage it is not possible to try to quantify the numbers involved.

## Planting Trees

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to plant more trees.

**(AQW 14483/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I remain committed to the policy of expanding tree cover from the current 8% to 12% of land area. To achieve this, my Department encourages tree planting by providing financial support from the Rural Development Programme through the Woodland Grant Scheme and agri-environment schemes.

Forest Service provide advice for farmers to help them identify suitable areas for planting which will integrate and complement their existing farming activities. Forest Service also publishes press articles and advisory information aimed at encouraging farmers to plant more trees.

Forest Service acknowledges that the current level of planting is insufficient to achieve 12% woodland cover by the middle of this century. To encourage an increased rate of planting, my Department, in consultation with stakeholders will explore ways to revise the nature of support for tree planting in the context of CAP reform and the draft Rural Development Regulation.

## Hedgerows

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to encourage farmers to grow and maintain hedgerows.

**(AQW 14484/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department recognises the importance of well-managed hedges in our landscape, which provide food and shelter for wildlife and act as a barrier to livestock.

All farmers who receive direct payments, such as Single Farm Payment, contribute to maintaining hedgerows by meeting Cross-Compliance standards and keeping their land in good agricultural and environmental condition which includes requirements for cutting, retention and maintenance of hedges.

Agri-environment participants go beyond the minimum cross-compliance standards by managing hedges for wildlife and planting hedges by carrying out field boundary restoration.

To manage hedges for wildlife Agri-environment Scheme participants are encouraged to maintain a variety of hedge heights, widths and shapes to provide an invaluable habitat for wildlife, cut a hedge

no more than once in two years, and leave a 1m uncultivated strip as a buffer from farming operations from the edge of the field boundary.

Scheme participants are encouraged to plant new hedges through payments in return for field boundary restoration. Restored hedges are required to have a mix of native hedge and tree plant species and must be protected from grazing animals and weeds. All hedge restoration and planting must follow the exact line of an original boundary. Agri-environment scheme participants restore over 500 km of hedgerows annually.

### Relocation of Forest Service Headquarters

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that one of the reasons for relocating the Forest Service headquarters to Fermanagh is because 15 percent of Fermanagh is already forested, and that this represents 38 percent of all forests managed by the Forest Service, how these percentages will change when her Department meets its aim to double the area of tree cover over the next fifty years.

**(AQW 14490/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Forestry Strategy aims to increase woodland cover to 12% of land area. Since this increase is likely to take place on land with limited agricultural potential, the table below illustrates how such an increase would look, by county, assuming that expansion takes place on 20% of surface water gley soils with poor and impeded drainage (based on the soil survey published by Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute) and excluding land over 300 metres elevation and sites designated for environmental conservation which are unsuitable for tree planting.

County	Current woodland cover as percentage of land area	Estimated increase in woodland cover as percentage of land area
Fermanagh	15	23
Derry	9	12
Tyrone	8	13
Antrim	6	11
Armagh	5	12
Down	4	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

Any change in the relative percentage of Forest Service and non Forest Service woodland will depend upon how much of the new planting occurs on Departmental land and how much is planted by farmers and landowners.

The current area of Forest Service woodland in County Fermanagh as a percentage of all Forest Service woodland is 30%, rather than the 38% which I stated in my earlier correspondence with you.

### Relocation of Forest Service Headquarters

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide a breakdown, by grade, of the 61 Forest Service posts based in Belfast that will be moving to Fermanagh as a result of the relocation of Forest Service headquarters.

**(AQW 14491/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** There are currently 61 posts based in Belfast, however it is now expected that over time 57 of these posts will transfer to the new HQ in Fermanagh. This reduction is a result of a review which separated out headquarters functions from operational functions associated with eastern forests.

The breakdown of the 57 posts is as follows:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>No of posts</b>
Chief Executive	1
Accountant (Deputy Principal)	1
Administrative Assistant	3
Administrative Officer	10
Deputy Principal	5
Director PPTO (Grade 7)	2
Director Grade 7	2
Executive Officer I	2
Executive Officer II	8
Forest Officer Grade III	3
Forest Officer I	3
Forest Officer II	3
Director Forest Operations Grade 6	1
Mapper	4
Personal Secretary	1
PTO Graphic Designer	1
Senior Mapper	1
Staff Officer (Accountant)	1
Staff Officer	5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>

### **Non-Industrial Forest Service Jobs**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many non-industrial Forest Service jobs are based in each county.

**(AQW 14492/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The number of non-industrial Forest Service jobs based in each county is as follows:

Co Antrim	61
Co Fermanagh	17
Co Down	9
Co Derry	8

### **Banning the Use of Wild Animals in Circuses**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to introduce legislation to ban the use of wild animals in circuses.

**(AQW 14498/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As stated in my previous answer to you, while I have no immediate plans to introduce a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses it is a matter that I am keeping under review. I have asked my officials to continue to monitor developments in Britain regarding the proposed licensing system, and eventual ban, announced by Minister Jim Paice earlier this year. I also want to examine developments in the south of Ireland, and to take account of legal rulings in Europe.

As I said in my earlier response I would also want to engage fully with circus operators and welfare organisations. With this in mind I hope to meet the Born Free Foundation to discuss the issue with them in the near future.

### **Gas Detectors for Farmers**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department can provide financial assistance for farmers to install gas detectors to warn them of danger when they are mixing slurry.

**(AQW 14531/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** There is no financial assistance for gas detectors currently available. Current HSENI advice on pocket sized meters to measure slurry gases is that whilst they may be a useful guide as to the level of gases in the immediate area, as gas concentrations rise so quickly at the start of mixing this device may not give adequate warning or time to escape. Therefore HSENI recommend breathing apparatus with its own air supply and that such work is best left to fully trained competent contractors.

If there is a further tranche of the FMP we will consult with stakeholders on safety items which could be included specifically in relation to slurry tank mixing and will consider if they can be financed under this Programme.

However Safety equipment is only part of the solution to creating a safe working environment for farmers and their families. The recent tragic events only confirm my belief that Health and Safety awareness must be incorporated into the day to day activities of the entire farm family. I am keen that my department develops a new health and safety short course directed towards the farming family. My Department is working closely with HSENI to progress this as quickly as possible.

### **Gas Detectors for Farmers**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there are any plans to make installing gas detectors a specific requirement when building new slurry tanks.

**(AQW 14532/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** New slurry tanks must be built with two outside mixing points; safety gang slats; and incorporate as much ventilation as possible to the tank with at least a door at each end of the building.

This facilitates a safe system of work and the Health and Safety Executive (HSENI) encourages all farmers to develop and follow a safe system of work.

HSENI also advise that gas detection monitors/meters are not a substitute for a safe system of work. Using a meter at the start of mixing as a safety measure is no use as the slurry gas concentration rises so quickly it is dangerous to remain in the building and a meter will not give adequate warning or time to escape. At the start of mixing slurry gas concentration rises and readings above 500 parts per million are very common in livestock buildings during tank mixing. Such levels will render most monitors ineffective.

HSENI has published guidance on working safely with slurry and on slurry gas detection monitors. This is available on its website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

## Gas Detectors for Farmers

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the need for firms supplying slatts or dealers supplying slurry tanks to be required to include gas detectors.

**(AQW 14533/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** New slurry tanks must be built with two outside mixing points; safety gang slats; and incorporate as much ventilation as possible to the tank with at least a door at each end of the building.

This facilitates a safe system of work and the Health and Safety Executive (HSENI) encourages all farmers to develop and follow a safe system of work.

HSENI also advise that gas detection monitors/meters are not a substitute for a safe system of work. Using a meter at the start of mixing as a safety measure is no use as the slurry gas concentration rises so quickly it is dangerous to remain in the building and a meter will not give adequate warning or time to escape. At the start of mixing slurry gas concentration rises and readings above 500 parts per million are very common in livestock buildings during tank mixing. Such levels will render most monitors ineffective.

HSENI has published guidance on working safely with slurry and on slurry gas detection monitors. This is available on its website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

## Farm Modernisation Scheme: Gas Detectors

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether gas detection systems could be included in farm modernisation schemes.

**(AQW 14534/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As you are aware I launched Tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Programme on 4th September. The eligible items included in this tranche were consulted on with Industry representatives and a number of items, whilst not specific to slurry tanks, were added under the enhanced occupational safety and business efficiency.

If there is a further tranche of the FMP we will consult with stakeholders on safety items which could be included specifically in relation to slurry tank mixing. HSENI advice on pocket sized meters to measure slurry gases is that whilst they may be a useful guide as to the level of gases in the immediate area, as gas concentrations rise so quickly at the start of mixing this device may not give adequate warning or time to escape.

However Safety equipment is only part of the solution to creating a safe working environment for farmers and their families. The recent tragic events only confirm my belief that Health and Safety awareness must be incorporated into the day to day activities of the entire farm family. I am keen that my department develops a new health and safety short course directed towards the farming family. My Department is working closely with HSENI to progress this as quickly as possible.

## Farm Quality Assurance Requirement: Gas Detectors

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether gas detectors could be a Farm Quality Assurance requirement.

**(AQW 14535/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Farm Quality Assurance Scheme is a voluntary industry funded scheme managed by the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) and as such, my Department has no remit in this scheme.

The specific requirements of such voluntary schemes are determined by the respective Scheme Standard Setting Committees. However, as I am sure you would agree, there is no substitute for safe working practices on all farms, whether in assurance schemes or not. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the appropriate authority in this regard and its website includes good guidelines on safe farm working.

## Departmental Staff Moving to Ballykelly

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of civil servants expected to move to the new departmental headquarters in Ballykelly to occupy (i) full-time permanent posts; and (ii) temporary posts.

**(AQW 14538/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** It is not possible to say how many civil servants may choose to move. The Department has currently around 800 permanent posts in its offices at Dundonald House and Hydebank, which will be affected by the relocation of the new headquarters at Ballykelly. It is not possible at this point to predict how many temporary posts may exist at the time of relocation.

## Departmental Headquarters: Ballykelly

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the expected cost of providing new buildings and equipment for the new departmental headquarters at Ballykelly; and whether this has been provided for in the estimates.

**(AQW 14539/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The estimated cost of providing modern office accommodation for headquarters staff is £26m. It follows that by using the Executive-owned site, and utilising the buildings on the site, there is potential to reduce that cost significantly.

I have asked my officials to produce a business case detailing the options available at Ballykelly. The final cost of the project will be dependent upon the agreed configuration.

## Website for the Farm Safety Partnership

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what consideration her Department has given to creating a website for the Farm Safety Partnership and publication of associated documentation or making the information available on an existing website.

**(AQW 14570/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** All documentation relating to promotion and advice regarding health and safety issues on farms is available on the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) website. My Department, as part of the Farm Safety Partnership, is considering how the information currently available can be developed to reflect more fully the work of the Partnership. We are also considering opportunities to develop further links with the HSENI site for farmers using the DARD website.

## Aspergillosis

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the scale of the problem of aspergillosis.

**(AQW 14656/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Aspergillosis is the name given to a wide variety of diseases caused by infection by fungi of the genus *Aspergillus*. The most common cause of such disease is *Aspergillus fumigatus* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspergillus\\_fumigatus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspergillus_fumigatus) which may grow in compost, damp and mouldy feeding or bedding material such as hay or straw.

Currently in the North low numbers of cases of aspergillosis are diagnosed annually by the AFBI Veterinary Laboratories, usually single figures.

There is no evidence that the disease levels are significant or rising.

## Regulations Banning the Use of Battery Cages for Laying Hens

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the level of compliance with the regulations banning the use of battery cages for laying hens.

**(AQW 14673/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Egg producers in the north of Ireland are now fully compliant with the requirements of Council Directive 99/74/EC (the Laying Hens Directive), as are those in the rest of Ireland and Britain.

## Relocation of DARD Headquarters

**Mr McQuillan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of how much the North West will benefit economically from moving the departmental headquarters to Ballykelly,

**(AQW 14683/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The North West region will benefit from this project in a number of ways.

As well as the construction jobs supported through the refit of the accommodation at the site, local businesses and suppliers in the area will benefit from a larger customer base. The new headquarters will need to be serviced, with functions such as cleaning, catering and security services which will impact on employment in the area. I will also ensure that the development of the site benefits the local community – how that will be met will be included in the business case but I envisage, for example, my Department being able to open up its conference rooms for community use.

This relocation will also open up employment and promotion opportunities and ensure greater accessibility to DARD services for those living in the region.

I believe that this relocation to Ballykelly, taken with the wide distribution across the region of other DARD premises, emphasises that DARD is a Department that promotes regional economic re-balancing and is committed to the sustainability of rural communities.

As you will appreciate, quantifying these benefits will not be easy. I have directed my Permanent Secretary to provide me with a business case which will consider the options available to accommodate the DARD headquarters at Ballykelly. This business case will consider in more detail the benefits, economic and otherwise, of the relocation.

## Single Point of Contact to Report Animal Welfare Issues

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what efforts are being made to introduce a single point of contact to report acts of animal cruelty or other animal welfare issues.

**(AQW 14723/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As I advised you during Oral Questions on Monday 24 September 2012, I have recently discussed the issue of a single point of contact for animal welfare matters with the Chief Constable. The USPCA have also raised the matter with me at a meeting earlier this year as they believed that members of the public were not always sure of the best point of contact, given the respective roles of the PSNI, DARD and Councils in animal welfare matters and rural and wildlife crime.

As I said in my reply to you, I think that one single point of contact would be very helpful. However, it will take time to discuss the matter with Councils and the PSNI and the staffing and financial implications, as well as operational matters, will need to be carefully explored.

In the meantime, I can assure you that we have done much work to date in promoting the fact that there are now 5 Council appointed Animal Welfare Officers who are doing sterling work across the north of Ireland.

Information on the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 along with the contact numbers for my Department, Council Animal Welfare Officers and the PSNI can be found on the NIDirect website and on Council websites.

## Relocation of DARD Headquarters

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the relocation of her Department's headquarters, whether her previous statement that none of the 800 civil servants would be forced to move to Ballykelly applies to all staff across all grades and specialisms.

**(AQW 14864/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I have said publically that I do not want to see any existing staff forced to move. I recognise that relocation could cause some problems for some of the existing staff and I will take the time that we have to develop and implement change. That can include looking at more flexible working, and doing things differently including optimising the use of ICT. Staff have rights and responsibilities under their existing contracts. Those rights will be honoured. I expect that the key element in all of this will be to work with the trade unions in the time ahead. We will continue that dialogue until 2015.

I do not expect that existing members of staff will be forced to move but it may not be possible in all situations.

## Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

### Performing Arts Sector

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking to ensure that small and medium sized enterprises within the performing arts sector of our creative industries are supported in making the transition into established production companies which are able to fulfil their export potential, and to prevent talented individuals within these groups leaving Northern Ireland for better paid opportunities elsewhere.

**(AQW 13736/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):** The Arts Council has a range of programmes to which emerging drama companies and actors can apply. These include the Small Grants Programme, Lottery Project Funding for organisations as well as the various strands of the Support for Individual Artists Programme.

In addition the Creative Industries Innovation Fund can offer support to theatre companies and other creative enterprises where they demonstrate innovation through people via:

- Investment in the development of exceptional talents
- Encouragement of entrepreneurial activity and of an enterprise culture
- Creative talents in traditional industries
- Internationalisation of talent by drawing talented people and resources back to the region; exposing local talent to new international markets and showcasing the creative industries to develop the region's image and brand.

### Allegations of Sectarianism by Sandy Row Boxing Club

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to provide details of the investigation into the allegations of sectarianism by Sandy Row Boxing Club; and when she expects this to be completed.

**(AQW 13745/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** In 2011 Sport NI investigated allegations of sectarianism within boxing in the north of Ireland that were raised by Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club (SRABC) with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). As part of this process, Sport NI met with SRABC and the governing body for boxing, the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC). The purpose of these meetings was to explore the possibility and practicalities of implementing an '8 Point Plan' proposed by SRABC as a means of addressing its concerns. As a result of these discussions the UPBC agreed to implement, as far as

practicable, the '8 Point Plan'. The Sport NI investigation was completed last year on the understanding that the UPBC would move forward on that basis.

### **Sandy Row Boxing Club**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support her Department has offered to Sandy Row Boxing Club in light of the allegations of sectarianism in the sport.

**(AQW 13746/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** My Department's Officials have met with Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club (SRABC) to discuss the club's areas of concern. They have also discussed the matter with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) and encouraged both parties to engage to seek a satisfactory resolution. My Department, through Sport NI, has also worked with the IABA and SRABC to implement the proposals in the club's '8-Point Strategy for the Reform of Boxing'.

Furthermore, DCAL, through Sport NI, is developing a new boxing strategy initiative, the aim of which is to assist sport to promote inclusivity, address any issues of inequality and ensure that anyone who wishes to take part in boxing at participative and competitive levels has the opportunity to do so.

### **Investment in Boxing Clubs**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what measures will be taken to ensure that the recently announced investment in boxing clubs will be used to benefit boxing clubs in Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 13752/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The recently announced investment in boxing clubs in the north of Ireland will be administered and managed by Sport NI.

Any awards made through the programme will specifically target the needs of individual clubs either through the provision of equipment for training and competition, or capital works carried out at premises used by clubs.

### **Participation in Minority Sports**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the success of athletes from Northern Ireland in the Olympics and Paralympics, whether a strategy is being, or has been, developed to support and encourage participation in minority sports.

**(AQW 13753/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Neither my Department nor Sport NI recognises the term "minority sports". DCAL has, however, in association with Sport NI, already developed a strategy to support and encourage participation in sport as a whole across the north of Ireland. Sport Matters, the Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019, recognises the diverse nature, size and needs of different sports and sets out Government's commitment to promote sport in general and to support the governing bodies of all recognised sports. I am continuing to consider options in this regard.

### **Monies Allocated to Minority Sports**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what monies have been allocated to minority sports and their governing bodies in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 13754/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Neither my Department nor Sport NI recognises the term "minority sports". It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

## Investment in Boxing Clubs

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether a portion of the recently announced investment in boxing will be used to develop and establish boxing in working class Protestant areas.

**(AQW 13755/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I can confirm that decisions on the distribution of funding will be taken on the basis of identified boxing needs. Sport NI are currently carrying out an exercise to establish boxing's needs in the north, including those in working class Protestant areas.

## Re-Imaging Communities Funding

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when the next round of Re-Imaging Communities funding will be available from the Arts Council.

**(AQW 13764/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Arts Council applied to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for funding to build upon the key successes of the Re-Imaging Programme.

The Arts Council has advised that it recently received confirmation of this funding and it is expected that the programme will re-open later this year. The re-opening of the programme will be publicised in the media, the Arts Council's e-newsletter and its website.

## Freedom of Information Requests

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail, for each of the last three financial years, (i) the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by her Department; (ii) the number of FOI requests responded to within the 20 working day requirement; (iii) the number of FOI requests that have taken longer than 20 working days to complete; and (iv) the number of FOI requests which were refused, broken down by the reason for refusal.

**(AQW 13770/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The information requested is published in a series of FOI Annual Reports which are on the basis of calendar years, not financial years. The reports can be accessed from the OFMDFM website at:

[http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/improving-public-services/information\\_management\\_and\\_central\\_advisory\\_branch/annual-reports-and-statistics.htm](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/improving-public-services/information_management_and_central_advisory_branch/annual-reports-and-statistics.htm)

The Member should note that statistics for 2011 are provided on a quarterly basis and cannot be seen as validated until the publication of the 2011 FOI Annual Report.

## Draft Executive Papers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how many draft Executive papers, for approval by the Minister, have not yet been approved; (ii) the date the Minister received each paper; and (iii) the subject matter of each paper

**(AQW 13788/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

## Funding for Boxing Clubs

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail what the Minister expects will be achieved through the recently announced funding for boxing clubs.

**(AQW 13809/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The main aim of the Boxing Investment Programme is to help the sport of boxing address the strategic facility and equipment needs of boxing clubs in the north of Ireland.

It is anticipated that the funding will help the sport to improve participation opportunities across the community and contribute more effectively to the Sport Matters Strategy.

### **Disabled Parking Provision at Portavoe Reservoir**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on her Departments plans to review disabled parking provision at Portavoe Reservoir.

**(AQW 13812/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** NI Water has advised the Department of a schedule of remedial works that will close particular reservoirs, including Portavoe, to DCAL permit holders for an estimated 12 months. Consequently the Department has suspended the review of disabled car parking until NI Water has undertaken and completed the remedial works.

### **Number of Salmon Caught on Lough Neagh**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of salmon caught on Lough Neagh in each of the last five years, broken down by month.

**(AQW 13817/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** A small number of fishermen on Lough Neagh are licensed by DCAL for the capture of salmon and freshwater fish. Catches of salmon are monitored through a carcass tagging scheme and the numbers declared per month are detailed below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>Total</b>
2007	0	41	7	48
2008	0	43	13	56
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	0	6	3	9
2011	2	26	8	36

### **Salmon Detected by the Bushmills Research Station**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether any salmon detected by the Bushmills Research Station in the last 9 months showed signs of net marks.

**(AQW 13818/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** In the past 9 months two salmon passing through the Bushmills Salmon Research Station were detected with physical stress marks on their bodies.

It cannot be confirmed that these were net marks.

### **Funding to Boxing Clubs**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the criteria that will be used to allocate the recently announced funding to boxing clubs.

**(AQW 13819/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Boxing Investment Programme is still at a developmental stage; however, I can confirm that decisions on the distribution of funding will be taken on the basis of identified needs. It is anticipated that eligibility and assessment criteria will be consistent with other Sport NI programmes.

## Indoor Athletics Area

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has any intention of developing an indoor athletics area.

**(AQW 13828/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** There are a number of indoor athletics areas currently available in the north of Ireland. Sport NI, which is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport, provided £2.5 million towards the development of a competition standard indoor athletics facility at the Odyssey Arena which hosted the Irish Indoor Athletics Championships in February 2012. In addition to this, facilities are also available at the Meadowbank Sports Arena in Magherafelt and the Sports Institute at the University of Ulster campus in Jordanstown. I have no plans at present to develop further indoor athletics areas.

## Funding for Pipe Bands

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding is available for pipe bands.

**(AQW 14308/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Funding in support of bands in the north of Ireland is disbursed through the Arts Council and the Ulster Scots Agency.

The Arts Council's Musical Instruments for Bands Programme provides grants from £500 to £5k for the purchase of instruments. This scheme is available to bands based in the north of Ireland, which are formally constituted.

Funding is also awarded by the Arts Council through its lottery funded Small Grants Programme for band related activity (which includes equipment and tuition). For items over £10,000 funding is available from its Equipment Programme

Bands can also apply for funding for musical tuition from the Ulster-Scots Agency through its Financial Assistance Scheme.

## Boxing Clubs

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to provide a list of boxing clubs, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 14366/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Neither the Department nor Sport NI retains information on boxing clubs, broken down by constituency. This would be a matter for the governing body of the sport, the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council.

## Funding for Boxing Clubs

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the boxing clubs which received funding from the Sports Council in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 14367/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The list below details the boxing clubs who have received funding from Sport NI in each of the last five years:

### 2007/2008 FINANCIAL YEAR

Name of Club	Total (£)
Bishop Kelly ABC	9,780
Dromore ABC	7,500
Oliver Plunkett ABC	6,920
St Agnes ABC	8,650

**2008/2009 FINANCIAL YEAR**

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Holy Trinity ABC	10,000
Keady ABC	9,900
Monkstown ABC	10,000
Saints ABC	8,920
Star ABC	7,821

**2009/2010 FINANCIAL YEAR**

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
All Saints ABC	8,000
Banbridge ABC	9,353
Cairn Lodge ABC	2,374
Ligoneil ABC	3,000
Lurgan ABC	9,487
Monkstown ABC	10,000
St Pauls ABC	9,540

**2010/2011 FUNDING YEAR**

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Canal Amateur Boxing Academy	21,366
Castlereagh ABC	19,926
Derrylin ABC	8,959
Eastside ABC	30,000
Gleann ABC	16,722
Holy Family Boxing Club	24,344
Holy Trinity ABC	24,322
Immaculata ABC	29,395
Ligoneil ABC	28,826
Poleglass ABC	4,245
Monkstown ABC	13,898
Silverbridge ABC	1,700
St Pauls ABC	29,574

**2011/2012 FUNDING YEAR**

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Canal Amateur Boxing Academy	2,299
Derrylin ABC	6,000
Saints ABC	4,980
St. John Bosco ABC	3,800

**Boxers Representing the UK**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how boxers can compete for the UK at international events, such as the Olympics.

**(AQW 14407/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** In the case of the Olympics, boxers can compete for and as part of Team GB and NI provided they are members of the British Amateur Boxing Association and are selected by the British Olympic Association through an International Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) approved qualification system. At World and European boxing championships, boxers can only compete for IABA affiliated national federations. In the case of the Commonwealth Games, boxers can only compete for countries/nations that are defined by and form part of the Commonwealth Games Federation.

**Drainage Problems on Football Pitches**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there are any grants available to help communities fix drainage problems on football pitches.

**(AQW 14413/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding to sport in the north of Ireland and providing advice on grants that may be available, including those that might be used to help communities fix drainage problems on football pitches.

Sport NI does not currently have any grant programmes available that could help fix football pitch drainage problems. However, Sport NI's website, [www.sportni.net/Funding](http://www.sportni.net/Funding), provides information on current funding programmes and also provides links to a range of other funders, including charitable trusts that may be able to assist communities in this regard.

**Currach Racing**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding is available from her Department for the currach racing.

**(AQW 14509/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Sport NI has responsibility for the distribution of funding to sport throughout the north of Ireland. Currach racing is not currently recognised by Sport NI as a sporting activity, and is not therefore eligible to apply for Exchequer funding at this time.

**Departmental Staff Facing Criminal Charges**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many departmental staff are currently (i) suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations; and (ii) not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations.

**(AQW 14559/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The information requested in respect of DCAL staff is contained in the table below.

<b>Number of DCAL Staff</b>	
(i) suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations	0
(ii) not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations	1

### **First and Second Languages**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to provide the most up-to-date statistical breakdown of all recorded first and second languages, including indigenous languages, minority ethnic languages, and sign language.

**(AQW 14571/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Department does not hold the information pertaining to languages in the format you have requested.

In the 2011/12 Continuous Household Survey my Department included a series of questions on language usage and knowledge of Irish and Ulster-Scots. Also included was a question on knowledge of Sign language. The results of the survey are currently being analysed and the figures will be available later this year.

The 2011 Census included a question on the two indigenous languages (Irish and Ulster-Scots). The statistics will be published within the next few months.

### **Belfast's Cultural Night**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the success of Belfast's Cultural Night.

**(AQW 14642/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** This event has become part of the cultural calendar giving the arts sector the opportunity to thank the public for subsidising the arts, by offering free events, and to celebrate and showcase the strength and quality of the arts in Belfast.

It is too early at this stage to give an accurate assessment of the success of Belfast's Cultural Night. However, the Arts Council has advised that over 220 artists and organisations participated in the event and that audience figures for the past 3 years have been in excess of 20,000.

### **Number of Anglers who use the River Bush**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number of anglers who used the River Bush; and (ii) the revenue generated as a result, between March and August in 2012.

**(AQW 14717/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Anglers can purchase day tickets for the special stretches of the River Bush and the number of day tickets sold and the income generated is detailed below.

<b>Year (March – August)</b>	<b>Number of day tickets sold</b>	<b>Income generated</b>
2012	668	£15,554.50

It is not possible to confirm the numbers of anglers using the unrestricted stretches of the River Bush as these are covered by general angling licences and permits, which allow anglers to fish a range of waters.

## Expenditure on Updating Library Stocks

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the expenditure on updating library stocks in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14828/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Libraries NI has informed me that its total spend on library stock in each of the last 3 years is as follows:

2009-2010	£3,376*
2010-2011	£3,460*
2011-2012	£4,146* (subject to audit)

\*Total to the nearest £'000

## Department of Education

### Capping of Admissions to Schools

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to list the post primary schools which are unable to meet the 500 enrolment figure for years 8-12 due to the Department's capping of admissions at fewer than 100, broken down by (i) type of school; and (ii) Education and Library Board.

**(AQW 14337/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** There are 58 post primary schools with an admissions number of fewer than 100, as detailed in table (1) below, broken down by type of school and Education and Library Board. Of these, the 21 schools listed in table (2) were fully or over subscribed with applications for admission to Year 8 in September 2012 and the number of pupils they could admit was restricted by their approved admission number.

Admissions numbers are derived from the enrolment number of a school which is a reflection of the physical capacity of the school. Where a school wishes to expand its capacity it can seek to do so through the normal Development Proposal process by which requests for significant changes to schools are considered. Where schools are oversubscribed with applications for admission they can request a temporary increase of the admissions number from the Department. In considering such requests, the Department takes account of any demographic pressures in the area and the availability of places in other school of the same educational category within reasonable travelling distance of the pupil's home address.

School's admissions and enrolment numbers do not include pupils with statements of special education need, or pupils admitted on appeal or pupils admitted through the Exceptional Circumstances Body.

**TABLE 1**

Management Type	Board	School
Controlled	North Eastern	Ballycastle High School
Controlled	North Eastern	Garvagh High School
Controlled	South Eastern	Nendrum College Comber
Controlled	South Eastern	The High School Ballynahinch
Controlled	South Eastern	Saintfield High School

<b>Management Type</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>School</b>
Controlled	Southern	Aughnacloy College
Controlled	Southern	Drumglass High School Dungannon
Controlled	Southern	Fivemiletown High School
Controlled	Southern	Markethill High School
Controlled	Southern	Newry High School
Controlled	Southern	Newtownhamilton High School
Controlled	Southern	Rathfriland High School
Controlled	Western	Castledearg High School
Controlled	Western	Collegiate Grammar School Enniskillen
Controlled	Western	Lisnaskea High School
Controlled	Western	Omagh Academy
Vol Grammar	North Eastern	Dominican College Portstewart
Vol Grammar	South Eastern	St Patrick's Grammar School Downpatrick
Vol Grammar	Southern	St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel
Vol Grammar	Southern	St Joseph's Grammar School Donaghmore
Vol Grammar	Southern	The Royal School Dungannon
Vol Grammar	Western	Mount Lourdes Grammar School
Vol Grammar	Western	Portora Royal Enniskillen
Roman Catholic Maintained	Belfast	St Gemma's High School
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	Our Lady of Lourdes High School Ballymoney
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Colm's High School Magherafelt
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Joseph's College Coleraine
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Mary's College Ballymena
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Paul's College Coleraine
Roman Catholic Maintained	South Eastern	De La Salle Secondary School Downpatrick
Roman Catholic Maintained	South Eastern	St Colmcille's High School Crossgar
Roman Catholic Maintained	South Eastern	St Columbanus College Bangor
Roman Catholic Maintained	South Eastern	St Colman's High School Ballynahinch
Roman Catholic Maintained	Southern	St Brigid's High School Armagh
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	Dean Maguirc College Omagh
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Aidan's High School Derrylin
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Comhghall's College Enniskillen
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Eugene's High School Castledearg
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Eugene's College Rosslea

<b>Management Type</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>School</b>
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Franchea's College Enniskillen
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St John's High School Dromore
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Joseph's College Enniskillen
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Mary's College Irvinestown
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Mary's High School, Belleek
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Patrick's High School Dungiven
Controlled Integrated	North Eastern	Crumlin Integrated College
Controlled Integrated	South Eastern	Priory College Holywood
Controlled Integrated	Southern	Brownlow College Craigavon
Grant Maintained Integrated	North Eastern	North Coast College Coleraine
Grant Maintained Integrated	North Eastern	Sperrin Integrated College Magherfelt
Grant Maintained Integrated	North Eastern	Ulidia Integrated College Carrickfergus
Grant Maintained Integrated	South Eastern	Blackwater Integrated College Downpatrick
Grant Maintained Integrated	South Eastern	Shimna Integrated College Newcastle
Grant Maintained Integrated	South Eastern	Strangford Integrated College
Grant Maintained Integrated	Southern	New-Bridge Integrated College Loughbrickland
Grant Maintained Integrated	Southern	Integrated College Dungannon
Grant Maintained Integrated	Western	Drumragh Integrated College Omagh
Grant Maintained Integrated	Western	Erne Integrated College Enniskillen

**TABLE 2**

<b>Management Type</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>School</b>
Controlled	South Eastern	Nendrum College Comber
Controlled	South Eastern	Saintfield High School
Controlled	Southern	Newtownhamilton High School
Controlled	Southern	Rathfriland High School
Controlled	Western	Collegiate Grammar School Enniskillen
Controlled	Western	Omagh Academy
Vol Grammar	North Eastern	Dominican College Portstewart
Vol Grammar	South Eastern	St Patrick's Grammar School Downpatrick
Vol Grammar	Southern	St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel
Vol Grammar	Western	Mount Lourdes Grammar School
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Colm's High School Draperstown
Roman Catholic Maintained	North Eastern	St Paul's College Coleraine

Management Type	Board	School
Roman Catholic Maintained	South Eastern	St Columbanus College Bangor
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	Dean Maguirc College Omagh
Roman Catholic Maintained	Western	St Franchea's College Enniskillen
Grant Maintained Integrated	North Eastern	Sperrin Integrated College Magherfelt
Grant Maintained Integrated	North Eastern	Ulidia Integrated College Carrickfergus
Grant Maintained Integrated	South Eastern	Shimna Integrated College Newcastle
Grant Maintained Integrated	South Eastern	Strangford Integrated College
Grant Maintained Integrated	Southern	New-Bridge Integrated College Loughbrickland
Grant Maintained Integrated	Western	Drumragh Integrated College Omagh

### School Preferences

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Education under what circumstances would it be appropriate to allow families to change their school preferences in the knowledge that their children were unsuccessful in achieving a grammar school place.

**(AQW 14369/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** In most cases parents will not know which post-primary school has offered their child a place until they receive the placement letter on 25 May (2013 Transfer Procedure timetable). In the process parents are advised to nominate at least three post-primary schools - at least one of which should be a non-grammar school - and, assuming they do so, it is likely the pupil will have been placed in a school in accordance with stated parental choice. Should they wish to change their preference after placement they would have to approach the appropriate Education and Library Board for information about schools which still have places available, and an application to one of those schools would then be processed. If only one school was nominated on the Transfer Form by a parent and the application was unsuccessful, the appropriate Board would write to the parent and ask for additional preferences. If the parent asked to change their preference at this stage they would be advised that revised preferences would not be processed until after placement letters have issued.

In exceptional circumstances a change of preference can be accepted up to a specific date in May but a child not being selected by a grammar school would not be considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

### New Schools

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to his statement on 25 June 2012, to detail on what date will each of the new schools open.

**(AQW 14378/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My statement of 25 June 2012 gave approval for 18 major school projects to proceed. All these projects were identified as the highest priority projects following a rigorous selection process. The design and planning work still required on all these projects to enable them to reach tender approval /construction stage is a complex process which also involves a number of statutory approvals. As such, at this stage in the overall design process it is not possible to give definitive opening dates for any of these projects.

## Vacancies in non-Departmental Public Bodies

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of membership vacancies within the governance structures of each of his Department's non-Departmental Public Bodies, including the length of time each post has been vacant, and the projected timescale for filling each vacancy. **(AQW 14380/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:**

<b>Non-Departmental Public Body</b>	<b>Number of Vacancies</b>	<b>Vacant From</b>	<b>Projected timescale for filling each vacancy</b>
<b>Belfast Education &amp; Library Board</b>	<b>1 General (Teacher) Member</b> <b>4 Councillor Members</b> <b>1 General (Other) Member</b>	<b>September 2012</b> <b>May 2011</b> <b>February 2012</b>	<b>December 2012</b> <b>Currently under review*</b> <b>Currently under review*</b>
General Teaching Council	1	October 2010	April 2013
Council for Integrated Education	1 vacancy 1 vacancy 1 vacancy 1 vacancy	April 2005 April 2006 September 2009 May 2011	Currently under review*
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	1 Council Member 1 Chair	July 2010 January 2011	December 2012 December 2012
North Eastern Education & Library Board	1 Councillor Member	May 2012	Currently under review*
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	5 Education & Library Board Members	January 2010	Currently under review*
Youth Council	1 vacancy 1 vacancy 1 vacancy 1 vacancy 1 vacancy 3 vacancies 1 vacancy	September 2005 March 2006 September 2006 December 2006 June 2007 January 2010 October 2010	Currently under review*

\* The timescale for filling these vacancies is currently under review in the context of the timescale for the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

## School Uniform Grants

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education how many (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary school pupils are in receipt of school uniform grants, broken down by (a) school type; and (b) Education and Library Board.

**(AQW 14382/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The number of school uniform grants awarded by the Education and Library Boards to date in the current school year are set out in the following tables. The Boards have advised that, as they are currently processing a number of applications for the uniform grant, the figures are subject to change.

### BELB

School Type	Number of Pupils
Controlled Primary	3,630
Maintained Primary	4,722
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	180
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	4
Controlled Special Primary	248
Maintained Special Primary	64
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>8,848</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	1,553
Maintained PostPrimary	2,988
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	582
Voluntary Grammar	713
Controlled Special PostPrimary	206
Maintained Special PostPrimary	95
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>6,137</b>

### NEELB

SCHOOL TYPE	Number of Pupils
Controlled Primary	5,442
Maintained Primary	2,208
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	360
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	4
Controlled Special Primary	160
Maintained Special Primary	6
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>8,180</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	2,303
Maintained PostPrimary	1,255
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	487

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Voluntary Grammar	506
Controlled Special PostPrimary	191
Maintained Special PostPrimary	7
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>4,749</b>

**SEELB**

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Controlled Primary	2,990
Maintained Primary	2,291
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	81
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	0
Controlled Special Primary	179
Maintained Special Primary	0
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>5,541</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	1,441
Maintained PostPrimary	1,432
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	262
Voluntary Grammar	431
Controlled Special PostPrimary	205
Maintained Special PostPrimary	18
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>3,789</b>

**SELB**

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Controlled Primary	2,875
Maintained Primary	6,308
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	296
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	0
Controlled Special Primary	102
Maintained Special Primary	0
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>9,581</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	1,278
Maintained PostPrimary	3,026
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	220
Voluntary Grammar	778

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Controlled Special PostPrimary	84
Maintained Special PostPrimary	0
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>5,386</b>

**WELB**

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Controlled Primary	2,192
Maintained Primary	6,168
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	311
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	0
Controlled Special Primary	3
Maintained Special Primary	0
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>8,674</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	839
Maintained PostPrimary	3,026
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	495
Voluntary Grammar	730
Controlled Special PostPrimary	262
Maintained Special PostPrimary	0
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>5,352</b>

**ALL ELBS**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Controlled Primary	17,129
Maintained Primary	21,697
GrantMaintained Integrated Primary	1,228
Voluntary Grammar Preparatory Depts	8
Controlled Special Primary	692
Maintained Special Primary	70
<b>Total Primary</b>	<b>40,824</b>
Controlled PostPrimary	7,414
Maintained PostPrimary	11,727
GrantMaintained Integrated PostPrimary	2,046
Voluntary Grammar	3,158
Controlled Special PostPrimary	948
Maintained Special PostPrimary	120
<b>Total Postprimary</b>	<b>25,413</b>

## School Starting Age

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education what consideration he has given regarding greater flexibility in the school starting age.

**(AQW 14437/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Currently the only provision in education legislation which allows for a child not to 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.

The revised curriculum was introduced in schools on a phased basis from 2007 – 2010 and provides separately for Foundation Stage (P1-P2). The Foundation Stage is designed to allow teachers the freedom to reassert what has always been regarded as best practice i.e. that very young children should be allowed to learn at their own pace.

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. During consultation on the draft Early Years Strategy reference to the school starting age attracted some 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. Any change to the school starting age here would require a review of the content and structure of the revised curriculum.

I will study the comments made and issues raised during the Early Years Strategy consultation and I will finalise my proposals by November 2012 for an Early Years Education Strategy in line with my statement to the Assembly on 2 July 2012.

## Physical Exercise in Schools

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education what his Department is doing to encourage an increase in physical exercise in schools.

**(AQW 14487/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Physical Education is a compulsory part of the curriculum for all pupils at every Key Stage from age 4 to 16. Legislation governing the revised curriculum prevents the Department from prescribing the amount of time to be allocated to any particular subject within the curriculum. However, the Department has issued guidance to schools recommending a minimum of two hours Physical Education (PE) per week.

The Department of Education is further contributing towards participation in PE through its funding of the Curriculum Sports Programme. The programme aims to develop the general physical literacy skills of our youngest pupils through enjoyable PE activities and is being delivered in over 560 primary schools in the north of Ireland.

The Department is also supportive of DCAL's Sport Matters Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019. As a response to this strategy, the Department has committed to establishing a baseline for the number of pupils participating in a minimum of 2 hours quality PE per week. An online questionnaire was issued to all schools, with a view to developing this baseline information, and the responses have been analysed and will be published on the DE website in the near future.

## School to Home Transportation of Pupils

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with Translink in relation to the school to home transportation of pupils who are allocated a place on privately contracted transport and who choose to attend after-school activities.

**(AQW 14496/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** There have been no discussions with Translink in relation to the transportation of pupils who are allocated a place on privately contracted transport and who choose to attend after-school activities.

Education and Library Boards provide transport assistance in accordance with Department of Education Circular 1996/41 on School Transport. The Board determines the most suitable method of transport assistance for each pupil, taking into account available resources and this may involve pupils travelling on public transport, Board buses or privately contracted buses or taxis. The Board is only obliged to provide transport assistance that coincides with normal school hours and has no statutory obligation to pupils who attend after school activities. Pupils issued with sessional bus passes may travel on later public services. This is at the discretion of Translink and only where suitable public services are available. In all other cases it is a parental responsibility to organize transport for their children attending extra circular activities.

### **Schools with Vacancies on their Boards of Governors**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the schools which have vacancies on their Boards of Governors; and (ii) the nominating body under which each vacancy lies.

**(AQW 14501/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** This information is not readily available. However, it is being requested from schools by the Education & Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Department. I will write to you with the information as soon as it is available.

### **Sex and Relationships Education**

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Education (i) whether the teaching of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is mandatory in primary schools; (ii) if not, whether he intends to make SRE mandatory in primary schools; (iii) if so, when will this take place; and (iv) what provision will be made for parents who do not wish their children to receive SRE at primary school.

**(AQW 14513/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The revised curriculum aims to prepare young people better for all aspects of life and the Department recognises the importance of delivering appropriate age-related relationship and sexuality education within a clear values framework as a means of developing the child as a whole.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the revised curriculum in both primary and post-primary schools and must be delivered within schools in a sensitive manner which is appropriate to the age and understanding of pupils and to the ethos of the school.

RSE is an important element within the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding area of learning in the revised curriculum for primary schools. At primary level the focus is mainly on enabling pupils to understand how to sustain their health and develop their self esteem and self confidence.

The Department requires each school to have in place its own written policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE. A school's RSE policy should be subject to consultation with parents, and should be endorsed by a school's Board of Governors. It should show clear links with pastoral care and should set out the aims of the teaching programme.

If parents have any concerns relating to the teaching of RSE to their children, they should raise them with the school Principal.

### **Youth Work Resources Focussed on 9-18 Year Olds**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to outline the rationale for his Department's policy that 90 percent of youth work resources should be focussed on 9 to 18 year olds, given the evidence that spending on early years is more effective in improving outcomes for young people.

**(AQW 14554/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I recently launched the draft Priorities for Youth policy document for public consultation. The draft policy does not set funding limits for any age group.

The policy proposes that the age range for youth work provision will be 4 to 21 (with some limited provision for 22 – 25) and, within this, the priority age group will be 9 to 13 and 14 to 18. The level of funding allocated to youth providers, will be informed by a composite assessment of need at a local and regional level.

The proposed age ranges are in line with developmental needs and how these relate to the delivery of youth work during the journey from childhood, through adolescence, and into young adulthood. In the proposed priority age ranges, young people have more freedom, are thinking more independently and establishing their own personal values. High quality youth work can be particularly relevant to help and support young people as they go through these stages.

I recognise the value of investment in early years provision, and my Department invests over £200 million in education services for the 0 – 6 age range, including £120 million for Foundation Stage years and £80 million for pre-school provision and Sure Start.

### Children Referred to Educational Psychologists

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of children referred to educational psychologists in each of the Education and Library Boards, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14555/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Chief Executives of the education and library boards have advised that the number of children referred to educational psychologists in each of the last three academic years is as follows:-

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
BELB	1,825	1,671	1,636
NEELB	1,534	1,571	1,714
SEELB	1,527	1,362	1,262
SELB	2,158	2,339	2,027
WELB	1,653	1,671	1,738

These figures include referrals for assessment at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP), reviews at Stage 3 of the COP, statutory assessments at Stage 4 of the COP and statutory reviews at Stage 5 of the COP

### Criteria for Referral to an Education Psychologist

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to outline the criteria for referral to education psychologists used by each Education and Library Board.

**(AQW 14556/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Chief Executives of the education and library boards have confirmed that educational psychologists have regard to the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP) during consultations with schools about which children to refer at Stage 3 of the COP

Prior to stage 3 referral, schools are required to provide evidence that they have conducted school based assessments of the child's needs and implemented education plan(s) at Stage 2 of the COP. During the review of the plan(s), schools also have to demonstrate that the child does not appear to be making adequate progress despite the school having put in place relevant and purposeful measures and having made reasonable adjustments.

If these actions have not met the individual needs of the child, then the school can consider referring the child to an educational psychologist.

### Appointments to Boards of Governors

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education how many appointments his Department has made to Boards of Governors in the (i) primary school and (ii) post-primary school sectors, in each of the last 12 months.

**(AQW 14563/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department makes direct appointments to the Boards of voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools. It has made appointments in each of the last 12 months as follows:

	<b>(i) Primary schools 2</b>	<b>(ii) Post-primary schools 101</b>
October	0	0
November	0	0
December	0	0
January	0	0
February	0	52
April	0	2
May	0	11
June	0	11
July	2	14
August	0	3
September	0	8

### Asbestos in School Buildings

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the schools in each Education and Library Board area where asbestos is present, (ii) the assessment of the risk in each case and (iii) the action planned to remove all traces of asbestos from these schools to minimise risk to pupils and staff.

**(AQW 14576/11-15)**

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

### Old Gransha Road School Site

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has plans to sell any of the Old Gransha Road School site in Bangor.

**(AQW 14579/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The site on the Old Gransha Road previously occupied by the old Gransha Boys High School has already been subject to the sale of approximately nine hectares of land to Bangor Grammar School for its new build project, which is currently in the construction phase. Following this sale the South Easter Education and Library Board retained just over four hectares.

At present, and subject to approvals, the SEELB is considering a proposal for two hectares to be considered as part of a 'land swap' in order for the Board to secure additional land beside Bangor Central IPS.

Should the land swap proceed the Board will then have only approximately two hectares still in its ownership. It is intended that this land will be disposed of through the normal processes set down by Lands and Property Services.

### **New Build for Holywood Primary School**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education when does he expect the new build for Holywood Primary School to be approved.

**(AQW 14582/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** While Holywood Primary School will be disappointed that they were not included in my capital investment announcement to the Assembly on 25 June, this in no way implies that they will not be considered for funding at a later stage within the area planning process.

Area plans for Primary Schools will require scrutiny and public consultation. In the interim I will continue to examine the case for capital investment and expect to make a further announcement before the end of the calendar year. Proposals for a new school for Holywood Primary will be considered alongside other new build propositions as part of any future announcement.

### **Bangor Grammar School Playing Fields**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education to outline the plans for Bangor Grammar School playing fields at Ballymaconnell Road, Bangor.

**(AQW 14584/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Any plans for the future of Bangor Grammar School's playing fields are a matter for their owners, the school's Board of Governors.

### **Strategy for Children and Young People**

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the ongoing partnership with Forest Service to deliver the 'Strategy for Children and Young People'.

**(AQW 14600/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I welcome any initiative that supports schools/teachers in the delivery of the curriculum and which makes learning interesting and fun for pupils. Giving pupils the opportunity to learn about our environment in a "hands on" way hopefully will inspire them to be protective of our environment and the world around us.

The revised curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about the environment through such areas as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) which is included in the curriculum across all Key Stages. Through ESD, pupils explore issues such as environmental and climate change and the need to manage human impact on the environment. They will come to understand the interdependence of society, the economy and the environment; to develop respect for the needs of both present and future generations and to act towards promoting an improved environment.

I welcome the opportunity to work with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on such initiatives. My officials have met with Forestry officials to discuss the possible development of further opportunities to provide outdoor learning in a forest environment for schools and also to put in place arrangements for the Forest service to work directly with the Education and Library Boards Curriculum Advisory and Support Service to develop this further.

### **Careers Advice in Post-Primary Schools**

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to review (i) the availability; and (ii) the content of careers advice in post-primary education.

**(AQW 14601/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The joint Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Preparing for Success strategy, launched in 2009, stated that after five years and in line with good practice and policy, the Departments would commission its review. The published commitment to review the strategy is scheduled for 2014. There are no plans to review it before this date.

Careers provision in post-primary schools forms part of the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3, where Career Management is a specific part of Employability within Learning for Life and Work. The statutory Minimum Content for Career Management states that, "Exploring Career Management provides opportunities for young people to investigate the changing concept of career which is moving away from the likelihood of a job for life to the expectation that individuals will experience several career changes and this will involve lifelong learning, updating knowledge and skills, self marketing and effective personal career planning."

Key Stage 4 provision builds on Key Stage 3, and the statutory Minimum Content for Employability at that stage states that pupils should be enabled to "develop a personal career plan based on relevant information and guidance."

The curriculum, including careers provision, was extensively revised prior to its phased introduction from 2007/08 and there are no plans to further review it at this time. Rather the focus is on giving teachers greater flexibility to determine the delivery of the revised curriculum in a way that best suits the needs of their pupils and allowing teachers to build on existing good practice across all curricular areas.

Schools work in partnership with the DEL's Careers Service. Each school's Partnership Agreement with the careers Service is reviewed annually to ensure the needs of pupils continue to be met.

### **Compulsory Teaching of Languages to Children at an Early Age**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Education whether there are any plans to introduce the compulsory teaching of languages to children at an earlier age, in keeping with the rest of Europe; and whether this would include children in the early years age group.

**(AQW 14617/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Modern languages are not a compulsory part of the statutory curriculum at primary level and I currently have no plans to change this position. Schools are however encouraged to offer a wider range of modern languages and the revised curriculum provides them with greater flexibility to do so, with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment providing support and resources for primary schools that wish to introduce an additional language.

To support primary schools wishing to deliver language learning, the Primary Languages Programme was introduced in 2007 to give pupils at Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 the opportunity to learn an additional language in school. The programme offers primary schools the opportunity to work with peripatetic language tutors to deliver Irish, Spanish and Polish and has been very successful. As at September 2012, 415 schools are participating in the programme.

My department has also commissioned an Irish language primary pilot programme for pupils in Key Stage 2 which aims to build upon and complement the provision made available via the Primary Languages Programme. The programme is scheduled to run for 4 years and commenced in 10 primary schools in the Derry/North west area in October 2011.

### **Transport Assistance for Pupils from the Magherafelt District Council Area**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Education how many pupils from the Magherafelt District Council area travel to schools in the Cookstown District Council area and receive transport assistance for travel by bus, broken down by school.

**(AQW 14619/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Southern and North Eastern Education and Library Boards have provided the information detailed in the tables below in respect to pupils travelling by bus between the Magherafelt and Cookstown District Council areas.

**(1) SCHOOLS IN THE COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA ATTENDED BY PUPILS RESIDENT IN MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA IN 2012/13 WHO RECEIVE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL BY BUS**

School name	School type	Pupils from Magherafelt D.C. area
Moneymore Primary School	Primary	14
St Patrick's Primary School, Loup	Primary	7
Woods Primary School	Primary	12
Holy Trinity College	Post primary	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>34</b>

**(2) SCHOOLS IN THE MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA ATTENDED BY PUPILS RESIDENT IN COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA IN 2012/13 WHO RECEIVE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL BY BUS**

School name	School type	Pupils from Cookstown D.C. area
Kilronan School	Special	19
Magherafelt High School	Post Primary	39
Rainey Endowed	Post Primary	158
Sperrin Integrated College	Post Primary	95
St Mary's Grammar School	Post Primary	347
St Pius X College	Post Primary	367
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,025</b>

**Transport Assistance for Pupils from the Magherafelt District Council Area**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Education how many pupils from the Cookstown District Council area travel to schools in the Magherafelt District Council area and receive transport assistance for travel by bus, broken down by school.

**(AQW 14620/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Southern and North Eastern Education and Library Boards have provided the information detailed in the tables below in respect to pupils travelling by bus between the Magherafelt and Cookstown District Council areas.

**(1) SCHOOLS IN THE COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA ATTENDED BY PUPILS RESIDENT IN MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA IN 2012/13 WHO RECEIVE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL BY BUS**

School name	School type	Pupils from Magherafelt D.C. area
Moneymore Primary School	Primary	14
St Patrick's Primary School, Loup	Primary	7
Woods Primary School	Primary	12
Holy Trinity College	Post primary	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>34</b>

**(2) SCHOOLS IN THE MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA ATTENDED BY PUPILS RESIDENT IN COOKSTOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA IN 2012/13 WHO RECEIVE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL BY BUS**

<b>School name</b>	<b>School type</b>	<b>Pupils from Cookstown D.C. area</b>
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St Mary's Grammar School	Post Primary	347
St Pius X College	Post Primary	367
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,025</b>

### **Issuing of AS Results**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Education why all schools do not issue AS results to students on the same day.

**(AQW 14621/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** All AS results are issued to centres on the same day.

All Awarding Organisations (including CCEA) are part of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). JCQ publish key dates in the examination cycle on behalf of the six member Awarding Bodies. This includes the key dates for the issue of results.

The key date for the restricted release of results to all centres (i.e. schools) is consistent across all 6 JCQ Awarding Organisations. This means that all centres receive their results on the same day from all JCQ Awarding Organisations. The release of results to candidates is one day after the restricted release of results to centres.

JCQ regulations require centres to distribute provisional statements of results to all candidates, either electronically or in hard copy, without delay and regardless of any disputes (such as non-payment of fees). Centres are not permitted to withhold provisional results from candidates under any circumstances.

### **GCSE: Grading Controversy**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education what action he has taken to ensure that no pupil who sat GCSE examinations this year has been disadvantaged by the grading controversy during the summer.

**(AQW 14624/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Following the publication of GCSE results on 23 August, there were a significant number of schools and colleges in England and Wales that expressed concerns that their English results were not in line with performance last year or with predicted outcomes. Similar concerns were expressed by some schools here. However, I should make the point that the overall grade outcomes for GCSE English here were in line with last year's results.

I asked the CCEA regulator to look into these matters and report to me on any issues. I met with CCEA at the start of week beginning 10 September 2012 and they presented me with their initial findings. In light of these I asked CCEA to investigate further with centres a range of complex issues that appear to have affected GCSE English results this year. I will receive the full report shortly.

I appreciate the complexity of the issues with GCSE English this year. There were new specifications being taught for the first time, and significant changes had been made to the assessment. The changes are aimed at promoting alignment with English/literacy skills within the 4-16 curriculum here. This is important as I want to ensure that 14-19 Education builds on the aims of our revised curriculum.

I will continue to seek to ensure that no learner will be disadvantaged as a result of this matter and that no unnecessary obstacles are placed in the way of fairness and equity in the examinations process.

## GCSE Examinations

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education how many pupils sat GCSE examinations set by examination boards other than CCEA, in 2011/12.

**(AQW 14625/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** A total of 171,354 GCSE grades were issued in summer 2012. Of these, CCEA awarded 123,375 grades, other awarding organisations awarded 47,979.

## Ofqual Investigation into the Setting of Grade Boundaries for GCSE English

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education what role the Qualifications regulator played in relation to the Ofqual investigation into the setting of grade boundaries for GCSE English.

**(AQW 14626/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Ofqual investigation related to England. The qualifications regulator here played no role in it. The investigation focused on how the awarding organisations in England managed the awarding process. However, the regulator here agreed to CCEA supplying Ofqual with data concerning its awarding of GCSE English this year. This was purely for comparison and information purposes.

As all of the other GCSE awarding organisations - AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC (based in Wales) - had candidates here, our regulator was kept informed of Ofqual's investigation, and with the report completed by the Welsh government about issues in Wales.

## School Inspections

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education how many schools had their last full school inspection (i) in the last three years; (ii) between three and five years ago; (iii) between five and ten years ago; and (iv) more than ten years ago, broken down by (a) school type; and (b) Education and KLibrary Board area.

**(AQW 14627/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The following tables provide the answers to (i) and (ii) – please note that the figures are based on academic years.

- (i) Schools which have had their last full school inspection in the last three years broken down by school type and Education and Library Board area.

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Grand Total
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>
BELB	3	2	0	5
NEELB	4	1	2	7
SEELB	2	1	0	3
SELB	2	2	3	7
WELB	3	2	0	5

	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Nursery</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>
BELB	5	5	2	12
NEELB	5	0	1	6
SEELB	5	3	2	10
SELB	3	2	1	6
WELB	3	2	1	6
<b>Preps</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
BELB	1	4	0	5
SEELB	0	1	2**	3
<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>139</b>
BELB	3	4	4	11
NEELB	9	9	21	39
SEELB	9	7	6	22
SELB	12	15	14	41
WELB	6	13	7	26
<b>Primary</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>125*</b>	<b>314</b>
BELB	9	14	5	28
NEELB	30	20	27	77
SEELB	12	16	29	57
SELB	35	16	46	97
WELB	13	24	18	55
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25***</b>	<b>66</b>
BELB	4	1	2	7
NEELB	5	4	8	17
SEELB	3	2	6	11
SELB	4	9	3	16
WELB	6	3	6	15
<b>Special</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>
BELB	3	0	2	5
NEELB	2	1	1	4
SEELB	1	1	2	4
SELB	1	0	0	1
WELB	1	1	0	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>610</b>

\* = 14 inspections incomplete due to TU action

\*\* = 1 incomplete inspection

\*\*\* = 2 incomplete inspections

(ii) Schools which have had their last full school inspection between three and five years ago broken down by school type and Education and Library Board area.

	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>
BELB	2	2	3	7
NEELB	4	2	4	10
SEELB	1	2	2	5
SELB	1	0	2	3
WELB	2	1	3	6
<b>Nursery</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>
BELB	1	4	5	10
NEELB	2	1	5	8
SEELB	1	1	5	7
SELB	0	4	3	7
WELB	2	0	3	5
<b>Preps</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
BELB	0	0	1	1
SEELB	0	0	0	0
<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>144</b>
BELB	8	5	3	16
NEELB	15	8	9	32
SEELB	11	8	9	28
SELB	18	12	12	42
WELB	7	13	6	26
<b>Primary</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>246</b>
BELB	8	7	9	24
NEELB	13	18	30	61
SEELB	12	12	12	36
SELB	19	18	35	72
WELB	22	18	13	53
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>52</b>
BELB	3	2	4	9
NEELB	4	3	5	12

	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
SEELB	2	2	3	7
SELB	3	6	4	13
WELB	4	1	6	11
<b>Special</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>
BELB	1	3	3	7
NEELB	3	0	2	5
SEELB	1	0	1	2
SELB	2	2	1	5
WELB	1	1	1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>533</b>

- (iii) The data relating to this question is prior to 2007. All data prior to 2007 is held in manual records and an exercise to collate this would result in disproportionate costs.
- (iv) The data relating to this question is prior to 2007. All data prior to 2007 is held in manual records and an exercise to collate this would result in disproportionate costs.

### **Advantages for Children Who Attend Schools with Broadband Access**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the advantages that children who attend schools with broadband access have over children who attend rural schools without broadband access.

**(AQW 14636/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** In the north of Ireland, no schools are disadvantaged as the C2k managed ICT service provides broadband access for all grant-aided schools.

Prior to April 2012, post primary schools were each provided with 2Mb circuits and up to 4 primary schools shared a 2Mb circuit. In a number of cases where a 2Mb circuit could not be provided to a school because of location, other technologies such as adsl, satellite and eps8 were provided.

I am very conscious of the need to provide schools with much increased bandwidth, as the resources they wish to use are available over the internet and are more bandwidth hungry. I have therefore been very mindful that we need to put in place improvements in bandwidth, to keep pace with schools' needs. The new C2k contract (Education Network), which is being rolled out from 1 April 2012, will therefore deliver increased bandwidth to all schools. This will ensure that schools receive un-contended bandwidth based on pupil numbers. The bandwidth to be provided to schools under the Education Network contract is outlined below.

Post primary schools (500+ pupils)	Initial bandwidth 100Mb
Post primary schools and Special Schools (Up to 499 pupils)	Initial bandwidth 10Mb
Primary Schools (500+ pupils)	Initial Bandwidth 10Mb
Primary Schools (Up to 499 pupils)	Initial bandwidth 4Mb

This will be of great benefit to our schools and the improved bandwidth is currently being rolled out and is scheduled to be delivered to all schools by June 2013. To date, 120 post primaries, 22 special schools and 236 primaries schools have received their new bandwidth provision.

In addition, we recognise that the bandwidth needs of schools will most likely increase over the period of the five year contract, with this in mind I am pleased that there is potential for the bandwidth to be further increased, at no cost to the school, should a school's sustained usage require it.

### Schools: Formal Transformation Process

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to list the schools which have undergone a formal transformation process, broken down by (i) management type; and (ii) Education and Library Board area; and how their current enrolment meets the integrated test.

**(AQW 14664/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Only controlled schools have undergone the formal transformation process to integrated status. The latest religious balance data for integrated schools was gathered during the 2011/12 school census. The table indicates transformed integrated schools by Education and Library Board area and whether they currently meet the religious balance requirements:

Education and Library Board Area/School	Meets religious balance requirements
Belfast Education and Library Board	
Cliftonville Integrated Primary School	Yes
North Eastern Education and Library Board	
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	Yes
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	No
Crumlin Controlled Integrated Primary School	No
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	No
Carhill Integrated Primary School	No
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	Yes
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	Yes
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	No
Crumlin Integrated College	Yes
Parkhall Integrated College	No
South-Eastern Education and Library Board	
Kircubbin Primary School	No
Portaferry Integrated Primary School	Yes
Bangor Central Primary School	No
Annsborough Primary School	Yes
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	No
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School	No
Priory College	No
Fort Hill College	No
Southern Education and Library Board	
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	No

Education and Library Board Area/School	Meets religious balance requirements
Brownlow Integrated College	Yes
Western Education and Library Board	
Groarty Primary School	No

### Awareness of Animal Welfare Amongst Young People

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Education what measures his Department currently takes, and could introduce in future, to increase awareness of animal welfare amongst young people.

**(AQW 14666/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The revised curriculum, which has been taught to all pupils of compulsory school age in grant-aided schools since 2009/10, provides opportunities for animal welfare issues to be taught in our schools.

The minimum to be taught by schools is detailed as Areas of Learning within The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (NI) 2007. There are a number of Areas of Learning which give teachers the opportunity to teach young people about animal welfare issues. These include The World Around Us at primary level and Environment and Society and Learning for Life and Work at post-primary level.

However, one of the key factors about the Revised Curriculum is the greater flexibility it provides for teachers to tailor their teaching to meets the needs of their individual pupils. Therefore, the Department tries to delegate as much funding and decision-making as possible to schools which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils, using their professional judgement. The Department does not prescribe the specifics to be taught and practice across schools will therefore vary.

### Catholic Certificate of Education

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to ensure teachers from a Protestant background are not discriminated against because they do not hold a Catholic Certificate of Education.

**(AQW 14669/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school in the North of Ireland.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) provides general information on their website relating to the Certificate including information on routes to obtaining a certificate. In terms of the teacher training colleges, St Mary's students are advised by the college about the requirement and can opt to take the certificate there. Stranmillis students are also advised about the requirement. The college has a partnership with the University of Glasgow which enables students to acquire, through part-time distance learning, a Certificate in Religious Education. University of Ulster (UU) students are also advised about the requirement. The UU Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course includes integrated study for the religious certificate.

The Department is currently undertaking a review of employment opportunities for teachers which will consider the implications of the requirement to possess the certificate. The review will be published early in the New Year.

### Hollywood Schools Scheme

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education why the Hollywood schools scheme was not included in his recent announcement on new builds.

**(AQW 14674/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** While the schools within the Hollywood Schools scheme will be disappointed that they were not included in my capital investment announcement to the Assembly on 25 June, this in no way implies that they will not be considered for funding at a later stage within the area planning process.

Area plans for schools will require scrutiny and public consultation. In the interim I will continue to examine the case for capital investment and expect to make a further announcement before the end of the calendar year. Proposals for the Hollywood Schools scheme will be considered alongside other new build propositions as part of any future announcement.

### **Performance Related Pay for Teachers**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of performance related pay for teachers.

**(AQW 14699/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Boards of Governors have a legal responsibility to ensure that teachers' performance is reviewed annually in accordance with the negotiated Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) Scheme. Review statements agreed under the Scheme form part of the evidence used to determine pay progression on the Leadership and Upper Pay Scales. Depending on their position on the pay scale, teachers progress up the pay scale either annually or biannually.

The PRSD Scheme came into operation on 1 September 2005 and was reviewed in conjunction with the recognised Teachers' Unions in 2007 and 2009. The Scheme is well embedded in schools and has become integral to performance management, staff development and overall school improvement.

### **Gaelscoil Eoghain School, Cookstown**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils in each year at Gaelscoil Eoghain School in Cookstown.

**(AQW 14702/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Information collected from the school indicates that, in the current academic year, there are 13 pupils, all in Year 1, in Gaelscoil Eoghain.

### **Area Planning Process**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Education how the Area Planning process will operate within the Dickson Plan area.

**(AQW 14721/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The focus of the area planning process is on developing a planned network of viable and sustainable schools to provide high quality education to meet the needs of children and young people in an area. Regardless of the structure emerging, this will mean schools working together to ensure that all pupils are offered access to the full breadth of courses set out in the Entitlement Framework.

The process for schools in the Dickson Plan area is therefore no different to that for schools elsewhere. The Southern Education and Library Board Post Primary Area Plan which is currently out for public consultation includes proposals for schools in the Dickson Plan area.

The Board's public consultation on the area plan will ensure that that all interested parties have the opportunity to provide comment before a final draft plan is submitted for my consideration.

### **Education and Skills Authority**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Education how Dickson Plan will operate within the Education and Skills Authority.

**(AQW 14722/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** A unique feature of the Dickson Plan is that pupils transfer to Junior High Schools at age 11 and then to Senior High Schools at age 14. I have therefore interpreted this question as asking about the operation of admissions processes within the Dickson Plan area.

Under the 1997 Education Order the Education and Library Boards have a range of duties in respect of the administration of all admissions processes. These duties will transfer to the Education and Skills Authority when it becomes operational. .

### Goal Line Youth, Portadown

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Education (i) for his assessment of the contribution of Goal Line Youth, Portadown; (ii) whether he is aware of its urgent funding needs which, if unmet, will lead to the organisation closing its doors on 31 October 2012; and (iii) what assistance his Department can provide to the organisation as it seeks to continue to meet the needs of over two hundred children, almost 50 percent of whom have special educational and disability needs.

**(AQW 14742/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Funding and monitoring for local youth provision is a matter for Education and Library Boards. The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has advised that Goal Line Youth Club, Portadown, is registered with the SELB as a part-time club supporting a recognised youth work programme of 27 hours per week.

- (i) The unit offers a range of quality programmes within the area, providing what is considered to be good value for the level of grant-aid support offered. In particular, the ability of the unit to recruit young people with special needs has been highlighted.
- (ii) The SELB advises that it has not been informed that Goal Line Youth Club is considering closing in October 2012 and it has not received any request for additional support for the unit.
- (iii) The SELB Youth Service offers core funding to the club and, in addition, the club has accessed different Schemes of Assistance, when available. Total funding (approved and claimed) is detailed in the table below. Core funding for this youth club from the SELB has been consistent over a number of years and there are no immediate plans to change this.

#### SELB FUNDING APPROVED/CLAIMED

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Annual Core Grant approved	7809.03	8,523.72	8696.93
Annual Core Grant claimed	6739.62	7625.15	Not yet known
Additional funding approved	9404.75	7509.17	4698.95
Additional funding claimed	9231.83	6824.75	Not yet known

The SELB has advised that there are additional programmes run in the centre which are funded from other sources. It is not clear at this time whether the funding arrangements for these additional programmes have changed.

### Centenary of the Ulster Covenant

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education what material was issued by his Department to schools in connection with the celebration of the centenary of the Ulster Covenant; and how did his Department mark and facilitate this milestone.

**(AQW 14780/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** No material has been issued by my Department in connection with the Ulster Covenant. My Department has no plans to celebrate the event, it is a matter for individual schools as to how they may wish to mark the Covenant or any other centenary.

## QUANGOs

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of QUANGOs linked to his Department (i) at 8 May 2007; and (ii) at the date of this question; and how many people served on the QUANGOs on these respective dates.

**(AQW 14816/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:**

<b>Bodies linked to the Department of Education at 8 May 2007</b>	<b>Number of people serving on the Body at 8 May 2007*</b>
Belfast Education & Library Board	32
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	2
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	21
General Teaching Council	3
Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd	5
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	17
Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	3
NI Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal	13
North Eastern Education & Library Board	33
South Eastern Education & Library Board	4 Commissioners
Southern Education & Library Board	35
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	13
Western Education & Library Board	33
Youth Council	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>

ii)

<b>Bodies linked to the Department of Education at 28 September 2012</b>	<b>Number of people serving on the Body at 28 September 2012*</b>
Belfast Education & Library Board	6
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	2
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	12
Exceptional Circumstances Body	49
General Teaching Council	3
Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd	5
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	8
Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	0
North Eastern Education & Library Board	22

<b>Bodies linked to the Department of Education at 28 September 2012</b>	<b>Number of people serving on the Body at 28 September 2012*</b>
South Eastern Education & Library Board	3 Commissioners
Southern Education & Library Board	15
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	6
Western Education & Library Board	13
Youth Council	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

Some of the Bodies listed were not classified as Executive Non Departmental Public Bodies in 2007 but have been included in this answer as the Bodies existed in 2007.

\*Includes Department of Education Public Appointments only.

### **Early Years Strategy**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of the Early Years Strategy. **(AQW 14825/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** In my statement to the Assembly on 2 July 2012 I outlined my approach to the development of a revised strategy with a clear focus on early education and learning. I am also seeking to explore the Delivering Social Change Framework as a potential mechanism for achieving collaboration and integration for early years but as part of a much wider theme of early intervention.

Officials have been engaging with key stakeholders as outlined in my statement and I will finalise my proposals by November 2012.

### **Requirement of a Religious Certificate**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has completed, and published, a review to assess the impact that the requirement of a religious certificate has on current and future recruitment opportunities in the teaching sector, including any course accessibility issues; and, if so, to detail the recommendations contained within the report. **(AQW 14986/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school in the North of Ireland.

The Department is currently undertaking a review of employment opportunities for teachers which will consider the implications of the requirement to possess the certificate. The review will be published early in the New Year.

## **Department for Employment and Learning**

### **Jobless Households**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of recent statistics that suggested that Northern Ireland has the UK's second highest percentage of households where no individual has a job, what is being done to tackle this issue. **(AQW 14092/11-15)**

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** My Department offers a range of measures to assist people to move into sustainable employment and to meet the needs of our widening client base.

The Employment Service, through its network of Jobcentres and Jobs and Benefit offices, offers tailored advice to meet individual's needs, provides information and support to clients, and refers clients to specialist provision when appropriate.

Steps to Work (StW) is the Department's main adult return to work programme. It is available to anyone who is aged 18 years old or over (aged 16 or over in the case of a lone parent) and aims to assist people who are unemployed to find and sustain employment.

My Department took the lead in the development of the Executive's cross departmental strategy "Pathways to Success" to address the challenge presented by young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The strategy, which was endorsed by the Executive on 31 May 2012, aims to deliver a three tier package of measures aimed at preventing young people falling into the NEET category in the first place; helping young people in the 16-18 age group, especially those facing barriers; and assisting unemployed young people aged 18-24 more generally.

A key objective of 'Pathways to Success' is to pilot community family support in 2013. The Employment Service has developed a model and proposes to trial the Family Support approach in Northern Ireland (NI). The introduction of a Community Family Support Pilot, tested through the LEMIS service, will focus on the needs of disadvantaged families to support parents, help prevent younger family members falling into the NEET category and help other young family members already in this situation to re-engage with education, training or employment. A multi-agency / departmental approach will be used to deliver the pilot including the harnessing and use of existing services that currently work with disadvantaged families.

In order to tackle the growing problem of youth unemployment, I have introduced a Youth Employment Scheme, for young people aged 18-24, which has a range of measures to specifically help unemployed young people. The programme will consist of enhanced support through additional Adviser time from both the Employment and Careers Services and a series of work experience placements and training opportunities designed to ensure early engagement with the labour market.

The Department, through the Disability Employment Service and its teams of specially trained Employment Advisers also delivers programmes and services aimed at helping and supporting people with health conditions and disabilities to consider their options for returning to work. This service is about promoting work as a positive, healthy and realistic option and supporting those who wish to actively pursue this goal.

Finally, the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) is an initiative designed to help unemployed and economically inactive people in the community overcome those issues that may be preventing them from finding and keeping a job. The service which is independent of the statutory employment service is provided by local community employment organisations in the Belfast area, Londonderry, Strabane, Newry & Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown District Council areas.

### **Northern Ireland Youth Employment Initiative 'Sustainable Skills for Growth and Jobs'**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have taken up places on the Northern Ireland Youth Employment Initiative 'Sustainable Skills for Growth and Jobs' since its launch.

**(AQW 14319/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Addressing youth unemployment is an Executive priority. After initial approval by the Executive my immediate priority was to put in place the delivery framework. That work is only recently complete and already, 9 people have started work experience placements, 4 opportunities are currently advertised and more than 90 expressions of interest from employers are being followed up. Many of these expressions of interest were secured at the major employer promotional event held in Titanic Building Belfast on 26 September where well over 100 employers were in attendance. My Department has planned a further series of promotional events across Northern Ireland during the autumn and I am

confident that we will secure the number and range of opportunities needed to make this a successful initiative. However, it is not a short-term solution and our initial focus will be on building quality into all aspects of the Scheme, followed by increasing the numbers of work placements, skills development opportunities and subsidised jobs over time. This is a long-term initiative designed to deliver long-term benefits. My Department will publish data on the numbers of opportunities available monthly from October 2012.

### **Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what financial support his Department has provided to the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14347/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** My Department does not have any statutory basis or remit to core fund any voluntary or community organisations to deliver training or education and has provided no direct funding to the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre in any of the last three years.

### **Education Maintenance Allowance**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) whether all colleges will only accept a doctor's certificate to confirm that a pupil is unwell; and (ii) if a doctor refuses to provide a certificate, what action a student should take, as this causes problems when claiming Education Maintenance Allowance.

**(AQW 14457/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I can advise the member that the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme is based on attendance and colleges must provide evidence of all absences. I can confirm (i). Each college will apply their own general absence policy when considering if an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Colleges are encouraged to make their criteria for authorising absences clear and consistent to apply to all students. A student might be able to self-certify an absence for up to five days, but it is at the college's discretion how many five-day certifications they accept. After two weeks, evidence such as a medical certificate should be produced.

(ii) The absence policy of each college will again be applied if a doctor refuses to provide a medical certificate. This may involve for isolated absences, a letter from the student or the parent/guardian.

### **Foyle College Lands**

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the recent decision by the Minister of Education to make Foyle College lands available, for an update on the business case for the Magee Campus of the University Of Ulster.

**(AQW 14465/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The University of Ulster prepared a Strategic Outline Case for the expansion of the Magee campus which my department approved in the autumn of 2010. I understand that the University has exercised its option on the future purchase of the site. At present it is estimated that the College will vacate the site in 2016. The funding required for the physical development of the site would be a matter for the University. The University is, however, seeking funding from government for 1,000 additional undergraduate places. Initially over the three year period to 2014-15, I have allocated an additional 322 undergraduate places to the University. The University has said that these places would all be deployed on the Magee campus.

### **Education Maintenance Allowance**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he has any plans to change Education Maintenance Allowance provision.

**(AQW 14497/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I refer the member to the answer to AQW 14159/11-15. I understand AQW 14159/11-15 is relevant and the most recent response.

### Education Maintenance Allowance

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the effectiveness of Education Maintenance Allowance provision.

**(AQW 14499/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I refer the member to the answer to AQW 14161/11-15. I understand AQW 14161/11-15 is relevant and the most recent response.

### St Mary's University College Appealing its Designation as a Non-Departmental Public Body

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he will take steps to prevent an anomalous and prejudicial situation arising to the detriment of Stranmillis College, Belfast in the event that St Mary's University College, Belfast successfully appeals its designation as a non-Departmental Public Body.

**(AQW 14516/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I do not agree with your view that any change in the designation of St Mary's University College as a non – Departmental Public Body would be to the detriment of Stranmillis College.

### Steps to Work Programme

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many (i) participants completed the Steps to Work programme in each month since January 2010; and (ii) participants were offered full-time jobs on completion.

**(AQW 14574/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The numbers of participants who completed the Steps to Work programme in each month since January 2010 is shown in Annex A.

#### ANNEX A

Month	Total leaving StW	Total Moved to Employment	Month	Total leaving StW	Total Moved to Employment
Jan '10	1,335	416	Jan '11	1,698	617
Feb '10	1,366	434	Feb '11	1,783	578
Mar '10	1,560	562	Mar '11	2,182	766
Apr '10	1,422	529	Apr '11	1,885	762
May '10	1,515	569	May '11	2,149	839
Jun '10	1,616	529	Jun '11	2,017	693
Jul '10	1,383	473	Jul '11	1,867	663
Aug '10	1,503	591	Aug '11	2,092	777
Sep '10	2,059	753	Sep '11	2,639	978
Oct '10	2,035	827	Oct '11	2,383	905
Nov '10	1,935	734	Nov '11	2,223	830
Dec '10	1,243	437	Dec '11	1,685	587

The latest statistics available are up to December 2011 as it is necessary to wait for a period of time after participants leave the programme to obtain information on employment outcomes.

“Total Moved to Employment” refers to participants considered as having moved to full time employment (16 hours or more per week) within 13 weeks of leaving Steps to Work based on Department for Employment and Learning /Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs data.

### Departmental Staff Suspensions

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many departmental staff are currently (i) suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations; and (ii) not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations.

**(AQW 14611/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** No Departmental staff are currently suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations; nor are there any staff who are currently not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations.

### Steps to Work Programme and the Step Ahead Programme

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of participants on the (i) Steps to Work Programme; and (ii) Step Ahead Programme, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14652/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The number of participants on (i) Steps to Work, and (ii) Step Ahead for the last 3 years is detailed below in 6 monthly cycles.

#### ALL PARTICIPANTS ON STEPS TO WORK (JUNE 2009 TO JUNE 2012)

	Steps to Work (StW)	Step Ahead (included in overall StW figure)
June 09	6,384	0
December 09	7,465	16
June 10	9,259	148
December 10	12,198	285
June 11	15,425	389
December 11	16,673	754
June 12	18,458	17

#### Notes:

- (1) Figures relate to the last Friday of each month.
- (2) Occupancy figures continue to fluctuate somewhat for several months after the occupancy date due to delays in recording leavers’ end dates.
- (3) Includes those who have received an invitation but have not yet attended their first interview.
- (4) Step Ahead introduced in Northern Ireland on 28 September 2009 and ceased in February 2012.

## Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

### FG Wilson

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what financial and other support FG Wilson has received from her Department since 1999.

**(AQW 14245/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):** Since 1999 Invest NI (and previously IDB) has offered £24.8m of direct financial assistance to F G Wilson (Engineering) Ltd in support of its operations in Larne, Monkstown and Springvale, Belfast. Details of this assistance are set out in the table below.

#### F G WILSON FINANCIAL SUPPORT SINCE 1999 (AT SEPTEMBER 2012)

Offer Date /Start Date	Amount Offered	Paid to date	Balance
<b>Selective Financial Assistance</b>			
27-Jul-00	8,531,800.00	8,129,456.25	402,343.75
10-Aug-04	200,000.00	98,394.84	101,605.16
21-Jan-05	234,000.00	227,250.00	6,750.00
01-Mar-06	11,504,000.00	10,261,781.14	1,242,218.86
16-Apr-07	125,533.00	117,213.88	8,319.12
	20,595,333.00	18,834,096.11	1,761,236.89
<b>Company Development Programme /Business Improvement Training Programme</b>			
14-Jan-02	270,000.00	208,025.00	61,975.00
01-Jan-04	696,000.00	588,358.00	107,642.00
13-Sep-04	458,150.00	408,275.00	49,875.00
01-Jan-07	56,634.00	45,306.00	11,328.00
04-May-09	704,058.00	223,260.00	480,798.00
	2,184,842.00	1,473,224.00	711,618.00
<b>R &amp; D</b>			
17-Feb-99	6,801.00	2,020.32	4,780.68
27-Apr-00	12,274.00	7,589.37	4,684.63
03-Nov-00	183,277.00	84,437.02	98,839.98
15-Jan-01	192,173.00	46,485.69	145,687.31
22-Oct-02	93,722.00	36,747.65	56,974.35
14-May-09	22,630.00	6,540.44	16,089.56
10-Jun-09	50,000.00	35,152.14	14,847.86
	560,877.00	218,972.63	341,904.37
<b>Centre of Excellence ECE</b>			
09-Apr-03	1,436,750.00	1,424,963.00	11,787.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,777,802.00</b>	<b>21,951,255.74</b>	<b>2,826,546.26</b>

In addition to this the company has availed of the following Invest NI services:

- Trade: Participation on 42 Trade Missions
- Sustainable Development: 4 Carbon Trust surveys carried out
- Consultancy support to develop an Energy Management strategy
- Participation on CE Marking programme
- E-Business: review of IT capabilities

### **Belfast International Airport**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with representatives of Belfast International Airport concerning the development of air routes to (i) Germany and Austria; (ii) Belgium; and (iii) Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

**(AQW 14266/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department and Tourism Ireland are in contact with Belfast International Airport (BIA) on an ongoing basis in relation to any opportunities for new, extended or re-instated services. Any negotiations with airlines are of a commercial and confidential nature.

Germany is a priority market for Northern Ireland and is one of the top four markets – along with Great Britain, the US and France – which together deliver over 80% of visitors to Northern Ireland. Direct access is essential if Northern Ireland is to realise its full potential in the German market and my Department and Tourism Ireland have been working closely with BIA to case make to airlines in respect of the introduction of new routes from Germany.

With regard to Austria, Tourism Ireland has recently agreed a co-operative marketing programme to promote a new inbound charter flight from Austria to BIA with Lauda Air. This service, which will operate from April to June 2013, will help to boost the number of inbound Austrian visitors to Northern Ireland and will also provide a positive example to other inbound charter carriers that Northern Ireland can be an option for their business.

Denmark, Sweden and Norway are not currently high priority markets for tourism to Northern Ireland. However, Tourism Ireland maintains ongoing dialogue with BIA, along with Northern Ireland's other airports, to monitor opportunities in these markets for new services to Northern Ireland.

### **Jobs Promoted in the Foyle Constituency**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs have been promoted in the Foyle constituency in 2012/13 financial year to date.

**(AQW 14298/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Between 1st April and 31st August 2012, Invest NI promoted 142 new jobs in the Foyle Parliamentary Constituency Area.

### **Pipe Band Competitions**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the financial contribution pipe band competitions make to the economy.

**(AQW 14310/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** No assessment has been made by my Department or the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

However, Belfast City Council commissioned Millward Brown Ulster to carry out an Events Evaluation of the European Pipe Band Championships 2011. The evaluation reported that 11,094 attended the European Pipe Band Championships 2011 and the estimated economic impact of the event was £212,000.

I would also refer the member to the reply I gave to AQO 2358/11-15 on Monday 10 September 2012. My department wants to support pipe bands in any way that we can. We recognise that they bring visitors into areas for their competitions, and I hope that we can work with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to develop that more.

### **1992 Legislation in Relation to Accommodation**

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she will consider relaxing the 1992 legislation in relation to accommodation to allow for host families during the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013 in Derry.

**(AQW 14317/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department has provided advice to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) on how alternative accommodation options, such as a host family scheme, might potentially be accommodated under the existing legislation governing the certification of tourism accommodation.

In providing this advice, my Department officials have highlighted the need for further information before a definitive position on the potential legislative implications can be reached.

Officials in DETI will continue to work in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to ensure that accommodation options for 2013 are maximised.

### **Gants and Schemes Available for Small Businesses**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether grants and schemes available for small businesses are currently being promoted to boost confidence and aid financial strain.

**(AQW 14324/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The ongoing impact of uncertainty in global markets continues to impact on our local business base and is evident in reduced demand, tighter financial markets and a loss of confidence to invest for the future. Invest NI has responded quickly to this, through its Boosting Business initiative, which has involved reviewing its existing products and services to see if, and how, they can be made either available to a wider business base, or make them easier for businesses to benefit from. Invest NI has also considered what new products or services it may be able to introduce to help business and has made many of these available to a much wider business base than has historically been the case.

Since the campaign was launched in November 2011, some 11,000 enquiries have been made to Invest NI's Business Support Team, through a number of channels including a free phone telephone number, online enquiry form and text message facility. It is encouraging that over 80% of the enquiries received to date have come from businesses that would not previously have engaged with Invest NI.

From April to September of this year almost 1,500 individuals from a wide range of businesses attended one of around 75 events which have been organised covering all aspects of business. Between September and December a further 80 events and workshops are already scheduled and, so far, some 800 individuals have already registered for these.

The range of Invest NI support, both financial and advisory, is regularly promoted through high profile advertising, both online and mainstream and through targeted communications to those businesses which are most likely to benefit from the support available.

Invest NI also continues to provide a range of financial assistance to support the establishment and growth of new and existing export focused businesses. This support is targeted particularly at businesses that sell in markets outside Northern Ireland, are actively pursuing growth plans, and can contribute to increased NI productivity. Financial support is based on the needs of the project and is normally targeted at areas such as Research and Development, Marketing and Employment.

Further Information on the full range of advice and support available can be found on Invest NI's Website [www.investni.com](http://www.investni.com)

## Child Trust Fund Payments

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any negotiations she has had with the Department for Work and Pensions or the Financial Services Authority to extend the ability of Northern Ireland based Credit Unions to act as agents for Child Trust Fund payments.

**(AQW 14352/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I have not had any negotiations with the Department for Work and Pensions or the Financial Services Authority about Child Trust Fund payments. The Government announced in May 2010, its intention to end new eligibility to Child Trust Fund accounts and to reduce and then stop payments to existing accounts by January 2011.

## Gas Network Extensions Paper

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the final gas network extensions paper will be published.

**(AQW 14360/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Outline Business Case on gas network extension which my Department commissioned from external consultants earlier this year is nearing completion and is expected to be finalised by the end of September 2012. Thereafter the Department will need time to consider the appraisal in detail, prior to any decision to publish its conclusions.

## Families in Fuel Poverty

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that natural gas is currently cheaper than oil or coal, what steps she intends to take to help families in fuel poverty who do not have the option of connecting to a mains gas network to reduce their bills.

**(AQW 14361/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** In addition to promoting gas network extension, which my Department recognises could contribute to alleviating fuel poverty levels, it is also working with the Utility Regulator and the energy industry to ensure greater competition within both the electricity and gas markets.

In May 2012, my Department launched a scheme to provide financial assistance for domestic customers to switch to renewable heat technologies. The Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme provides support for a range of technologies with the level of support varying depending on the technology installed.

DETI is also proposing an energy efficiency measure within the new Energy Bill. The proposal would require all energy suppliers to support a range of energy efficiency measures for households, as poor energy efficiency is one of the contributors to fuel poverty. Furthermore, in July 2012, I announced a roll-out of electricity smart meters aimed at shifting customer behaviour and which may assist families in fuel poverty to better manage their energy consumption.

Furthermore, my colleague Nelson McCausland recently launched a new £12 million boiler replacement scheme for homeowners across Northern Ireland. This scheme, provided by funding from the Northern Ireland Executive, offers owner occupiers a grant of up to £1,000 to replace inefficient boilers with energy efficient condensing oil boilers, or switching to a wood pellet boiler.

## Gas Network Being Extended to Millisle and Bushmills

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the gas network being extended to Millisle and Bushmills, whether small villages such as Carnlough, Glenariffe, Cushendal and Cushendun will be considered priority areas for an extension of the gas network.

**(AQW 14362/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Extending the natural gas network to new areas can only take place where it is economically viable to do so. Locations given priority for any extension of the gas network will depend

on the availability of suitable gas loads in such areas, interest by a gas company in developing new gas networks, and the commitment of companies and public sector organisations in new areas to connect to natural gas in the event of it becoming available.

Given the expected gas loads, it is unlikely that extending the gas network to the villages mentioned would be considered economically viable.

### **Subsidies to Businesses in Rural Areas**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans there are to provide subsidies to businesses in rural areas that may never receive natural gas, given that this is an impediment to attracting investment in rural East Antrim.

**(AQW 14364/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department will shortly launch the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which will provide financial incentives to non-domestic consumers in the first instance wishing to utilise renewable heating technologies such as biomass, heat pumps, solar thermal panels and other technologies. This may be of particular interest to businesses which may not become connected to the natural gas network.

Invest NI provides a range of support for businesses to help reduce the cost of water, energy or materials consumption. This support includes the provision of free project management technical consultancy to identify, prioritise and take forward appropriate cost saving projects including renewable energy projects where appropriate. Invest NI also provides the funding for the Energy Efficiency Loan Fund delivered by the Carbon Trust which offers interest-free loans from £3,000 - £400,000 to Northern Ireland businesses to help them deploy more energy efficient and/or carbon reducing solutions; and the £12 million Sustainable Productivity Programme 2012/13 to 2014/15 which covers a range of activities to help the wider business community achieve operational savings in water, energy and waste. Support includes advice and, where appropriate, financial support through loans and/or grants.

### **Natural Gas Network**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her Department's plans to extend the natural gas network; and which towns and villages will benefit from such extensions.

**(AQW 14365/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** An Outline Business Case on gas network extension to additional towns in the West and North West and in East Down was commissioned by my Department and is nearing completion. The towns under consideration for extension of the natural gas network include Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland, Omagh, Enniskillen/Derrylin and Strabane in the West/North West and Hillsborough, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Crossgar and Saintfield in County Down.

The Department will need time to consider the Outline Business Case in detail and the next steps in co-operation with the Utility Regulator, including which towns should form part of any new or extended gas licensed areas.

### **Grant Aid Paid to FG Wilson**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the grant aid her Department has paid to FG Wilson in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 14391/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Over the past five calendar years F G Wilson has been paid a total of £6.1million, the breakdown of which is shown in the table below. Given the nature Invest NI offers, much of what has been paid over this period would relate to earlier offers. During the past five years the company has received new offers totalling £0.959million.

<b>Assistance Type</b>	<b>2007/08*</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>Total</b>
Selective Financial Assistance	1,969,906	1,141,278	778,323	1,513,592	0	5,403,099
Research & Development	0	0	41,692	0	0	41,692
Trade	250	2,471	3,633	1,991	4,971	13,316
Training	115,282	238,579	85,253	137,703	110,036	686,853
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,085,438</b>	<b>£1,382,328</b>	<b>£908,901</b>	<b>£1,653,286</b>	<b>£115,007</b>	<b>£6,144,960</b>

\* Year from August to September

Invest NI's assistance has been increasingly focussed on encouraging the company to develop higher value activities. Assistance has been provided towards developing the company's R&D capability and training activities.

### **Grant Aid Paid to FG Wilson**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the job losses announced on 13 September 2012 by FG Wilson whether she is expecting any repayment of grant aid paid to the company.

**(AQW 14392/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The redundancies announced recently may result in grants becoming repayable by Caterpillar. However, it is not possible at present to be definitive on the exact amount involved as a number of factors need to be taken into consideration including what level of benefits we have received and over what period of time the company has maintained its target employment. It is worth noting that the company's management has confirmed that it will meet all its contractual obligations under any offers of assistance it has received in the past from Invest NI.

### **Meetings with Caterpillar/FG Wilson**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any meetings or contact she, or her departmental officials, had with Caterpillar/FG Wilson since March 2012.

**(AQW 14393/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Since March this year, I have written to and received a reply from the CEO of Caterpillar Inc., in which he confirmed the company's plan to continue to manufacture large gensets in Northern Ireland. I also had two telephone calls with the Head of Caterpillar's global Electric Power Division which was followed by a face-to-face meeting (along with Invest NI's Chief Executive) in the US last week. My team in Invest NI specifically had two telephone calls with senior officials in the US as well as eleven face-to-face meetings with senior management in Northern Ireland and from the wider Caterpillar organization. In addition there have been numerous e-mail exchanges and telephone calls on a range of matters relating to this decision.

### **InvestNI's 73 Percent Funding for Indigenous Businesses**

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail InvestNI's 73 percent funding for indigenous businesses in 2011/12, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 14400/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The table below shows assistance offered by Invest NI to both locally and externally-owned businesses between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012, broken down by constituency.

**INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY OWNERSHIP & PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA (2011-12)**

<b>Pca</b>	<b>Externally-owned £m</b>	<b>Locally-owned £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Belfast East	6.26	7.02	13.28
Belfast North	1.51	1.22	2.74
Belfast South	5.88	16.12	22.00
Belfast West	3.49	0.76	4.25
East Antrim	0.27	1.33	1.59
East Londonderry	0.00	1.75	1.76
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	0.48	2.71	3.20
Foyle	1.45	2.67	4.12
Lagan Valley	0.24	4.07	4.31
Mid Ulster	1.15	6.13	7.29
Newry and Armagh	0.55	2.33	2.88
North Antrim	0.66	1.85	2.52
North Down	0.00	1.68	1.68
South Antrim	0.76	3.57	4.33
South Down	0.34	2.67	3.00
Strangford	0.14	1.18	1.32
Upper Bann	0.31	6.29	6.60
West Tyrone	0.15	1.58	1.73
Not Yet Located	0.73	0.00	0.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.38</b>	<b>64.93</b>	<b>89.32</b>

**Notes:**

1. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
2. Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.
3. 'Not Yet Located' refers to cases where the company has not identified a final location for the project.

**Land Bank**

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the land bank, in acres, in public ownership in the (a) Carrickfergus; (b) Larne; and (c) Newtownabbey areas, that is suitable for industrial development; and (ii) if she has any plans to improve the availability of serviced sites, given the increased need for jobs.

**(AQW 14401/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Within my Department, Invest NI has responsibility for the provision of property in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses with an approved business case and an immediate demonstrable property need.

Within the Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey District Council areas Invest NI holds a total of 427 acres. Whilst a significant proportion of this has been developed and is occupied by businesses there

remain 121 acres available. A table has been attached at Annex A providing a breakdown of these figures by Council area.

In addition to the property within its ownership the organisation is also aware of a range of properties of various sizes provided by both Local Enterprise Agencies and the private sector in each area. Further information can be found through the Northern Ireland Business Info website.

Invest NI recently completed infrastructural works at its Trooperslane and Global Point Business Parks, in Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey respectively, which released 39 acres of new serviced land to support economic development. This has been included within the figures provided in the table.

Invest NI proactively markets all of its available property to both foreign and indigenous investors although the final decision on location rests with the investor.

## ANNEX A

### TABLE SHOWING INVEST NI LANDHOLDING AND AVAILABILITY IN THE NEWTOWNABBEY, CARRICKFERGUS AND LARNE COUNCIL AREAS

District Council	Landholding (acres)*	Land Availability (acres)*
Newtownabbey	283.2	97.39
Carrickfergus	108.06	18.80
Larne	35.7	4.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>426.96</b>	<b>120.89</b>

\* Figures correct as at 30 June 2012.

## InvestNI Vists

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of visits InvestNI has arranged with those seeking to invest in each of the last three years, broken down by either District Council area or postcode area.

**(AQW 14405/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The table below details the number of visits by DCA by potential inward investors. It should be noted that potential investors may visit more than one DCA during a visit programme.

### NUMBER OF INVEST NI VISITS BY POTENTIAL INWARD INVESTORS TO DISTRICT COUNCIL AREAS (2009-10 TO 2011-12)

Council Area	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Antrim	0	2	0
Ards	1	0	0
Armagh	0	0	1
Ballymena	0	1	0
Ballymoney	0	0	0
Banbridge	1	0	0
Belfast	60	71	82
Carrickfergus	0	0	0
Castlereagh	4	1	3

<b>Council Area</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Coleraine	4	2	4
Cookstown	0	0	1
Craigavon	0	0	2
Londonderry	13	10	7
Down	0	0	0
Dungannon	0	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0	0
Larne	2	3	0
Limavady	1	0	0
Lisburn	3	7	1
Magherafelt	0	0	0
Moyle	0	1	0
Newry & Mourne	1	6	2
Newtownabbey	11	18	15
North Down	4	2	0
Omagh	0	0	0
Strabane	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>118</b>

### **Fusion and Acumen Programmes**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 13667/11-15, how many of these jobs are still in existence.

**(AQW 14406/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The information sought is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

### **Electricity Network Costs**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any figures her Department holds on electricity network costs compared with those in the Republic of Ireland.

**(AQW 14440/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department does not hold details of this nature.

### **Biomass Heating**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the level of biomass heating that can be sustained (i) with existing indigenous fuel sources; and (ii) from indigenous sources in the future.

**(AQW 14462/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Research carried out by my Department into the potential development of the Northern Ireland renewable heat market in 2010 suggested that heating from existing biomass resources could

account for up to 5% of Northern Ireland's total heat demand. It was also assessed that with future development in this market and increased growth of energy crops that by 2020 indigenous biomass resource could account for 10% of total heat demand.

My Department is seeking to develop the renewable heat market through the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive and has set a target of 10% renewable heat by 2020.

### **Legislative Requirements for Commercial Companies Undertaking Oil or Gas Exploration**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the legislative requirements for commercial companies undertaking oil or gas exploration; and (ii) the minimum insurance liability required for each of the companies that currently hold an oil or gas exploration licence.

**(AQW 14464/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I would refer the member to the answers I gave to:

AQW 8471/11-15

AQW 12271/11-15

AQW 13397/11-15

### **£50 Million Growth Loan Fund for Small Businesses**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the uptake of the £50 million Growth Loan Fund for small businesses; and the average interest rate charged.

**(AQW 14521/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Growth Loan Fund opened for business in early June 2012 and has completed its first phase of recruitment, with 6 full time employees now in place.

103 loan enquiries have been made from SMEs in NI since the Fund was launched. Following these enquiries 27 Business Plans have been received and are currently being analysed.

Seven loans have been approved by the Fund's investment Committee.

The first loan has been made by the Fund and was announced last week. It is therefore not deemed to be appropriate to provide details of the average interest rate charged as this would be identifiable to a specific loan and this information is considered to be commercially sensitive.

### **Consumer Prices of Oil and Natural Gas**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the difference between the current consumer prices of oil and natural gas.

**(AQW 14541/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Retail heating oil prices are currently considered to be around 35% higher than the regulated retail price of natural gas for domestic consumers in Greater Belfast at similar usage rates.

### **Gas to the West Proposal Paper**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she plans to include the Maze/Long Kesh site in her Department's Gas to the West proposal paper.

**(AQW 14542/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department has commissioned an Outline Business Case (OBC) on gas network extension to additional towns in the West/North West and East Down which is nearing completion. The

areas under consideration for extension of the natural gas network do not include the Maze/Long Kesh site which falls within firmus energy's existing gas licence area.

### **Tourist Attractions/Events in the Upper Bann Constituency**

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 8982/11-15 and AQW 13889/11-15, (i) to list the tourist attractions/events in the Upper Bann constituency that her Department has identified as motivating key customer segments; and (ii) given that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) works closely with the Orange Order, to list the festivities relating to the Order and the Royal Black Preceptory that have been promoted in NITB literature.

**(AQW 14569/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Lough Neagh Discovery Centre and Oxford Island Nature Reserve have featured extensively in the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) marketing campaigns. Information on these attractions, along with the Bronte Homeland Interpretative Centre, F. E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio, Fergusons Irish Linen Centre, Millennium Court Arts Centre and The Tannaghmore Gardens Farm & Museum all appear on the NITB consumer website [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com)

The Tourism Flagship Parades were listed in the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's summer events flyer which was inserted in The Belfast Telegraph, The News Letter and The Irish News on the 23rd and 24th March 2012. The Tourism Flagship Parades and The Sham Fight at Scarva were also listed on the events section of the NITB consumer website [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com).

### **Jobs Creation**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the number of new jobs created; and (ii) the level of financial investment for job creation, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 14573/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Tables 1 to 5 detail the 24,016 jobs that Invest NI has supported by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) over the past 5 years. The tables also provide the amount of financial assistance offered by Invest NI to secure these jobs and the amount of investment that is planned by businesses to create these jobs. In addition, Table 6 shows the 7,918 jobs supported through the Enterprise Development Programme. This is presented separately because there are no investment figures associated with the programme.

It should be noted that all the information contained in this response is based on the number of jobs expected to be created, as this is the metric used by Invest NI as part of its investment decision-making process.

**TABLE 1: INVEST NI SUPPORT OFFERED TO JOB CREATION PROJECTS BY PCA (2007-08)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Supported</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast East	299	13.03	96.04
Belfast North	51	0.41	4.25
Belfast South	527	4.36	33.01
Belfast West	62	0.88	8.72
East Antrim	284	1.80	17.34
East Londonderry	389	3.06	9.72
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	250	7.33	71.37

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Supported</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Foyle	994	10.20	46.79
Lagan Valley	107	0.55	3.73
Mid Ulster	398	3.54	39.35
Newry & Armagh	425	5.18	118.97
North Antrim	95	3.44	17.59
North Down	37	0.30	1.96
South Antrim	65	0.69	3.87
South Down	61	0.81	3.39
Strangford	61	0.22	2.55
Upper Bann	102	1.18	12.00
West Tyrone	199	1.71	19.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,406</b>	<b>58.68</b>	<b>510.52</b>

**TABLE 2: INVEST NI SUPPORT OFFERED TO JOB CREATION PROJECTS BY PCA (2008-09)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast East	1,089	24.35	545.20
Belfast North	116	1.01	13.80
Belfast South	358	2.93	38.49
Belfast West	92	0.56	3.67
East Antrim	30	0.24	1.20
East Londonderry	52	0.64	4.79
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	397	4.01	30.25
Foyle	215	1.95	11.53
Lagan Valley	102	0.95	5.03
Mid Ulster	356	2.67	36.44
Newry & Armagh	928	7.41	82.30
North Antrim	191	1.61	9.25
North Down	91	0.78	7.69
South Antrim	212	2.83	18.46
South Down	569	7.17	23.47
Strangford	134	0.63	8.41
Upper Bann	262	13.33	66.92

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
West Tyrone	71	1.12	10.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,265</b>	<b>74.19</b>	<b>917.57</b>

**TABLE 3: INVEST NI SUPPORT OFFERED TO JOB CREATION PROJECTS BY PCA (2009-10)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast East	376	7.00	31.13
Belfast North	472	4.54	36.25
Belfast South	602	14.01	55.99
Belfast West	44	0.59	5.17
East Antrim	53	0.52	3.21
East Londonderry	73	0.73	4.32
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	149	1.94	11.84
Foyle	252	14.89	60.39
Lagan Valley	186	2.36	11.04
Mid Ulster	228	6.93	53.36
Newry & Armagh	121	2.65	17.98
North Antrim	40	2.08	8.27
North Down	167	0.96	5.84
South Antrim	118	1.98	9.27
South Down	148	1.84	13.08
Strangford	137	2.21	16.68
Upper Bann	713	12.76	59.69
West Tyrone	106	1.26	7.50
Not Yet Located	20	0.24	1.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,001</b>	<b>79.50</b>	<b>412.17</b>

**TABLE 4: INVEST NI SUPPORT OFFERED TO JOB CREATION PROJECTS BY PCA (2010-11)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast East	931	12.55	64.21
Belfast North	383	3.29	21.30
Belfast South	867	8.18	57.25

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast West	5	0.04	0.20
East Antrim	113	1.71	14.73
East Londonderry	50	0.40	2.87
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	192	1.24	19.41
Foyle	357	1.65	10.86
Lagan Valley	244	3.89	29.83
Mid Ulster	123	0.90	8.64
Newry & Armagh	601	5.66	39.20
North Antrim	96	5.58	37.86
North Down	25	0.28	2.07
South Antrim	678	6.01	50.19
South Down	115	0.62	6.15
Strangford	33	0.32	2.68
Upper Bann	116	1.17	11.82
West Tyrone	34	0.31	1.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,961</b>	<b>53.79</b>	<b>381.08</b>

**TABLE 5: INVEST NI SUPPORT OFFERED TO JOB CREATION PROJECTS BY PCA (2011-12)**

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
Belfast East	219	1.88	13.59
Belfast North	447	1.45	14.35
Belfast South	1,070	8.42	76.61
Belfast West	710	3.67	33.45
East Antrim	73	0.45	2.08
East Londonderry	77	0.62	2.58
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	191	1.36	10.08
Foyle	349	2.48	24.15
Lagan Valley	333	2.72	19.91
Mid Ulster	585	3.67	27.21
Newry & Armagh	209	1.30	12.03
North Antrim	119	0.86	8.12
North Down	139	1.23	8.09

<b>PCA</b>	<b>New Jobs Promoted</b>	<b>Assistance Offered (£million)</b>	<b>Total Planned Investment (£million)</b>
South Antrim	206	1.33	9.88
South Down	227	1.49	10.34
Strangford	125	0.65	5.21
Upper Bann	156	0.63	5.09
West Tyrone	129	0.78	4.22
Not Yet Located	20	0.18	1.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,383</b>	<b>35.16</b>	<b>288.61</b>

**Notes to Tables 1 to 5:**

- 1 New Jobs Promoted represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 2 Planned Investment includes Assistance Offered.
- 3 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

**TABLE 6: INVEST NI JOBS SUPPORTED THROUGH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME BY PCA (2007-08 TO 2011-12)**

<b>Pca</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>Total</b>
Belfast East	84	68	58	92	50	353
Belfast North	77	63	78	108	52	377
Belfast South	86	73	76	120	63	418
Belfast West	85	61	62	78	36	323
East Antrim	97	65	56	68	74	359
East Londonderry	149	99	87	139	93	567
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	202	143	124	148	95	711
Foyle	164	97	74	84	58	478
Lagan Valley	78	53	58	94	54	337
Mid Ulster	166	105	124	181	97	674
Newry & Armagh	136	86	81	116	72	492
North Antrim	142	81	52	81	71	426
North Down	56	50	34	69	45	254
South Antrim	76	57	53	88	58	333
South Down	132	79	79	105	82	476
Strangford	72	47	42	76	45	282
Upper Bann	108	93	67	101	81	450
West Tyrone	148	109	111	134	89	591

<b>Pca</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unknown	0	0	3	7	6	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>1,321</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>7,918</b>

**Notes to Table 6:**

- 1 These figures are based on an estimate of jobs created by an individual EDP offer. This estimation process is derived from an independent evaluation of the programme.

**Abbey Lodge Hotel Site, Downpatrick**

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has received any requests for grant aid for new accommodation on the former Abbey Lodge Hotel site in Downpatrick.

**(AQW 14613/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI have been in receipt of an application (16 January 2009) for financial assistance toward the development of tourism accommodation at the former Abbey Lodge Hotel site in Downpatrick. All such applications are treated as commercial in-confidence. No offer of financial assistance has been made in relation to the application received.

**Broadband Provision in Rural Areas of South Down**

**Mrs McKevitt** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of broadband provision in rural areas of South Down.

**(AQW 14637/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Broadband services in Northern Ireland are delivered via a mix of technologies including fixed-line, satellite, radio (wireless) and mobile. This is similar to many regions globally where there are geographic and topographic challenges to network development.

My Department has taken forward a number of initiatives aimed at improving broadband access for consumers across Northern Ireland, particularly those located in rural areas including South Down. This includes the £51million Next Generation Broadband (NGB) project, which has facilitated the roll-out of the highest level of fibre-to-the-cabinet technology in the UK.

Through the NGB project, 164 street cabinets from a total of 168 have been fibre enabled within the South Down Parliamentary Constituency. This represents 98% across the eighteen telephone exchanges, delivering access to speeds of between 2 to 40 megabits per second (Mbps). Those interested in acquiring a service, can use the two websites that have been created to check availability in their area - [www.fasterbroadbandni.com](http://www.fasterbroadbandni.com) and [www.nibroadband.com](http://www.nibroadband.com).

However, as fibre-to-the-cabinet technology is distance related, not all premises will be able to access the fibred services. Nevertheless, the recent OFCOM Communications Market Report indicates that, by March 2012, Northern Ireland had the highest household availability of superfast broadband services, at 94%. This is well above the UK average of 60%.

Customers in South Down can access the satellite broadband services available under the Department's contract with Onwave Ltd. Onwave offers services with download speeds of 8, 12 and 18 Mbps. Details of Onwave's services can be found on the company's website at [www.onwave.co.uk/ni](http://www.onwave.co.uk/ni) or by contacting the company directly on 0845 43 43 500.

My Department also established the £1.9million Northern Ireland Broadband Fund, through which there has been significant deployment of fixed-wireless broadband networks across many parts of Northern Ireland. One of the companies supported under the Fund, North West Electronics (NWE), is currently delivering fixed-wireless broadband services in many areas across South Down. NWE offers services with download speeds of between 10 Mbps and 100 Mbps. More information can be found on North West Electronic's website at [www.nwewn.com](http://www.nwewn.com) or by contacting them directly on 028 7135 1999.

In addition, the Fund supported Net 1 Ltd in deploying fixed-wireless technology in a number of locations in South Down, using fixed-wireless technology. Net 1 offers services with download speeds of 5, 6 and 8 Mbps. More information can be obtained on the company's website at [www.net1.co.ni](http://www.net1.co.ni). or by calling 0845 557 6036.

Looking forward, my Department has secured £4.4million under the UK Coalition Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) initiative, which together with its Budget allocations for 2011-2015, will be used to extend the delivery of higher speed services, into those areas of Northern Ireland where, despite previous investments, a minimum download speed of 2Mbps via fixed-line technology cannot currently be attained.

My officials are also in discussions with BDUK to source additional funds to deliver an innovative project, aimed at improving mobile broadband coverage across Northern Ireland. Work on scoping both projects is underway.

### **Broadband in Rural Areas of South Down**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the efforts of her Department to improve access to high speed broadband in rural areas of South Down, particularly Saval, Hilltown and the Mayobridge area.

**(AQW 14639/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Broadband services in Northern Ireland are delivered via a mix of technologies including fixed-line, satellite, radio (wireless) and mobile. This is similar to many regions globally where there are geographic and topographic challenges to network development.

My Department has taken forward a number of initiatives aimed at improving broadband access for consumers across Northern Ireland, particularly those located in rural areas, including South Down. This includes the £51million Next Generation Broadband (NGB) project, which has facilitated the roll-out of the highest level of fibre-to-the-cabinet technology in the UK.

Customers in Saval, Hilltown and Mayobridge are served by the Newry, Rathfriland and Mayobridge exchanges respectively. Through the NGB project, 57 street cabinets from a total of 58, representing 98%, have been fibre enabled within the Newry, Rathfriland and Mayobridge exchanges, including all of the cabinets that serve Saval, Hilltown and Mayobridge.

These upgrades deliver access to speeds of between 2 to 40 megabits per second (Mbps). Those interested in acquiring a service, can use the two websites that have been created to check availability in their area - [www.fasterbroadbandni.com](http://www.fasterbroadbandni.com) and [www.nibroadband.com](http://www.nibroadband.com) .

However, as fibre-to-the-cabinet technology is distance related, not all premises will be able to access the fibred services. Nevertheless, the recent OFCOM Communications Market Report indicates that, by March 2012, Northern Ireland had the highest household availability of superfast broadband services, at 94%. This is well above the UK average of 60%.

Customers in South Down can access the satellite broadband services available under the Department's contract with Onwave Ltd. Onwave offers services with download speeds of 8, 12 and 18 Mbps. Details of Onwave's services can be found on the company's website at [www.onwave.co.uk/ni](http://www.onwave.co.uk/ni) or by contacting the company directly on 0845 43 43 500.

My Department also established the £1.9million Northern Ireland Broadband Fund, through which there has been significant deployment of fixed-wireless broadband networks across many parts of Northern Ireland. One of the companies supported under the Fund, North West Electronics (NWE), is currently delivering fixed-wireless broadband services in many areas across South Down. NWE offers services with download speeds of between 10 Mbps and 100 Mbps. More information can be found on North West Electronic's website at [www.nwevn.com](http://www.nwevn.com) or by contacting them directly on 028 7135 1999.

In addition, the Fund supported Net 1 Ltd in deploying fixed-wireless technology in a number of locations in South Down, using fixed-wireless technology. Net 1 offers services with download speeds

of 5, 6 and 8 Mbps. More information can be obtained on the company's website at <http://www.net1.co.ni> or by calling 0845 557 6036.

Looking forward, my Department has secured £4.4million under the UK Coalition Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) initiative, which together with its Budget allocations for 2011-2015, will be used to extend the delivery of higher speed services, into those areas of Northern Ireland where, despite previous investments, a minimum download speed of 2Mbps via fixed-line technology cannot currently be attained.

DETI officials are also in discussions with BDUK to source additional funds to deliver an innovative project, aimed at improving mobile broadband coverage across Northern Ireland. Work on scoping both projects is underway.

### **Mobile Phone Coverage in Rural Areas of South Down**

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the efforts of her Department to improve mobile phone coverage in rural areas of South Down.

**(AQW 14641/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Coverage targets for 3rd Generation (3G) mobile services are set as part of spectrum licensing obligations on a geographic basis and at a UK national level by Ofcom (the telecommunications regulator), meaning that Mobile Network Operators can effectively meet their targets by providing coverage in the largest towns and cities in the UK.

The impact of this is that in many areas of the UK there is a limited commercial case for investment from Mobile Network Operators to improve coverage and quality of service. This particularly impacts on Northern Ireland, having a high density of rural dwellers.

Deficiencies in access to mobile voice services is recognised by Government on a UK-wide basis, which is why the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is taking forward a project – the Mobile Infrastructure project – the aim of which is to improve access to 2nd Generation (voice and text) mobile services across the UK, including parts of Northern Ireland. The precise locations within Northern Ireland to benefit from the project will not be known until the procurement process has been completed and a contract awarded in early 2013. My officials continue to engage with DCMS on this project. In addition to this, DETI, under its Telecommunications Action Plan 2011-2015, is currently scoping a project aimed at delivering improvements in 3rd Generation (voice, text and mobile broadband) services across Northern Ireland while, at the same time, future-proofing networks for the delivery of 4th Generation (voice, text and high speed mobile broadband) services when commercial roll-out commences in 2013.

### **Grant Aid for New Hotel Developments**

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has made any offers of grant aid for new hotel developments in the South Down area in the last five years.

**(AQW 14671/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** In the last five years Invest NI has received eight applications for capital assistance towards tourism accommodation developments in the South Down constituency. Of these, two were for hotels. In one case the application has not been progressed at the request of the client and in the other case no offer of financial assistance has been made.

### **Project Kelvin**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to what extent Project Kelvin has featured in persuading inward investment companies to locate to Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 14684/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI uses the benefits of the region's world class telecoms infrastructure, including the transatlantic link provided by Project Kelvin, to promote Northern Ireland as an attractive and

viable location for new inward investment opportunities, and to secure additional projects from existing international investors.

While Invest NI does not hold information on which companies have chosen to take advantage of the transatlantic link, the agency has conducted an informal survey to assess the extent to which Project Kelvin was important to investment decisions.

The survey found that, between going fully operational in Spring 2010 until the end of Financial year 2011-12, approximately 25% of first time investors rated the transatlantic link as either crucial to their investment decision or a contributing factor.

The survey also found that the investment location was not linked to a Project Kelvin point of presence and that, in all cases, other factors (including availability of skilled labour, availability of office space, other infrastructure related issues, presence of an existing sectoral cluster etc.) contributed to the location decision.

Invest NI will continue to use the Northern Ireland's telecoms infrastructure, including the benefits that Project Kelvin provides, to sell the region as a place to do business.

### **Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart: International Sales Conference**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the international sales conference held in the Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart in March 2011, whether (i) potential inward investors have been identified; and (ii) any specific benefits have been derived.

**(AQW 14685/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The stakeholder event held at the Flowerfield Arts Centre on 30 March 2011, as part of Invest Northern Ireland's annual sales conference, represented an ideal forum to outline the Coleraine inward investment proposition to Invest NI's Overseas Sales Teams. This allowed the overseas sales teams to understand the initiatives that the Council has undertaken in strengthening certain sector propositions such as that of the ICT sector in launching Digital Causeway.

Following the conference, the number of visits to the Coleraine District Council Area (DCA) increased from two in financial year 2010-11 to four in 2011-12. These visits have not as yet resulted in new first time investment in the Coleraine DCA. However, it should be noted that the investment decision is the end result of an extensive process that can span 18-24 months or even longer.

It is also important to note that the decision on where to invest is taken by the investor and that it is crucial to allow companies the scope to locate where they feel that the business can thrive.

Invest NI will continue to review the Coleraine DCA investment proposition when seeking to meet the needs of prospective investors.

### **Northern Ireland Science Park**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what was the value of the grant given to the Northern Ireland Science Park.

**(AQW 14708/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Up to 30 September 2012, the Northern Ireland Science Park has received the following grant aid:

- £21,977,000 has been provided to co-fund the building and expansion of the Science Park
- £3,319,000 was provided to fund the running costs during the construction and establishment of the Science Park.
- £1,100,000 has been provided to support Halo business angel network and NISP Connect programme.

## Grant Allowance for the Installation of Solar Power Products

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what grant assistance is available to self-builders for the installation of solar power products.

**(AQW 14709/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** In May 2012, I launched the Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme that provides financial assistance for domestic consumers wishing to install renewable heating technologies such as solar thermal panels. To date, my Department has offered £400,000 of assistance, resulting in a total investment of £1.5million. The RHPP is a forerunner to the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which will be launched following the passage of appropriate legislation. The RHI will support non-domestic renewable heat installations via ongoing payments over the lifetime of the technology. The RHI will be extended to the domestic sector in due course.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are incentivised by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) which provides a revenue stream for the renewable electricity generated in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates which can be sold to electricity suppliers. DETI does not offer grants towards the installation of solar PV panels for renewable electricity.

Further information on the RHPP, RHI and NIRO can be found at [www.energy.detini.gov.uk](http://www.energy.detini.gov.uk).

## Development of an Innovation Strategy

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the inquiry into research and development, what progress has been made on the development of an Innovation Strategy.

**(AQW 14729/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Economic Strategy has highlighted innovation as being the key factor to rebalancing our economy toward a greater focus on generating high value exports. The ETI Committee's Inquiry Report into Innovation and R&D is therefore particularly welcome as it will provide a valuable contribution to the development of the forthcoming Innovation Strategy. The Innovation Strategy is currently being drafted and I intend to present it to the Executive Sub Committee on the Economy later this year, with an aim to publishing in 2013.

## Appointment of Onwave Ltd

**Mr Mitchel McLaughlin** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what assurance can be given that her Department's appointment of Onwave Ltd, on 6 January 2012, to provide satellite broadband services to rural residents and business, who are unable to avail of fast telephone-line broadband, has resulted in services being offered which are (a) more competitive than comparable services; and (b) comparable, in terms of quality and cost, to broadband services available in urban areas; and (ii) what plans she has to open up the provision of rural broadband services to competition.

**(AQW 14748/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Broadband services in Northern Ireland are delivered across a range of technologies. It would be misleading to compare the services of one product over another, given the different technologies involved and the competitive nature of the marketplace. I can, however, confirm that my Department is unaware of any complaints about the quality of the services provided by Onwave from customers who have bought an Onwave product.

The cost of services is a commercial matter for individual telecommunications companies, taking account of market conditions. The Remote Broadband Services contract awarded to Onwave contains a pricing ceiling above which the company cannot charge its customers. In recognising that telecoms is already an open market, my Department seeks to encourage further competition, but has no remit to intervene or influence the pricing policy of private companies.

## The Mourne Granite Trail

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if her Department has considered the extension of the Mourne Granite Trail to include other quarries, given the success of the current trail linking King Street, Newcastle to Thomas' Mountain.

**(AQW 14792/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Neither my Department nor the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has considered the extension of the Mourne Granite Trail.

## Department of the Environment

### Planning Application B/2011/0057/F

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister of the Environment whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was submitted for planning application B/2011/0057/F.

**(AQW 6483/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment):** As the site of planning application B/2011/0057/F was located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) the Department carried out an EIA assessment under Category 11 (B) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (EIA) Regulations to determine whether the planning application should be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Following consideration of the application details, an EIA determination was carried out on 25 March 2011. It was determined that the proposed development was not likely to have significant effects on the environment and that an Environmental Statement was not required. I have asked for further details on this assessment.

You may however be aware that this planning application was refused at Council on 26 June 2012 and I can confirm that the Department subsequently issued the decision notice on 10 July 2012 refusing planning permission.

### Road Haulage Operator Licences

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of the Environment how many Road Haulage Operator licences have been revoked in each of the last five years; and what were the reasons involved.

**(AQW 12041/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** An applicant for a road freight operator's licence must meet specified criteria in relation to repute, financial standing and professional competence. The number of licences revoked in each of the last five years and the reasons for revocation are tabulated below.

Year	Licences Revoked	Reason for Revocation
2007-08	2	Loss of repute – 1 Inadequate financial standing - 1
2008-09	None	
2009-10	None	
2010-11	None	
2011-12	15	Loss of repute – 4 Inadequate financial standing - 11

I met with hauliers in recent weeks to discuss this issues and the condition of the industry, mindful of the recent loss of TARGET jobs. A number of strategies were discussed including the sharing of HMRC

and DVA information with other authorities and how new structures in place since early July can be developed in relation to reputations and other issues.

## National Parks

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has held any recent discussions with the Ulster Farmers' Union in relation to the National Parks proposals.

**(AQW 13984/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am very well aware of the differing views in support and in opposition to national parks. I have said I am "taking stock" and am arranging to meet a wide range of queries. I have, of course, met the UFU in January, in August at a farmers meeting in Cookstown and the issue has been raised in other meetings. I have also met the National Beef Association twice on National Parks. I will continue to meet the farmers organisations on this, on the end of the slurry spreading season and any other relevant matters.

## Planning Applications: Restrictions on Traffic Flow

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister of the Environment who has responsibility to ensure that planning restrictions placed on applications, in regard to traffic flow, agreed activity and vehicular activity are monitored; and what penalties are in place when an applicant is found to be in breach of these restrictions.

**(AQW 14228/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** DoE Planning is responsible for planning control in Northern Ireland. This responsibility includes the determination of planning applications and taking whatever action considered necessary for the enforcement of planning control.

As part of the assessment of an application advice may be sought from a number of agencies and organisations, such as DRD Roads Service, to inform the decision on an application. A copy of the decision notice will normally issue to Roads Service.

Following the grant of planning permission, planning officers will identify particular developments which require proactive monitoring to ensure that development is carried out as approved and conditions complied with. In cases involving restrictive conditions such as traffic flow and activity, the Department will take reasonable steps through effective monitoring and liaison with Roads Service to ensure that conditions are complied with.

Roads Service officials regularly alert DoE Planning of concerns in relation to the implementation of a permission granted, including compliance with traffic and road safety conditions stipulated as part of the planning permission.

Where planning permission has been granted subject to conditions, and one or more of these conditions has not been complied with, DoE Planning may serve a breach of condition notice. Failure to secure compliance with the notice is an offence and anyone found guilty of such an offence may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1000.

## Bangor to Holywood Coastal Path

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to upgrade the Bangor to Holywood coastal path to make it useable by both cyclists and pedestrians.

**(AQW 14248/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The North Down Coastal Path which extends from Bangor to Holywood is currently a well used walking route and an important section of the Ulster Way. I understand that there are several sections of this route that are already suitable for multi-use access.

For example, I can inform you that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) through its Natural Heritage Grants Programme previously provided £60,000 in grant aid to the North Down Borough

Council between 2008 and 2010 for upgrades to two sections of the route at Glen Road and north of Rockport School to make them accessible for cyclists and all-ability use. In addition NIEA worked with Sustrans to create a specific cycle route through part of Crawfordsburn Country Park which connects to the North Down Coastal Path.

Whilst I recognise the benefits of upgrading paths into 'all ability' walking and cycling routes in appropriate locations, development of such access provision is the responsibility of the local council, in this case North Down Borough Council. You may therefore wish to approach North Down Borough Council directly regarding its plans to upgrade the coastal path.

## **Safety and Cleanliness of Beaches**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what powers his Department has in relation to the safety and cleanliness of beaches.

**(AQW 14257/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The legislative powers in relation to the safety and cleanliness of beaches are mainly exercised by District Councils. There is a fairly wide range of such powers and details of these are set out below. For completeness I have also provided additional information covering other initiatives currently under way designed to improve the state of our beaches.

Section 82 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 ("the 1907 Act") provides that a Council may make bye-laws to prevent danger, obstruction, or annoyance to persons using the seashore in its district. This would include beaches. Examples of the types of activity that may be covered include:

- erection and placing of booths, tents and stalls;
- vehicles; and
- playing of games.

Most of the 1907 Act (including section 82) does not extend to Northern Ireland. A Council may, however, apply to the Department for an Order extending parts or sections of the 1907 Act to its district.

It is a matter for each Council to decide whether to apply for such an Order and whether to make provision, in bye-laws, for its beaches.

Under the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 district councils are under a statutory duty to ensure that land for which they are responsible is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter. In cases where land is not the responsibility of the District Council, for example, Crown land, the duty applies to the appropriate authority. District Councils and other duty bodies are required by law to have regard to the Code of Practice on Litter in discharging the above duty. The Code gives specific guidance in relation to beaches and for ease of reference I have reproduced the relevant section below:-

"This land use includes amenity beaches (including inland beaches where substantial number of bathers or beach users may congregate). As a minimum standard, amenity beaches should generally be kept clear of all types of litter between the traditional bathing season of 1st May and 30th September inclusive. It is expected that during this time of the year, beaches be subject to a frequent monitoring routine and be cleansed to as practicable a standard as possible. The Code recognises that a Grade A [no litter] is not always achievable, due to the terrain and conditions in a beach environment. A Grade B [predominantly free of litter apart from some small items] would be a suitable cleanliness standard under these circumstances.

Due to changing holiday and climatic patterns, beaches are increasingly being used outside of the traditional bathing season. Although the duty does not extend beyond the bathing season, it is recommended as good practice that duty bodies are aware of the different nature of beaches within their area, that they carry out regular monitoring programme of those beaches and develop an appropriate cleansing regime.

By virtue of the Litter (Non-Relevant Land) Order (Northern Ireland) 1995 (SR 1995 No. 184), land below the place to which the tide flows at mean high water springs is not to be treated as relevant land of a district council or as relevant Crown land. Again, it is recommended as good practice that duty bodies are aware of the impact of litter in the inter-tidal area, and where appropriate carry out cleansing.

District councils should identify those beaches for which they have responsibility, which might reasonably be described as amenity beaches. Any assessment should take into account the level of use of the beach for recreational purposes.

The duty applies to items or materials originating from discharges directly to the marine environment as well as discarded items from beach users. As a guide, only litter comprising manufactured or processed items of materials that have been discarded, disposed of or abandoned, by intent or accident, should be removed. Litter should include processed food items but it does not include seaweed or twigs, which contribute to maintaining the local ecosystem.

There may be issues of practicability relating to litter removal from beaches and particular care will be needed in respect of sensitive habitats.”

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance constitutes a statutory nuisance. If an Environmental Health Officer of a Council is satisfied that such a statutory nuisance exists in the district of the council, for example, on a part of a beach, they shall serve an abatement notice on the person responsible for the nuisance. The notice can impose a range of requirements to deal with the nuisance.

Under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the consent of the Department is required to discharge any trade or sewage effluent to the aquatic environment. In addition, potentially polluting activities carried out on farms are controlled under the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

These control measures, together with substantial pollution prevention activities, are combined into River Basin Management Plans. These set ecologically based targets for all waters and especially for protected areas such as bathing waters designated under the EC Bathing Waters Directive. The responsibility for implementing these pollution control and prevention powers rests with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Protecting bathers' health is therefore another important consideration. Twenty-three of Northern Ireland's bathing waters are identified under the EC Bathing Waters Directive and are monitored for water quality. District Councils and other beach managers monitor safety at these most popular family beaches and many have life guards during the summer months. The Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 require that where either the Department or a bathing water operator is aware of the presence of waste, including tarry residues, glass, plastic or rubber, the operator shall take such operator management measures there as it considers adequate to protect bathers' health and, where necessary, remove the waste.

I place great importance on the quality and standards of our beaches and the series of Good Beach Summits I am hosting are designed to focus efforts on improving the state of our beaches. I have also instructed officials to develop a strategy to address the problem of marine litter on our beaches. A consultation on a Draft Northern Ireland Marine Litter Strategy, which will provide an overarching framework for coordinated activity, will issue shortly.

I am also committed to the ongoing good work being done in conjunction with coastal councils and other key groups that are targeting increased beach cleanliness, better facilities and appropriate beach information signage.

I know that a number of Councils are very proactive in this area and have undertaken risk assessments and put in place beach safety procedures and signage. In August 2012 I wrote to coastal councils requesting they review their health and safety arrangements and signage at beaches. I will be seeking an update on this important issue at the forthcoming Good Beach Summit on 3 October 2012.

The NIEA continues to work with coastal councils to improve beach cleanliness, facilities, signage and beach safety. Information on bathing water quality, amenities and facilities as well as beach safety is

available through a number of local web sites which the public are encouraged to use as part of their planned beach outing. These include:

Beach NI web site – <http://beachni.com/>

NIEA Bathing Water Quality – <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/quality/bathingqualityni.htm>

RNLI Beach Safety – <http://www.beachni.com/useful-info/beach-safety/>

### **Climate Change Adaptation Programme or Plan**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department intends to introduce a Climate Change Adaptation Programme or Plan; (ii) how it would be introduced; (iii) when it would commence; (iv) how much it is anticipated to cost; and (v) to outline the reasons for its introduction. **(AQW 14290/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I chair the Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change which has the responsibility to prepare and deliver a cross-departmental climate change adaptation programme. I have been pressing my own Department and other Departments on adaptation.

I intend to introduce a Climate Change Adaptation Programme through the Northern Ireland Assembly, in 2013, as required by the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

I fully recognise that we must take action to address our climate change risks and opportunities, otherwise the costs both to our economy and to our environment will increase exponentially. Early adaptation is therefore essential to reduce long term costs and disruption caused by climate change. Our response of course needs to be proportionate to the risks, and have the right balance between our economic sectors and the challenge and growing risks of climate change.

### **Council: Casual Staff**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment how many casual staff are registered with each council.

**(AQW 14328/11-15)**

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

<b>Council</b>	<b>Number of Casual Staff</b>
Antrim Borough Council	140
Ards Borough Council	194
Armagh City & District Council	193
Ballymena Borough Council	4
Ballymoney Borough Council	0
Banbridge District Council	120
Belfast City Council	362
Carrickfergus Borough Council	46
Castlereagh Borough Council	330
Coleraine Borough Council	48
Cookstown District Council	93
Craigavon Borough Council	219
Derry City Council	114

<b>Council</b>	<b>Number of Casual Staff</b>
Down District Council	103
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	73
Fermanagh District Council	164
Larne Borough Council	44
Limavady Borough Council	95
Lisburn City Council	159
Magherafelt District Council	104
Moyle District Council	0
Newry & Mourne District Council	0
Newtownabbey Borough Council	267
North Down Borough Council	92
Omagh District Council	215
Strabane District Council	108

### **Marine Strategy Framework Directive**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department can achieve good environmental status across all the descriptors under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, or implement an ecologically coherent and representative network of Marine Protected Areas if an MCZ is not a purely environmental designation, will be primarily for seabed features and is not intended to displace any other activity or industry.

**(AQW 14356/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department's objective is for an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, which will include MCZs and European designations. This network will assist in meeting the UK's obligation to achieve Good Environmental Status in our marine waters by 2020; the overall objective of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Identification of potential MCZs will be science-based, however socio-economic data will also be considered when defining areas likely to be impacted and assessing possible management measures.

The Marine Bill is based on sustainable development principles, in that the economic and social consequences are to be taken into account in providing environmental protections. Socio-economic considerations will not override the coherence of the MPA network but will determine the site location and size of the MCZs within the network, without compromising the network's coherence. The aim is to find the right balance between all those who have an interest in the marine area.

It is envisaged that the designation of MCZs will primarily be for specific seabed features and habitats. Many mobile marine species are already protected throughout Northern Ireland territorial waters under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

### **Preservation of Areas Used as Filming Locations**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of recent success of the film and television industry, for his assessment of the retention and preservation of areas that are used as filming locations which are also of considerable character or heritage such as Rugby Road in South Belfast.

**(AQW 14357/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department has designated as Conservation Areas or Areas of Townscape Character a number of areas which it has assessed as exhibiting a distinct character based on their historic built form or layout. Rugby Road is one of many such areas that have been designated in draft BMAP as an Area of Townscape Character. Policy for the control of development within Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) is set out in Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage and the Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 6: Areas of Townscape Character. In addition the Department has published Supplementary Planning Guidance for individual Conservation Areas and many of these areas also contain listed buildings and protected trees.

The Department is therefore supportive of the retention and preservation of areas which display considerable character or heritage and which as a result provide opportunities for filming.

Upon being advised of the proposal by Roads Service, I spoke with relevant Roads official, explained my interest, the concern of the residents and the film industry and the opposition of residents. I also contacted the Roads Minister.

Minister Kennedy has written to inform me that he has requested Roads Service to postpone the proposed scheme in Rugby Road until consultation with the local community and their public representatives has been carried out.

I believe that the proper outcome is the one requested by residents. I hope this will prevail.

### **Criteria for Farm Development in PPS21**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of the Environment how the criteria for farm development in PPS21 helps young farmers and new entrants into the industry, who wish to start new farm businesses and be able to construct farm buildings to house livestock or farm machinery.

**(AQW 14421/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** PPS21 supports the operational needs of farm enterprises through policy CTY12 'Agriculture and Forestry Development' which permits agricultural buildings on active and established farm holdings subject to certain criteria. For consistency the policy criteria for determining an active and established farm business are the same as that for CTY10 'Dwellings on Farms'. This requires that the holding is active and has been established for at least 6 years.

In cases where a new farm business has been established, and there are no existing building on the farm, an application for a farm building will be assessed against the all the criteria set out in CTY12, other relevant planning policies, and other material planning considerations. However, the welfare of livestock or the need to store farm produce or equipment are material planning considerations which need to be balanced against the requirements of CTY12, including the requirement that the farm business is established at least 6 years.

In such cases non-compliance with the six year rule will not usually render an application unacceptable.

The latest planning statistics on the number of approvals of agricultural buildings show that from April 2011 to March 2012 244 such applications were received and 234 applications were approved. This represents an approval rate of 96%. This high rate of approvals indicates that the majority of farmers are able to submit proposals which satisfy the requirements of CTY12.

### **Consultation Responses from Internal Consultees**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) why consultation responses from internal consultees, such as Landscape Architects Branch, are no longer available to the public; (ii) how this complies with his Department's aims of openness and transparency; and (iii) whether this complies with the Aarhus Convention.

**(AQW 14425/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Earlier this year, revised arrangements were put in place in for seeking advice on planning applications from civil service staff within the Department's Planning and Local Government Group

(PLGG). These revised arrangements were introduced on that basis that there was a clear distinction between (i) external consultees to the Planning process, such as DRD Roads Service, (ii) internal Departmental consultees, such as NIEA and (iii) other sections of the Department where staff have a level of expertise.

Certain sections, such as Landscape Architects Branch, form part of the internal structures of PLGG. Therefore the advice that those sections provide on planning applications will now be sought informally, where necessary, and this will be taken into consideration along with other material planning considerations in the preparation of the Development Management Officers report and following discussion at Development Management Group Meeting.

Following consideration by Development Management Group meeting and when a recommendation on an application has been made and referred to the Council, the Development Management Officer's report will be made available on the Planning Portal. This report will include the details of internal advice provided.

DOE is satisfied that it is meeting the requirements of the Aarhus Convention. Significant efforts have been made over recent years to make a wide range of information relating to individual planning applications available on the Planning Portal. The Development Management Officers report is a key document which sets out the considerations of the Department in making a recommendation on a planning application.

### **Payment of Invoices**

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of the Environment to list the councils which have a payment term for invoices from suppliers of (i) less than; and (ii) more than 30 days.

**(AQW 14450/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** This information is not held centrally by the department and is being obtained from the 26 District Councils. Some councils have not been able to provide the necessary information within the deadline given. I shall therefore reply to Mr McClarty MLA as soon as all the information has been received.

### **Payment of Invoices**

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the supplier invoices paid by councils during the period 1 April 2012 to 31 August 2012, (i) to detail the number of invoices paid within 10 working days of receipt of the supplier's invoice; (ii) to identify the councils which paid 90 percent or more of suppliers invoices within 10 work days of receipt; and (iii) to explain the performance of any council which failed to achieve the payment performance target of 90 percent.

**(AQW 14451/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** This information is not held centrally by the department and is being obtained from the 26 District Councils. Some councils have not been able to provide the necessary information within the deadline given. I shall therefore reply to Mr McClarty MLA as soon as all the information has been received.

### **Payment of Invoices**

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to supplier invoices paid by councils between 1 April 2012 to 31 August 2012, to detail (i) the number of invoices paid; and (ii) the number paid (a) within 30 days; and (b) more than 30 days of receipt of the supplier's invoice.

**(AQW 14452/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** This information is not held centrally by the department and is being obtained from the 26 District Councils. Some councils have not been able to provide the necessary information within the deadline given. I shall therefore reply to Mr McClarty MLA as soon as all the information has been received.

## Road Haulage Operators Licences

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years, how many Road Haulage Operators Licences have been revoked on the basis of the holder being deemed not to be of good repute.

**(AQW 14456/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** An applicant for a road freight operator's licence must meet certain specified criteria, including in relation to repute. The number of licences revoked in each of the last five years on the basis of the holder being deemed not to be of good repute is set out in the table below.

Year	Licences revoked on the basis of the holder being deemed not to be of good repute
2007-08	1
2008-09	None
2009-10	None
2010-11	None
2011-12	4

## Site at Cavanacaw Near Omagh

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will give an assurance that the site at Cavanacaw near Omagh will be restored, specifically in relation to the mining pit.

**(AQW 14478/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The original grant of planning permission for the Gold Mine includes a condition requiring a closure plan to be submitted to deal with remediation and restoration. While the permission associated with the implementation of the closure plan was recently quashed the Department will be retaking this decision with a view to ensuring proper restoration of the site in the future.

I am therefore confident that when this planning application is processed properly the restoration of the site will be secured.

## Cavanacaw Gold Mine

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of the Environment for a breakdown of all the costs incurred by his Department in the recent civil action concerning the Cavanacaw gold mine.

**(AQW 14479/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** It is too early to provide a full breakdown of costs.

While the Court has awarded costs against the Department the applicants' legal advisors have not yet submitted their costs to the Department for consideration.

## Packaging Alternatives to Glass: Eenvironmental Impact and Recycling

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the benefits of packaging alternatives to glass, in the context of environmental impact and recycling.

**(AQW 14480/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am committed to the efficient use of resources and recognise the benefits that this can deliver for a sustainable economy and for our environment. In this context I am creating a legislative framework to encourage the application of the waste hierarchy and to promote resource efficiency. Whilst the choice of packaging must remain a commercial decision for business to make based on their products, and I cannot advocate substituting specific materials, I am amending the

Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 from 1st January 2013 to set higher targets to recover and recycle all packaging materials. This will minimise environmental impact by increasing the amount and availability of recyclable material for reprocessing, reducing the amount of packaging going to landfill and by encouraging producers to reduce packaging through innovative design. The Department is also working closely with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to promote optimum packaging for all producers.

## **Recyclable Plant-Based Plastics and Polyethylene Terephthalate Bottles**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of the Environment to outline any research his Department has undertaken in the field of recyclable plant-based plastics and Polyethylene terephthalate bottles.

**(AQW 14481/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** No bespoke research has been conducted by the Department into these particular plastics. However the Department has directly and indirectly funded general research and studies on plastics.

In June 2008, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), who receive grant-in-aid funding from the Department, published the "Domestic Mixed Plastics Packaging Waste Options". The WRAP study concluded near-infrared systems can effectively remove polylactic acid bioplastics (plant-based plastics) and carton board from a mixed packaging stream thereby showing that automated systems on the market today can accurately sort natural plastics into pure streams within industry accepted norms and thus reduce barriers to their use. The report is at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/domestic-mixed-plastics-waste-management-options>.

On 15th September 2011 Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government, Mr Phil Hogan TD, and I launched the study, "The Irish Recycled Plastic Waste Arisings Study". The aim of the study was to provide business people and entrepreneurs with reliable data on the quantity, quality, type, origin, destination and end use of plastic waste generated on the island of Ireland to help them form ideas and make decisions on what they can do to reprocess plastic waste here on the island.

The study which was compiled by rx3, identified that many plastic reprocessors and manufacturers import plastic waste and recycle as raw materials for their operations here on the island of Ireland. The rx3 study, the first of its kind on the island of Ireland, found that while manufacturers have a need and demand for recyclable plastics as raw materials, in 2009 less than a third of the estimated 482,366 tonnes of plastic waste generated on the island of Ireland was collected for recycling. The study also estimated that 40,088 tonnes of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) packaging, roughly equivalent to 1.6 billion plastic 500 ml soft drinks bottles, were collected for recycling from households in 2009 across the island. The report is can be viewed at: <http://www.rx3.ie/MDGUploadedFiles/file/The%20Irish%20Recycled%20Plastic%20Waste%20Arisings%20Study.pdf>

## **Animals Under Threat of Extinction**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what animals, including bird life, are currently under threat of extinction.

**(AQW 14485/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Species threatened with extinction in Ireland are included in published Irish red lists. Species assessed as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable are considered to be under threat of extinction.

For birds, a list of Birds of Conservation Concern for Ireland and the UK is used to assess conservation status.

In Northern Ireland a list of priority species is maintained which includes all species threatened with extinction and other species requiring conservation action. This list is published by my Department as required under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

The current list of 481 Northern Ireland priority species was published in 2010 and includes 343 animal species (of which 66 are bird species). Of these, 83 animal species (including 9 species of birds) are listed as threatened in Irish Red Data lists and a further 41 birds are red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern. These are listed in the attached appendix. The full priority species list can be found on the Northern Ireland Environment Agency website. [http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/northern\\_ireland\\_priority\\_species\\_list.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/northern_ireland_priority_species_list.pdf)

## Appendix

### Criteria 6: Irish Red Data Book (RDB) species classed as critically endangered (CR), endangered (EN) or vulnerable (VU)

### Criteria 7: Red-listed species in either Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BOCCI) or the UK Birds of Conservation Concern (UK BOCC) lists.

Group	Latin Name	Common name	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Birds	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	dunlin	√	√
Birds	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	nightjar	√	√
Birds	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	hen harrier	√	√
Birds	<i>Crex crex</i>	corncrake	√	√
Birds	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	common scoter	√	√
Birds	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	red-necked phalarope	√	√
Birds	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	golden plover	√	√
Birds	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	roseate tern	√	√
Birds	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	little tern	√	√
Bees	<i>Andrena coitana</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Andrena denticulata</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Andrena fuscipes</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Andrena nigroaenea</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Andrena praecox</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Andrena semilaevis</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Bombus (P) barbutellus</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Bombus (P) campestris</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Bombus (Psithyrus) rupestris</i>	a cuckoo bumblebee	√	
Bees	<i>Bombus muscorum</i>	moss carder bee	√	
Bees	<i>Colletes floralis</i>	northern colletes	√	
Bees	<i>Hylaeus brevicornis</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Hylaeus hyalinatus</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Lasioglossum nitidiusculum</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Lasioglossum rufitarse</i>	a solitary bee	√	
Bees	<i>Nomada goodeniana</i>	a bee	√	

Group	Latin Name	Common name	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Bees	<i>Nomada striata</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Sphecodes ferruginatus</i>	a bee	√	
Bees	<i>Sphecodes gibbus</i>	a bee	√	
Beetles	<i>Agabus congener</i>	relative diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Agabus conspersus</i>	spattered diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Bagous frit</i>	short sloth weevil	√	
Beetles	<i>Bagous lutulentus</i>	horsetail sloth weevil	√	
Beetles	<i>Cyphon punctipennis</i>	transition marsh beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Donacia aquatica</i>	zircon reed beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Donacia cinerea</i>	hairy reed beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Haliphus apicalis</i>	saltmarsh crawler water beetle	√	

Group	Latin Name	Common name	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Beetles	<i>Haliphus variegatus</i>	variegated crawler water beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Helophorus arvernicus</i>	upland frenchman	√	
Beetles	<i>Helophorus fulgidicollis</i>	orangeman	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydraena minutissima</i>	diminutive moss beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydraena nigrita</i>	black moss beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydraena rufipes</i>	red-legged moss beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydrochus brevis</i>	bereft scavenger beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydrocyphon deflexicollis</i>	rockhopper beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydroporus glabriusculus</i>	three bs diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydroporus longicornis</i>	Sharp's parallel diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Hydroporus morio</i>	quicksilver diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Hygrotus novemlineatus</i>	nine-lined diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Ilybius chalconatus</i>	copper diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Ilybius subaeneus</i>	dull bronze diver	√	
Beetles	<i>Laccophilus hyalinus</i>	dinghy skipper	√	
Beetles	<i>Ochthebius bicolon</i>	:: moss beetle	√	
Beetles	<i>Ochthebius exsculptus</i>	a moss beetle	√	
Molluscs	<i>Acicula fusca</i>	point snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Anisus vortex</i>	whirlpool ram's horn	√	
Molluscs	<i>Anodonta anatina</i>	duck mussel	√	
Molluscs	<i>Anodonta cygnea</i>	swan mussel	√	

<b>Group</b>	<b>Latin Name</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Criteria 6</b>	<b>Criteria 7</b>
Molluscs	<i>Aplexa hypnorum</i>	moss bladder snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Arianta arbustorum</i>	copse snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Balea perversa</i>	tree snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Cochlodina laminata</i>	plaited door snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Gyraulus laevis</i>	smooth ram's horn	√	
Molluscs	<i>Helicella itala</i>	heath snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Hydrobia acuta neglecta</i>	a spire snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Leiostyla anglica</i>	English chrysalis snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Limax cinereoniger</i>	ash-black slug	√	
Molluscs	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	freshwater pearl mussel	√	
Molluscs	<i>Merdigera obscura</i>	lesser bulin	√	
Molluscs	<i>Musculium lacustre</i>	lake (or capped) orb mussel	√	
Molluscs	<i>Pisidium lilljeborgii</i>	Lilljeborg's pea mussel	√	
Molluscs	<i>Pisidium pulchellum</i>	iridescent pea mussel	√	
Molluscs	<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	moss chrysalis snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Radix auricularia</i>	ear pond snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Spermodea lamellata</i>	plaited snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Succinella oblonga</i>	small amber snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Vallonia pulchella</i>	beautiful grass snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Ventrosia ventrosa</i>	a spire snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Vertigo angustior</i>	narrow-mouthed whorl snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Vertigo antvertigo</i>	marsh whorl snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	Geyer's whorl snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Vertigo lilljeborgi</i>	Lilljeborg's whorl snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Zenobiella subrufescens</i>	brown snail	√	
Molluscs	<i>Zonitoides excavatus</i>	hollowed glass snail	√	
Birds	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	skylark		√
Birds	<i>Anas acuta</i>	pintail		√
Birds	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	shoveler		√
Birds	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	tree pipit		√
Birds	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	golden eagle		√
Birds	<i>Aythya marila</i>	scaup		√
Birds	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	bittern		√
Birds	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	knot		√
Birds	<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	lesser redpoll		√

<b>Group</b>	<b>Latin Name</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Criteria 6</b>	<b>Criteria 7</b>
Birds	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	linnet		√
Birds	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	twite		√
Birds	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	hawfinch		√
Birds	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	quail		√
Birds	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	cuckoo		√
Birds	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	bewick's swan		√
Birds	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	yellowhammer		√
Birds	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	white-tailed eagle		√
Birds	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	red grouse		√
Birds	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	herring gull		√
Birds	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	black-headed gull		√
Birds	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	black-tailed godwit		√
Birds	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	grasshopper warbler		√
Birds	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	yellow wagtail		√
Birds	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	spotted flycatcher		√
Birds	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	curlew		√
Birds	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel		√
Birds	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	house sparrow		√
Birds	<i>Passer montanus</i>	tree sparrow		√
Birds	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	wood warbler		√
Birds	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	black-necked grebe		√
Birds	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	sooty shearwater		√
Birds	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>	Balearic shearwater		√
Birds	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Arctic skua		√
Birds	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	turtle dove		√
Birds	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	starling		√
Birds	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	redshank		√
Birds	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	redwing		√
Birds	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	song thrush		√
Birds	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	ring ouzel		√
Birds	<i>Tyto alba</i>	barn owl		√
Birds	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	lapwing		√

## Planning Application Process

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what his Department is doing to make the planning application process quicker for businesses.

**(AQW 14488/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am working on a number of fronts to reform and remodel the planning system so that it supports the future economic and social development needs of all users in Northern Ireland, including local businesses.

I have recently introduced legislation which provides new permitted development rights for extensions, alterations and other small scale development for shops, financial and professional services establishments, office premises and schools, colleges, universities and hospitals. The legislation also provides revised permitted development rights for industrial buildings and warehouses. Increasing the range of development that no longer needs planning permission will make it easier for owners of shops and offices to undertake minor building works such as small extensions to their property.

I have also introduced an enhanced streamlined scheme, to which 20 councils have now agreed. This enhanced scheme incorporates all minor and intermediate applications, housing developments up to 25 units and office accommodation up to a maximum of 200 square metres. Processing times for these applications will be significantly reduced and this will have a positive impact on business in Northern Ireland.

I have also set ambitious targets for 2012-2013 to speed up the planning process. These targets should ensure that planning applications for small business are processed in a timely manner.

I also intend to bring forward various reforms designed to speed up the processing of applications (including major applications) such as measures to ensure quicker responses from consultees and on a voluntary basis pre-application community consultation on key developments.

However, the Department's experience to date is that improved performance can only be achieved through working inclusively with all key stakeholders in the overall planning system. I would encourage applicants to engage with the local community and to enter into pre-application discussions with my Department prior to the submission of major planning applications.

I will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that planning delivers benefits to the economy in an efficient and timely manner and continue to monitor the performance within Planning.

In addition there are a further series of initiatives including:

- (i) Extension of Permitted Development rights;
- (ii) Moving resources into Strategic Planning;
- (iii) Concentrated work on a range of non Article 31 applications;
- (iv) Fundamental policy review to move towards a single Planning Policy Statement; and
- (v) Return of Planning staff on secondment to other parts of the NICS.

## Economic Appraisal of the Local Government Reform Programme

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has commissioned a new economic appraisal of the Local Government Reform Programme

**(AQW 14544/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The economic appraisal of local government service delivery, published by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration) implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty five years.

The Regional Transition Committee, which I chair, has commissioned the senior local and central government officers in the Finance Working Group to re-examine the costs and benefits of reform taking account a range of key factors. These include the 2015 timescale for reform set out in the Programme for Government 2011-15, the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency proposals and the changed economic climate in which reform is now being taken forward.

The group will be working closely with the Transition Committees in developing the costs and benefits of reform in their constituent councils.

The funding of RPA will need to come from a number of sources, including in my view direct central Government support.

## Recycling

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what more his Department can do to increase recycling.

**(AQW 14585/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department is currently delivering a comprehensive programme to divert waste from landfill through the prevention of waste and the increase of recycling. The Department's Rethink Waste programme includes:

- 1 A communications plan including promotion of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign to reduce the quantity of food waste arisings.
- 2 Grant-in-aid funding for the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) to provide technical advisory support to local councils in order to improve the quality and efficiency of collection and recycling services offered to households and businesses.
- 3 Support for voluntary agreements that encourage greater resource efficiency, including increased recycling, such as the Halving Waste to Landfill agreement (construction waste); Courtauld Commitment 2 (packaging waste); and the Hospitality and Food Service Sector Service agreement.
- 4 The delivery of Rethink Waste Capital and Revenue Funds. Capital funding is available to councils and Waste Management Groups to improve or extend their existing waste collection, re-use and recycling infrastructure. Councils, the private sector and the Community & Voluntary Sector are able to apply for revenue funding for initiatives which will improve resource efficiency and boost waste prevention, recycling and re-use activity.

Under the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme, the Department is funding pre-procurement costs to assist local government in securing the network of major new facilities which it has identified as necessary to meet its legal obligations to divert waste from landfill. The new facilities will contribute to increased recycling by extracting recyclates from residual municipally collected waste in Mechanical Biological Treatment plants and extracting additional recyclates during Energy from Waste processes.

With increased recycling it is essential that the quality of recyclates is improved and a market is developed for recyclates. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has introduced seven quality protocols in the last several years in Northern Ireland. Quality protocols provide standards to enable fully recovered materials to be used without the need for waste management controls. This in turn leads to increasing market confidence in waste-derived products and driving markets for recyclates. The North South Market Development Steering Group has also commissioned a several studies to assist market development, such as the Irish Recycled Plastics Waste Arisings Study. The aims of this particular study were to establish baseline information on the quantity, quality, type, origin and destination of waste plastics across the island of Ireland, and identify potential domestic markets for plastics at all life-cycle stages including plastic waste, plastic recyclates and plastic end products.

Although there has been significant progress in recycling made over the last decade, I am mindful that we cannot be complacent but instead must increase the momentum of change towards a resource efficient and low carbon economy of which recycling plays an important part. Therefore I have recently

announced my intention to introduce a statutory 60% recycling target for local authority collected municipal waste to be achieved over the next 10 years.

The review of the Waste Management Strategy will also include the introduction of landfill restrictions for food waste and policies to increase the quality of recyclates such as a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Code of Practice. There will also be initiatives for waste prevention which sits above recycling in the waste hierarchy.

### **Closed Spreading Period for Slurry**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has had any discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in regards to extending the closed spreading period for slurry and farm yard manures.

**(AQW 14590/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department of the Environment has joint responsibility with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) on implementation of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2006.

I have been, and will continue to, liaise with Minister O'Neill regarding the closed spreading period for slurry and farm yard manures.

### **Slurry Spreading Deadline**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to extend the closed spreading period for slurry and farm yard manures in 2012, given the level of rainfall in recent months.

**(AQW 14591/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am very aware of the concerns of the local farming community regarding issues they have faced recently in spreading slurry and I appreciate the difficulties faced by farmers in a number of places in the North of Ireland. The rainfall figures have this summer again been above average, even in some places well above average. I have met with the Ulster Farmers Union and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association, as to their view on ground conditions, on 27 September 2012.

I agree with their views that, as with 2011, where a farmer has "reasonable excuse" to spread after the end of the season, the farmer will be able to spread.

I must stress that, under Regulation 25(2) of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, farmers, on a case by case basis, may be able to rely on the defence of "reasonable excuse" in relation to spreading of organic manures and non compliance with the closed period. To be able to rely on this defence a farmer should provide evidence showing that they have managed their slurry properly and taken all reasonable steps to manage the situation and had no alternative to spreading during the closed period.

I have made it clear to NIEA that where individual farmers have taken all reasonable steps to manage the situation and had no alternative, the Agency should look positively at those cases.

I believe this approach should result in relief to and protection of farmers in genuine difficulty, in a way that protects the interests of the farmer, the government, the economy and the environment and that this is a proper intervention and a proportionate response to a difficult situation. I attach my press release issued on 28 September 2012 in this regard.

### **Slurry Spreading Deadline**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will extend the slurry spreading deadline to the end of October.

**(AQW 14594/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am very aware of the concerns of the local farming community regarding issues they have faced recently in spreading slurry and I appreciate the difficulties faced by farmers in a number of places in the North of Ireland. The rainfall figures have this summer again been above average, even in some places well above average. I have met with the Ulster Farmers Union and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association, as to their view on ground conditions, on 27 September 2012.

I agree with their views that, as with 2011, where a farmer has "reasonable excuse" to spread after the end of the season, the farmer will be able to spread.

I must stress that, under Regulation 25(2) of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, farmers, on a case by case basis, may be able to rely on the defence of "reasonable excuse" in relation to spreading of organic manures and non compliance with the closed period. To be able to rely on this defence a farmer should provide evidence showing that they have managed their slurry properly and taken all reasonable steps to manage the situation and had no alternative to spreading during the closed period.

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## **Low-Carbon Farming**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the benefits of low-carbon farming; and for his assessment of whether low-carbon farming would be permitted in a National Park.

**(AQW 14660/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** DARD has key responsibility for farming methods, including low carbon approaches. DARD endorsed the low carbon farming approach in the document "Efficient Farming Cuts Greenhouse Gases"<sup>1</sup> which includes examples of improved nutrient management, improved fertiliser management and other measures. Low carbon approaches benefit the environment through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and can also benefit the farmer through improved sustainability and reduced costs associated with more efficient methods.

Minister Attwood has publically stated that national park designation would not affect existing farming methods or practices. Therefore it would be a matter for each farmer to decide if they would adopt such practices on their land.

## **Slurry Spreading Deadline**

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the persistent wet weather and the wet summer forcing farmers to keep animals indoors which has resulted in increased levels of stored slurry, whether he will consider an extension of the slurry spreading deadline to allow farmers to empty tanks in preparation for winter.

**(AQW 14697/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I am very aware of the concerns of the local farming community regarding issues they have faced recently in spreading slurry and I appreciate the difficulties faced by farmers in a number of places in the North of Ireland. The rainfall figures have this summer again been above average, even in some places well above average. I have met with the Ulster Farmers Union and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association, as to their view on ground conditions, on 27 September 2012.

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1 <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/de/efficient-farming-cuts-greenhouse-gases-2.pdf>

I agree with their views that, as with 2011, where a farmer has “reasonable excuse” to spread after the end of the season, the farmer will be able to spread.

I must stress that, under Regulation 25(2) of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, farmers, on a case by case basis, may be able to rely on the defence of “reasonable excuse” in relation to spreading of organic manures and non compliance with the closed period. To be able to rely on this defence a farmer should provide evidence showing that they have managed their slurry properly and taken all reasonable steps to manage the situation and had no alternative to spreading during the closed period.

I have made it clear to NIEA that where individual farmers have taken all reasonable steps to manage the situation and had no alternative, the Agency should look positively at those cases.

I believe this approach should result in relief to and protection of farmers in genuine difficulty, in a way that protects the interests of the farmer, the government, the economy and the environment and that this is a proper intervention and a proportionate response to a difficult situation. I attach my press release issued on 28 September 2012 in this regard.

### **Driver and Vehicle Agency’s Enforcement Team: School Buses**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of the Environment how many buses, which were carrying school children, did the Driver and Vehicle Agency’s enforcement team find to have defects, in the Western Education and Library Board area, since the beginning of this school term; and whether this includes the three operators from the Republic of Ireland whose contracts were reinstated by the Board on 1 September 2012.

**(AQW 14776/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Since the beginning of this school term the Driver & Vehicle Agency’s enforcement team has detected six buses carrying school children in the Western Education and Library Board area with defects present. Some of these buses were owned by operators whose contracts were reinstated by the Board on 1 September 2012.

### **Noise Assessment Guidance for Wind Turbines ETSU-R-97**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 4800/11-15, whether he has considered revising ETSU-R-97.

**(AQW 14793/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The ETSU-R-97 methodology for the assessment of wind farm noise was developed by the Energy Technology Support Unit of the former Dept. of Trade and Industry (now the Department of Energy and Climate Change) in Britain. It is not therefore within my gift to revise the ETSU-R-97 methodology.

You will be aware from my previous answer that, at the request of DECC, the Institute of Acoustics (IoA) has established a working group to examine the application of ETSU-R-97. By way of an update, this group has now published a discussion paper and intends to issue a ‘Good Practice Guide’ on the application of ETSU-R-97 methodology later this year.

The aim of this guide will be to ensure that noise assessments are carried out in a thorough and, as far as possible, consistent manner and that the subsequent noise reports contain all necessary information required by the decision-maker.

Following its publication I will consider the lessons for Northern Ireland planning policy and best practice guidance.

## Transfer of Existing Local Government Debt

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister of the Environment what provisions he intends to put in place for the transfer of existing local government debt, where debt associated assets will move to another council jurisdiction.

**(AQO 2533/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The dissolution of the current twenty six councils, and the creation of the eleven new councils in 2015, will require the transfer of legal title of the assets and legal responsibility for liabilities, including debt, from a current council to its successor council.

It is, therefore, proposed to include provision in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill for the creation of schemes which will transfer the designated assets and liabilities, including debt, from the current to the successor councils. Subject to the Executive's agreement, I intend to introduce this Bill to the Assembly before the end of the year.

The Finance Working Group, which comprises senior local and central government officials, is developing the detail of these transfer schemes for consideration of the Regional Transition Committee, which I chair.

It is 950 days to reorganisation. Councils, Councillors, Council Management need to accelerate the work of the VTC's to get reform over the line and to get reform right.

## Department of Finance and Personnel

### Rates Legislation

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there is any scope within the current Rates legislation to allow people who have been forced out of their homes due to flood damage to be exempt from paying rates whilst they cannot live at their homes.

**(AQW 13801/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** Only properties in the Valuation List are chargeable to rates and there is scope within the current legislation to remove houses (or apartments) from the valuation list if they are in such a poor condition that they are incapable of being lived in without significant repair.

This is a matter of degree and each case has to be considered on its individual merits, depending on the extent of the flood damage.

The property would have to need a considerable amount of money to be spent on repair work to render it reasonably habitable. Exactly how much depends on the sort of house it is and its capital value. This is a matter for the District Valuer within LPS to assess in the first instance.

### Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 will be published.

**(AQW 14126/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The next report for Northern Ireland will provide fiscal balance estimates for both 2009-10 and 2010-11. It is anticipated that this report will be published in October.

### Funding for Lending Scheme

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions have taken place with the Treasury and banks regarding the Bank of England Funding for Lending Scheme.

**(AQW 14165/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** I have been concerned for some time now that national initiatives taken by the Government to improve access to finance have not been effective in Northern Ireland. This is not acceptable and as banking is a reserved matter it is the Government's responsibility to ensure that such schemes are equally beneficial in all parts of the UK. This is a point I have made repeatedly to Treasury Ministers over the past couple of years and most recently when I met with the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mark Hoban MP, on 4 July 2012 to discuss banking issues. At that meeting I emphasised how vital it was that the then to be announced Funding for Lending scheme was designed in a way which meant our banks could fully participate.

Mr Hoban subsequently advised me on 8 August 2012 that the Treasury officials had met with our four main banks who had reported that they viewed the new Funding for Lending Scheme and its design positively. Ulster Bank formally announced their participation in the scheme on 28 September and I hope that others will follow in the future.

Mr Hoban committed to monitor participation in this scheme in Northern Ireland. My officials are liaising with their counterparts in the Treasury and the Bank of England on this and I will be taking this forward with the new Financial Secretary as and when appropriate.

### **Payment for Conacre**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what are the current tax implications for people who are receiving payment for conacre.

**(AQW 14186/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The tax treatment of conacre let land is a Reserved Matter for HM Treasury to determine. Concerns were raised previously in 2009 about how the "McClellan" judgment (that conacre let land would no longer attract Business Property Relief from Inheritance Tax liability on the development value of the land) would affect local farming families. Fears were also raised in the local agricultural community that Agricultural Property Relief was also under threat.

Following on from these concerns, the then DARD Minister Michelle Gildernew and I sought and received clarification from HM Treasury that the UK Government was not planning to withdraw Inheritance Tax APR from conacre land. Neither were there plans to change the rules around APR. I have not received any indication of a change to this position.

### **Payment for Conacre**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he is aware of any impending changes in tax regulations that will have implications for people receiving payment for conacre.

**(AQW 14187/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The tax treatment of conacre let land is a Reserved Matter for HM Treasury to determine. Concerns were raised previously in 2009 about how the "McClellan" judgment (that conacre let land would no longer attract Business Property Relief from Inheritance Tax liability on the development value of the land) would affect local farming families. Fears were also raised in the local agricultural community that Agricultural Property Relief was also under threat.

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### **Rights for Grandparents to Access their Grandchildren**

**Mr Clarke** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there is scope for legislation to be introduced to grant rights for grandparents to access their grandchildren, in cases where the children's parents are divorced or separated.

**(AQW 14329/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** This question has been referred to me as my Department is responsible for substantive private family law. We are undertaking a review of the law relating to parental responsibility and contact with children post-separation. At this stage we are hoping to go out to consultation in the Autumn of this year. However, that target date may fall to be revised in light of business demands.

### **Rates in Multi Occupancy Homes**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the owner or landlord is responsible for the collection and payment of rates for Houses of Multiple Occupation, regardless of the capital value or frequency of rent payment, yet for other private rented accommodation, the tenant is normally liable for the payment of rates.

**(AQW 14518/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The landlord liability provisions in rating legislation, making the owner or landlord liable for rates rather than tenants in most circumstances, is a long established feature of the rating system here. It has origins in earlier legislation dating back 90 years.

It applies to lower value single family residences and all houses in multiple occupation because this is where problems are likely to occur in collecting rates directly from tenants, who tend to move about more often than most. Direct collection from such occupiers is uneconomic and this holds true today as it did back then, even through the type of households may have changed a lot.

Some changes were made to the powers in 2007, following research and public consultation. This was to reflect the change in the basis of assessment from net annual value to capital value and it also brought in the relatively new category of 'houses in multiple occupation' (HMOs), which replaced and extended the earlier definition of "properties let as apartments or lodgings".

The reason there are no valuation limits on HMOs is because virtually all HMOs are occupied by the more transient tenant.

The enquiry is both a welcome one and a timely one because the issue of landlord liability is something I am actively considering at the moment.

There are certain complications around the way this measure is administered, and that concerns the frequency of rent payments for the lower value single household residences. They must be paid at quarterly intervals, or less, to bring them within compulsory landlord liability. This is both expensive to administer and could lead to avoidance but more importantly it can lead to confusion about who is legally liable, the landlord or the tenant.

I would like to remove this stipulation and make some other changes to the arrangements for landlord liability. I am in the process of liaising with the DSD Minister before my Department writes directly to the Landlords Association, prior to a wider consultation.

### **Rates Liability**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any plans to clarify rates liability by amending the Rates (NI) Order 1977.

**(AQW 14519/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Rating legislation dictates that private landlords are liable for domestic rates in most circumstances.

These circumstances are where all houses where the capital value does not exceed £55,000 or where the capital value does not exceed £150,000 and the rent is payable or collected at intervals shorter than quarterly or houses in multiple occupation.

The law also allows the landlord of any house to enter into a voluntary arrangement with the department to pay the rates.

Disputes are uncommon but when they do arise it is generally because the landlord has not made the rates position clear to the tenant when a tenancy agreement is entered into.

I can confirm that I am in the process of bringing forward proposals that will both simplify administration and improve understanding of the rules governing landlord liability for rates and thus reduce the number of disputes that occur.

I am currently liaising with the DSD Minister before my Department writes directly to the Landlords Association, prior to a wider consultation.

### **Protection for Private Rental Tenants**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what his Department is doing to address the problems arising around the payment of rates on rented properties, where a dispute over liability between the landlord and tenant exists.

**(AQW 14520/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Rating legislation dictates that private landlords are liable for domestic rates in most circumstances.

These circumstances are where all houses where the capital value does not exceed £55,000 or where the capital value does not exceed £150,000 and the rent is payable or collected at intervals shorter than quarterly or houses in multiple occupation.

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I am currently liaising with the DSD Minister before my Department writes directly to the Landlords Association, prior to a wider consultation.

### **No Payment of Rates Disputes**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, over the last two years, how many cases for non-payment of rates have been taken where a dispute exists between the landlord and tenant of the property over the liability for paying rates.

**(AQW 14522/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** No records exist on the number of cases taken for non-payment of rates where a dispute exists between the landlord and tenant of the property over the liability for paying rates.

### **Protection for Private Rental Tenants**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures can be put in place to protect private rental tenants from action on non-payment of rates, where the landlord has declared responsibility for payment.

**(AQW 14523/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Rating legislation dictates that private landlords are liable for domestic rates in most circumstances.

These circumstances are where all houses where the capital value does not exceed £55,000 or where the capital value does not exceed £150,000 and the rent is payable or collected at intervals shorter than quarterly or houses in multiple occupation.

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I am currently liaising with the DSD Minister before my Department writes directly to the Landlords Association, prior to a wider consultation.

### **Church Buildings: Rates Exemptions**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any church buildings qualify for rates exemptions.

**(AQW 14595/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** A church, chapel or similar building, occupied by a religious body and used for purposes of public religious worship; and a church hall, chapel hall or similar building occupied by a religious body and used for purposes connected with the body or for purposes of any charity are exempt from rates under Article 41(2)(b) of the Rates (NI) Order 1977.

### **Executive: Issuing Bonds**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has raised with the British Government the possibility of the Executive issuing bonds without an impact on the Block Grant.

**(AQW 14596/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Increased lending powers for the Scottish Government are being provided for on a phased basis in the Scotland Act 2012 in the context of broader agreement on the devolution of fiscal powers for Scotland. These lending powers are intended to enable the management of the increased budget volatility that will come with that fiscal devolution. As part of this the Government also included a provision in the Scotland Act 2012 which enables it to amend, in future, the way in which Scottish Ministers can borrow to include bond issuance, without the need for further primary legislation.

While the Finance Act 2012 provides for the devolution of long haul Air Passenger Duty rate setting powers to the Northern Ireland Executive, discussions are ongoing, and the Government has yet to decide whether it will agree to the devolution of Corporation Tax setting powers.

I have not raised the specific issue of bond issuance with the Government. However, following a decision on Corporation Tax devolution, how further borrowing powers over and above those we currently have through the Re-investment & Reform Initiative (RRI) might be used to manage any increased budget volatility is something we may need to consider. It is too early to say how beneficial bond issuance might be in this regard. A Government consultation on this matter in the Scottish context recently closed and I look forward to seeing the outcome of this work.

### **Executive: Issuing Bonds**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether a proposal similar to that to allow the Scottish Government to issue bonds would be of benefit to the Executive.

**(AQW 14597/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Increased lending powers for the Scottish Government are being provided for on a phased basis in the Scotland Act 2012 in the context of broader agreement on the devolution of fiscal powers for Scotland. These lending powers are intended to enable the management of the increased budget volatility that will come with that fiscal devolution. As part of this the Government also included a

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## **Under-Representation of Protestants**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel given that previous surveys have identified that the Protestant community was under-represented in Administrative Assistant and Administrative Officer posts within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, what work is being undertaken to ensure that the previous under-representation is not repeated.

**(AQW 14662/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** My Department carries out statutory monitoring and reporting on the community background of the Northern Ireland Civil Service workforce. The last Article 55 Review which used data on the workforce as at 1 January 2010 found fair participation between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Administrative Assistant grade and a lack of fair participation by Protestants in the Administrative Officer grade. The Review also found an increase in the proportion of applications from Protestants for vacancies at both grades although in the case of Administrative Officer this was still lower than would be expected. In response my Department decided to continue to use lawful outreach measures to improve the proportion of applications from Protestants for vacancies at Administrative Assistant and Administrative Officer.

In common with all employers, the Service's ability to bring about positive change in the composition of its workforce is largely determined by flows into, through and out of the organisation. Between February 2010 and November 2011, an embargo on recruitment and promotion applied in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. This will have had an effect on compositional change as fewer recruitment exercises mean fewer opportunities to change the profile of a grade. Although the embargo has been lifted, it is likely that recruitment activity will continue to be at a lower level than in previous years.

My Department will carry out a further Article 55 review next year and the results will be published.

## **Multiple Deprivation**

**Mr Hazzard** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the current Multiple Deprivation indicators; and whether they accurately illustrate contemporary levels of rural poverty and deprivation.

**(AQW 14665/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 is the current official measure of spatial deprivation in Northern Ireland.

The NIMDM 2010 is based on the internationally agreed methodology developed by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre in the University of Oxford, which was used in the NIMDM 2001, 2005 and current multiple deprivation measures in England, Scotland and Wales. The construction of the 2010 NIMDM was overseen by a Steering Group including representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Rural Development Council.

In order to provide a relative deprivation measure and to allow meaningful area based comparisons, indicator data included were available for all of Northern Ireland and collected in a consistent form.

Where any bias was identified, including potential urban/rural bias, the indicator was either omitted or corrected for this effect.

A full consultation on NIMDM 2010 was carried out and all concerns were addressed. As the 2010 measures included deprivation results at Output Area level, this enabled a more detailed picture across Northern Ireland to be presented and allows the identification of small pockets of deprivation in rural and urban areas. It may be more appropriate when assessing deprivation in rural areas to focus on the Output Area results.

### **Vacant Commercial and Non-Commercial Properties**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 14049/11-15, whether banks or financial institutions, who are mortgagees in possession following the repossession of a property, can defer payment of rates on these properties for any period of time; and if so, under what circumstances.

**(AQW 14777/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** There are no legislative arrangements for the deferment of rates payments.

Land and Property Services (LPS) can spread out payments, without any legislative obligation, under what are termed payment arrangements.

These payment arrangements seek to resolve the current year's debt entirely within the same rating year and therefore are not regarded as deferment of debt. They are offered to a wide range of ratepayers.

Since the introduction of the rating of empty homes last year there have been occasions that arrangements have been put in place with ratepayers, such as when a sale is pending, and this can include financial institutions.

LPS will only agree to this if it facilitates effective collection of rates.

### **Ballykelly**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the decision to relocate the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development headquarters to Ballykelly, what other possibilities exist to de-centralise public sector employment.

**(AQW 14797/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Individual public bodies, departments and Ministers can consider the relocation of public sector facilities and jobs subject to the normal requirements of business need, value for money and affordability. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

## **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

### **Discussions with Representatives of People with Neurological Conditions and their Carers**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has held with representatives of people with neurological conditions and their carers concerning more localised health care services, as envisaged in "Transforming Your Care".

**(AQW 14262/11-15)**

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

I have had no discussions with representatives of people with neurological conditions and their carers concerning more localised health care services as envisaged in Transforming Your Care (TYC).

Transforming Your Care set out proposals for changing our health and social care system. These include delivering health and social care services closer to people in their homes and their communities; moving services out of hospitals where it is safe and appropriate to do so; and supporting a more personalised approach to care.

The development of Population Plans and an overarching Strategic Implementation Plan are key elements of TYC. They will form the basis of a public consultation exercise which it is anticipated will commence next month. This will provide the opportunity for everyone to provide their views on the proposals.

A Neurological Conditions Network is in place to ensure the delivery of appropriate treatment and support to people with long term neurological conditions in all settings to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Network includes membership from the HSC Board, the Public Health Agency and the voluntary and community sector.

### **Inflammatory Bowel Disease Standards**

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has adopted the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Standards; and what progress has been made on their implementation.

**(AQW 14264/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has not endorsed any specific standards on Inflammatory Bowel Disease but has endorsed a range of guidance from the National Institute for Health and clinical Excellence (NICE) on specific aspects of the prevention and management of inflammatory bowel disease.

Clinical and services standards are developed by many organisations and some of these standards are endorsed by national organisations. Commissioners and providers of services are expected to take account of the best available evidence when planning and delivering services to patients, within available resources.

### **Register of Inflammatory Bowel Disease Patients**

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are any plans to establish a register of Inflammatory Bowel Disease patients.

**(AQW 14265/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** There are currently no plans to establish a register of Inflammatory Bowel Disease patients in Northern Ireland.

### **Essential Language Translation Services**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent on essential language translation services in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14330/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The table below details how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent on essential language translation services in each of the last three years.

	<b>2011/12</b> £	<b>2010/11</b> £	<b>2009/10</b> £
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	536,462	448,576	412,739
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	309,832	295,496	334,437
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	115,391	93,600	81,273
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	924,136	919,977	749,889
Western Health & Social Care Trust	220,052	166,239	172,699

	<b>2011/12</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2010/11</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2009/10</b> <b>£</b>
NI Ambulance Service Health & Social Care Trust	1,268	2,357	1,208
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,107,141</b>	<b>£1,926,245</b>	<b>£1,752,245</b>

### People Diagnosed with Crohn's Disease and Colitis

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are diagnosed with (i) Crohn's Disease; and (ii) Colitis.

**(AQW 14342/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information relating to the number of people diagnosed with either Crohn's Disease or Colitis is not routinely collected by the Department.

However, information is available on the number of hospital admissions where a diagnosis of (i) Crohn's Disease and (ii) Colitis was recorded in 2010/11 and is shown in the table below:-

<b>Diagnosis</b>	<b>Admissions</b>
Crohn's Disease	3,295
Colitis	2,070

**Source:-** Hospital Inpatient System

Figures do not include patients attending hospital as outpatients or who attended an Accident and Emergency Department. Deaths and discharges have been used to approximate admissions

### Sending Children to Other Regions for Assessment, Treatment or Care

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust has spent sending children to other regions for assessment, treatment or care over the last five years.

**(AQW 14376/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The information requested is not available.

### Prescription Drugs

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of prescription drugs dispensed in each of the last five years were (i) generic; and (ii) brand named.

**(AQW 14417/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The information requested is detailed in the table below:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Generic (%)</b>	<b>Branded (%)</b>
2007/08	54%	46%
2008/09	56%	44%
2009/10	58%	42%
2010/11	60%	40%
2011/12	64%	36%

Information supplied by Family Practitioner Services, Business Services Organisation.

## Islet Cell Infusion Operations for People with Type 1 Diabetes

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce islet cell infusion operations for people with Type 1 Diabetes, given the success of this programme in Scotland in helping those who struggle to control their condition.

**(AQW 14460/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** At present there are no plans to introduce islet cell infusion operations locally, for people with Type 1 Diabetes. NICE Interventional Procedures Guidance (IPG257) Allogenic pancreatic islet cell transplantation for type 1 diabetes mellitus, published in 2008, states that “serious complications may occur as a result of the procedure” and that “further audit and research should address the effect of the procedure on quality of life and its long term efficacy, particularly in relation to the complications of diabetes.” Currently as there is no strong evidence base for the long-term benefits of the procedure, as outlined in the NICE guidance, and as the number of patients requiring pancreatic transplantation from Northern Ireland is such that a local pancreatic transplant service is unlikely to be sustainable there are no plans to commence islet cell transplantation locally.

However, patients from Northern Ireland, who are clinically suitable, can be referred to centres in Great Britain for assessment and, if appropriate, treatment, through existing extra contractual referral arrangements. In Northern Ireland since February 2011 the HSC Board has received and approved one request for islet transplantation to Nottingham University Hospital.

## Dental Fluorosis

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 14012/11-15, to provide a further breakdown of sample areas, along with the number tested in each cohort.

**(AQW 14558/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Data on the prevalence of fluorosis is contained in the ‘Children’s oral health in Ireland 2002’ report, published by the Republic of Ireland’s Department of Health and Children is available at <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/coral.pdf?direct=1> . This report presented data on dental fluorosis on an aggregated basis in three categories i.e. Republic of Ireland Fully Fluoridated Areas; Republic of Ireland Non Fluoridated Areas; and Northern Ireland Non Fluoridated Areas (i.e. Northern Ireland as a whole). As such no further breakdown of results by geographic area is presented.

The ‘Children’s oral health in Ireland 2002’ report used a stratified representative sample of 5-, 8-, 12- and 15-year-old children and adolescents in each of the 10 Health Board regions in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland as a whole. The numbers tested in each cohort are reproduced in the following table:

	AGE GROUP				
	5	8	12	15	Total
ECAHB	227	248	217	230	922
NAHB	272	356	325	335	1288
SWAHB	305	329	313	329	1276
MHB	308	274	337	260	1179
MWHB	382	402	413	350	1547
NEHB	3310	372	363	346	4391
NWHB	270	242	268	250	1030
SEHB	551	547	592	495	2185

	AGE GROUP				
	5	8	12	15	Total
SHB	658	650	700	622	2630
WHB	378	349	358	305	1390
<b>Total Rol</b>	<b>6661</b>	<b>3769</b>	<b>3886</b>	<b>3522</b>	<b>17838</b>
<b>Total NI</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>2112</b>

**Number of children by age group, examined in each of the Health Board areas in the Republic of Ireland and for Northern Ireland as a whole as presented in for the ‘children’s oral health in Ireland 2002’ report**

(The Republic of Ireland’s Health Boards listed are the East Coast Area Health Board (ECAHB); Northern Area Health Board (NAHB); South Western Area Health Board (SWAHB); Midland Health Board (MHB); Mid Western Health Board (MWHB); North Eastern Health Board (NEHB); North Western Health Board (NWHB); South Eastern Health Board (SEHB); Southern Health Board (SHB); and Western Health Board (WHB). The table presented in the report (table 1) also includes an additional row for the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) which is a Health Authority rather than a Health Board and comprises the first three listed Boards above.)

**Guidelines for Prescribing Gluten-Free Foods**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 14052/11-15, whether there is a directive instructing pharmacists to only dispense gluten-free foods in accordance with the guidelines, regardless of the quantities prescribed by GPs.

**(AQW 14581/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is recognised that adherence to a gluten-free diet is essential for patients with confirmed gluten-sensitive enteropathies. The HSC Board’s guidance to prescribers on the prescribing of gluten free foods provides recommendations regarding the amount of gluten free food that a patient should receive on prescription each month based on the age of the patient, gender and levels of physical activity.

However, it remains the responsibility of the prescriber to make appropriate decisions on the quantities of gluten free food they are prescribing based on clinical knowledge and of course in the best interests of the individual patient.

Pharmacists should be dispensing in accordance with the instructions provided by the prescriber on the prescription form and there is no directive instructing pharmacists to only dispense gluten-free foods in accordance with the HSC Board’s guidance regardless of the quantities prescribed by GPs.

**Paediatric Physiotherapists**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW12889/11-15, when the Western Health and Social Care Trust began the evaluation process and when the results can be expected.

**(AQW 14589/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Western HSC Trust has received nearly 500 requests for Agenda for Change job evaluation and expects to be in a position to commence the Job Evaluation process early next year; Paediatric Physiotherapist Senior I posts will be scheduled into that process. As this is a very lengthy process the results cannot be expected earlier than September 2013.

While this timeframe may be considered unacceptable it is important to point out that these staff have already had two opportunities to have their job graded and both of these show the value of the job

at Band 6. The small team in the Trust's HR Unit, undertaking this process in partnership with local trade union representatives, will endeavour to have the job evaluation process completed in a timely but accurate fashion. Individuals will be notified of the result by letter along with a copy of their job evaluation documentation.

### **Eleven Grievances Pending in the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) why there are currently eleven grievances pending in the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters; (ii) for how long each grievance has been lodged; (iii) the rank of each officer involved; and (iv) whether the results of the investigations into the grievances will be published.

**(AQW 14593/11-15)**

#### **Mr Poots:**

- (i) and (iii) It is not possible to release information as to why grievances are pending or the rank of officers involved as to do so may breach Data Protection principles.
- (ii) The 11 grievances were lodged in the months below:
- April 2010
  - July 2010
  - November 2010
  - May 2011
  - July 2011
  - August 2011
  - January 2012
  - March 2012
  - February 2012
  - July 2012
  - August 2012
- (iii) The NIFRS does not publish the outcome of grievances.

### **Direct Payment Scheme**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Direct Payment Scheme only covers private carers rates and not agency rates.

**(AQW 14605/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is up to each Health and Social Care Trust to decide the amount of a Direct Payment and what it is intended to cover. The Department does not set any limit on the maximum or minimum amount of a Direct Payment, either in the amount of care it is intended to purchase, or on the value of the Direct Payment. It must, however, be enough to enable the recipient to secure the relevant service to a standard which the HSC Trust considers acceptable.

### **Checks for Care Agencies**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what checks are in place for care agencies that work with Health and Social Care Trusts.

**(AQW 14606/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Statutory and independent domiciliary care agencies are regulated (i.e. registered and inspected annually) by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in accordance with the

Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (the Order).

All agencies are subject to inspection against specific regulations made under the Order, the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 and against minimum published care standards applying to all such agencies.

Whilst annual inspection is a prerequisite for continuing registration, RQIA has the legal authority to conduct further inspections, either announced or unannounced, where it considers necessary or has concerns.

Where an agency fails to comply with the regulations and standards, RQIA can require compliance within a certain timescale. Ultimately, RQIA can prosecute for failure to comply with regulations or exceptionally, close an agency, where it can not, or will not comply with statutory minimum requirements.

### **Defibrillators Available to Sports Club**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many defibrillators are currently available to sports club across Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 14633/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Any organisation or individual may purchase a defibrillator. There is no requirement to register the purchase, possession or location of a defibrillator. It is therefore not known how many defibrillators are available to sports clubs across Northern Ireland.

A pilot programme to train people to use defibrillators, which my Department has just completed, has had the additional benefit of raising awareness, in some sporting organisations and District Councils, of the location and accessibility of defibrillators purchased by their organisation and also the need for maintenance of the defibrillator and training of staff in their use.

### **Review of the Clark Clinic in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the review of the Clark Clinic in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, to explain the term 'not sustainable'; and whether this is purely a financial issue.

**(AQW 14713/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Expert Panel's report on the Review of the Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Service in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, in July 2012, did not find any immediate safety concerns with the current arrangements for the provision of paediatric cardiac surgery in Belfast but did conclude that the surgical element of the service is not sustainable and that potential safety risks should be addressed within six months.

This is unequivocally not a financial issue. The paediatric cardiac surgery and interventional cardiology elements of the service provided in Belfast has been recognised for over a decade to be inherently vulnerable, given the small number of patients being treated each year. This has given rise to concerns regarding the long term sustainability of the Paediatric Cardiac Surgical Service.

It was in this context that the Minister announced the Board's intention to undertake the external Expert Panel review.

The relatively small number of procedures being delivered in Belfast present a challenge for specialist surgeons to sustain the degree of quality which is expected in a field where standards are continuing to rise. Standards for this service are increasing across the UK with a move towards surgeons working in larger teams delivering higher volumes of activity, and ensuring a rota that can provide 24/7 surgical cover. Available evidence and professional consensus is that larger teams deliver better outcomes.

## **Review of the Clark Clinic in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the review of the Clark Clinic in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, how Northern Ireland will retain and attract top quality paediatric cardiologists, nurses and specialist staff if they cannot be offered the same training and opportunities as the rest of the United Kingdom.

**(AQW 14716/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** On 25 September 2012 I announced the commencement of a 12 week period of consultation in relation to the future delivery of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery and Interventional Cardiology for the population of Northern Ireland. As part of this consultation process, careful consideration will be given to the staff training implications of any potential changes to the existing arrangements.

## **Parking Charges at the Causeway Hospital**

**Mr McQuillan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has raised since the introduction of parking charges at the Causeway Hospital.

**(AQW 14728/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Car park charging was introduced at Causeway Hospital site on the 18th April 2011.

The total income generated from April 2011 until August 2012 from car parking charges at Causeway Hospital is £271,506. This is a gross figure and does not take account of maintenance and running costs of car parks.

## **Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Machines**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average age of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines currently used in the treatment of sleep apnoea in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and whether there are any plans to upgrade the stock.

**(AQW 14730/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Each patient diagnosed with sleep apnoea is provided with a new Continuous Pressure Airway machine which comes with a two year warranty. There are currently around 3500 patients in the Belfast Trust area receiving Continuous Positive Airway Pressure therapy and to ascertain the average age of the machines in use would incur disproportionate cost. When a machine breaks down it is replaced with a new one.

The Belfast Trust has advised me that patients are given a self-adjusting Auto Titrating machine for a few nights to establish the pressure reading required to treat sleep apnoea. The pressure result is used to set the patient up on non-self-adjusting machine which is used long-term by the patient.

## **Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Machines**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether sleep clinics in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust can administer treatment for sleep apnoea using either self-adjusting or non-self-adjusting Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines.

**(AQW 14731/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Each patient diagnosed with sleep apnoea is provided with a new Continuous Pressure Airway machine which comes with a two year warranty. There are currently around 3500 patients in the Belfast Trust area receiving Continuous Positive Airway Pressure therapy and to ascertain the average age of the machines in use would incur disproportionate cost. When a machine breaks down it is replaced with a new one.

The Belfast Trust has advised me that patients are given a self-adjusting Auto Titrating machine for a few nights to establish the pressure reading required to treat sleep apnoea. The pressure result is used to set the patient up on non-self-adjusting machine which is used long-term by the patient.

## Proposed Level of Pension Contribution for a Newly Qualified Doctor

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the proposed level of pension contribution for a newly qualified doctor.

**(AQW 14734/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The rate of contribution currently payable by a newly qualified doctor in receipt of a basic salary is 6.5%. This may increase to 8% if they receive a banding supplement for additional hours worked over their normal basic hours.

To date no decision has been taken on any further proposed increase to member contribution rates for 2013/14.

## Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Food Preparation

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is a central location where food is prepared for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and if so, where is the location.

**(AQW 14764/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Within the Belfast Trust there are various methods of meal provision depending on local facilities and requirements.

Several of the hospitals provide a traditional meals service where the food is cooked on site and sent out to the various wards from a central kitchen. These are:

- Musgrave Park Hospital
- Mater Infirmorum Hospital
- Belfast City Hospital
- Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital
- Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Many community facilities also cook meals for the clients on site.

Knockbracken Foods is a Cook Chill Food Production Unit operated by the Belfast HSC Trust. It is based at Knockbracken Healthcare Park and produces approximately 60,000 meals and sandwiches per week. These meals and sandwiches are provided to hospital sites, community facilities within the Belfast Trust (not using traditional cooking methods), the home meals service and staff catering facilities.

The hospital facilities supplied by Knockbracken Foods are:

- Knockbracken Healthcare Park (Including the Medium Secure Unit at Shannon)
- Muckamore Abbey Hospital
- Royal A Block
- Neurology Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital

The community facilities which receive meals from Knockbracken Foods are:

Elderly Persons Homes

- Fairholme E.PH.
- Killynure E.PH.
- Brae Valley House
- Pine Lodge
- Orchardville House

- Ballyowen EPH
- Bruce House EPH
- Chestnut Grove
- Grovetree EPH
- Shankill EPH

#### Day Centre Facilities

- Ravenhill Road Day Centre
- City Way Day Centre
- K/Bracken Day Centre - Main Kitchen
- K/Bracken Day Centre- Dementia Unit
- Mount Oriel Elderly
- Mount Oriel Young People
- Island Day Centre
- Edgcumbe Atu Day Centre
- Edgcumbe Trc
- Enler Day Centre
- Orchardville Trc
- Everton Day Centre
- North Belfast Day Centre
- Fortwilliam Day Centre
- Grove Centre
- Ballyowen Day Centre
- Carlisle Day Centre
- Fallswater
- Beechall
- Mica Drive Day Centre
- Newington Day Centre
- Shankill Day Centre
- Glencairn Day Centre
- Suffolk Day Centre
- Whiterock Day Centre
- Woodlands Day Centre
- 4 Sandhurst Road

#### Luncheon Clubs

- Cregagh Methodist
- Mcquiston Lunch Club
- St Bartholomews
- St. Mary's Silver Threads Luncheon Club

- Mount Oriel (Branial Age Concern)
- Mount Oriel (Belvoir Age Concern)
- Belfast South Methodist Church
- Tullycarnet Community Support Services
- Tullycarnet Presbyterian Luncheon Club
- Belvoir Luncheon Club

#### Children's Facilities

- 60 North Road Childrens Home
- Beechcroft 1 (Adolescent)
- Beechcroft 2 (Children's)
- Iveagh Children's Home

The home meals service is provided to the following Trusts:

- Belfast Trust
- Northern Trust
- Southern Trust
- South Eastern Trust

There are several staff catering facilities which receive chilled meals and/or sandwiches.

- Staff Facilities on Knockbracken Healthcare Park
- The Arches CTCC
- Mater Infirmorum Coffee Shop – Sandwiches
- Royal Group Hospital Staff Facilities - Sandwiches
- Health & Social Care Board – Linenhall Street
- Beeches Management Centre and Clady

### **Preparation for Increase in Patient Numbers**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans are in place in hospitals to deal with the expected increase in patients this winter, including staffing arrangements. **(AQW 14765/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Health and Social Care services are under considerable pressure all year round, but tend to come under increased pressure during the winter months because of extra demands on services, particularly in unscheduled care. All Health and Social Care Trusts have plans in place for dealing with winter pressures. These include measures such as maintaining efficient patient flows through and out of the hospital, and increasing capacity and uplifting staff levels as appropriate to match need. Other measures include developing primary and community care services to support older people in their own homes and reduce the number of hospital admissions.

The Health and Social Care Board has been working closely with the Trusts to support improvements in emergency department performance. As part of this work the Board is finalising arrangements with Trusts to deal with potential increases in demand for services in the coming winter.

## Terms and Conditions of Employment of Domiciliary Care Workers

**Mr Rogers** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the terms and conditions of employment of domiciliary care workers are applied consistently across all Health and Social Care Trusts irrespective of whether the care worker is a Trust employee or agency worker.

**(AQW 14768/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Health and Social Care Trusts are required to comply with the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, which came into effect on 5 December 2011, for all agency staff including Domiciliary Care Workers. Under this legislation provided a worker has worked in the same job for 12 weeks, he/she qualifies for equal treatment in respect of pay and basic working conditions.

## Threats to Staff at Accident and Emergency Departments

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how many occasions were police called to assist Health Service staff because of the threat of violence at each acute hospital's Accident and Emergency department in 2011.

**(AQW 14801/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information on the number of occasions where police called to assist health service staff because of the threat of violence at each acute hospital's emergency care department in 2011 is not available, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

However, information is available on the number of times the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) attended an incident of verbal or physical abuse against staff in each acute hospital; although, it should be noted that this information relates to all acute hospital attendances and not specifically to emergency care departments.

The table overleaf presents information on the number of times the PSNI have attended an incident of verbal or physical abuse against staff in acute hospitals which have an emergency care department, between 1st October 2010 and 30th September 2011 (the latest information available).

**TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF TIMES THE PSNI ATTENDED AN INCIDENT OF VERBAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE IN ACUTE HOSPITALS (1ST OCTOBER 2010 - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011)**

Hospital	Verbal Incident	Physical Incident	Total Incidents
Belfast City	10	30	40
Mater	13	8	21
Royal Group of Hospitals	19	18	37
Antrim Area	3	7	10
Causeway	3	6	9
Ulster	1	1	2
Craigavon Area	11	13	24
Daisy Hill	9	5	14
Altnagelvin	3	0	3
Erne	4	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>166</b>

**Source:** HSC Trust Incident Report Forms

## Goal Line Youth, Portadown

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for his assessment of the contribution of Goal Line Youth, Portadown; (ii) whether he is aware of its urgent funding needs which, if unmet, will lead to the organisation closing its doors on 31 October 2012; and (iii) what assistance his Department can provide to the organisation as it seeks to continue to meet the needs of over two hundred children, almost 50 percent of whom have special educational and disability needs. **(AQW 14812/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I recognise and acknowledge the role played by organisations, such as Goal Line Youth, in working with young people in relation to a range of key issues.

The Southern Drug and Alcohol Co-Ordination Team within the PHA previously provided small grant funding to Goal Line Trust Portadown in 2009/10. The award of £3,000 was to develop a young men's group (aged 14 to 17 with moderate learning disabilities and/or autism/Aspergers) to address issues of drugs and alcohol misuse. However, I understand that they have not applied for any further funding since.

I understand that the Public Health Agency is currently advertising another Small Grant programme in the area and Goal Line Trust Portadown could consider applying for funding under this scheme if they believe they can meet the funding criteria. Further information and contacts in respect of the Small Grant funding is available here:

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/pha-southern-area-health-improvement-small-grants-now-open>.

## Parking Facilities at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans there are to increase the parking facilities at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald. **(AQW 14826/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I am aware of the car parking problems at the Ulster Hospital and the need to provide additional car parking spaces on the site to relieve the congestion as soon as possible. The changes to clinical services provided at the Ulster Hospital have significantly increased demand for car parking spaces. The South Eastern Trust is in the process of developing a business case which will explore a number of options to provide additional car parking areas on the site. This business case is due to be submitted to my Department shortly and will be considered accordingly.

## Department of Justice

### CCTV Surveillance in Prisons

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether the use of CCTV surveillance in prisons is approved under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; and under which section of the Act it is approved.

**(AQW 14270/11-15)**

**Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):** The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act is not applicable to the routine use of CCTV within prisons. NIPS are registered with the Information Commissioner for the use of CCTV and are fully compliant with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the CCTV Code of Practice.

### Benefit Appeal Tribunals

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether he intends to review the operation of Benefit Appeal Tribunals to ensure parity at all hearings; and (ii) given that the hearings are generally chaired by

a legally qualified person, whether Legal Aid will be provided for appellants in the interest of access to justice.

**(AQW 14273/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Appeals Tribunal is an independent judicial body. Responsibility for the operation of the Tribunals is a statutory function of the President of Appeal Tribunals, Mr Conall MacLynn. The President can be contacted directly at the Office of the President of Appeal Tribunals, 6th Floor, Cleaver House, 3 Donegall Square North, Belfast, BT1 5GA.

Legal aid is currently not available for hearings before the Appeal Tribunal. The Access to Justice Review report, published in September 2011, recommended that publicly funded representation should not be made available in all social security appeal cases but that contracts or grants for advice and assistance in welfare matters should include provision for enhanced advice and advocacy services in welfare matters.

Officials in my Department are currently examining this recommendation as part of my Department's work on legal aid reform.

### **Court Division of Fermanagh and South Tyrone**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice (i) why the court division of Fermanagh and South Tyrone is the slowest at progressing Crown court cases; and (ii) the reasons for the delays.

**(AQW 14275/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** In 2011/12, the Fermanagh and South Tyrone division was the best performing of the seven divisions.

In the period from April to June 2012 the average waiting time from Committal to Hearing in the Crown Court in Fermanagh and Tyrone was 87 days compared to the Northern Ireland average of 128 days.

### **Prisoner Assessment Unit Report**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the Prisoner Assessment Unit report, whether the PSNI has been informed of its redacted contents; and how many Northern Ireland Prison Service staff are under criminal investigation as a result of the report.

**(AQW 14276/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Report has not been passed to PSNI and there are no Prison Service members of staff under criminal investigation as a result of the Report.

### **Acting Director General of the Prison Service**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 13492/11-15, whether this is an accepted practice for an Acting Director General of the Prison Service; and how this compares with the previous post-holder's attendance at meetings with the Committee on the Administration of Justice.

**(AQW 14277/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** During his time in post, the previous Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service attended one meeting with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) on 1 March 2011. The CAJ has not requested to meet with the Director General since that date. However, should the CAJ seek a meeting with the Director General NIPS will be happy to facilitate this.

## Offender Levy for Victims of Crime

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the Offender Levy for victims of crime; and to detail the amount accrued since the inception of the levy.

**(AQW 14311/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** My Department along with colleagues from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Prison Service and Public Prosecution Service worked closely together to ensure the smooth implementation of the offender levy. Prior to the introduction in June 2012, training was undertaken and operational guidance was also issued, which has helped with the successful implementation of the levy.

Although the offender levy has only been operational for a number of months, I consider it to be working well.

The levy can be applied only in respect of offences committed since 6 June 2012. To date £13,455 has been accrued.

## People Convicted of Brothel Keeping or Controlling Prostitution

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of brothel keeping or controlling prostitution, broken down by (i) Magistrates court; and (ii) Crown court, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14312/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** During the period in question, offences of brothel keeping were prosecuted under Section 13(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 and controlling prostitution for gain under Section 53(1) Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The table below gives the number of people convicted of brothel keeping or controlling prostitution broken down by magistrates' court and Crown Court for the calendar years 2007 to 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

Number of people convicted of brothel keeping or controlling prostitution broken down by Magistrates court and Crown court for the calendar years 2007 to 2009

	<b>Magistrates Court</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Brothel keeping</b>	<b>Controlling prostitution</b>	<b>Total convictions</b>
2007	2	0	2
2008	2	3	5
2009	0	3	3
	<b>Crown Court</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Brothel keeping</b>	<b>Controlling prostitution</b>	<b>Total convictions</b>
2007	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included. Data for 2009 are provisional.

## **NIPS: Code of Conduct and Discipline**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 12644/11-15, on what grounds was a redacted document provided.

**(AQW 14313/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The copy of the document provided to the Member was redacted to protect the individual identities. The record held also contained additional comments, for example in relation to time, which were not attributable to the Secretary of State's approval.

## **Remand Prisoners**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how the Northern Ireland Prison Service deals with remand prisoners, who are co-accused in an alleged crime, to prevent them having contact with each other, as would be part of bail conditions if they qualified for bail.

**(AQW 14314/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** It is not a common bail condition to prevent co-accused from contacting each other. In exceptional cases, the Northern Ireland Prison Service can put in place specific measures to prevent remand prisoners, who are co-accused in an alleged crime, from having contact with each other if directed by the court or if a risk assessment determines that they should be kept apart for personal safety reasons.

## **Accreditation for Foreign National Prisoners who Participate in English Classes**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice what accreditation is offered for foreign national prisoners who participate in English classes.

**(AQW 14396/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Foreign national prisoners who participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes can attain Edexcel accreditations at five different levels. Entry Levels 1- 3; Level 1; and Level 2.

## **Meetings between Acting Director General of the Prison Service and the Committee on the Administration of Justice**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many meetings the Acting Director General of the Prison Service has held with the Committee on the Administration of Justice since he took up post.

**(AQW 14397/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Since taking up her post in July 2012, the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service has not attended any meetings with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ). However, should the CAJ seek a meeting with the Director General NIPS will be happy to facilitate this.

## **Departmental Staff Suspensions**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many departmental staff are currently (i) suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations; and (ii) not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations.

**(AQW 14398/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Suspension from duty is governed by the NICS Staff Handbook and careful consideration is given on a case by case basis. Within the Department of Justice, there are less than five members of staff facing criminal charges or criminal investigations. As such, the precise number, and whether they have been suspended or not, has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

## People Charged with Refusing to Answer Questions by Her Majesty's Forces

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many people charged with refusing to answer questions by Her Majesty's forces are currently in the court system, broken down by court division.

**(AQW 14399/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The table below sets out the number of people currently before the courts charged with refusing to answer a question addressed to him by a member of Her Majesty's forces on duty or a constable in accordance with section 21(3)(b) of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007. All of the cases relate to questions posed by police officers.

Division	Persons before the courts
Belfast	1
Fermanagh & Tyrone	2
Londonderry	1

## Tendering Process used to Appoint a Funeral Director

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Justice to outline the tendering process that was used to appoint a Funeral Director to transfer the bodies of the deceased to Belfast to allow Coroner post mortem examinations to be carried out.

**(AQW 14416/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The procurement process for this service was facilitated by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in the Department of Finance and Personnel in adherence with Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy using a European Union open procedure.

Advertisements were placed in the Official Journal of European Union, eSourcingNI (which is the Northern Ireland Public Sector Portal for procurement opportunities) and three Northern Ireland newspapers. A series of briefing sessions were offered to potential suppliers. However only one session, facilitated by the CPD and Coroners Service, was availed of.

Tenders were submitted and evaluated against published selection and award criterion, outlined in the tender documents. These documents were accessible to all interested parties. Contracts were subsequently awarded to those suppliers who submitted the Most Economically Advantageous Tender for the respective districts.

## Civil Disturbances in North Belfast

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the civil disturbances in North Belfast between 25 August and 5 September 2012, including the number of police officers injured.

**(AQW 14423/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** I refer the Member to the replies I gave to Conall McDevitt and Megan Fearon on 18 September 2012. (Official Report Column - Volume 77, No WA2, Page 130/131.)

Since that date the total number of arrests and charges in relation to the disorder at Denmark Street/ Carlisle Circus has risen to 17 and 10 respectively.

## Animal Cruelty Offences

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted for; and (ii) convicted of animal cruelty offences in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 14430/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Animal cruelty offences span a number of statutes. During the period in question offences were prosecuted under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

The table below gives the number of prosecutions and convictions for animal cruelty for the calendar years 2005 to 2006. Conviction data only is available for 2007 - 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

#### **NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY, 2005-2009**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of prosecutions</b>	<b>Number of convictions</b>
2005	29	24
2006	19	17
2007	n/a	21
2008	n/a	17
2009	n/a	11

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2005-2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2009 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

#### **Delayed Court Cases**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many court cases, including contests, are currently delayed due to police officers being suspended and under investigation, broken down by (i) Magistrates Court; and (ii) Crown Court, in each court division.

**(AQW 14441/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** It is not possible to answer this question as this is not recorded as a reason for adjournment in court records. However, a police officer who is currently suspended is still compellable to give evidence at court if required to do so.

#### **Prison Staff Dismissed for Gross Misconduct**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) how many prison staff who were dismissed for gross misconduct were awarded compensation on appeal; (ii) in how many of these cases the Polkey Factor was applied; and (iii) what is this figure as a percentage.

**(AQW 14445/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** In the last five years, four prison staff were dismissed for gross misconduct and were awarded compensation on appeal. In each case the Polkey factor was applied with the percentage figures ranging from 0% to 100%.

#### **Preliminary Inquiries**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) preliminary inquiries have been held in each court division, in each of the last three years; and (ii) cases did not proceed to trial.

**(AQW 14447/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Table A below sets out the number of cases for which a preliminary inquiry was held in the years 2009 - 2011. Table B sets out the number of cases for which a preliminary inquiry was held but where the case was not committed for trial in the Crown Court. Both tables are broken down by County Court Division.

**TABLE A: NUMBER OF CASES FOR WHICH A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY WAS HELD**

County Court Division	Year		
	2009	2010	2011
Antrim	187	179	122
Ards	126	156	189
Armagh and South Down	99	126	141
Belfast	490	527	513
Craigavon	117	167	166
Fermanagh and Tyrone	192	202	201
Londonderry	152	129	135
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>1,467</b>

**Source:** Integrated Court Operations System

**Note:** There may be more than one defendant in a case

**TABLE B: NUMBER OF PRELIMINARY INQUIRY CASES NOT COMMITTED FOR TRIAL IN THE CROWN COURT**

County Court Division	Year		
	2009	2010	2011
Antrim	9	5	6
Ards	2	5	5
Armagh and South Down	5	7	7
Belfast	22	47	20
Craigavon	4	6	2
Fermanagh and Tyrone	5	10	6
Londonderry	2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>49</b>

**Source:** Integrated Court Operations System

### Cases of Sexual Offences Against a Child

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many cases of sexual offences against a child are currently in the court system, broken down by (i) Crown Court; and (ii) Magistrates Court, in each court division.

**(AQW 14459/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The table below details the number of cases of sexual offences against a child currently before the Crown Court and Magistrates' Court broken down by County Court Division.

In addition, there is one appeal from the Magistrates' Court in the County Court Division of Ards and twelve appeals from the Crown Court before the Court of Appeal. This makes a total of 228 cases.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Crown Court</b>	<b>Magistrates' Court</b>
Antrim	14	18
Ards	7	14
Armagh & South Down	9	2
Belfast	71	26
Craigavon	12	3
Fermanagh & Tyrone	16	4
Londonderry	7	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>79</b>

### **Prison Governors Who Have Been Suspended**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of governors within Northern Ireland Prison Service facilities, including Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre, who have been suspended during their career, either as a governor or at any staffing level, broken down by (a) grade; and (b) facility; and (ii) how many have been suspended more than once.

**(AQW 14461/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Suspension from duty for Prison Officer and Governor grades is governed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), Code of Conduct and Discipline and careful consideration is given on a case by case basis. Within the NIPS, there are less than five Governors at separate Establishments who have been suspended during their career as a Governor. None of them have been suspended more than once during their career. The actual number, of staff at this level who have been suspended, has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Small Claims Court Processing Centre**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice why the briefing documentation made available to judges in a Small Claims Court case, by the Small Claims Court Processing Centre, is not provided to the plaintiff and the defendant.

**(AQW 14466/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) Small Claims Guide provides information about the Small Claims Court including procedures and the appeal process.

When a small claims application is lodged in a court office it is forwarded to the Civil Processing Centre. This office is responsible for the administrative checking of small claims applications and entering relevant application details on the NICTS Integrated Courts Operating System (ICOS).

A copy of the application form and an information pack are posted to the applicant and the respondent by the Civil Processing Centre. If the claim is disputed the Notice of Dispute and/or Counterclaim is sent to the applicant on receipt.

All paperwork associated with the claim is provided to the applicant, respondent and District Judge. No additional briefing documentation is prepared by court staff for the District Judge.

On receipt of an appeal, court staff complete administrative checks to ensure that the details of the question of law under appeal are documented, the appeal period has not expired, there is proof of service and the appropriate fee has been paid. Relevant appeal details and the appropriate fee are recorded on the ICOS IT system. Provided the appeal documentation is in order, they and the original small claims case papers are referred to the County Court Judge who will give a direction as to the conduct of the appeal.

## Edward Connors

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 13727/11-15, to detail (i) the date and nature of the first breach; (ii) the date the warrant was (a) requested; (b) granted; and (c) executed; and (iii) the date, and on what terms, bail was subsequently granted.

**(AQW 14502/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Edward Connors was released from prison on 18 April 2012 in accordance with the release date of the custodial part of his sentence. He first breached the requirements of his Custody Probation Order (CPO) on 11 June 2012 by breaking hostel rules. An arrest warrant was applied for and obtained on 11 June 2012. Edward Connors was arrested overnight and produced at Court on the morning of 12 June 2012. There was no bail requirements associated with his subsequent release on 15 June 2012.

## Regulations Provided for in Statutory Rules and Orders

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct, what legislation authorises a Secretary of State, or their Private Secretary, to approve rules or regulations provided for in Statutory Rules and Orders in Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 14503/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Function) Order 2010 the Secretary of State no longer has any power to approve legislation in respect of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct.

## Domestic Abuse

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether the new guidelines issued by the Home Office on the definition of domestic abuse apply to Northern Ireland; and, if so, when they will take effect.

**(AQW 14504/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The new definition of domestic violence, which was announced by the Home Office on 18 September 2012, and which will be implemented by March 2013, applies to England and Wales only.

The definition of domestic violence for Northern Ireland, as detailed within the 'Tackling Violence at Home' Strategy, takes into account psychological abuse and is all encompassing in that it recognizes that anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age.

Work has begun on the development of a new combined domestic and sexual violence Strategy for Northern Ireland which is due to be published in September 2013. We will use the consultation on the new strategy to gauge views on our definition of domestic violence, taking cognizance of the new definition of Domestic Violence for England and Wales.

## Edward Paul Murphy

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 13723/11-15, to detail (i) the times that this action has been used in the past and counted as legally acceptable; and (ii) the legislation which permits this action.

**(AQW 14505/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The power to award a compensation order is set out in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 (Articles 14–17) and provides that a court by or before which a person is convicted of an offence may, on application or otherwise, make an order for compensation.

I can confirm that there are no other cases that match the specific circumstances of the Edward Paul Murphy case. There are other instances where a compensation order has been made at the same time as adjourning a case for sentence. However, in Mr Murphy's case his solicitor asked the court to make a compensation order after the case had been adjourned and before the case was next listed.

## **Austin Creggan, Desmond Hamill, Tommy Hamill and Mark McGilloway**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether republican prisoners Austin Creggan, Desmond Hamill, Tommy Hamill and Mark McGilloway (i) are in separated conditions; (ii) have each signed the required compact; (iii) are on protest; and (iv) are, or have been, on hunger strike, and if so, on what date did this begin.

**(AQW 14506/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Austin Creggan, Desmond Hamill, Tommy Hamill and Mark McGilloway are not in separated conditions and as such are not required to sign a compact. All are reported to have refused to eat prison food for varying periods of time between 17 August and 22 September 2012.

## **Proposals to Close a Number of Magistrates Courts**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 13774/11-15, whether he can give a more precise timeframe for the announcement of his decision.

**(AQW 14510/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** I plan to present my decision on the proposals to close five Hearing Centres to the Justice Committee in November 2012.

## **Use of Glass Bottles in Crimes**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact of the use of glass bottles in violent crimes, assaults and civil unrest.

**(AQW 14586/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The PSNI do not collate information in relation to the use of glass bottles during periods of civil unrest.

The PSNI have advised that in 2011- 12 broken glass and / or a bottle was used in less than 7% of all serious and violent crime and assaults. This figure represents an almost 50% reduction in these types of offences since 2009/10.

I recognise that the use of any object, particularly glass, as a means of causing harm can often have serious and sometimes fatal consequences to the victims of these assaults and I remain committed to tackling these types of offences.

## **Use of Glass Bottles in Crimes**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Justice (i) for his assessment of the use of glass bottles as weapons in licensed premises; and (ii) what measures can be put in place to restrict the use of glasses and glass bottles in licensed premises that have a record of violent incidents.

**(AQW 14587/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The PSNI have advised that they do not collate data on locations where glass bottles are used as weapons in violent crime or assault.

I understand that if reported crime incidents are associated with particular licensed premises the PSNI actively engage with licensees, to identify possible causes and to try to develop a plan to address the issues.

Measures which could be used by licensees include strict table clearance policies on empty glasses and bottles, together with close internal supervision which can reduce the risk of incidents occurring inside the premises. In addition a policy of non removal of bottles and glasses from premises also reduces the risk of these items being used as weapons.

## Small Claims Court

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of Justice what time limits have been established for the submission of a case to the Small Claims Court.

**(AQW 14608/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The time limits applicable within which proceedings may be commenced in the Small Claims Court will depend on the cause of action. The Limitation (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 sets out the time limits for different types of actions and the court has power to extend this timeframe under certain circumstances.

Generally most actions heard by the Small Claims Court will require commencement within six years from the date on which the cause of action arose.

## Savings Plans

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Justice to outline any savings plans for his Department.

**(AQW 14688/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Department of Justice published detailed savings delivery plans for each of its spending areas in January 2011 in the consultation document "Draft Allocations and Savings proposals".

Throughout the Budget 2011-15 period, the Department will regularly monitor progress against these plans and will publish six monthly updates.

The most recent update, as at 31 March 2012, is available via the following link:

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-departmental-business/departments-of-justice-savings-delivery-plans.htm>

## Thomas O'Brien

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Justice to detail why Thomas O'Brien, who was sentenced to nine years in prison for causing the death of Paul Flanagan, was allowed to participate in a resettlement programme, given that (i) he absconded from the scene of the accident; (ii) it was six years before he was brought to justice; and (iii) he has absconded from prison.

**(AQW 14725/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** NIPS is unable to provide the information requested as it falls into the category of sensitive personal data as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998. To provide this information would be in breach of the first Data Protection Principle.

## Legal Aid for Judicial Review

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Justice, given that civil Legal Aid should not be available to an individual for a judicial review when it advantages a group and circumvents it from funding proceedings, how a Carrick Hill resident received Legal Aid to challenge the Parades Commission decision in respect of the Covenant Parade on 29 September 2012, while a supporter of the Ballymaconnolly Band from Rasharkin was refused Legal Aid to challenge the Parades Commission decision in respect of the Ballymaconnolly Parade in August 2012.

**(AQW 14907/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Under Article 24 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 I am precluded from discussing the details of individual applications for civil legal aid. However, all applications for civil legal aid are subject to the statutory means and merits tests and are considered on the basis of the facts submitted in support of the individual application.

Regulation 5 (11) of the Legal Aid (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1965 states that if an application is made by or on behalf of a person in connection with a cause or matter in which numerous persons have the same interest, legal aid can be refused if:

- (a) the refusal would not seriously prejudice the right of the applicant; or
- (b) that it would be reasonable and proper for the other persons having the same interest in the matter as the applicant to defray so much of the costs as would be payable from the Legal Aid Fund in respect of the proceedings.

Accordingly, each individual application must be considered on its own merits against this statutory provision.

## Department for Regional Development

### Residents Parking Schemes

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his Department's position on the introduction of residents parking schemes.

**(AQW 14315/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is continuing to progress Residents' Parking Schemes and the legislation required as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that schemes in the Bogside, Londonderry and at Clarke Court and Masserene Street in Antrim are likely to be delivered in late 2013. Roads Service officials are currently working with residents' associations in the Stranmillis / Lower Malone Area of Belfast, with the aim of implementing a scheme in early 2014.

Roads Service has started discussions with residents of the Rugby Road/College Park Avenue area of Belfast and has re-engaged with local representatives from the Donegall Pass and Sandy Row areas of Belfast. Officials also hope to be in a position to consult with the Lower Malone, Stranmillis and Sandy Row communities, soon after the start of the university autumn semester.

### Residents Parking Schemes

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to hold further trials of residents parking schemes outside Belfast.

**(AQW 14316/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has neither carried out, nor does it intend to implement, any trial residents' parking schemes. A significant amount of research has already been carried out to develop what officials consider to be an effective residents' parking policy. In addition, the degree of local consultation in each area is intentionally extensive to ensure that agreement is reached with both the residential and business communities, and they are fully aware of the details and operational conditions of a scheme.

### Planning and Delivering Large Capital Infrastructure Projects

**Mr Newton** asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) for his assessment of the benefits of annualised budgets when planning and delivering large capital infrastructure projects such as the East Belfast's Flood Alleviation Scheme; and (ii) what consideration he has given to holding the funding for projects as allocated project budget that could be spent over an agreed number of years.

**(AQW 14321/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department, as with all Northern Ireland departments, operates within the financial framework set by HM Treasury to manage public expenditure across the United Kingdom.

The NI Executive operates an overarching Budget Exchange scheme which allows it to carry forward up to a capped amount of capital budget cover for use in the following financial year in line with the Executive's priorities.

My Department does make maximum use of the flexibilities allowed within the financial framework to effectively plan and deliver a large and varied capital programme.

## Flooding

**Mr Newton** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to recent flooding, (i) for his assessment of the need for a more integrated response and better co-ordination between agencies; (ii) what lessons have been learnt; and (iii) whether clear roles and responsibilities have been identified and agreed with the agencies involved.

**(AQW 14323/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have stated on several occasions that more effective coordination between all the agencies involved in preparing for, and responding to, flooding is required. The Executive-commissioned review into flooding, including issues such as lessons learned and the appropriate roles and responsibilities of government agencies is currently being considered. It would be inappropriate for me to comment in greater detail until the review has been published and I and my Executive colleagues have had an opportunity to consider its findings. However, I am willing to consider all the options for more integrated arrangements and clarity of roles.

## Car Parks in Larne

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister for Regional Development how much revenue has been raised by each car park, to date, since charges were introduced to car parks in Larne.

**(AQW 14388/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department is only required to keep financial records for the previous seven financial years.

The revenue generated by each charged car park in Larne for the period 2005/2006 to 2011/2012 is as follows:

■ Agnew Street	£126,782
■ Circular Road West	£75,594
■ Fairhill	£58,884
■ Narrow Gauge Road	£175,442

In relation to the Riverdale East car park where charges were introduced with effect from 5 July 2012, the revenue generated from that date to 31 August 2012, was £525.

## Parking Tickets Issued in North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how many parking tickets were issued in (i) Bangor, (ii) Holywood, (iii) Donaghadee and (iv) the rest of North Down, in the last three years, and the amount of revenue raised in each area.

**(AQW 14424/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Bangor, Holywood and Donaghadee, for the last three years, are set out in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Bangor	3,672	3,156	3,411
Holywood	1,201	1,865	1,657
Donaghadee	171	352	234

My Department's Roads Service has advised that in the North Down District Council area, enforcement is primarily undertaken in the towns of Bangor and Holywood, with other smaller towns and villages subject to enforcement upon request. Consequently, there are no figures available for the revenue raised from PCNs for the rest of North Down. I should also advise that Donaghadee is located within the Ards District Council area.

Roads Service has further advised that it does not maintain details of revenue raised from PCNs, by council area. However, the total annual revenue from PCNs, for each of the last three years, is detailed in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
PCN Income (NI)	£4,818,351	£4,491,987	£4,626,980

### Esplanade in Holywood, Lough Side

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the rationale behind Roads Service's decision to designate the Esplanade in Holywood, lough side, as a no parking area between 8.30am and 6.30pm.

**(AQW 14432/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has assured me that the current waiting restrictions along the Esplanade, which comprise a mixture of double yellow lines (no waiting at any time) and single yellow lines (no waiting Monday to Friday 08.30 – 18.30), have been in place for many years and there are no plans to introduce new restrictions.

However, your query may have arisen due to incorrect wording on replacement waiting restriction signage that officials advise has now been removed, pending the erection of the correct signage.

I regret any confusion or inconvenience that this may have caused.

### Use of Rubberised Asphalt Concrete for New Roads

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the economic and environmental costs and the benefits of the use of rubberised asphalt concrete for new roads.

**(AQW 14433/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service is aware of the potential economic and environmental benefits relating to the use of Rubberised Asphalt Concrete (RAC). However, officials have advised that additional testing, analysis and approval of use, by obtaining the appropriate certification, will be required before RAC can be recommended for use on the Northern Ireland road network.

### Car Parking

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to introduce legislation on cars parking on, and obstructing, pavements; and to provide a timescale.

**(AQW 14463/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that while there is currently no general prohibition on parking on footways, with the exception of the parking of heavy commercial vehicles which is prohibited and is a matter for the PSNI to enforce, there are other means of dealing with the issue.

Where parking restrictions apply on the adjacent carriageway, as indicated by road markings and/or traffic signs, the restrictions will generally also apply to the footway and are enforced by Traffic Attendants. Elsewhere, in areas where there are no marked or signed parking restrictions on the carriageway, and parking on footways is creating an obstruction, the matter can be referred to the PSNI, which has the powers to deal with it.

In these circumstances, and particularly since the PSNI already has powers to deal with obstructions, I currently have no plans to change the law on cars parking on footways.

### **Coleraine, Castlerock and Londonderry Signal Boxes**

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the plans for the continued usage of the Coleraine, Castlerock and Londonderry Northern Ireland Railway signal boxes.

**(AQW 14486/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink advises me that phase 2 of the Coleraine to Londonderry Line Renewal Project which has an economic appraisal approved, will see the consolidation of signalling operations for that section of the line to the Coleraine Box. As a result, the Londonderry and Castlerock boxes will be closed.

At present the Phase 2 works are planned for 2014/15 so Translink would envisage the signal boxes closing sometime in the first half of 2015.

### **Common Travel Area**

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has made any representation to the Under-Secretary of State for Transport in relation to the EU Commission's review of the cabotage regulation; and (ii) for his assessment of the benefits of the creation of 'functional area' as an extension of the Common Travel Area between the north and south of this island and GB.

**(AQW 14493/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Although this question was tabled for the Minister for Regional Development to respond, it is more appropriate that I reply to the question, as the responsibility for cabotage lies within remit of the Department of the Environment.

The EU Commission and Member States are currently considering the details of a report, published in June 2012, by a High Level Group tasked with assessing the benefits of further liberalisation of national road transport markets. The report does not include the transportation of passengers, only the carriage of goods.

The report proposes a flexible and gradual opening of national road transport markets, to be flanked by measures to restore the attractiveness of the sector and ensuring that rules are applied fairly. The authors argues that benefits include more flexibility - allowing hauliers and shippers to optimise fleet management and reduce empty runs, thereby reducing emissions and fuel consumption whilst improving the competitiveness of the overall economy which relies on efficient logistics.

To date, I have not been directly in discussions with the Under-Secretary of State for Transport in relation to the contents of the report, but I can advise that my officials are working closely with their counterparts in the Department for Transport (DfT) to establish the full impact of the proposal. Furthermore, the report was discussed with industry representatives, including the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and the Road Haulage Association (RHA) in Northern Ireland at the meeting of the Northern Ireland Road Freight Forum on 24 September 2012; Forum members are also in the process of considering the proposals.

A well functioning logistics sector is of vital importance for the economies of both Ireland and the UK, as well as in improving the competitive efficiency of the EU as a whole. I welcome, therefore, the review of cabotage and look forward to hearing what the Commission's view of the findings are.

My Department intends to work closely with DfT, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the FTA and the RHA in an effort to establish the full impact of the scheme, particularly on road freight in the island of Ireland.

In terms of creating a "functional area" and what the benefits might be, I can advise that this issue has been considered by the Commission. Their view, expressed in October 2010, was that the aim of the current regulations is to grant entitlements for cabotage but not to restrict cabotage as such.

If further liberalisation were to be granted, however, the Commission's clear view is that the rules would have to comply with the general Treaty principles and, therefore, have to be non-discriminatory in nature, including on grounds of nationality. Their view, therefore, was that bilateral agreements in border regions would be in conflict with the principle of non-discrimination. However, I firmly believe we must continue to look creatively at how in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland we can work together for our mutual benefit.

## **A5 Western Transport Corridor**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasoning for proceeding with the sections of the A5 between main towns on the North West Corridor rather than bypassing the towns.  
**(AQW 14524/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** As you will be aware, the Executive agreed to proceed with two sections of the A5. This will include the construction of 15km of new offline dual carriageway between New Buildings and Strabane and approximately 23km between Omagh and Ballygawley. The construction of a 1.5km single carriageway bypass of New Buildings is also proposed.

The phased implementation of the project is necessary due to the Irish Government's deferral of further funding. I can advise that the following information was taken into consideration and is relevant to the choices made in phasing the project.

Dualling the section from Ballygawley to Omagh extends the benefits of the A4 dual carriageway project. It also improves access between Omagh and Belfast with motorway/dual carriageway provision over the entire length of the route, making Omagh, which is identified as a Main Hub in the Regional Development Strategy, more attractive to potential investors.

The proposed works between Londonderry and Strabane will bypass a number of small urban settlements along the existing A5, thereby improving access to Londonderry, the main centre of population in the North West with port and airport facilities. It will also improve access to Strabane, which has important cross-border links to Lifford.

Whereas the full A5 project recognises the benefits of a dual carriageway bypass of Omagh and Strabane, the Omagh Throughpass and single carriageway bypass of Strabane have improved traffic conditions in these town centres in the interim.

## **A2 Road**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the timescale for completion of the widening of the A2 road through Greenisland.  
**(AQW 14525/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that, subject to a successful completion of the procurement process for this project, it is anticipated that the construction stage of the scheme will commence in early 2013 and will take approximately 2 years to complete.

## **Sewerage Network**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the sewerage network in North Down is up to the required standard.  
**(AQW 14527/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its drainage systems are maintained to the standard required to meet its statutory obligations under the Water and Sewerage Services Order (2006). There are a number of on-going Drainage Area Studies within the North Down area which will identify improvements to the sewer network to alleviate intermittent discharges to water courses and flooding.

As a result NIW has a significant programme of capital works planned for the North Down constituency during the two year period from 2013 to 2015 which will ensure that overflows within the sewer network meet the standards which have been specified by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. It is estimated that £7 million will be spent on the Bangor network, £3.5 million on the Hollywood network and £1.5 million on the Millisle network.

In terms of wastewater treatment, the major treatment works which serve the constituency have been the subject of major upgrades within the past five years and are deemed to be operating satisfactorily. In addition, £5.5 million has recently been invested on improvements to the sewerage network in the Bangor area.

### Street Light Repairs in North Down

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many street light repairs have been carried out in North Down in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14528/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Road Service has advised that it does not maintain specific details of street light repairs in the format requested.

However, details of repairs carried out in Roads Service Eastern Division, which comprises North Down, Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus, in the last three financial years, are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of Repairs
2009/10	25047
2010/11	23085
2011/12	22916

### Street Lights in daylight hours

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the cost of street light being left on during daylight hours in the last financial year.

**(AQW 14529/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that, since street lighting electricity is not metered, there is no additional monetary cost for a street light operating during daylight hours.

Officials have further advised that when they are made aware of street lights operating during the daytime, as a result of faulty equipment or for routine maintenance purposes, they endeavour to attend to such issues promptly, as they appreciate energy is being used unnecessarily with consequential detriment to the environment.

### Street Lighting Network in North Down

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any part of the street lighting network in North Down is not fit for purpose.

**(AQW 14530/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that while some of the older lighting installations in North Down do not meet the present-day lighting standards, which apply to new installations, it is not aware of any part of the street lighting network in the area which is not fit for purpose.

## Removal of Graffiti

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development what direction has been given to Roads Service to remove paint and graffiti on kerbstones, lamp-posts and other equipment in towns and villages.

**(AQW 14536/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I would firstly point out that my Department's Roads Service does not approve of, or support, the unauthorised defacement of the Department's property. I can also advise that officials prioritise the removal of such defacement, in situations that are considered to present a road safety hazard, for example, the vandalism of road signs.

However, Roads Service must have due regard to the safety of its staff that are involved in removing/treating such items. When Roads Service becomes aware of graffiti on Departmental property, it will assess the situation to determine if action can be taken, either directly or in support of others. This often involves working with elected or local community representatives and the PSNI.

I would also advise the Member that officials must be sensitive in dealing with the removal of paint and graffiti. As I am sure the Member appreciates, such action has the potential to create tension within local communities and also inadvertently result in an escalation of the existing problem.

## Parking Facilities for Cycles in Town Centres

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development which towns have provided parking facilities for cycles in their town centres.

**(AQW 14537/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that those towns that provide parking facilities for cycles in their town centres are listed in the table below:

### TOWNS PROVIDING PARKING FACILITIES FOR CYCLES IN THEIR TOWN CENTRES

Ballymena	Cookstown
Ballymoney	Dunmurry
Belfast	Limavady
Carryduff	Londonderry
Coleraine	Omagh
Portrush	Strabane
Portstewart	Downpatrick
Portglenone	Newry

## Ferry Service to Rathlin Island

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how many visitors to Rathlin Island used the ferry service in each year from 2000/01 to date.

**(AQW 14568/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The table below provides a breakdown of the number of passenger journeys taken on the Rathlin Island ferry service from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2012. My Department does not hold the specific information on the number of journeys undertaken by Rathlin Island residents prior to 1 April 2008.

Date	Total Journeys	Rathlin Island Resident Journeys
1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001	37,099	Not available

<b>Date</b>	<b>Total Journeys</b>	<b>Rathlin Island Resident Journeys</b>
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	36,106	Not available
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	39,399	Not available
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	46,562	Not available
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	45,378	Not available
1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006	48,217	Not available
1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007	49,630	Not available
1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008	49,885	Not available
1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009	56,486	3,738
1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010	79,562	4,123
1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011	87,015	8,117
1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012	80,159	8,085

### **NI Water's Review of Water Meters**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to NI Water's review of water meters (i) how many meters were identified as test meters; (ii) how many test meters were subsequently changed to chargeable meters; (iii) how many bills were then issued to customers; (iv) what time period the bills cover; (v) how many of the new bills included a domestic water and sewage allowance on first issue; (vi) how many bills were challenged by the customer due to (a) no domestic allowance being included; and (b) not being a commercial or farming customer, and therefore not liable for charges; (vii) how many bills were subsequently (a) reduced; or (b) reduced to zero; and (viii) what checks were carried out on the circumstances of each property prior to bills being issued.

**(AQW 14577/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that:

- (i) 10,898 meters were identified through a data integrity project as having a meter classification of "test meter" and therefore were not billed. All "test meters" have been inspected;
  - (ii) 2,699 test meters have been reclassified to chargeable meters on the basis of site visits and further office analysis;
  - (iii) 2,647 customers have had retrospective bills issued to them as a result of the reclassification. The difference of 52 meters between these figures relates to test meters changed to revenue bearing where no bills were issued because the accounts either have no customer or a new customer had moved in after the last billable read;
  - (iv) retrospective billing for test meters reclassification covers 1 April 2007 to most recent reading period;
  - (v) In exercising due diligence, NIW does not presume a customers' eligibility for domestic allowance. Evidence of rateable status is a required to enable the allowance to be granted. Letters were sent to inform the consumers of their potential meter reclassification to non-domestic, prior to retrospective billing. This letter explained the availability of domestic allowance and encouraged the customer to apply for the allowance;
- (vi)(a) None, as the application is customer driven; and (b) 1490 accounts were reclassified to domestic therefore not chargeable as a result of additional information received from customer. 756 requests from customers to have domestic allowances applied have been granted according to the criteria set.

(vii)(a) and (b) NIW is unable to quantify the number of test meter accounts that have been reduced, however adjustments have been made, for example where the customer meets the leakage allowance criteria. 756 customers have applied for and been granted domestic allowances.

(viii) The review undertaken of test meters included a field survey and a desktop analysis that involved checking rateable status with Land and Property Service valuation lists, previous billing history, and internet to identify if the meter was supplying a non- domestic property.

### **Departmental Staff Facing Criminal Charges**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many departmental staff are currently (i) suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations; and (ii) not suspended whilst facing criminal charges or criminal investigations.

**(AQW 14609/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** There are currently no staff in my Department who are suspended due to criminal charges or criminal investigations.

The Department is aware of one member of staff who is facing criminal charges and is not currently suspended from work.

### **Gritting of Roads this Winter**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department is prepared for the gritting of roads during this winter.

**(AQW 14614/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Prior to the start of each winter service season, my Department's Roads Service carries out a significant amount of planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine pre-season checks, planning includes ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, ensuring all winter service equipment is in working order and that there is an adequate stock of salt.

Salt barns, which are strategically placed in depots throughout Northern Ireland, are normally stocked to hold sufficient quantities of salt to provide the winter service programme for a full season without the need to restock. Following the severe weather experienced over recent years, Roads Service has reviewed these levels and has increased stocks significantly in order to be well prepared, in the event of a prolonged period of wintry weather. I can confirm that salt barns are filled to capacity at this time. Additionally, and if necessary, Roads Service also has arrangements in place to supplement stocks of salt during the winter period.

In addition, salt bins or grit piles may be provided for use by the public, on other routes adopted or maintained by Roads Service, which do not qualify for inclusion on the gritting schedule. Roads Service currently provides approximately 4,800 salt bins and almost 50,000 grit piles on public roads.

Every night, from the end of October 2011 until the middle of April 2012, Roads Service will have over 300 people on standby ready to salt main roads, helping drivers across Northern Ireland cope with the wintry conditions.

Officials have assured me that my Department's Roads Service is well prepared and will be able to provide a high standard of service delivery for the gritting of roads during the incoming winter season.

### **Speed Limits: Local Authorities**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his Department's assessment of the proposal to devolve responsibility on speed limits in England to local authorities.

**(AQW 14654/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** In England, local authorities already have responsibility for the setting of speed limits on local roads. However, the Department for Transport recently issued draft guidance with the aim of

increasing flexibility for local authorities. Currently out for consultation, this new guidance encourages authorities to keep their speed limits under review with ever-changing circumstances, and consider the introduction of more 20mph limits and zones, over time, in urban areas, to ensure greater safety for pedestrian and cyclists, using the criteria.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Regional Development is the sole Roads Authority and as such, is the only organisation that has powers to set speed limits. This includes the power to introduce local speed limits, where national limits are deemed to be inappropriate. Local Authorities in Northern Ireland do not have any powers in relation to the management of roads.

Initial proposals under the Review of Public Administration included the transfer of responsibility for the maintenance and development of local roads and associated traffic management from the Department to local authorities. However, this proposal was not advanced at that time, as councils were reluctant to take on responsibility for the full range of functions included.

As things stand, it is unlikely that councils would have the necessary technical expertise to carry out the assessments required, or the resources to draft, consult on and publish the necessary legislative orders to introduce local speed limits.

In addition, transferring this speed management function to councils would probably require primary legislation to be enacted. There is also the possibility that some councils would not support the transfer of the function for the afore-mentioned reasons.

### **Traffic Congestion in Belfast City Centre**

**Mr McQuillan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to address traffic congestion in Belfast City Centre, particularly for people travelling from rural areas where public transport is not an option.

**(AQW 14687/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The roads works currently taking place in Belfast city centre are part of the Belfast on the Move initiative to provide increased priority for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists. The bus lanes, which have recently been introduced, accommodate public transport, emergency vehicles, cyclists, motorcycles and permitted taxis and are operational from 7am to 7pm.

In relation to people travelling from rural areas my Department recognises that the provision of Park and Ride sites has an important role in promoting sustainable transport. Therefore, over the last few years we have continued to increase the number of Park and Ride locations and the number of spaces available for both bus and rail based services. My Department is currently planning to introduce additional Park & Ride facilities at the outer edges of the Belfast metropolitan area which will allow these people to make use of the improved public transport services in the city whilst at the same time reducing congestion in Belfast.

In relation to Belfast city centre, about 60% of the 30,000 vehicles per day which travel through the city centre on the roads in front and behind the City Hall is through traffic that does not have a city centre destination. My Department's Roads Service is urging drivers who do not need to travel via the city centre to use alternative routes such as the M3, Westlink and the Outer Ring Road (A55). In 2009, a survey showed that 18,847 people entered Belfast by private car, 7,299 by bus, 3,870 by walking and 285 by cycling. This survey also showed that the 18,847 people used 12,211 cars, while the 7,299 bus passengers used only 257 buses, highlighting the relatively small number of buses necessary to carry a proportionately larger number of people into the city centre. The current redistribution of road space is therefore fully justified in terms of moving people, rather than vehicles.

In our experience, when new or amended road layouts are first introduced there is a 'bedding in' period while the travelling public get used to the new arrangements and therefore it is likely to be some time before the full benefits of the bus lanes are realised. My Department's Roads Service has been monitoring traffic flows, both on the ground and by CCTV, to minimise delay to all road users to ensure that bus operations and traffic movements operate to their optimum. As the works are completed and

traffic patterns are established, further traffic management measures can be considered, if necessary, to target specific issues.

### **Belfast Bus Lanes**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department intends to measure the success of the newly introduced bus lanes in Belfast; and to outline any timescale for this action.

**(AQW 14724/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The roads works currently taking place in Belfast city centre are the part of the Belfast on the Move initiative to provide increased priority for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists. The bus lanes, which have recently been introduced, accommodate public transport, emergency vehicles, cyclists, motorcycles and permitted taxis and are operational from 7am to 7pm.

In our experience, when new or amended road layouts are first introduced there is a 'bedding in' period while the travelling public get used to the new arrangements and therefore it is likely to be some time before the full benefits of the bus lanes are realised. My Department's Roads Service has been monitoring traffic flows, both on the ground and by CCTV, to minimise delay to all road users to ensure that bus operations and traffic movements operate to their optimum. As the works are completed and traffic patterns are established, further traffic management measures can be considered, if necessary, to target specific issues.

Prior to the commencement of the works associated with the Belfast on the Move Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures surveys were carried out on traffic flows on all the arterial routes into and through the city centre. Following the completion of the works, scheduled for mid 2013, further surveys will be carried out to measure the success of the project. In addition my Department is liaising with Translink in relation to the impact the project have had on bus services within the city. Early indications from Translink are that there has already been a positive impact on Metro services.

### **Dropped Kerb Schemes for the Donaghadee Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what dropped kerb schemes are planned for the Donaghadee area.

**(AQW 14759/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is considering the installation of dropped kerb measures at The Parade/Manor Street junction in Donaghadee. The Member will be aware that he met on-site with officials on Friday 28 September 2012 to identify the precise locations where installation of dropped kerb measures would be of greatest benefit to the elderly and those using mobility scooters in this area.

### **Street Lighting Schemes for the Donaghadee Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what new street lighting schemes are planned for the Donaghadee area.

**(AQW 14760/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are no new street lighting schemes planned for the Donaghadee area in the current financial year.

### **Bus Lane Changes**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to address the traffic congestion in and around Belfast as a result of the recent bus lane changes.

**(AQW 14778/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The road works currently taking place in Belfast city centre are part of the Belfast on the Move initiative to provide increased priority for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists. The

bus lanes, which have recently been introduced, accommodate public transport, emergency vehicles, cyclists, motorcycles and permitted taxis and are operational from 7am to 7pm.

Apparently 60% of the 30,000 vehicles per day which travel through the city centre on the roads in front and behind the City Hall is through traffic that does not have a city centre destination. My Department's Roads Service is urging drivers who do not need to travel via the city centre to use alternative routes such as the M3, Westlink and the Outer Ring Road (A55). In 2009, a survey showed that 18,847 people entered Belfast by private car, 7,299 by bus, 3,870 by walking and 285 by cycling. This survey also showed that the 18,847 people used 12,211 cars, while the 7,299 bus passengers used only 257 buses, highlighting the relatively small number of buses necessary to carry a proportionately larger number of people into the city centre. The current redistribution of road space is therefore justified in terms of moving people, rather than vehicles.

In our experience, when new or amended road layouts are first introduced there is a 'bedding in' period while the travelling public get used to the new arrangements and therefore it is likely to be some time before the full benefits of the bus lanes are realised. My Department's Roads Service has been monitoring traffic flows, both on the ground and by CCTV, to minimise delay to all road users to ensure that bus operations and traffic movements operate to their optimum. As expected there are some additional delays to vehicles accessing Oxford St from Queen's Bridge and Donegall Quay. However, as the works are completed and traffic patterns are established, further traffic management measures can be considered, if necessary, to target specific issues.

## Department for Social Development

### Mobility and Wheelchair Bungalows in the Foyle Constituency

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) mobility; and (ii) wheelchair bungalows in the Foyle constituency; and whether there are any plans to increase the current stock.

**(AQW 14302/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely record separately the number of bungalows for mobility use and wheelchair use. However, the Housing Executive currently has a total of 506 mobility/wheelchair bungalows within its Collon Terrace, Waterloo Place and Waterside District Office areas.

Housing Associations have 112 mobility bungalows and 163 wheelchair bungalows in the Foyle constituency.

Not all bungalows within Social Housing Development Programme schemes are wheelchair/mobility bungalows, unless that is required by the client. With regard to plans to increase the current stock, the tables below show the number of bungalows within Social Housing Development Programme schemes which are (i) currently on site; and (ii) future planned schemes:-

**TABLE 1- NEW BUILD SCHEMES ON SITE 31 MARCH 2012:**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Wheelchair Bungalows</b>	<b>Bungalows</b>	<b>Total</b>
Apex Acquisitions Phase 19A	0	1	1
Apex Acquisitions Phase 19B	0	1	1
Derry Acquisitions Phase 19C	1	1	2

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Wheelchair Bungalows</b>	<b>Bungalows</b>	<b>Total</b>
Marian Hall	1	0	1

**TABLE 2 – NEW BUILD SCHEMES PROGRAMMED 2012 – 2015: -**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Wheelchair Bungalows</b>	<b>Bungalows</b>	<b>Total</b>
Culaduff Gardens	Not yet known	4*	4
Bradley's Pass	2	1	3
Skeoge Road Phase 2 & 3	Not yet known	1*	1

\* Details of scheme proposal have not yet been provided.

### **Cost of Employing Non-Local Examining Medical Practitioners**

**Mr Molloy** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost of employing non-local Examining Medical Practitioners to carry out medical assessments for Disability Living Allowance claimants in their home (i) for the current financial year to date; (ii) the 2011/12 financial year; and (iii) the 2010/11 financial year.

**(AQW 14349/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** During the financial years 2010/11 and 2011/12 (up to June 2011 only), all Examining Medical Practitioners who carried out Disability Living Allowance assessments on behalf of the Social Security Agency were based in Northern Ireland. Therefore there are no associated costs for employing non-local Examining Medical Practitioners during this period.

Since 20 June 2011 the Medical Support Services have been provided on behalf of the Social Security Agency by Atos Healthcare. The Department for Social Development does not hold information regarding the location details of healthcare professionals employed by Atos Healthcare.

### **Clandeboyne Village Association**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development what support his Department can provide to the Clandeboyne Village Association in its efforts to obtain a community house.

**(AQW 14408/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that the Clandeboyne area is of particularly high demand with a very low turnover in suitable properties which could be considered for use as a community house. In addition the Housing Executive is currently going through a process of regularisation of all existing community properties with Building Control and the Planning Service, with regards to statutory requirements. As such there has not been any new community houses allocated to community groups since this process began over a year ago and only when this is complete can this type of application recommence.

However, it is anticipated that applications for community lettings may be accepted later in this financial year. Following that it will then be down to local supply issues that exist for particular areas or locations as to whether a community letting can be made. However, it is not envisaged, given the high demand for housing in the Clandeboyne area that the Housing Executive's Bangor District office will be in a position to offer the Association a community house in the near future.

## Employment Support Allowance

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the level of Employment Support Allowance paid to claimants who are awaiting a hearing with the appeals service; and what is the current waiting time for an appeal to be heard.

**(AQW 14414/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The majority of customers who appeal against a decision relating to their entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance will continue to receive the assessment rate of Employment and Support Allowance for the duration of their appeal i.e. from the date the appeal is received to the date of the Appeal Tribunal's outcome, provided they continue to supply current medical evidence. The assessment rate of Employment and Support is equivalent to the rate of Jobseekers Allowance.

The average waiting time for Employment Support Allowance appeals is currently 9.5 weeks. This is calculated from the date a valid appeal is received in The Appeals Service to the first date of hearing.

## Disabled Facilities Grant: South Down

**Mrs McKevitt** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people in South Down who (i) applied for the Disabled Facilities Grant, in each year since 2008; and (ii) met the financial criteria.

**(AQW 14442/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the tables below provide information relating to the Banbridge, Down and Newry and Mourne local government areas. Table 1 details those cases where a Schedule of Works was issued to those who expressed an interest in applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant and, Table 2 details the cases where grant aid approvals were issued.

**TABLE 1**

Council Area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Banbridge	49	46	37	28
Down	157	143	64	74
Newry & Mourne *	210	123	72	62

\* Cases readily identifiable as outside of South Down have been removed

**TABLE 2 \*\***

Council Area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Banbridge	21	30	21	23
Down	85	69	58	35
Newry & Mourne **	73	85	58	45

\*\* Cases where the approval value was nil have been excluded

## Housing Waiting Lists: People with a Disability

**Mrs McKevitt** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people with a disability are on the waiting list for suitable accommodation to be provided by the Housing Executive or Housing Associations, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 14444/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate information regarding applicants with a disability (other than where it pertains to the housing needs of the applicant) or by parliamentary constituency. However, there are currently 13,569 housing applicants on the waiting list with functional mobility problems relating to their current accommodation and the tables below provide a breakdown of that figure as follows:

Table 1 details persons on the waiting list with points for functional disability by Housing Executive District office; and

Table 2 details persons on the waiting list with points for functional mobility by Housing Association.

The Housing Executive has also confirmed that at 26 September 2012 there were 572 applicants requiring wheelchair accessible accommodation.

**TABLE 1**

<b>NIHE District Office</b>	<b>Persons with points for functional mobility</b>
Antrim	277
Armagh	249
Ballycastle	80
Ballymena	404
Ballymoney	112
Banbridge	222
Bangor	865
Carrickfergus	367
Castlereagh	449
Coleraine	485
Collon Terrace	260
Cookstown	124
Craigavon Lurgan	409
Craigavon Portadown	205
Downpatrick	413
Dungannon	219
East Belfast	686
Fermanagh	258
Larne	164
Limavady	106
Antrim ST	591
Dairy Farm	200
Magherafelt	136
Newry	440
N'Abbey1	343

<b>NIHE District Office</b>	<b>Persons with points for functional mobility</b>
N'Abbey2	324
Newtownards	626
North Belfast	731
Omagh District	120
Shankill	332
South Belfast	492
Strabane	201
Waterloo PI	383
Waterside	232
West Belfast	666
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,171</b>

**TABLE 2**

<b>Housing Associations</b>	<b>Persons with points for functional mobility</b>
Alpha	41
Apex	98
Ark	8
Clanmil	112
Connswater Homes	14
Filor	19
Flax	35
Fold	213
Gosford	3
Grove	5
Habinteg	105
Harmony Homes	17
Hearth	7
Helm	297
Newington	20
Oaklee Homes Group	175
Open Door	18
Rural	19
St Matthew's	7
Triangle	18

<b>Housing Associations</b>	<b>Persons with points for functional mobility</b>
Trinity	86
Ulidia Association	27
Wesley	3
South Ulster	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,398</b>

## Housing Selection Scheme

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of applicants to the Housing Selection Scheme who received housing points for intimidation in each year since 2008, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 14446/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the table below details the number of housing applicants awarded intimidation points by Housing Executive District Offices, including the Homeless Advice Centre, for the period 2008/09 to 2011/12: -

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Belfast West	4	11	23	6
Belfast East	5	11	9	22
Shankill	10	22	17	18
Belfast North	35	27	41	37
Belfast South	26	72	32	36
Homeless Advice Centre	20	25	24	5
Bangor	15	24	15	3
Newtownards	7	16	20	17
Castlereagh	16	13	22	18
Lisburn Antrim Street	36	40	22	19
Lisburn Dairy Farm	13	14	9	12
Downpatrick	5	13	14	2
Banbridge	1	0	3	2
Newry	0	1	2	10
Armagh	6	4	2	5
Lurgan/Brownlow	0	0	1	4
Portadown	3	2	2	1
Dungannon	9	13	10	3
Fermanagh	1	0	0	0
Ballymena	14	12	6	3

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Antrim	1	21	19	20
N'abbey 1	8	4	2	2
N'abbey 2	8	14	11	4
Carrickfergus	9	8	6	4
Larne	2	3	1	7
Ballycastle	0	2	4	2
Ballymoney	1	1	1	2
Coleraine	19	10	5	8
Waterloo Place	2	5	6	2
Waterside	5	6	7	9
Collon Terrace	0	3	7	7
Limavady	2	3	2	2
Magherafelt	3	2	4	6
Strabane	0	2	3	2
Omagh	0	0	1	3
Cookstown	2	2	3	0
<b>N.I. Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>303</b>

### **Childrens Play Facility at Crilly Park**

**Ms Boyle** asked the Minister for Social Development when a decision will be made by the Housing Executive on the leasing of land at Crilly Park, Killeter for a Children's Play Facility.

**(AQW 14482/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The area in question is an adopted car park and the Housing Executive would only give approval to its disposal if the Strabane District Council provided alternative car parking. The Housing Executive is currently waiting on confirmation from the Council that planning permission has been obtained for this car parking.

The adopted car parking would have to be extinguished prior to a transfer to the Council. However, before this process can be initiated, an economic appraisal would have to be carried out to ascertain whether the land is surplus and if so how it should be disposed of. The Housing Executive would then have to refer the transfer of land to my Department for consideration.

### **Social Security Computer System**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development what plans his Department has to upgrade the Social Security computer system.

**(AQW 14526/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department uses a number of major Social Security computer systems provided by the Department for Work and Pensions in Great Britain to process and pay social security benefits for Northern Ireland customers. Many of these computer systems are impacted by the changes proposed in the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill and correspondingly the Social Security Agency is developing extensive plans to upgrade and modernise these.

Working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and impacted Northern Ireland stakeholders, the Social Security Agency is undertaking a programme of work to introduce new computer systems to support processing for Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment and Discretionary Payments. It is also putting in place a number of enabling computer systems which will facilitate Identity Verification, Risk Assessment, Scanning, Fraud Management, Data Sharing and Passporting and other supporting processes. In addition, the Social Security Agency will also be implementing an upgraded desktop and telephone infrastructure.

These changes will be implemented over the next 3 – 4 years. Development of the new systems is being led by teams from the Department for Work and Pensions who are responsible for co-ordinating input from a range of contracted suppliers. The Social Security Agency has project resource embedded alongside these teams, and their role is to monitor progress, evaluate and communicate outcomes and ensure alignment with Northern Ireland specific requirements.

## Helm Housing

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development, given that the final inspection report on Helm Housing identified a high level of tenant rent arrears, whether Helm Housing have a higher level of rent in comparison to other housing associations.

**(AQW 14557/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Based on the Department's Annual Regulatory Return for 2010/2011 the average weekly rent for a Housing Association three bed decontrolled property was £75.57. The Return showed that across all Housing Associations the average weekly rent ranged from £67.28 per week to £86.57 per week.

Helm Housing Association charged an average weekly rent of £79.72.

## External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the External Cyclical Maintenance schemes planned for (i) Ards Borough Council and (ii) North Down Borough Council in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

**(AQW 14567/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has provided details of its External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes programmed for its Newtownards and Bangor District Offices which reflect the Ards Borough Council and North Down Borough Council areas respectively.

Table 1 below shows the schemes planned for Newtownards District Office area; and Table 2 below shows the schemes planned for Bangor District Office area.

**TABLE 1: EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE SCHEMES: NEWTOWNARDS DISTRICT OFFICE: -**

Scheme	Dwellings
<b>2012/13</b>	
West Winds Flats	202
Movilla	207*
Portaferry	184*
Ballyhalbert/Ballywalter	248*
<b>2013/14</b>	
Comber 1	119
West Winds Houses	332

Scheme	Dwellings
Scrabo	425
Comber 2	111

**TABLE 2: EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE SCHEMES: BANGOR DISTRICT OFFICE: -**

Scheme	Dwellings
<b>2012/13</b>	
Loughview	291
Kilcooley	386
Hollywood	311*
<b>2013/14</b>	
Bloomfield/Rathgill/Willowbrook	410

\* These schemes are reserve schemes and are part of the gross programme for 2012/13 but may slip to 2013/14.

### Housing Executive: Assisting Tenants Affected by Heavy Snow

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive is prepared to assist tenants affected by any heavy snow falls this winter.

**(AQW 14615/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** In the event of any extreme weather conditions such as heavy snow falls, the Housing Executive will provide its full response maintenance service and will of course implement its emergency procedures as and when required.

### Disabled Facilities Grant: North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of Disabled Facilities Grants funding allocated to each electoral ward in North Down in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 14631/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not record information on an electoral ward basis. However, the table below provides the value of Disabled Facilities Grants approvals for the past three financial years in the North Down Council area: -

Year	Approval Values
2009/10	£1,122,326
2010/11	£297,532
2011/12	£380,995

It should be noted that expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants is wholly demand driven.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

## Housing Executive Properties: North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in the North Down constituency are deemed as not fit for habitation, broken down by (i) type of dwelling; and (ii) electoral ward.

**(AQW 14632/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The 2011 House Condition Survey carried out by the Housing Executive indicates that no Housing Executive properties in the North Down constituency were unfit.

## Belfast City Council Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study

**Mr Maskey** asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration his Department has given to the Belfast City Council commissioned 'Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study' published in March 2012; and (ii) what action has been taken to implement the recommendations relevant to his Department.

**(AQW 14644/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** With regard to the "Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study", my officials have briefed me on the report. DSD has responsibility for two specific issues identified in the report; an accreditation scheme for student housing and the "new homes from old places" initiative.

My officials have recently undertaken a fundamental review of the policy and legislation regulating standards within Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and new proposals have been issued for public consultation. As well as seeking to improve physical and safety standards in HMOs, the proposals seek to introduce new controls on the behaviour of occupants within HMOs. Also, as part of this consultation process, officials will engage with stakeholders on how a separate accreditation standard for shared student housing might be developed and catered for within the wider regulation of all HMOs across Northern Ireland.

Officials in NI Housing Executive continue to encourage social housing applicants on the waiting list to widen their area of choice to include the Holylands and to promote development in the area by Housing Associations.

## Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development why, under the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme, 'preferred bidder status' has been withdrawn for the (i) volunteering; and (ii) women in disadvantaged and rural areas themes; and on what date the decision on (ii) was taken.

**(AQW 14645/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** In the areas of support for volunteering and women in disadvantaged and rural areas I decided that further analysis and research was required to determine how best to provide such support. I have serious concerns regarding the level of collaboration and partnership working in these areas and reservations as to whether the proposed arrangements would adequately deliver. For this reason I decided not to proceed with the proposed new arrangements. To ensure continuity of service delivery, the current level of support will continue until the end of this financial year as we continue to review how we deliver effective support to these key sectors. The decision to not proceed with the proposed new arrangements in these thematic strands was taken on 7 September 2012.

## Housing Executive's Double-Glazing Scheme

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 13996/11-15, to detail the location of the estates and areas of Housing Executive properties that have yet to be double-glazed.

**(AQW 14726/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The tables below details the Housing Executive's programme of window replacement schemes for the Portadown, Lurgan and Banbridge areas. These schemes, with the exception of

that listed in Table 2, are due to be addressed over the next two years through a new double glazing contract being introduced by the Housing Executive in January 2013.

**TABLE 1 - PORTADOWN \***

Scheme 1	Garvaghy Park, Churchill Gardens, Fitzroy St., Brownstown Park, Alexandra Gardens, Clounagh Avenue & Close, Marian Avenue Maghery	123 dwellings
Scheme 2	Ulsterville Park, Margaret Street, Seagoe Park, Rectory Park Estate, Clounagh Park, Parkside	256 dwellings

\* Further to AQW 13996/11, Housing Executive advises that they have identified an additional 81 dwellings which have been added to proposed schemes.

**TABLE 2 – LURGAN - DUE ON SITE OCTOBER 2012**

Ashleigh Crescent, Festival Square, Larkfield Square, Orient Circle, Wheatfield Drive, Alfred Terrace, Gilpin Park Dollingstown, Cambrai Drive, Main Street, Waring Terrace Waringstown, Bleary, Derrymacash, Enniskeen, Kilwilkie Road, Lake Street, Levin Road	313 dwellings
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**TABLE 3 – REMAINING PROGRAMME FOR LURGAN \***

Scheme 1	Mourne Estate, Brookehill, Donard Gardens, Darling Avenue, Glenfield Road, Geddis Avenue, Houston Park, Hannon Drive, Mourne Road, Pollock Drive,	105 dwellings
Scheme 2	Meadowbrook	79 Dwellings
Scheme 3	Avenue Road Estate, Shankill Estate, Wakehurst Estate, Gilpinstown, Aghagallon, Taghnevan Close and Drive, Irwin Place Donacloney, Ardowen, Ennis Close, Windsor Close, Waringstown	236 Dwellings
Scheme 4	Taghnevan, Victor Place Dollingstown, Clarendon Park, Florenceville, Malcolmson Park Maralin, Baird Avenue, Donagh Park, Hillview, Donacloney, Churchill Place, Main Street Waringstown	182 Dwellings
Scheme 5	Drumgor Heights, Altmore, Clonmeen, Burnside, Rosmoyle, Drumbeg South, Crozier Park	228 Dwellings
Scheme 6	Beech Court, Edward Street, James Street, Maple Court, Thornleigh, George Street, Hill Street, Mark Street, Mark Street, New Street, Sloan Street	193 Dwellings
Scheme 7	Ennis Tarry, Ennis Green, Lurgan Tarry, Tarry Drive, Kilwilkie Estate,	157 Dwellings

\* Housing Executive advises that the number for Lurgan has decreased by 1 due to a house sale.

**TABLE 4 - BANBRIDGE**

Scheme 1	Moorefield, Mount Charles, Chestnut Place, Churchview Drive and Terrace, Mountview Park and Drive, Primrose Gardens, Mourneview Park Rathfriland	157 Dwellings
Scheme 2	Cline Road, Fort Street, Leamont Park, Forthill Green, Iveagh Drive, Huntly Bungalow, Scarva Walk, Reilly Court	198 Dwellings
Scheme 3	Woodlands, Castleview, Churchview Villas Gilford, McCandless Terrace, Moybrick Grove Dromara, John Street, Stewarts Crescent, Hilltown Road Rathfriland, Katesbridge Road Ballyrone, Mount View Drive, Beech Grove Jubilee Park, Laganvale, Rampart Street Dromore	174 Dwellings

## SHAC Housing Association's Derelict Housing Properties

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Social Development when the derelict housing properties currently under the ownership of SHAC Housing Association will be renovated and available for allocation.

**(AQW 14740/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The first phase of improvements to 10 of the 25 properties owned by SHAC is due to commence in early 2013. The work will include the replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and windows. Following completion of this work, the four currently vacant dwellings in the first phase will be re let.

SHAC are hopeful that the completion of this first phase of works will generate further demand for housing in the area and therefore allow for implementation of the second phase of redevelopment to the remaining properties.

## New Pension Centre

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AWQ 14495/11-15, (i) how many new posts will be created in the new pension centre; (ii) when the new posts that will be created will be filled; and (iii) when the existing vacancies will be filled.

**(AQW 14770/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Fifteen additional posts have been created in the Pension Centre. Work is already underway to fill these posts in line with the provisions of the Northern Ireland Civil Service vacancy management policy. There is a series of options that need to be worked through as part of that process including consideration of NICS staff with priority based on disability or welfare or who are in posts which have been or will shortly be declared surplus; the potential to offer these posts to existing NICS staff and the use of external recruitment. Given the range of variables it is not possible at this stage to state precisely when all these posts might be filled but every effort is being made to ensure that the process is completed as quickly as possible.

In terms of the posts referred to in part (iii), arrangements have already been made to fill one vacancy during October. The remainder have been offered as recruitment opportunities. Once a candidate accepts an offer of employment, that employment will usually commence within a month. If they do not accept the offer then the process is repeated moving down the merit order.

## Proposed John Lewis Development at Sprucefield

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has used, or will use, public resources to demonstrate the potential impact that the John Lewis development at Sprucefield would have on Belfast retail plans.

**(AQW 14771/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department has been asked by the Planning Appeals Commission to attend the public inquiry into the planning application for the proposed expansion of Sprucefield to respond to questions about regeneration issues in relation to Belfast City Centre. The Department is being advised by legal counsel and planning advisers on its preparation for attending the inquiry and is using public resources for this advice. This is the standard process followed by Departments in preparing for such an inquiry. The Planning Appeals Commission determines the terms of reference for the Department's attendance at the inquiry.

## Political Parties Applying for Public Funding

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the guidelines in relation to political parties applying for public funding from his Department (i) as the sole applicant; and (ii) in partnership with other groups.

**(AQW 14774/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Department for Social Development does not accept applications for public funding from political parties as sole applicants or in partnership with other groups. Applications where

the proposed project's purpose is to promote any religious or political viewpoint are deemed ineligible for funding.

### **Political Party Applications for Funding from his Department**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to list the applications for funding from his Department in which political parties have been (a) the sole applicant; and (b) an applicant in partnership with another group; and (ii) to detail whether each application was successful or unsuccessful and on what grounds they were unsuccessful.

**(AQW 14775/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Department for Social Development has not received any applications for funding from political parties as the sole applicant or in partnership.

### **Warm Homes Scheme**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the number of homes that will benefit from the Warm Homes Scheme in this financial year.

**(AQW 14800/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Warm Homes Scheme is my Department's primary tool in tackling fuel poverty. The scheme continues to be very successful and the Warm Homes Scheme managers have a target of installing energy efficiency improvements in 9,000 vulnerable homes during the current financial year. The scheme managers are on track to meet this target.

### **Co-Ownership Places**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many co-ownership places will be available in the next financial year.

**(AQW 14843/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association has been awarded £25 million of funding from my Department for the 2012/13 financial year.

In conjunction with private finance resources, such funding will allow Co-Ownership to support the purchase of 595 affordable homes; helping to meet the aspirations of those seeking to be homeowners, but who cannot do so without the assistance the Co-Ownership Scheme brings.

### **The Living Over The Shop Scheme**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on The Living Over The Shop scheme.

**(AQW 14872/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Re-energising our towns and city centres remains a key policy priority for me. The new Housing Strategy will set out my intention to revitalize the Living over the Shops initiative as part of a broader package of town and city centre regeneration and work with a range of partners to extend the number of schemes ensuring synergy with the Department's mainstream urban regeneration initiatives.

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# Revised Written Answers

Friday 5 October 2012

**(AQW 13939/11-15)**

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board offers all B&Bs in Northern Ireland the option to promote their properties for free on [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com). Website views of B&B properties on NITB's consumer website, including details of how to book, over the past five years, are detailed below:

- 1st August 2007 - 31st July 2008 - 413,000 page views
- 1st August 2008 - 31st July 2009 - 254,845 page views
- 1st August 2009 - 31st July 2010 - 189,305 page views
- 1st August 2010 - 31st July 2011 - 143,547 page views
- 1st August 2011 - 31st July 2012 - 146,307 page views

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board offers all B&Bs in Northern Ireland the option to be listed on their online booking system. Visitors can make bookings for B&Bs which choose to use NITB's online booking system. The number of bookings made via this system for B&Bs, in each of the last five years, broken down by council area is detailed in Table 1.

**TABLE 1:**

<b>District Council Area:</b>	<b>1st August 2007- 31st July 2008</b>	<b>1st August 2008- 31st July 2009</b>	<b>1st August 2009- 31st July 2010</b>	<b>1st August 2010- 31st July 2011</b>	<b>1st August 2011- 31st July 2012</b>
Antrim Borough Council	1	0	3	2	1
Ards Borough Council	13	11	10	6	3
Armagh City and District Council	7	3	1	1	0
Ballymena Borough Council	3	2	0	0	2
Ballymoney Borough Council	0	3	0	0	2
Banbridge District Council	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast City Council	263	116	121	92	55
Carrickfergus Borough Council	8	11	1	0	0
Castlereagh Borough Council	0	0	0	0	0
Coleraine Borough Council	57	54	21	13	8
Cookstown District Council	4	12	1	2	1
Craigavon Borough Council	16	10	8	7	7

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<b>District Council Area:</b>	<b>1st August 2007- 31st July 2008</b>	<b>1st August 2008- 31st July 2009</b>	<b>1st August 2009- 31st July 2010</b>	<b>1st August 2010- 31st July 2011</b>	<b>1st August 2011- 31st July 2012</b>
Derry City Council	109	62	36	23	11
Down District Council	34	33	12	15	7
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	0	3	2	1	0
Fermanagh District Council	22	29	23	8	11
Larne Borough Council	3	3	4	2	1
Limavady Borough Council	11	14	8	2	2
Lisburn City Council	1	1	2	4	0
Magherafelt District Council	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle District Council	116	91	84	109	31
Newry and Mourne District Council	18	6	5	1	2
Newtownabbey Borough Council	0	3	7	0	1
North Down Borough Council	28	15	19	3	0
Omagh District Council	9	9	4	2	1
Strabane District Council	4	1	0	0	0
<b>Total B&amp;B Bookings</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>146</b>





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