

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 9 November 2012

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 9 November 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Single Equality Bill

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the introduction of the Single Equality Bill.

(AQW 13980/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): There are currently no plans to develop a Single Equality Bill here.

Our Department continues to legislate in order to provide legal protection against discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity.

European Union Events

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the jurisdictional issues arising from the suggestion that European Union events should be hosted in Northern Ireland under the aegis of the upcoming Irish Presidency of the European Council.

(AQW 14553/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We do not consider that any jurisdictional issues are likely to arise.

Community Relations Council

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many times since 2007 they have carried out reviews into the effectiveness of the Community Relations Council and (ii) how often the Community Relations Council has requested such a review.

(AQW 14830/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The last review into the effectiveness of the Community Relations Council was in 2007. An effectiveness review has been the subject of discussion at quarterly liaison meetings with the Community Relations Council. We are currently considering all options for a review within the context of the development of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy.

Goal Line Youth, Portadown

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for their assessment of the contribution of Goal Line Youth, Portadown; (ii) whether they are aware of its present urgent funding needs which, if unmet, will lead to the organisation closing its doors on 31 October 2012; and (iii) what assistance their 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 14999/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department has had no involvement or funding relationship with Goal Line Youth in Portadown and has no plans to fund this organisation.

We understand that the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has provided core funding to the organisation since 2010/11 and there are no immediate plans to change this.

Reinvestment and Reform Initiative

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the current status, balance and priorities for the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative.

(AQW 15205/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI) commenced implementation in 2002. Elements of the Initiative have since been subsumed into a number of key Executive programmes, including the Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Programme for Government, which includes actions in relation to a number of former military sites previously included in the RRI, was published in March 2012 and the Investment Strategy, which outlines how the Executive will allocate its capital investment funding was published in October 2012.

Under RRI, six former military sites were gifted to the Executive. The regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh (2 sites) is being taken forward by the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation, the two initial projects being the building of a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre on the site and the sale of 65 acres of land

to the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society who are moving the Balmoral Agricultural Show by 2013 and creating a new Centre of Rural Excellence at the site. The development of the Ebrington site is being delivered by the Urban Regeneration Company Ilex. OFMDFM is directly taking forward the development of the Crumlin Road Gaol. The remaining two sites at Malone Road and Magherafelt were sold for re-development. In 2011, a further three sites were gifted under the Hillsborough Agreement. These sites were not intended primarily for regeneration but are intended to provide capital receipts for the Executive.

Borrowing by DFP under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative is ongoing. The level of borrowing built into the Budget 2011-15 for the years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 is £200m per annum.

Delivering Social Change

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to their Delivering Social Change announcement, which constituencies will benefit from the (i) additional 230 graduate teachers delivering one to one tuition; (ii) ten Family Support Hubs; (iii) additional 50 health workers delivering positive parenting programmes; (iv) ten Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs; (v) NEET intervention project to support 500 families; and (vi) 20 Nurture Units.

(AQW 15434/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The lead departments responsible for the signature projects will be developing Programme Delivery Plans in the coming weeks, with the aim of having work rolled out at the earliest possible opportunity. However, all investment zones will benefit from the schemes.

Maze Regeneration Board

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 15114/11-15, how many members of each of the respective selection panels which were convened to appoint the Maze Regeneration Board, declared an interest, or otherwise declared any knowledge of, or association with, any of the applicants; and for how many of the applicants (i) deemed appointable; and (ii) appointed, was such a declaration made.

(AQW 15654/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Selection Panels for both the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation Board public appointment competitions received redacted application forms at sift stage and it would not be possible for panel members to declare an interest or knowledge of any of the applicants at that stage.

Prior to the interview stage for both competitions, the Selection Panel was made aware of the applicants' names. In the November 2011 competition, individual members of the Selection Panel indicated that between them they knew professionally and/or personally ten of the twelve applicants deemed appointable. Of those appointed from this list, some panel members indicated that they knew professionally and/or personally four of the applicants appointed.

At the March 2012 competition, individual panel members indicated that between them they knew professionally and/or personally all fourteen of those deemed appointable. Of those appointed to the Board from this list, some panel members indicated they knew seven of the applicants appointed.

Maze Regeneration Board

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 14129/11-15, how many applicants were deemed appointable by each respective interview panel.

(AQW 15657/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There were twelve applicants deemed appointable as Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation Board members in the October/November 2011 public appointment competition. No one was deemed suitable by the interview panel to fill the Chair position.

In the May 2012 Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation Board public appointment competition, there were seven applicants deemed appointable for the Chair position and a further nine applicants deemed appointable for the Board member positions.

Delivering Social Change Signature Project

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Delivering Social Change signature project will be financed, or partially financed, from the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 15726/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Funding for the Delivering Social Change Signature Projects will be found within central Government funds.

The £80m Social Investment Fund remains ring-fenced for the development of strategic projects which will tackle recurring issues faced by communities living with the consequences of poverty and deprivation and will be spent in the first phase of SIF.

Policy and Economic Appraisal of Options for the Childcare Strategy 2010

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQQ 2642/11-15, (i) how the Policy and Economic Appraisal of Options for the Childcare Strategy 2010 research has been used; (ii) whether it continues to represent the completion of Phase 1 of a two phase process adopted by their Department's Child Poverty Sub-Group in developing a Care Strategy, phase 1 being the completion of the policy and economic appraisal and phase 2 being development of a childcare strategy underpinned by the findings and recommendations set out in the policy and economic appraisal; and (iii) how much was spent on this initial appraisal.

(AQW 15731/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The findings of the 2010 Policy and Economic Appraisal were the basis for including a commitment to publish and implement a Childcare Strategy in the current Programme for Government. The findings were also the basis for the Executive's £12m allocation towards the development of a Childcare Strategy over the course of the current Comprehensive Spending Review period. The Policy and Economic Appraisal represented the completion of Phase 1 of the work originally identified by the Child Poverty Sub-Group. Work identified as Phase 2 is now being taken forward under the Delivering Social Change Framework. The 2010 Policy and Economic Appraisal cost £33,000.

Devolution of Corporation Tax

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the devolution of Corporation Tax.

(AQO 2654/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A reduction in the rate of Corporation Tax would provide a major stimulus to the local economy; one of the key commitments in our Programme for Government is to press for the devolution of Corporation Tax and reduce its level. The Joint Ministerial Working Group examining the issues involved in devolving responsibility for the rate of Corporation Tax met for the last time on 18 October.

We have completed our work and addressed the Terms of Reference. We have agreed that a joint report will go to the Prime Minister highlighting findings on the costs, administrative changes and the potential legislative vehicle for devolving Corporation Tax powers.

Officials are currently drafting this joint report which we expect to go to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor soon.

We are pressing for a meeting with the Prime Minister after this to make our case.

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what reassurances they can give to witnesses in the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry who feel under-represented without access to independent legal representation.

(AQW 15780/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Inquiry has supplied the following response:

"Victims and survivors who appear before the Statutory Inquiry as witnesses will be represented by the Inquiry legal team. Victims and survivors can be assured that the Inquiry legal team will be competent, experienced and appropriately resourced to carry out its functions. It should be borne in mind that the Statutory Inquiry is an inquisitorial rather than an adversarial forum and it will not be determining questions of any person's civil or criminal liability."

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Historical Institutional Abuse inquiry, in the event of a judicial review challenge to the decisions of their Department or the Inquiry Panel, (i) whether members of the Inquiry legal team will be tasked with advising witnesses on potential challenges; (ii) would the Inquiry legal team be sufficiently independent to offer independent legal advice; and (iii) were the Panel not considered suitably independent, who would be allowed to advise witnesses.

(AQW 15796/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A challenge to a decision of the Inquiry or the Department would be outside the remit of the legal team and anyone seeking to do this would have to seek their own legal advice in the normal way.

Hope, Confidence and Certainty Document

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what resources will be provided to the Commissioner for Older People to implement the priorities for action contained in the Hope, Confidence and Certainty document.

(AQW 15838/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We understand that the draft priorities for action contained in the Hope, Confidence and Certainty document will be subject to public consultation in 2013 and so could change.

The budget for the Commissioner for Older People NI is determined by our Department within the terms of the current Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. For 2012/13 the budget is £988k, for 2013/14 it is £959k and for 2014/15 it is £930k. Should the Commissioner require additional resources, she does have the option of submitting bids for them to the Department.

Appointments to the Northern Ireland High Court

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many (a) males; and (b) females have been appointed to the Northern Ireland High Court since 2002; (ii) how many were practising (a) barristers; and (b) solicitors at the time of their appointment; and (iii) how many of those appointed had previously held full-time posts in other branches of the judiciary.

(AQW 16045/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) is the independent body for the appointment of judicial office holders to courts and tribunals. We have no locus in judicial appointment matters and have referred the question to the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission to provide the Member with the relevant information.

Vacancies in the Northern Ireland High Court

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many competitions have been held to fill vacancies in the Northern Ireland High Court since 2005; (ii) how many valid applications were received from (a) males; and (b) females; (iii) how many (a) males; and (b) females have been appointed as a result of these competitions; and (iv) how many successful applicants were practising barristers at the time of their appointment.

(AQW 16047/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) is the independent body for the appointment of judicial office holders to courts and tribunals. We have no locus in judicial appointment matters and have referred the question to the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission to provide the Member with the relevant information.

Northern Ireland High Court

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many (a) male; and (b) female judges are currently serving in the Northern Ireland High Court; (ii) how many were practising (a) barristers; and (b) solicitors at the time of their appointment; and (iii) how many had previously held full-time offices in other branches of the judiciary.

(AQW 16048/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) is the independent body for the appointment of judicial office holders to courts and tribunals. We have no locus in judicial appointment matters and have referred the question to the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission to provide the Member with the relevant information.

European Court of Human Rights' Case on Adoption

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any communication they have had with the Attorney General regarding his decision to intervene in a European Court of Human Rights' case on adoption.

(AQW 16087/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not had any communication with the Attorney General regarding this issue.

Ebrington Barracks and Fort George Army Base in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on achieving the Programme for Government milestone of development framework completion and securing outline planning approval for Ebrington Barracks and Fort George Army Base in Derry.

(AQW 16152/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A Business Case for appointment of the design Team to develop a Framework for Ebrington has been prepared by Ilex and is currently being assessed by the Department. An Outline Planning Application with Environmental Statement will be based on the completed Framework and will be submitted at the end of April 2013 which is in line with the target set in the "One" Regeneration Plan. The Fort George site is under the ownership of the Department for Social Development (DSD).

Social Investment Fund

Mr Buchanan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline when they anticipate that an area based plan will be in place for each of the Social Investment Fund zones.

(AQO 2765/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have recently commenced the area planning stage of the Social Investment Fund, with a two-day workshop for voluntary/community and political Steering Group members, on 17th and 18th October in Crumlin Road Gaol.

The consultants, recently appointed to support the Steering Groups to develop the strategic area plans, were also in attendance.

This was a significant event at which members began the process of scoping the issues and preparing engagement strategies to ensure wider community involvement in the area planning process. These engagement strategies are now being delivered.

We expect Steering Groups to submit strategic plans for their zones to the Department by 31 January 2013.

Following official assessment of the proposed projects within each plan, we will then sign off on the final area plan for each zone, with a view to commencing delivery on the ground as early as possible.

Our officials will engage the Funders Reference Group during this process to ensure other funders are made aware of the projects we approve for funding and that these dovetail as much as possible with the wider work being taken forward.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Newton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund Programme.

(AQO 2766/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have recently commenced the area planning stage of the Social Investment Fund, with a two-day workshop for voluntary/community and political Steering Group members, on 17th and 18th October in Crumlin Road Gaol.

The consultants, recently appointed to support the Steering Groups to develop the strategic area plans, were also in attendance.

This was a significant event at which members began the process of scoping the issues and preparing engagement strategies to ensure wider community involvement in the area planning process. These engagement strategies are now being delivered.

We expect Steering Groups to submit strategic plans for their zones to the Department by 31 January 2013.

Following official assessment of the proposed projects within each plan, we will then sign off on the final area plan for each zone, with a view to commencing delivery on the ground as early as possible.

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Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Flooding in East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the work the Rivers Agency has carried out, or will carry out, to address the recent flooding in East Antrim, in particular Cairncastle and Cushendall.

(AQW 15856/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Rivers Agency is not aware of any recent flooding in the Cairncastle area and therefore no schemes have been identified or works planned. Rivers Agency attended two meetings in September with DRD Roads Service, NIW and local councillors where the ongoing flooding problems in Cushendall were discussed. It was accepted that the recurring flooding in the centre of the town was not related to the river but was due to excess run-off exceeding the capacity of road and storm drainage systems. The recent flooding replicated previous events with flood waters travelling along roadways and ponding in Shore Street. Rivers Agency is working with Roads Service colleagues to review the flooding event and consider what the options are for reducing the likelihood of further recurrence. Individual properties along the River Dall upstream of the town are also at risk of flooding but no viable works were identified by a study in 2009 which would offer increased protection. However an additional length of the river was designated to allow maintenance by Rivers Agency to optimise the capacity of the watercourse.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many strategic projects have been funded through the Rural Development Programme, including their location and under which arm's-length body they fall.

(AQW 15875/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All applications are working their way through the assessment process and at the time of writing no letters of offer have issued to any strategic project, therefore no projects have been funded.

Animal Cruelty

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she intends to introduce legislation to permanently ban farmers from keeping livestock following a conviction of animal cruelty at Londonderry Magistrates Court, if there are previous convictions.

(AQW 15917/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, which will replace the Welfare of Animals Act 1972. Both Acts provide powers to allow the Courts to disqualify a person convicted of an offence of cruelty or of causing unnecessary suffering from owning animals, either permanently or, for such a period as the Court thinks fit, irrespective of whether it is a first offence.

The powers of disqualification have been strengthened in the 2011 Act to ensure that a person who is disqualified from owning animals cannot keep, or participate in the keeping of animals, or be party to any arrangements to control or influence the way in which animals are kept. In addition, the powers have been extended to cover not just offences of unnecessary suffering, but also a wide range of other offences such as failing to provide for the needs of the animal. Disqualification may be imposed in relation to animals generally, or to one or more kinds of animal. If the Court decides not to make an order to disqualify the person for cases brought forward under the 2011 Act, the Court must state its reason.

I am content that the legislation in place provides Courts with the powers to disqualify those persons convicted of animal welfare offences from owning and keeping animals. With regard to permanently banning farmers with previous convictions, sentencing within the legislative framework is a matter for the independent judiciary. In making sentencing decisions, Judges take into account the law, the seriousness of the offence, any aggravating or mitigating factors, sentencing guidelines and all the relevant circumstances in each case. In the case to which you refer, which was heard at Derry Magistrates' Court on 20 September 2012, a farmer who pleaded guilty to permitting an act of cruelty was convicted under the Welfare of Animals Act 1972 and was fined £750 plus £24 costs. I understand this was the first time that this farmer had been convicted for animal cruelty.

I have been advised by the Minister of Justice that the Lord Chief Justice, in his Programme of Action on Sentencing, is enhancing the structures by which the judiciary ensure consistent and appropriate sentencing and that sentencing guidelines on offences of animal cruelty heard in the Magistrates' Courts will be developed in the near future.

Tuberculosis Testing Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has had any contact with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in relation to the changes to tuberculosis testing regulations.

(AQW 15923/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The proposed TB testing changes in England have not been on the agenda for my meetings with Agriculture Ministers from Britain.

However, I can assure you that my officials are in regular contact with their Defra counterparts and those from the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government via monthly TB Liaison Group teleconferences and also in relation to the TB Eradication Plans that are submitted annually to the EU Commission for approval.

You will be aware that we have a robust EU Commission approved TB Eradication Programme in place that is based on testing to detect infected cattle, removing infected animals and reducing the risks of disease spread through herd restrictions and movement controls.

My officials are also involved with their counterparts in Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government concerning any Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) audits or EU Commission TB Task Force visits in relation to the TB Eradication Programmes in place in the north and in Britain.

There have been no significant changes to our TB programme since 1 January 2010 when we introduced the requirement to remove as reactors animals that give a second consecutive inconclusive result to a TB test, rather than three consecutive tests as formerly. However, we review our Eradication Programme annually and will consider further amendments to our existing controls should these prove necessary to improve disease control here.

Any proposal to enhance our controls will be considered in the context of the estimated costs and benefits, the assessment of likely impact on the disease, as well as on farm businesses and will be subject to consultation with industry stakeholders.

Tuberculosis Testing Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs proposed changes to tuberculosis testing regulations.

(AQW 15924/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: You will appreciate that it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the detail of Defra's proposed changes to their TB Eradication programme. However, we continue to monitor closely any changes made to the TB programmes in Britain and in the south.

All EU Member States and regions of Member States have to comply with the requirements of the Council Directive 64/432, the "Trade Directive". In addition, Member States and regions of Member States may be required to apply tighter conditions in their TB Eradication Plan if they wish to secure the EU Commission's approval for co-funding from the EU Veterinary Fund for TB Eradication.

We have a rigorous EU approved TB Eradication Plan, which has enabled us to apply for EU co-funding for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Our draft TB Eradication Plan for 2013 has been submitted to the EU Commission for consideration.

Unlike the position in England, all cattle herds here are tested annually for TB and animal movement controls are applied uniformly across the north.

However, we review our TB Eradication Programme annually and will consider further amendments to our existing controls should these prove necessary to improve disease control here.

Any proposals to enhance controls will have to be considered in the context of the estimated costs and benefits, the assessment of likely impact on the disease, as well as on farm businesses and will be subject to consultation with industry stakeholders.

Lack of Days at Sea

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW14420/11-15, what representation she has made in relation to securing spare fishing effort from other Member States which can be used by the Portavogie fleet.

(AQW 15926/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is continuing to work with the other Fisheries Administrations to secure additional fishing effort in the West of Scotland through a swap of spare fishing quota for spare fishing effort. We have agreed to negotiate a swap subject to the terms of such a deal being considered reasonable value in terms of effort secured against quota donated. As soon as we have an equitable offer we will approach Producer Organisations to invite them to donate fishing quota for the swap.

Introduction of a Fishing Licence Fee

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether her Department was consulted by the Isle of Man Government in relation to the introduction of a fishing licence fee, on 1 April 2013, by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and (ii) to outline her Department's response.

(AQW 15927/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department was not consulted by the Isle of Man authorities prior to them taking a decision to introduce a £435 fee for a 2-year fishing vessel license from April next year. This will apply to all vessels wishing to fish in the Isle of Man territorial sea, including Manx vessels. This matter was raised with me by Phil Gawne MHK, the Isle of Man Fisheries Minister when we met on 19th October. He explained that it was necessary to introduce this charge following a cut of 40% to his Department's fisheries budget. Given those circumstances I understand why the Isle of Man had to take this action, which while necessary, will be unpopular with fishermen. I was assured that the fee has been based on the estimated cost of the administration of the licenses including variations made over the 2-year period and does not include any contribution to other fisheries management costs.

Public Health Risks Identified by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Newforge

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department, or any other Department, is advised of public health risks identified by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Newforge whilst carrying out analytical research on behalf of private sector clients.

(AQW 15936/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Where there is a statutory basis to do so, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) advises my Department, and other departments, of potential public health risks while carrying out analytical research on behalf of private sector clients.

AFBI reports to DARD the identification of pathogens specified in The Zoonoses Order (Northern Ireland) 1991, The Zoonoses Order (NI) 1997 and The Zoonoses (Amendment) Order (NI) 2011, in samples submitted by private sector clients. Examples of this include salmonella, psittacosis and enzootic abortion of ewes.

AFBI also reports to DARD the results of any analysis for veterinary drug residues or pesticides which demonstrate levels above the limits of compliance as set out in EC Regulation 470/2009 and EU Commission Regulation 37/2010.

AFBI follows the position taken by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), the Lead Partner in The Shellfish Partnership, that as a government agency, it is under an obligation to support the government's consumer protection law and policy. Consequently, in the event that AFBI becomes aware of a non-compliant product being placed on the market, it is under an obligation to inform the relevant competent authority. On this basis, and whilst not a legislative requirement, results from any private sector samples found to be non-compliant for marine biotoxins are reported by AFBI to the Food Standards Agency.

AFBI reports to DARD, as the competent authority, the submission of bovine stillbirths and abortions submitted by private sector clients. AFBI also reports to DARD the identification of pathogens listed in the Diseases of Animals Act (NI) 2010. These include agents that may be of public health significance, e.g. highly pathogenic strains of influenza.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the cost of undertaking a vaccination programme with a view to eradicating bovine tuberculosis.

(AQW 15937/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is fully committed to reducing and ultimately eradicating bovine TB in cattle here.

You may be aware that, on 3 July 2012, I advised the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development Committee that I have asked my officials to design specific wildlife intervention research that would involve testing live badgers; vaccinating and releasing the test negative badgers; and removing the test positive ones.

The purpose of this wildlife intervention research is to assess the impact of this approach on the level of TB in badgers and in cattle in the field study area. This balanced approach would focus on removing diseased badgers and protecting uninfected ones. It would avoid removal of uninfected badgers and could lead in time to a reduction of TB in badgers and in reduced transmission of TB from this source to cattle. The design of the study will be complex and we want to make sure that we get it right. You will appreciate that the design work must first be completed, and the results of badger sett survey work evaluated, before detailed cost estimates can be provided. Subject to the completion of the necessary preparatory steps, I would wish this study to start as early as possible next year.

I am very encouraged by the wide spectrum of stakeholder support and engagement for this test and vaccinate or remove wildlife intervention research. Farmer, environmental and private veterinary representative organisations are participating fully through the newly constituted TB stakeholder working group on the development of this research approach.

EU Commission legislation prohibits the vaccination of cattle against bovine TB, although research continues in England into the feasibility of developing such a vaccine. Field trials would have to be approved, conducted and validated before any change to the legislative position would be considered. In addition, we should wish to be certain that any such vaccine developed would have international

acceptance before considering its use here, given the value of our export dependent trade in livestock and livestock products which is worth over £1,000 million per year.

Keeping Unclassified Roads Clear

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to meet with the Minister for Regional Development to discuss the involvement of the farming sector in keeping unclassified roads clear during periods of snow, severe frost and subsequent flooding.

(AQW 15938/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have no plans at present to meet with the Minister for Regional Development to discuss the involvement of the farming sector in clearing unclassified roads affected by frost, snow or subsequent flooding, however, I will keep this under review.

I can also advise that Roads Service employs contractors and farmers to help remove snow from local roads, using their own equipment, in severe weather conditions.

Flooding in the Greater Lisburn Area

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what co-operation her Department has had from other Departments following the recent flooding in the greater Lisburn area.

(AQW 15969/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: During the flood event of 27 June 2012, drainage systems as a whole throughout Greater Belfast and Lisburn were overwhelmed, such was the intensity of the rainfall and the flows generated in watercourses and culverts. Generally for each flooding locality, a lead organisation (namely Rivers Agency, NI Water or Roads Service) will head up an investigation. At many locations, flooding may well have been caused by a combination of factors. Rivers Agency is currently inspecting and investigating numerous watercourse related flooding locations throughout Greater Belfast and Lisburn. Co-operation from other authorities at this stage has generally been in the form of discussion and evidence-gathering for particular investigations. The authorities have jointly attended residents' meetings, local and central government meetings and forums. These meetings clearly identify the particular roles of each organisation in investigating and reporting on flooding locations. The Inter-Agency Flood Liaison Group (Eastern) recently met and a key element of the meeting was the June 2012 flood event and the identification of various hotspots.

Rivers Agency

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department plans to increase resources within the Rivers Agency in relation to the regular inspection of culverts and grilles.
(AQW 15970/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Rivers Agency has an inspection regime in place for both culverts and grilles. Culverts are inspected on a three year cycle, while grilles are inspected depending on their risk classification. Category "A" grilles are inspected a minimum of weekly and category "B" grilles are inspected a minimum of monthly. Rivers Agency constantly keeps the risk classification under review and some grilles may move categories, particularly following flooding events. The Agency has no plans to change these regimes, and therefore has no plans to increase resources significantly.

Fishing Vessel Decommissioning Scheme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of her decision not to proceed with a decommissioning scheme, whether she will allocate additional funds to the grant application scheme available to local fishermen for modernising their vessels.
(AQW 15976/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Investments on board fishing vessels and selectivity measure has been allocated a budget of £2.4m and to date the Department has committed £378k (16% of budget) to 54 projects

focussed mainly on improving safety on board, working conditions, product quality and energy efficiency. The remaining £2m of the budget is considered sufficient to meet the current and anticipated future demand to support modernisation needs of the fleet to the end of 2013 when the EFF programme comes to a close. The position is monitored continuously and should circumstances change then finance can be reallocated to this measure.

The Department proposes to reallocate the funding reserved for decommissioning to Axis 2 and 3, where demand already exceeds the approved budgets and work is ongoing to revise the relevant business cases.

Field Boundary Restoration in the NI Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she would consider removing ash trees as a preferred species in Field Boundary Restoration in the NI Countryside Management Scheme, given that ash dieback is a threat.

(AQW 16014/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have introduced emergency legislation to control the movement of ash plants. With this legislation in place, supplies of ash plants will not be available for the coming planting season for the Field Boundary Restoration option within the NI Countryside Management Scheme or indeed other options which could involve the planting of ash. I also recommend that all agri-environment scheme participants remain vigilant and look for any signs of this disease on ash trees they have already planted on their farmland.

NI Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Minister when her Department expects to have all 2012 inspections for the NI Countryside Management Scheme completed.

(AQW 16058/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department plans to start inspections for NICMS 2012 claims in early 2013 and the completion date will be determined by the findings of the inspections. In line with Article 12, paragraph 2 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011 my Department is obliged to increase the number of on-the-spot checks (OTSCs) where the initial sample of OTSCs reveal significant irregularities. Therefore if, at inspection, it is discovered that a significant level of work is not carried out or not completed to standard, the number of inspections on 2012 claims may need to be increased. Once all the inspections are complete, payment processing can commence.

Field Boundary Restoration Claims

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the rationale behind the decision that there should be further checks on Field Boundary Restoration claims, thus causing a further delay in the payments of the 2011 NI Countryside Management Scheme; and (ii) why the checks could not be included in the 2012 or 2013 farm inspections and any necessary adjustments made in subsequent payments.

(AQW 16059/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) In line with Article 12, paragraph 2 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011 my Department is obliged to increase the number of on-the-spot checks (OTSCs) where the initial sample of OTSCs reveal significant irregularities. During the 2011 OTSCs for the NI Countryside Management Scheme, significant irregularities were detected on Field Boundary Restoration (FBR) claims. These irregularities related to inspection findings where work was not done, or not done to the correct standard. Therefore, as required by the above mentioned EU legislation, my Department has had to increase the number of checks on FBR claims. We will progress these claims once we are satisfied that all claims are accurate and valid.

- (ii) Article 12, paragraph 2 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011 requires the number of OTSCs to be increased in the claim year and therefore the checks cannot be included in 2012 or 2013 farm inspections. My Department is progressing additional checks to allow payment processing to continue as quickly as possible.

Agri-Food Research Fund

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the administration of the Agri-Food Research Fund, in particular how much has been spent on advertising. **(AQW 16085/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The Department opened the Research Challenge Fund for the third time on 8 October 2012 for a 15 week period. We advertised the re-opening of the fund in the Belfast Telegraph, Newsletter, Irish News, Farm Week, Farming Life, Irish Farmers Journal and on the NI Business Info website with a total cost of £2,844.74

Farmers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans there are to ensure that the additional £15 million, made available by reducing the amount of modulation, will be directed to farmers who are most in need.

(AQW 16086/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The 2013 Single Farm Payment (SFP) will not be subject to voluntary modulation deductions. The additional €19 million (£15million at current exchange rates) will be made available to all those SFP applicants that receive a payment from December 2013 onwards.

The amount received by individual farmers under the Single Farm Payment Scheme is determined by the value of entitlements held and by the amount of eligible land used to claim those entitlements. The allocation of entitlements with a few minor exceptions took place back in 2005 when the SFP scheme commenced and the current allocations will not change prior to a new CAP Reform agreement, except where entitlements are traded between farm businesses.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions have taken place between her Department and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the issue of bovine tuberculosis and any potential badger cull.

(AQW 16120/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The issue of bovine tuberculosis and the potential badger cull in England have not been on the agenda for my meetings with Agriculture Ministers from Britain. However, I can assure you that my officials are in regular contact with their Defra counterparts and those from the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government via monthly TB Liaison Group teleconferences and also in relation to the TB Eradication Plans that are submitted annually to the EU Commission for approval.

You will be aware that we have a robust EU Commission approved TB Eradication Programme in place that is based on testing to detect infected cattle, removing infected animals and reducing the risks of disease spread through herd restrictions and movement controls.

My officials are also involved with their counterparts in Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government concerning any Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) audits or EU Commission TB Task Force visits in relation to the TB Eradication Programmes in place in the north and in Britain.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the Countryside Management Scheme is claimed using the same form as the Single Farm Payment, was paid in conjunction with the Single Farm Paid in 2009 and 2010 and is still to be paid for 2011, meaning a delay of 10 months compared to previous years, can she clarify that it will be subject to a delayed payment for the remaining years of the scheme.

(AQW 16178/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Participants in the NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) must claim their payment annually on the Single Application Form (SAF). Whilst the SAF is also used to claim Single Farm Payment, DARD does not make payments for NICMS in conjunction with Single Farm Payment. My Department cannot process NICMS payments until inspections are completed, the claims are validated and we are sure that payment can be correctly verified.

In line with these requirements my Department started making payments for 2011 NICMS claims in September 2012. One of the main reasons which caused a delay between claims being submitted and payments commencing is that additional inspections have been needed. This is because my Department discovered that a high number of claims had over-declarations, especially for Field Boundary Restoration where work was either not done or not done to the correct standard.

I plan to start inspections for 2012 claims in early 2013, but as NICMS is claimed annually, it will be the outcome of subsequent years' inspections that will determine the timing of future payments. However my Department aims to make payments as quickly as possible within the regulatory framework of the Scheme each year.

Brucellosis Blood Testing

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to regulate the fee charged by vets for Brucellosis blood testing.

(AQW 16183/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have no plans to intervene and regulate fees charged by private veterinary practitioners for brucellosis pre-movement testing. I consider this to be a matter between the vet and his customer.

Animal Cruelty or Abuse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to introduce additional legislation to combat animal cruelty or abuse.

(AQW 16193/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 is a major step forward in terms of protecting the welfare of both farmed and other animals. The 2011 Act will become fully operational on 1 January 2013 when the final provision to ban the cosmetic docking of dogs' tails is commenced. The 2011 Act provides powers to prevent unnecessary suffering to any animal and it places a 'duty of care' on people to secure the welfare of animals, including domestic pets and horses, for which they are responsible.

Over the last year I have introduced the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2012, which lays down the standards for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, and the Welfare of Animals (Permitted Procedures by Lay Persons) Regulations 2012. In addition to this programme of legislation, earlier this year my Department published Codes of Practice setting out the standards of care required for sheep, beef cattle, meat chickens, dogs, cats, horses, rabbits and non-human primates. My Department also aims to publish updated Codes of Practice setting out the standards of care required for dairy cows, pigs and laying hens by the end of 2012.

Currently, Regulations regarding the welfare of dogs in breeding establishments and the welfare of animals at the time of killing are progressing through the legislative process.

Next year I plan to bring forward updated subordinate legislation in relation to the licensing and registration of petshops, animal boarding establishments and horse riding establishments in order to protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of animals in these establishments. The licensing and registration functions associated with such establishments will transfer from DARD to Councils as the new subordinate legislation is made and on the basis that fees will be set at an appropriate level to allow Councils to recover full costs.

Over the coming weeks I will be meeting the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Education on a number of issues relating to animal welfare.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the recent detection of schmallenberg virus.

(AQW 16315/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: On Wednesday last week, I was informed that a case of Schmallenberg virus had been detected on a farm in Co Down. My Veterinary staff are currently undertaking an investigation on farm. The information to date indicates that it is a closed herd that has had no recent imports. This development is not surprising given the rapid spread of the virus across northern Europe and large parts of Britain since it was first identified in late 2011.

AFBI have been undertaking surveillance of aborted and stillborn foetuses that meet a recognised clinical case definition of Schmallenberg virus. The recent case was detected as a result of that surveillance. One calf submitted from the farm tested positive for Schmallenberg virus. A second calf submitted from the same farm displayed the clinical signs of Schmallenberg virus but did not test positive. It is likely that the mother in this case was infected with Schmallenberg virus about 6 months ago but will now have recovered.

Schmallenberg virus was also detected in a deformed calf in the south last week. I understand that the farm involved, which is in Co Cork, was also a closed herd and virus was detected in a malformed calf submitted for post mortem examination.

In response to the recent development, I have issued a press release asking farmers to be vigilant for signs of disease and to report any suspicion to their PVP. To assist with this, information has been provided to farmers and their PVPs to enable them to recognise the clinical signs which might give rise to suspicion of the disease. Offspring which meet the clinical case definition will be tested free of charge by AFBI.

My staff have met with key stakeholders to discuss the situation.

While Schmallenberg virus is recognised as a low impact disease, I appreciate the distress that it can cause at an individual farm level and any losses as a result of this disease are regrettable. The actions we are taking to date are proportionate to the assessed risk.

Flooding: South Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she has taken to reduce flooding in the South Belfast constituency.

(AQQ 2790/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the aftermath of the June flooding Rivers Agency undertook considerable work to clear debris and blockages in watercourses across Belfast. This was in addition to the Agency's ongoing inspection and maintenance programme to ensure that the main watercourse network, for which it is responsible, is functioning as effectively as possible.

The Agency also investigated watercourse related flooding to determine what could be done to reduce the risk of further flooding. Where minor works were identified, many of these have been progressed.

The Agency is also seeking approval from the Drainage Council to take on responsibility for a number of watercourses where there are clear benefits for this work to be undertaken by government.

For my part, I am delighted to confirm that I have secured £6m for flood alleviation work to help protect 1,700 properties in East Belfast. This will enable Rivers Agency to commit to the integration of flood alleviation work as part of the Connswater Community Greenway project, and is in addition to the £5m worth of stand-alone work which Rivers Agency is taking forward to reduce the risk of flooding.

Farms

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of farms.
(AQW 16355/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The June Agricultural Census 2011 found 24,436 farm businesses in the north of Ireland. Additional statistical information about the local farming industry is available on the DARD website.

Animal Welfare

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the effectiveness and enforcement of the current sanctions for breaches of animal welfare.
(AQO 2784/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 is a major step forward in terms of protecting the welfare of both farmed and non-farmed animals. The 2011 Act has significantly increased the penalties for animal welfare offences from a maximum of 3 months imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine to a maximum of 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. These new penalties are stiffer than those in Britain, which has a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and/or a £20,000 fine.

I strongly support tough penalties for animal welfare offences and the full use of the newly extended sentences introduced by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011.

Powers to prosecute offences under the 2011 Act became available to the PSNI from 11 July 2011 and to DARD and Councils from 2 April this year. Enforcement of the new Act is already working well and I have been very encouraged by the positive approach taken by Councils to their new responsibilities for animal welfare.

Based on the number of successful convictions that have been recently publicised in the media, there are positive indications that the new tough penalties in the 2011 Act will provide a strong deterrent, thus protecting animals from unnecessary suffering including deliberate acts of cruelty. In the cases taken forward to date for prosecution by the PSNI, the penalties imposed include fines, prohibition from keeping animals and suspended sentences.

I have arranged to meet the Minister for Justice to ensure that the guidelines on sentencing, which his Department will be developing in the near future, encourage the Courts to make full use of the range of penalties available and in cases of extreme cruelty that the Courts apply the maximum penalty available to them.

Livestock: Imported Feeds

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she is encouraging and assisting farmers to become less dependent on imported feeds.
(AQO 2789/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is strongly focused on helping farmers to maximise production from natural home-grown forages which will reduce reliance on imported feeds. Forages, especially grass, are the cheapest source of feed for ruminant livestock. My Department's college, CAFRE, encourages farmers to maximise the use of forages through programmes of training and knowledge and technology transfer events.

Over the last year CAFRE has delivered training to over 2,750 farmers at local events held throughout the north. In addition CAFRE has also established 12 new grassland monitor groups which aim to improve farmers' knowledge and skills in grassland management. CAFRE, in partnership with AFBI, also produce weekly grassland management bulletins in the local farming press.

Flooding: Newcastle

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department is taking to prevent flooding in Newcastle.

(AQO 2792/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In order to reduce the impact of flooding in Newcastle, Rivers Agency completed the Newcastle - Burren River Flood Alleviation Scheme in 2007. Following completion of the Scheme, a number of back drainage problems were identified, that had resulted in the nuisance flooding of garden areas adjacent to the river flood defences. Back drainage problems can arise when floodwalls which are constructed to prevent the river inundating property hinders natural drainage towards the river. In order to address the problems identified, Rivers Agency has successfully undertaken remedial works at three locations and is currently considering proposals, with a view to undertaking further works over the next few months. The most recent flooding related to storm drainage systems and not rivers.

Single Farm Payments: Inspections

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Single Farm Payment farm inspections were completed by remote sensing in 2012.

(AQO 2794/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: For the 2012 Single Farm Payment scheme year we will complete 250 On The Spot (OTS) checks by Remote Sensing.

Flood Defence: Ballygawley Water

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with the Minister for Regional Development regarding the impact that the proposed Flood Defence Scheme at St Ciaran's School will have on the Ballygawley Water.

(AQO 2795/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: While I have not met directly with the Minister for Regional Development to discuss the impact that the proposed Flood Defence Scheme at St Ciaran's School will have on the Ballygawley Water, I can confirm that during the Feasibility Study and Detailed Design stages of the Ballygawley Flood Alleviation Scheme, officials from Rivers Agency have undertaken extensive discussions with DRD Roads Service.

Inshore Sea Fisheries Strategy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the delivery of an Inshore Fisheries Strategy.

(AQO 2796/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) was commissioned to draw up an Inshore Fisheries Strategy on DARD's behalf and has produced a comprehensive draft report that includes much detail on the current state of inshore fisheries. My Department is currently reviewing the draft and will engage with the Inshore Strategy Steering Group during November to consider and, where necessary, refine the strategy with the view of having the final version ready for consultation during Spring 2013.

Department of Education

Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW12101/11-15, for an update on the tender for the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register.

(AQW 15329/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): It is intended that all ICT procurement will be addressed within the Strategy that has been developed to modernise the ICT Infrastructure in Education. Procurement of a substitute teachers' register is subject to a business case which will be prepared in the context of that ICT strategy.

Announcement by the Chair of the Board of Governors of Omagh Academy

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education whether the recent announcement by the Chair of the Board of Governors of Omagh Academy, that the Board is withdrawing from negotiations on the Lisanelly site, will affect his proposals on other Omagh schools, particularly Omagh High School, Sacred Heart College and Arvalee Special School.

(AQW 15488/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Lisanelly Campus is a unique project and an opportunity to develop a state of the art, innovative, shared education campus to serve the needs of young people in the Omagh area. Delivering on this is a commitment in the Programme for Government and I have previously stated it will be one of my priorities moving forward. Work is progressing and an Outline Business Case (OBC) is due to be submitted to the Department in the near future.

I would hope that the Board of Governors of Omagh Academy will in due course reengage in developing and delivering this exciting project.

Children with Special Educational Needs

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail the total departmental spend on children with Special Educational Needs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 15881/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below provides the total departmental spend on children with Special Education Needs (SEN) in each of the last five financial years from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m
Total	174	192	197	201	199*

Note: 2011/12 figure is provisional.

The above figures include spend on statemented pupils in mainstream schools, pupils in special schools and home to school transport for statemented pupils attending primary, post-primary and special schools.

Schools are also responsible for meeting any additional needs of pupils within the first three stages of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN. Such funding is not separately identified from within the overall delegated budget distributed to schools, nor is it separately reported on. The level of spend by schools for such pupils cannot be disaggregated from the schools' overall expenditure.

During the same five year period additional funding has been provided by the Department to support children with SEN in relation to the Middletown Centre for Autism and the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal. Further funds have been made available through the Special Education and Inclusion

Review for the SEN integrated capacity building programme from 2010/11 to 2014/15 to prepare schools for the introduction of the new SEN and Inclusion framework and provide for pilots in Early Years settings and Educational Assessment.

Social Clauses in Relation to Procurement

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what social clauses he has in place in relation to procurement in his Department.

(AQW 15896/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department complies with procurement guidance provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel, Central Procurement Directorate. It should be noted that the Department does not procure schools' construction projects; these are procured by the education authorities such as the Education and Library Boards.

Current guidance may be located using the following link:

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_achieving_sustainability_in_construction_procurement/content_-_cpd_proposal_for_promoting_equality_and_sustainable_development.htm

Average Cost of Educating a Child

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail the average cost of educating a child in (i) primary education; and (ii) post-primary education, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 15899/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below provides the average delegated and non-delegated recurrent expenditure per primary and post-primary school pupil in each of the five financial years from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Primary Pupil	3,279	3,531	3,556	3,684	3,682
Post-Primary Pupil	4,696	4,936	4,966	5,206	5,298

Notes

- (i) Data for Primary Schools includes Nursery Classes within Primary Schools;
- (ii) Primary School data incorporates expenditure for Controlled; Maintained; Controlled Integrated; Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish Medium Primary Schools;
- (iii) Data for Post-Primary schools includes Preparatory Departments attached to Controlled Grammar and Voluntary Grammar Schools as it is not possible to disaggregate this data from the host school expenditure;
- (iv) Post-Primary School data incorporates expenditure for Controlled; Maintained; Controlled Integrated; Grant-Maintained Integrated; Controlled Grammar; Voluntary Grammar and Irish Medium Post-Primary Schools;
- (v) Data included for 2011/12 in respect of Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools is provisional pending validation by the Department; and
- (vi) Data excludes capital expenditure which is not available in the format requested.

Irish Medium Sector

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail the average cost of educating a child within the Irish Medium Sector in (i) primary education; and (ii) post-primary education, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 15900/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The table below provides the average delegated and non-delegated recurrent expenditure per Irish Medium primary and post-primary school pupil in each of the five financial years from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
IM Primary Pupil	3,579	3,955	4,202	4,270	4,339
IM Post-Primary Pupil	4,345	5,348	5,081	4,994	5,164

Notes

- (vii) Data for Irish Medium Primary Schools includes Nursery Classes within the Irish Medium Primary Schools;
- (viii) Data relating to pupils attending Irish Medium Units attached to English Medium host schools cannot be provided as it is not possible to disaggregate the costs of pupils attending Primary and Post-Primary Irish Medium Units which are attached to English Medium schools;
- (ix) Data excludes capital expenditure which is not available in the format requested.

Special Educational Needs

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail the average cost of educating a child with Special Educational Needs in (i) primary education; and (ii) post-primary education, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 15901/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I am concerned that the information as sought will not represent a robust measure. There is a continuum of special education needs (SEN) within the SEN register and the cost of support for children with special education needs will vary depending on the individual needs of the child and the type of intervention.

The table below provides the total departmental spend on children with Special Education Needs (SEN) in each of the last five financial years from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m
Total	174	192	197	201	199*

Note: 2011/12 figure is provisional.

The above figures include spend on statemented pupils in mainstream schools, pupils in special schools and home to school transport for statemented pupils attending primary, post-primary and special schools.

In addition, pupils in schools in the first three stages of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of SEN will receive support directly from their school; the funding for which is contained within the schools' own Local Management of Schools' delegated budget. Such funding is not separately identified and is, therefore, in addition to the figures provided above.

The number of SEN children at stages 1 to 3 and 4 to 5 of the Code of Practice, along with the number of children in special schools are identified in the table below for each of the last five years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Stages 1 - 3	43,031	44,446	46,676	48,045	50,207
Stages 4 - 5	9,692	9,974	10,316	10,598	10,707
Special Schools	4,611	4,598	4,443	4,458	4,549

Early Years Funding

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 15137/11-15, to detail (i) the composition of the panel; and (ii) the 155 groups that were allocated funding.

(AQW 15959/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) The composition of the funding panel was as follows:

Pauline Walmsey (Chair) - Early Years, Director of Knowledge

Jenny McDaid – Southern Childcare Partnership Manager

Evelyn Curran – Eastern Childcare Partnership Manager

DE Departmental officials also attended as observers.

(ii) A breakdown of the groups which were allocated funding during 2012/13 is as follows:

Name of Project

- 174 Trust Pre-School
- Bees Nees Early Years Centre
- Acorn Women's Group
- Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid
- Aghadowey Pre-School Playgroup
- Benburb Playgroup
- An Droichead
- Blackie Creche
- Appletree Childcare
- Bloomfield Playgroup
- Ardmonagh Pre-School Playgroup
- Bunnahone Bunnies Playgroup
- Ardstraw Community Playgroup
- Carebears Community Playgroup
- Armoy Cross Community Playgroup
- Carryduff Pre School Playgroup
- Ashgrove Pre - School Playgroup
- Castlerock Community Playgroup
- Ashton Centre
- Caw Community Playgroup
- Atlas Creche
- Chirpy Chicks Playgroup
- Atticall Playgroup
- Chrysalis Women's Centre
- Ballinascreen Early Years
- Clady Tiny Tots
- Balloughry Integrated Com. Playgroup
- Clough & District Community Playgroup
- Ballykinlar Cross Community Pre Sch Ltd
- Cloughmills Early Years
- Ballymacarrett Youth & Com Project
- Covenant Christian Playgroup
- Banagher Community Playgroup
- Crows Nest Community Playgroup
- Barnardos Forward Steps
- Dara Playgroup
- Barnardos Travellers Pre-School
- Derry Well Woman Creche
- Ballynafeigh Community Development Association pre school
- Derrytrasna Playgroup
- Beacon Playgroup
- Dervock Playgroup
- Drumellan Community Association

- Drumsham Parent and Toddler
- Dundrum Cross Community Playgroup
- Dunloy Community Playgroup
- Dunnaman Childrens Centre
- Early Bird
- Falls Women's Centre
- First Steps Com. Playgroup PM Session
- First Steps Day Care Project
- First Steps Playgroup
- Forthspring Afterschools
- Gingerbread Lone Parent Services
- Glenarm Community Pre School
- Glenview
- Greengables Playgroup
- Grove Community Playgroup
- Hansel and Gretel Pre School
- Happy Days Playgroup
- Harbour Bears Pre-School Playgroup
- Harpurs Hill Community Early Years
- Hillside Pre School Playgroup
- Hobby Horse Playgroup
- Holy Trinity Centre
- Ionad Uibh Eachach
- Kiddies Castle Playgroup
- Kids Korner
- Kidzone Playgroup (Lurgan)
- Kids R Us
- Kidzone Playgroup (Newry)
- Kilkeel Community Association
- Killean Playgroup
- Killen Parent and Toddler
- Killyleagh Early Years P & T
- Killyman Community Playgroup
- Kingdom Playgroup
- Krafty Kids (Ogras)
- Ladybird Playgroup
- Laurencetown Playgroup
- Leitrim Community Playgroup
- Ligoniel Family Centre
- Little Acorns Playgroup
- Little Acorns Playgroup Derrynoose
- Little Amps Playgroup
- Little Castle
- Little Diamonds Community Playgroup
- Little Doves Childcare Centre
- Little Folks Playgroup
- Little Oaks Pre-School Playgroup
- Little People Playgroup
- Little Rainbows PG
- Little Rascals Community Playgroup
- Little Villagers Playgroup
- Lorag Childrens Project
- Loughgiel Community PG
- Lower Oldpark Community Association
- Macosquin Community Playgroup
- Magherafelt Womens Group (Kidz Lodge)
- Magic Roundabout Playgroup
- Magilligan Community Playgroup
- Millburn Community Playgroup
- Monkstown Community School Playgroup
- Mother Goose Community Playgroup
- Naiscoil an Chreagain
- Naiscoil an tSleibhe Dhuibh
- Naiscoil Ard Eoin
- Naiscoil Charn Tochair
- Naiscoil Chois Locha
- Naiscoil Dhun Padraig
- Naiscoil Mhachaire Ratha
- Naiscoil na Rinne
- Newhill First Steps Playgroup
- Newtownabbey Meth Miss. Playgroup
- O'Fiaich Playgroup
- Old Warren Community Association
- Omagh Early Years Centre
- Orana Nursery
- Parish of Nativity Playgroup, Poleglass

- Pomeroy Pre School Playgroup
- Portaferry Playgroup
- Portrush Com. Pre-School Playgroup
- Poyntzpass Community Playgroup
- Rainbow Child & Family Centre (WHSSB)
- Rainbow Community Playgroup
- Rainbow Playgroup (Carrick)
- Rasharkin Community Playgroup
- Roden Street Development Group
- Scoil na Fuiseoige
- Shalom House Creche
- Shankill Women's Centre
- Slievegallion Community Playgroup
- Smart Attack Childcare Services
- Springwell Centre
- St Theresa's Youth Centre
- Stepping Stones Playgroup
- Stepping Stones Pre School Nursery
- Stewartstown Tiny Tots
- Straidarran Community Playgroup
- Strangford Parent and Toddler
- Sugar and Spice Playgroup
- Sunflower Early Years Group
- Taghnevan Pre School Playgroup
- Taylorstown Cross Community Complex
- The Firs Playgroup
- The Orchard Playgroup
- Tiny Steps Creche
- Tiny Toons Playgroup
- Tiny Tots Community Playgroup
- Tiny Tots Corner Playgroup
- Tober Tinys Playgroup
- Upper Andersonstown Comm. Forums Daycare Facility
- West Bann Development (Creche)
- Whiterock Creche Centre
- Windsor Women's Centre
- Zero-8-Teen

In addition, there are also 7 organisations that received funding for capacity and development work, including running costs. These groups are:

- NI Childminding Association
- Barnardos Black Minority Ethnic project
- Early Years Organisation – Early Years Advisors
- Early Years Organisation - Community
- Development Workers
- Foyle Down Syndrome Trust
- Lifestart Limavady
- The Cedar Foundation
- West Bann Development (Dev Worker)

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the current Board membership of each of his Department's non-departmental public bodies.

(AQW 15962/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current membership of each of the Department's non-departmental public bodies is listed in the table below.

Bodies	Members
Belfast Education & Library Board	Rev Norman Hamilton Miss Rosemary Rainey Mrs Dinah MacManus Mr Gerry McMahon Mr Alastair Mackay Mr Stephen Cumper
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Mr Caoimhín Ó Peatáin Ms Janet Muller Mr Deaglán Ó mocháin Mr Malachy Crudden Mr Caoimhín Mac Cionnaith Ms Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh Mr Niall Ó Catháin Mr Aodán Mac Póilin Ms Gabrielle Nig Uidhir Ms Áine Andrews Mr Seosamh Ó Coinne Mr Brendan Henry Ms Muireann Ní Mhóráin Ms Aingeal Nig Aoidh Mr Gerard Campbell Mr Micheál Mac Giolla Ghunna Ms Máire Uí Éigearthaigh Mr Séamas Ó Donnghaile Mr Caoimhín Williamson Ms Rosemary Mulholland 2 vacancies
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Mrs Joan Christie Mr Brian McCargo Mrs Sheila McCaul Mr Eamon Mullan The Most Rev John McAreavey

Bodies	Members
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Sister Eithne Woulf Rt Rev Monsignor S Cahill Ms Caroline Callan Mrs Pat Carvill Ms Deirdre Connor Father Kevin Donaghy Very Reverend Sean Emerson Brother Patrick Collier Dame Geraldine Keegan Fr Paul Farren Mr Harry Goodman Rt Rev Mgr Aidan Hamill Mrs Mary Haughey Mr Seamus McCaughey Most Rev Donal McKeown Mrs Eleanor McWilliams Mr Dermot Mullan Fr Aidan Mullin Very Rev Canon J Mullin Ms Adrian Nugent Ms Catherine O'Neill Ms Grainne Perry Ms Anne Rice Fr S Rice Ms Paula Sheils Mr Stanley Smyth Most Rev Noel Treanor
Diocesan Education Committees	Mr John Farrell Mr Brian Rafferty Mr Gerard Burns Mrs Sheila McCaul Mrs Collette McNelis Mr Gerald Murray Mr Matthew Murray Mr Shaun McCann Mr John Campbell Mrs Pat Carvill

Bodies	Members
Diocesan Education Committees	Rev Sister Mercedes Coen Very Rev Gerard McAleer PP Mrs Kay McCaul Very Rev Joseph McKeever PP VF Very Rev Martin McVeigh PP Mr David Millie Very Rev Seamus Rice PE AP Rt Rev Monsignor S Cahill VG Very Rev F McKiernan PP Mrs M Connolly Mr M Duffy Mr B McManus Mrs T Murray Rev Aidan Mullan PP Mrs Sally O'Kane Rt Rev Mgr Eamon Martin VG Mrs Mary Healy Mr Jim Smyth Mr Brian Baxter Mrs Michelle Simpson Mr Peter Torney Most Rev A Farquhar DD Very Rev S Emerson Adm Very Rev J Forsythe PP Mr Jim Smyth Mr S Doherty Dr A Hamill Miss Anne McGrath Mr E O'Hare Ms D Downey Mr Paddy Hoey Rt Rev Mgr A Hamill VG Mrs Anne Doran Mr P Poland Mr Sean McGuigan Mrs Rosemary Mulgrew Miss Una Lawless

Bodies	Members
Exceptional Circumstances Body	Mr Joe Moore Mrs Sarah Havlin Miss Mairead Lavery Mr David Hunter Mr Michael Flanigan Mr Clive Connell Mr Eamon O'Connor Ms Anne Marshall Mr Paul Shevlin Mr Simon Jenkins Htaik Win Mrs Anne MacRandall Mrs Niamh Luft Ms Eithne Ryan Miss Jenny Burns Miss Judith Lowry Ms Teresa Leonard Mrs Patricia Montgomery

Bodies	Members
Exceptional Circumstances Body	Ms Carol McClean Mr Timothy Mayes Ms Eileen Brady Miss Marion Reynolds Mr John David William Moore Mrs Andrea Smyth Mr Thomas Gerald Strong Mr Trevor Cecil Magee Mrs Diana Elizabeth Press Mrs Alannah Bingham Mrs Angela Hampton Dr Robert Stuart Maguire Mrs Susan Elizabeth Smyth Mrs Magdalen Carmel Maneely Mrs Arlene Kee Ms Miriam Karp Mr Stanley Smith Mr Bill Reilly Mr Peter Somerville Miss Sheelagh Sleath Mr Seamus Duffy Mr Arthur Rainey Mr Tim O'Prey Mrs Gillian Reid Mrs Mary McCartan Mr Diarmuid Maginn Mrs Karen Keers Mrs Deirdre Brown Mr Wilbert McKee Mr Brendan McConville Ms Barbara A Stuart

Bodies	Members
General Teaching Council (GTCNI)	Mr Graham Agnew Ms Aine Andrews Mr Ivan Arbuthnot Ms Rosemary Barton Ms Sharon Beattie Mr David Canning Mr Brian Carlin Mr John Colgan Ms Jennifer Cornyn Ms Sheila Crea Mr Carney Cumper Ms Audrey Curry Mr Colm Davis Mr John Devlin Mrs Frances Donnelly Ms Sandra Douglas Ms Gillian Dunlop Mrs Teresa Graham Mr Dermot Hardy Mr Bryan Jess Mr Sean Lambe Ms Mary Leonard Ms Ciara McCay Mrs Sally McKee Ms Elizabeth McNeice Ms Daisy Mules Mr Barry Mulholland Mr Eugene O'Neill Mr John Pollock Mrs Rosemary Rainey Ms Gillian Scott Mr Ian Simons

Bodies	Members
Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd	Professor Mary Hanratty Mr Harry Mullan Mrs Daphne O'Kane Mrs Ethel Ruddock Dr Lawrence Crowley Mr Leo Kinsella Mr Michael Travers Mrs Goretti Newell Mr James O'Grady
Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	Mr Colm Cavanagh Mr Michael Morrow Mr Martin Stroud Ms Simone Bartlett Mr David Clement Mr Vincent Fullam MBE Ms Helen Hamilton Ms Brigid Heron Ms Claire McGlynn Mr Ian McKay Ms Helen McLaughlin Mr Ian McMorris Mr John Milliken Mr Brendan O'Loan Mr Andrew Sleeth Ms Heather Watson
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (NICCEA)	Mrs Helen McClenaghan Ms Dorothy Black Mr Jim Clarke Mr James Collins Michele Crilly Ms Patricia O'Farrell Mr David Thompson Mr John Wilkinson

Bodies	Members
North Eastern Education & Library Board	Rev Amanda Adams Rev Selwoode Graham Rev Trevor Jamieson Mrs Una Duncan Mr Liam Raven Mr John Devlin Mr Michael Newman Mrs Gillian Scott Mr Samuel McCrea Mr Joseph Donaghy Dr David Elliott Dr Alan Preston Mr Sean Quinn Cllr James Currie Cllr Evelyn Robinson Alm James Brown Cllr Samuel Cole Alm Roy Beggs Cllr Sean Kerr Cllr Lynn Frazer Cllr Joan Baird
South Eastern Education & Library Board	Mr Pat Carvill Mr Lawson McDonald Mrs Joan Christie

Bodies	Members
Southern Education & Library Board	Rev John McKegney Mr Ronald McVeigh Mr Plunkett Campbell Mrs Kay McCaul Dr Peter Cunningham Mr Ciaran Mackin Mr John Wilkinson Mrs Roberta Brownlee Prof Patrick Murphy Cllr Sylvia McRoberts Cllr Junior McCrum Cllr Sean Clarke Cllr Jim Cavanagh Cllr Ronnie Harkness Cllr Mick Murphy
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	Mr Barry Mulholland Mr Shane McCurdy Professor Brian Cullen Mrs Una O'Kane Mrs Angela Connolly Mr Bumper Graham
Western Education & Library Board	Mrs Margaret Cooper Rev Robert Herron Mr Peter Duffy Mrs Kathleen Bradley Mr Gordon White Mrs Rita Fox Mr Fintan Murphy Mr Donal McDermott Cllr Shaun Gallagher Cllr Robert Irvine Cllr Anne Brolly Cllr Declan McAleer Cllr Maolíosa McHugh

Bodies	Members
Youth Council (YCN)	Ms Marie Young Mr Bertie Faulkner Mr Derek Capper Mr Jim Currie Mr Gerard Doran Ms Ann-Marie McClure

Special Education Needs Units

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) Special Education Needs units in each Education and Library Board area; and (ii) children attending these units, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 15987/11-15)**

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

NUMBER OF LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRES IN PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND PUPILS ENROLLED IN THESE CENTRES BY ELB, 2007/08 – 2011/12

Year	No of Centres/ pupils	ELB					TOTAL
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
2007/ 08	Centres	11	7	28	49	75	170
	Pupils	159	63	314	628	731	1,895
2008/ 09	Centres	12	11	29	48	71	171
	Pupils	164	60	333	515	730	1,802
2009/ 10	Centres	12	13	31	50	79	185
	Pupils	166	60	359	476	749	1,810
2010/ 11	Centres	19	15	25	45	81	185
	Pupils	163	55	355	466	688	1,727
2011/ 12	Centres	17	16	35	49	77	194
	Pupils	147	57	358	453	690	1,705

Source: School census

Department's Buildings: Biomass Heating

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether feasibility studies have been conducted to assess the potential savings that could be achieved by switching his Department's buildings to biomass heating. **(AQW 16020/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not own any buildings. The buildings occupied by my Department are part of the NICS Estate and therefore owned and managed by Properties Division in the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

I understand that you have tabled a similar question to the Minister for Finance and Personnel who will be responding to you for all DFP managed buildings.

Nurture Units

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what mechanisms he proposes to decide on the location of, and to establish, the 20 nurture units that were announced by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

(AQW 16033/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Work is currently being undertaken to establish arrangements for identifying the locations of the 20 additional nurture units to ensure that support, help and guidance is targeted at those children most in need.

Nurture Units in Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what role his officials have played in the establishment and development of nurture units in schools.

(AQW 16034/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My officials have been involved in assessing bids for Neighbourhood Renewal funding from schools and Education and Library Boards. For successful bids, the relevant Education and Library Board manage the implementation, including quality assurance and monitoring of the provision.

Children in North Down Not Attending School

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many children in North Down have been identified as not attending school.

(AQW 16064/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the tables below and refers to 3 categories:

- 1 Children with a bad absenteeism record i.e. <85% attendance
- 2 Children receiving their education other than at school
- 3 Children who are home schooled

Current numbers in categories 1 and 2 are taken from the annual school census.

- 1 Primary and post primary pupils attending schools in the North Down constituency who had less than 85% attendance in 2010/11

School type	Primary	Post primary	Total
Total pupils	143	30	173

- 2 Primary and post primary pupils attending schools in the North Down constituency who are recorded as being educated off site but not in a school – 2011/12

School type	Primary	Post primary	Total
Total pupils	0	10	10

- 3 I have also been informed by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board that it is aware of 8 children in the North Down area who are being home educated. It is important to note that parents can choose to home educate, however, there is no legal requirement for parents to advise their Education and Library Board or the Department of their decision.

Middletown Centre for Autism

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what are the budgetary requirements to expand the provision at Middletown Centre for Autism.

(AQW 16099/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The budgetary requirements for the expansion of services at the Middletown Centre for Autism are subject to the completion of an appropriate business case. It is expected that the expansion should be able to be delivered with a relatively modest increase in funding and would be phased in over a 2 year period as the Centre builds its capacity to deliver an expanded service.

Service Level Agreement

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 15137/11-15, (i) when the Service Level Agreement (SLA) was placed for tender; (ii) the renewal date for the current SLA; and (iii) whether the new SLA will be awarded through an open tender process.

(AQW 16101/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) Responsibility for the Early Years Fund transferred from DHSSPS to DE in 2006. This Fund was created by DHSSPS to support groups which were providing early childhood services in areas of greatest need when their Peace II funding was ending. The tender for administration of the Peace II funds to pre-school groups had previously been awarded to Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children (then known as NIPPA) and the existing arrangements continued. Following transfer of responsibilities, DE has continued to support these arrangements under an annual SLA with Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children. A review of the operation of the Fund was commissioned by the Department and commenced in Spring 2012. The review is expected to report shortly.
- (ii) The current Service Level Agreement expires on 31st March 2013.
- (iii) The review will include a number of recommendations for change around the implementation and management of the Fund. Funding will be reviewed in light of the findings of the review. It is not yet clear what the way forward on the Fund will be but services required will be procured through an open tender process if appropriate.

Woodlands Speech and Language Unit at the Belmont Site in Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education whether restrictions have been placed on staff employed at the Woodlands Speech and Language Unit at the Belmont site in Londonderry, regarding communications with either the media or parents on proposals for the Unit.

(AQW 16138/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have been advised by the Western Education and Library Board that no restrictions have been imposed on staff at the Woodlands Speech and Language Unit. Indeed, the Board has stated that it is aware of continuing engagement of staff with parents and also, indirectly, with the media, in relation to this issue.

Sure Start Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's role in the Sure Start programme.
(AQW 16181/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has policy responsibility for the Sure Start programme and for the financial resources allocated to the programme. A Memorandum of Understanding formalises the financial governance and accountability arrangements between DE and DHSSPS in respect of Sure Start and some other services. The operational aspects of Sure Start delivery are overseen by the Health and Social Care Board, under a Service Level Agreement with DE.

Sure Start Programmes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether training will be given to management committees implementing the Sure Start programmes, particularly in relation to procurement issues.

(AQW 16182/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Childcare Partnership Managers work with all Sure Start management committees at the project set up and development stage to ensure there is clarity about roles and responsibilities.

A Service and Budget Agreement (SBA) is drawn up between the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the selected Lead and Accountable body which outlines the contractual requirements. The SBA also contains the necessary financial management guidelines to ensure that probity is maintained in the use of public funds. It contains guidance on the procedures to be followed in utilising the funds made available for Sure Start, including appropriate procurement processes.

An induction programme may be facilitated by the Childcare Partnership to explain the detail contained in the SBA and the procedures with which the organisation must comply and to identify external partnership training issues or on-going support requirements. HSCB Finance officers will provide sessions regarding the financial monitoring systems.

Training will also be provided to Sure Start Project Managers and Chairpersons in relation to the web based information system and self evaluation performance management.

Sure Start Programmes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education which areas of North Down will benefit from the Sure Start programmes.

(AQW 16184/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The wards of Dufferin and Whitehill and the Super Output Areas of Conlig 3 and Harbour 1 will be included in the creation of a Sure Start programme to serve the North Down area.

Work is being progressed through the Eastern Childcare Partnership to scope existing provision and develop proposals for Sure Start services, based on an analysis of local needs through engagement and consultation with local representatives, organisations and parents. An initial plan is currently being prepared by the management committee and will be available in December.

Sure Start in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to list the programmes that will be offered under Sure Start in North Down.

(AQW 16185/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The wards of Dufferin and Whitehill and the Super Output Areas of Conlig 3 and Harbour 1 will be included in the creation of a Sure Start programme to serve the North Down area.

Work is being progressed through the Eastern Childcare Partnership to scope existing provision and develop proposals for Sure Start services, based on an analysis of local needs through engagement and consultation with local representatives, organisations and parents. An initial plan is currently being prepared by the management committee and will be available in December.

Admissions and Enrolment Numbers

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education what are the proposed (i) admissions; and (ii) enrolment numbers for the 2013/14 school year for (a) Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena; (b) Ballymena Academy; (c) Dunclug College; (d) Cullybackey High School; (e) Slemish College; (f) Ballee Community High School; (g) St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena; and (h) St Patricks College, Ballymena; and how this differs from the previous year.[R]

(AQW 16186/11-15)

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

School Name	Numbers Consulted on for 2013/14 School Year		Numbers Consulted on and Agreed for 2012/13 School Year	
	Admissions	Enrolment	Admissions	Enrolment
Cambridge House GS	120	950	140	1030
Ballymena Academy	176	1200	176	1200
Dunclug College	110	600	110	600
Cullybackey HS	130	700	130	700
Slemish College	120	720	120	720
Ballee Community HS	100	525	100	525
St Louis GS, Ballymena	139	960	139	960
St Patrick's College	150	760	150	760

The Department consults with post-primary schools on admissions and enrolment numbers annually. For the 2013/14 school year the Department consulted with Cambridge House Grammar School on a reduction in the school's admissions and enrolment numbers from 140 and 1030 respectively to 120 and 950. This reduction was in line with numbers proposed by the school in September 2011, which at that time because of the commencement of the area planning process, the Department was unable to consider. The consultation process for 2013/14 has now been completed and the Department has agreed to retain Cambridge House's admissions and enrolment numbers of 140 and 1030 for the 2013/14 school year.

Assets Transferred to the Catholic Church

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4980/11-15, to detail (i) the assets to be transferred from his Department to the Catholic Church; (ii) the value of the assets at the time of purchase; and (iii) the estimated current value of the assets.

(AQW 16200/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My answer to AQW 4980/11-15 stated: "certain assets of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) were paid for by the Catholic Church. Those assets will be transferred by my Department to the Church prior to the appointed day, that is, the date of establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The remainder of the assets and liabilities of CCMS will be transferred to the ESA on the appointed day."

This answer describes how DE will administer the process to transfer to the Catholic Church some assets of CCMS that were paid for by the Catholic Church. These assets do not include schools. The Education Bill leaves unchanged the ownership (by their Trustees) of Catholic Schools, both maintained and grammar.

This answer does not reflect the transfer to the Catholic Church of any assets of the Department in the context of the dissolution of CCMS and the establishment of ESA. This is because no assets of the Department will transfer to the Catholic Church in this context. Accordingly, details as to the value or nature of any such assets do not apply.

Assets Transferred to the Catholic Church

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4980/11-15, which of the assets that are to be transferred from his Department to the Catholic Church are still required for the provision of education; and how replacements, or agreement, for continued use will be procured.

(AQW 16201/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My answer to AQW 4980/11-15 stated: "certain assets of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) were paid for by the Catholic Church. Those assets will be transferred by my Department to the Church prior to the appointed day, that is, the date of establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The remainder of the assets and liabilities of CCMS will be transferred to the ESA on the appointed day."

This answer describes how DE will administer the process to transfer to the Catholic Church some assets of CCMS that were paid for by the Catholic Church. These assets do not include schools. The Education Bill leaves unchanged the ownership (by their Trustees) of Catholic Schools, both maintained and grammar.

This answer does not reflect the transfer to the Catholic Church of any assets of the Department in the context of the dissolution of CCMS and the establishment of ESA. This is because no assets of the Department will transfer to the Catholic Church in this context. Accordingly, details as to the value or nature of any such assets do not apply.

Language Units in Schools

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education whether notification has been given to the staff of (i) Ballykelly Primary School; (ii) St Anne's Primary School; and (iii) Ebrington Primary School that new language units will be located in their schools from September 2013.

(AQW 16206/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In accordance with the requisite procedures, the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) is currently in consultation with the school managing authorities, teaching staff and parents of the Woodlands Speech and Language Unit regarding about the Board's proposal to relocate the speech and language provision from the Unit to mainstream primary schools.

As part of this consultation process, I understand that the WELB has been in discussion with Ballykelly and Ebrington Primary Schools and that the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has been in discussion with St Anne's Primary School regarding the relocation of the speech and language provision to these schools.

While I have been informed these schools are in agreement I would emphasise that this proposal is at an early stage of development and that no final decision can be made prior to the publication of a supporting statutory Development Proposal (DP).

Proposed Closure of Woodlands Language Unit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education whether a decision has been made on the proposed closure of Woodlands Language Unit and the relocation of language classes to Ballykelly Primary School, St Anne's Primary School and Ebrington Primary School.

(AQW 16207/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In accordance with the requisite procedures, the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) is currently in consultation with the school managing authorities, teaching staff and parents of the Woodlands Speech and Language Unit regarding about the Board's proposal to relocate the speech and language provision from the Unit to mainstream primary schools.

As part of this consultation process, I understand that the WELB has been in discussion with Ballykelly and Ebrington Primary Schools and that the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has been in discussion with St Anne's Primary School regarding the relocation of the speech and language provision to these schools.

While I have been informed these schools are in agreement I would emphasise that this proposal is at an early stage of development and that no final decision can be made prior to the publication of a supporting statutory Development Proposal (DP).

Department's Consultations for Parents

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what efforts are being made to improve the accessibility to his Department's consultations for parents.

(AQW 16211/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: When undertaking a consultation the Department of Education carefully considers the audience and the group(s) who might be affected by any proposed change in provision, be that school governors, teachers, pupils or parents.

On launching a consultation process, consideration is also given to the most appropriate mix of communications channels to reach target audiences. These may include the use of classified advertising, social media, the Departmental website and NI Direct or the issue of press releases or articles.

Consultation events, public meetings and roadshows are arranged at various locations and times to accommodate the availability of and greatest involvement by the target audience. The Department also asks schools to notify parents of consultations on various policies.

Consultation documents are normally available in a variety of formats including printed copy in English and Irish, electronic format on the DE website and alternative formats and languages on request.

The Department has also expanded its use of social media in recent years. The NI Executive and NI Direct Twitter and Facebook accounts have been used to communicate consultation periods and the front page of the Department's recently re-launched website prominently highlights current consultations and their closing deadlines.

Department's Consultations for Parents

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what efforts are being made by his Department to engage better with parents as part of its consultation process.

(AQW 16212/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education seeks to proactively engage with parents during its consultation process through a variety of methods:

- Targeted consultation exercises with parents.
- Direct engagement with representative groups such as Parenting NI, the Parenting Forum, NI Parent Teacher Associations, Barnardo's and Save the Children.
- Public meetings/roadshows at various locations and times to accommodate the greatest involvement.
- Requesting that schools notify parents of consultations on various policies.
- Holding meetings with individual groups on a preplanned or ad hoc basis.
- Making consultation documents available in a variety of formats such as printed copy in English and Irish, electronic format on the Department's website, alternative formats and languages on request.
- The Department has also expanded its use of social media in recent years. The NI Executive and NI Direct Twitter and Facebook accounts have been used to communicate consultation periods and the front page of the Department's recently re-launched website prominently highlights current consultations and their closing deadlines.

The Department will continue to use a range of appropriate methods to engage with parents and seek parents' views as part of its consultation process.

Sure Start Programmes

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education which areas of East Belfast will benefit from Sure Start programmes.

(AQW 16226/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The East Belfast Sure Start project currently provides services for children aged under 4 and their families within the electoral wards of The Mount, Ballymacarret, Island, Woodstock, Tullycarnet and Enner and Bloomfield SOA1.

There are also plans for the East Belfast Sure Start project to provide services to the Cregagh ward due to the planned expansion of Sure Start services to the top 25% most disadvantaged wards. Work is currently underway to develop the plan for services in this ward.

Manhattan System

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when the Belfast Education and Library Board implemented the Manhattan system.

(AQW 16331/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The implementation of the Manhattan system began in February 2000.
- (ii) The Department utilises the Manhattan system, where possible, as an asset management tool for obtaining information on the Education estate.

Manhattan System

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education why his Department does not use the Manhattan system as its asset management tool.

(AQW 16332/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (iii) The implementation of the Manhattan system began in February 2000.
- (iv) The Department utilises the Manhattan system, where possible, as an asset management tool for obtaining information on the Education estate.

Department for Employment and Learning

Students from the Republic of Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to explain the financial arrangements for the attendance of students from the Republic of Ireland at third level institutions in Northern Ireland, and vice versa; (ii) what is the resulting cost balance; and (iii) how these arrangements are discharged or settled between the two jurisdictions.

(AQW 15425/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Students domiciled in the Republic of Ireland (and other European Union nationals) attending undergraduate courses at third level institutions in Northern Ireland are eligible for the same financial support for tuition fees as Northern Ireland students studying here. In the academic year 2012/13 the maximum fee charged for home and EU nationals is £3,465. Students from the Republic of Ireland can apply to the Student Loans Company's European Unit for a non means-tested loan to cover the fee charged up to £3,465. The cost to my Department of subsidising this loan arrangement is approximately one third of the amount of each loan taken which, based on a loan of £3,465, equates to approximately £1,150 per student.

Under the Free Fees Initiative in the Republic of Ireland, home students and European Union nationals (including Northern Ireland domiciles) do not pay tuition fees for undergraduate courses. The cost of tuition is met in full by the Irish Government. However, all students must pay a student contribution charge of €2,250. My Department currently pays this charge in full on behalf of all eligible Northern Ireland domiciled students at institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

From academic year 2013/14 my Department is introducing a new non means-tested loan arrangement to cover the student contribution charge for students from Northern Ireland commencing courses in the Republic of Ireland. The cost to my Department of subsidising this loan arrangement will be approximately one third of the amount of each loan taken, which will equate to approximately £695 per student (based on a loan of €2,500).

In line with EC directive (Article 12 EC), the Department is compelled to fund provision for all EU-domiciled students attending Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland, on the same basis as home students.

The latest indicative, non-validated figures, from the 2011/12 academic year indicate that £8.1m was expended on students from the Republic of Ireland enrolled in the six Northern Ireland Further Education colleges.

The Department does not hold information on the level of expenditure resulting from Further Education students from Northern Ireland enrolling at further education institutions in the Republic of Ireland, as there is no comparable sector.

Third Level Education

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what additional steps are being taken to increase access to, and participation in, third level education among communities that have traditionally had low levels of involvement.

(AQW 15665/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department will be implementing Access to Success, the new regional strategy for widening participation in higher education and for the first time, all of the funded institutions offering higher education courses will be included within widening participation arrangements. The main aims of the Strategy will be to widen participation among those groups which are currently under-represented in higher education. This will be achieved through a range of additional measures which include; clearer identification, at individual level where possible, of the most disadvantaged students/groups when applying to higher education, and the improved targeting of available resources to support these students.

There will be a centralised programme to raise awareness of the benefits of higher education to which all higher education providers will subscribe. My Department will make available increased funding, on a competitive basis, to encourage all institutions offering higher education courses to offer additional "outreach" programmes in schools, colleges, local communities and the workplace, which are designed to raise aspiration and educational attainment in order to facilitate entry to higher education.

The strategy will encourage the development and piloting of regional programmes for disadvantage and disability application routes into higher education. Additional support measures will also be developed to sustain the continuing participation in higher education of these disadvantaged students through targeted bursaries, fee waivers and other forms of direct support.

The further education sector has a proven track record of delivering a high proportion of its provision to the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. In 2010/11, for example, 22% of FE enrolments were from these areas, drawing down funding of £11.5m.

My Department has recently announced its proposals for the introduction of the mainstream Learner Access and Engagement Programme. This programme will allow FE Colleges to contract with third party organisations for the provision of learner support. Support will be directed at those 'hard-to-reach' adults who are economically inactive, disengaged from the labour market, with few or no qualifications, to encourage them to undertake suitable further education to help prepare them for employment or further learning. The procurement process for the programme is underway and is expected to complete by May 2013.

Students from the Republic of Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students on average from the Republic of Ireland study or take courses at the Regional Colleges in Northern Ireland each year; and who pays for such provision.

(AQW 15822/11-15)

Dr Farry: The numbers of professional and technical enrolments from the Republic of Ireland (RoI) who attended the NI Further Education Colleges over the last 3 years for which data are available, are set out in the table below.

Academic Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Enrolments from RoI	3,092	4,567	4,142

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

The bulk of these enrolments are funded by the Department for Employment and Learning, whilst a small number are funded by individuals or employers through full cost recovery.

Staff with Disabilities

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action is being taken to encourage employers, particularly those who cite insurance liability issues, to engage staff with disabilities.

(AQW 15978/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning has a dedicated Employer Engagement Team who work with employers throughout Northern Ireland, and in doing so, provide a professional and comprehensive service.

This specific service to Employers is delivered through teams of Employer Contact Managers. These staff are tasked with promoting all Departmental services and programmes available to employers within their local area.

The range of services and programmes include a number which have been specifically designed to help and support Employers to recruit and retain people with disabilities.

This specialist provision is managed by the Department's Disability Employment Service. Programmes and services available include; Access to Work (NI), Workable (NI), Work Connect, Job Introduction Scheme, and the Department's own Occupational Psychology Service.

The help and assistance provided to local employers through these programmes and services include: Financial incentives, coaching and training for managers and employees, provision of special aids, equipment and adaptations to premises, employment assessments and a dedicated mentor for the disabled employee.

The Department works in partnership with leading disability organisations from throughout Northern Ireland, who have extensive experience of helping people with disabilities obtain and sustain work. This is achieved, in part, through the very positive employer relationships that they have built up over the years.

Specially trained staff, from the Disability Employment Service and from the Jobs and Benefits Office network across Northern Ireland, actively engage with local employers to advocate on behalf of disabled clients that they are currently working with, and in doing so, will explain how each of the programmes and services can assist them.

In addition, and as required, they will offer advice and support relating to any specific issues or concerns that a local employer might have in relation to their employer responsibilities, such as reasonable adjustments or requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act. My Department is not aware of employers citing insurance liability issues as a reason not to employ a person with a disability.

My Department also enjoys a close working relationship with Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI). This is a network of employers, drawn from all sectors, with a common aim, to promote training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The Disability Employment Service has worked in partnership with EFDNI in the organisation and delivery of disability awareness events and in the promotion and publication of Best Practice Booklets for employers.

Stranmillis University College and Queen's University Belfast

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the merger between Stranmillis University College and Queen's University Belfast is no longer proposed.

(AQW 15990/11-15)

Dr Farry: At the end of last year I announced that the formal policy of my Department is to support a merger between Stranmillis University College and Queen's University Belfast. This I believe to be the best option for the College. I also announced a two stage study of teacher education in Northern Ireland. As you will be aware, from my response to AQW 14979/11-15, I commissioned the first stage of the study earlier this year and await the outcome of that work.

Evidence suggests that 'strong performing' education systems such as exist in Singapore, Korea, Canada and Finland, have systematically invested in enhancing the initial education of their teachers. In all of these education systems, teachers are educated in academic universities where theory and practice are combined to form a foundation for teaching that is on a par with other academic professions. Recently the Republic of Ireland has restructured its initial teacher education provision following a review by a panel of international experts. It recommended reducing the number of providers from nineteen to six through integration and merger. The six integrated providers are all located in a university. I further understand that most education systems in Europe have implemented or are considering structural reforms similar to those carried in the Republic of Ireland. The proposed merger of Stranmillis with Queen's is in line with what is considered best practice. I believe it is also best for the future generations of children in Northern Ireland.

Chairman of the Board of Governors for Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the process of finding a replacement for the Chairman of the Board of Governors for Stranmillis University College who is due to retire has commenced.

(AQW 15991/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that the process has commenced.

Board of Governors for Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether there will be an increase in the number of members sitting on the next Board of Governors for Stranmillis University College.

(AQW 15992/11-15)

Dr Farry: There are fourteen members on the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College and currently three of these positions are vacant. Work has commenced on the process of recruiting persons to fill these three vacancies.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students are enrolled at Stranmillis University College.

(AQW 15993/11-15)

Dr Farry: In the 2010/11 academic year there were 915 full-time and 385 part-time students enrolled at Stranmillis University College.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- 1 HESA data are rounded to the nearest 5.
- 2 The latest available data are for academic year 2010/11.

Lisburn College

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much Lisburn College receives per post-16 student with learning difficulties.

(AQW 16042/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides funding to further education colleges on the basis of agreed, planned provision that is in support of economic priorities. Funding, which is made through a formal funding mechanism, is allocated at a college level and it is not possible, therefore, to provide details relating to the Lisburn campus of the South Eastern Regional College (SERC).

I can advise, however, that in the 2011/12 academic year, SERC had 760 students with a learning difficulty or disability (SLDD) enrolled across all campuses and the total value of grant funding provided by my Department, in support of those students, was £1.350 million.

My Department also provides financial support to assist colleges in discharging their responsibilities towards SLDD students. These support funds provide assistance to colleges for the provision of technical and personal support and the total value of support funds provided to SERC in 2010/11 was £0.481m.

Consequently, in the 2010/11 academic year, my Department provided a total of £1.831m to students with a learning difficulty or disability enrolled on courses within South Eastern Regional College. As the level of funding will vary between full and part-time enrolments, and different levels of support fund are payable, I am unable to provide you with an accurate breakdown, or average cost, per student.

Review of Further Education College Provision

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what co-ordination there is between the review of further education college provision, particularly in Ballymoney, and the Department of Education's review of secondary education.

(AQW 16055/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no current review of further education college provision in Northern Ireland. However, I can confirm that the Northern Regional College is currently preparing a business case considering its estate's requirement across its entire area, including Ballymoney. The Department of Education and the North Eastern Education and Library Board will both be consulted as part of this exercise. The consultation will be wide ranging but in particular will focus on the need for the inclusion in the college facilities of accommodation for the delivery of the professional and technical elements of the entitlement framework, particularly elements such as construction and engineering.

Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS and other sectors, including the further education sector, are currently engaged in an area planning process to identify the need for post-primary education in each Board area, including Ballymoney, and to develop proposals to meet that need.

The consultation on these area plans closed on 26 October 2012. Revised plans, taking account of the consultation responses are due in the Department of Education by 7 December 2012.

Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many young people are Not in Employment, Education or Training in the North Down area; and (ii) what action his Department is taking to address the problem.

(AQW 16070/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is not possible to provide estimates of the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the North Down area due to sample size constraints in the Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, estimates of those who are not in employment, Government supported training or full-time education are available at the Northern Ireland level from the LFS.

For the period April –June 2012, in Northern Ireland, the LFS estimated that there were 54,000 (24.4%) 16-24 year olds who were not in employment, Government supported training or full-time education.

In terms of initiatives my Department is undertaking, on 31 May 2012, I secured Executive endorsement of ‘Pathways to Success’, the cross-departmental NEET strategy for Northern Ireland. I also secured substantial additional funding to implement the strategy and the ‘Youth Employment Scheme’. On 2 July I made an oral statement to the Assembly announcing £5.8m for this financial year and proposals for future years of £15.6 million in 2013/14 and £19.6 million in 2014/15.

The ‘Pathways to Success’ strategy comprises a three tier package of measures aimed at prevention, helping young people in the 16-18, especially those facing barriers to participation and assisting unemployed young people aged 18-24 more generally.

My Department is now implementing several initiatives under that strategy.

One of the initiatives is the Community Family Support Programme (CFSP). The CFSP pilot will focus on the needs of 44 disadvantaged families in targeted areas and will be delivered by Local Employment Intermediary Service providers in partnership with other mainstream provision.

The pilot will be concentrated 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.

As this is one of the Delivering Social Change Signature Projects an additional £2 million will now mean that the service can be extended over the next two years to some 500 families.

I am also piloting a Community Based Access Programme through the Learner Access and Engagement Programme. The programme will enable non-statutory organisations to provide learner support to young people aged 16 to 18, through a contractual arrangement with a Further Education College.

I also recently announced the introduction of a training allowance for young people participating in projects funded by the European Social Fund. This allowance has been designed to ensure there are effective incentives for young people to progress from provision which re-engages them with learning and develops skills linked to education and training, to programmes that provide the skills and qualifications to support progression and success in work. The allowance was introduced from 15 October.

A call for proposals under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund was issued on 23 October. My Department is seeking applications for grant under the Fund to test new approaches, based on sound evidence, aimed at piloting a range of approaches to re-engaging young people in the NEET category.

For unemployed 18 to 24 year olds, the Youth Employment Scheme is offering the following -

Initially 1,000 short 2 to 8 week work experience placements, rising to 3,000 placements annually by March 2013, designed to ensure early engagement with the labour market; this will cost £200,000 in 2012/13 rising to £400,000 and £600,000 respectively in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

800 employer subsidies of £5,750 a year in sectors which have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the economy; (rising to 1,200 by 2014/15), provided employers agree to facilitate and enable further skills development; this will cost £2.3 million in 2012/13 rising to £5.75 million in 2013/14 and £6.9 million in 2014/15.

400 training places coupled with additional sector based work experience of between 6 and 9 months (rising to 1,800 by 2014/15) in sectors which have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the economy. While in training young people will receive a training allowance of £100 a week. This will cost £1.1 million in 2012/13 rising to £5.3 million in 2013/14 and £6.4 million in 2014/15.

My Department will also invest £400,000 this year in direct employer engagement rising to £1.1 million in 2014/15. This will provide for marketing and developing a cadre of staff to manage employer engagement and participation in the various strands of the initiative.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Youth Unemployment Figures for Dungannon

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department is taking to address the high youth unemployment figures for Dungannon.

(AQW 16147/11-15)

Dr Farry: Addressing youth unemployment, in all areas of Northern Ireland including Dungannon, is a priority. In the Dungannon District Council area young people make up 27.5% of the total number claiming Jobseekers Allowance which is above the Northern Ireland average of 21.1%.

Steps to Work and Pathways to Work are the Department's main return to work programmes and in the Dungannon area 149 young people are currently availing of the former while 94 young people are involved in the latter.

The Youth Employment Scheme (YES), which I announced to the Assembly on 2 July, will invest £31 million across Northern Ireland in new measures to help young unemployed people find work over the next 3 years. This Scheme is in the early stages of implementation but at present, 22 work experience opportunities are available through YES in the Dungannon area. I expect this number to rise significantly in the coming months.

Grievance Cases and Whistleblowing Complaints

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many (i) grievance cases have been taken; and (ii) whistleblowing complaints have been made, against (a) his Department; and (b) its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last five years; and at what cost to the public purse.

(AQW 16157/11-15)

Dr Farry: A total of forty-seven grievance cases have been taken by employees of the Department in the last five years.

The Department's Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) are USEL (Ulster Supported Employment Ltd), CITB (CITB-ConstructionSkills Northern Ireland), LRA (Labour Relations Agency) and, with effect from 1 April 2012, the six Further Education Colleges and Stranmillis University College. In the Department's ALBs, a total of twenty-six grievances have been taken in the last five years.

The number of grievances, for the Department and its ALBs in each of the last five years is set out in the table overleaf:

Year	Number of Formal Grievances in DEL	Number of Formal Grievances in ALBs *
2008	8	3
2009	9	10

Year	Number of Formal Grievances in DEL	Number of Formal Grievances in ALBs *
2010	11	0
2011	10	1
2012	9	12

* Information on Further Education Colleges and Stranmillis University College has been included with effect from 1 April 2012, the date they were classified as Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

No complaints have been made against the Department which can be categorised as 'whistle blowing' complaints in the relevant time period. Six such complaints have been made in the Department's ALBs.

No Departmental grievance has resulted in the payment of any money to an employee. £17,947.20 has been incurred to date in relation to grievance and 'whistle blowing' complaints in the Department's ALBs.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Promoting Downpatrick as the Burial Place of St. Patrick

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what (i) tourism potential can be developed; and (ii) job opportunities created, by promoting Downpatrick as the burial place of St. Patrick (a) locally; and (ii) abroad.

(AQW 15803/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland are both working to capitalise on Downpatrick's tourism potential in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and overseas.

Downpatrick has a wealth of Patrician and wider Christian Heritage product including the burial site of St. Patrick, which has been supported, developed and promoted as part of the St. Patrick/Christian Heritage Signature Project. To date NITB has invested over £2.5million in capital works through the Tourism Development Scheme, levering a total of over £8.9million for the project, with a further £300,000 revenue assistance having been provided by NITB.

Tourism Ireland feature the St Patrick's Trail (including Downpatrick) as part of its extensive global destination marketing programme and has profiled Christian heritage and the St Patrick Centre in its promotion overseas, particularly in the GB and US markets. In March, ten Italian tour operators specialising in religious tourism visited Downpatrick as part of a visit organised by Tourism Ireland in partnership with NITB.

The story of St. Patrick can act as a job creator and the Chief Executive of NITB has recently taken the lead in organising a workshop with key stakeholders, Tourism Ireland and senior Council Officers with a view to re-focusing the St. Patrick project and exploring development and promotional opportunities further.

Natural Gas Distribution Licence

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the gaps in domestic gas distribution and supply to many urban housing estates, (i) when the natural gas distribution licence is due for renewal; and (ii) in relation to the terms of a new distribution licence, what measures will be put in place to ensure that extensive surveys are carried out by the chosen distributors to analyse consumer interest in domestic gas installation, particularly in urban housing estates.

(AQW 15974/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As with other gas licenses, the licence for distributing gas in the '10 Towns' licensed area outside Greater Belfast, which is held by firmus energy, is an ongoing licence which is not subject to renewal.

Roll out of the gas distribution network in the '10 Towns' licensed area is based on a development plan agreed between firmus energy and the Utility Regulator which concentrates on connecting key gas loads, i.e. primarily businesses but also public sector buildings, social housing and new private housing developments, in order to achieve economic viability. The licence holder may discuss plans for further development of the gas network with the Utility Regulator at any time, including connecting more properties in existing private housing developments. Such plans must be subject to economic appraisal.

InvestNI's 73 Percent Funding for Indigenous Businesses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 14400/11-15, how many indigenous businesses in North Antrim shared the £1.85 million assistance from Invest NI from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

(AQW 15982/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There were 89 indigenous businesses assisted by Invest NI between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012 in the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA). These businesses received 190 offers of financial support throughout that period.

Indigenous Businesses Assisted by Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many indigenous businesses were assisted by Invest NI in the 2011/12 financial year, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 15983/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 shows the number of indigenous businesses assisted by Invest NI between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012 broken down by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA). The number of offers of assistance has also been included, as a business can receive more than one offer per year.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS BUSINESS ASSISTED BY INVEST NI (2011-12)

PCA	No of Businesses	No of Offers
Belfast East	131	246
Belfast North	106	176
Belfast South	208	414
Belfast West	66	93
East Antrim	74	148
East Londonderry	94	131
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	138	278
Foyle	171	234
Lagan Valley	118	229
Mid Ulster	186	411
Newry & Armagh	147	262
North Antrim	89	190
North Down	74	122
South Antrim	104	262
South Down	131	232
Strangford	63	123

PCA	No of Businesses	No of Offers
Upper Bann	126	224
West Tyrone	84	131
Total	2,110	3,906

Notes:

- 1 Figures are provisional and may be subject to change.
- 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.

In addition, Invest NI provided support and guidance through the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) to nearly 2,400 individuals to start their own business. A breakdown of these individuals by PCA is contained in Table 2.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED BY EDP (2011-12)

PCA	No of Offers
Belfast East	101
Belfast North	125
Belfast South	119
Belfast West	121
East Antrim	126
East Londonderry	164
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	175
Foyle	205
Lagan Valley	95
Mid Ulster	175
Newry & Armagh	142
North Antrim	126
North Down	80
South Antrim	99
South Down	142
Strangford	79
Upper Bann	149
West Tyrone	164
Not Yet Located	9
Total	2,396

Notes:

- 1 Figures are provisional and may be subject to change.
- 2 'Not Yet Located' refers to cases where the applicant has not identified a final location for the project.

In direct response to the economic downturn, Invest NI launched its Boosting Business initiative on 14th November 2011. This initiative promotes the range of support and advice available to local businesses through accessible contact points, via telephone, email and social media.

Since June 2012, Invest NI has had a dedicated full time Business Support Team in place to deal with enquiries from businesses across Northern Ireland. Where appropriate, enquirers are referred to relevant teams within Invest NI, other stakeholders such as local Councils, as well as web-based sources of support such as www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk.

From 14th November 2011 to 31st March 2012, through the Boosting Business campaign Invest NI dealt with a total of 6,124 enquiries.

Since 1st July 2012, following software enhancements, Invest NI has been able to break down enquiries by geographic region, and as a result 1,761 enquiries can be analysed by parliamentary constituency area, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: BOOSTING BUSINESS ENQUIRIES BY PCA

PCA	No of Businesses	No Of Cases
Belfast East	110	124
Belfast North	83	101
Belfast South	180	197
Belfast West	66	75
East Antrim	48	51
East Londonderry	63	70
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	86	93
Foyle	57	60
Lagan Valley	105	116
Mid Ulster	95	104
Newry & Armagh	100	114
North Antrim	75	81
North Down	91	99
South Antrim	83	88
South Down	105	114
Strangford	74	83
Upper Bann	114	125
West Tyrone	61	66
Total	1,596	1,761

Gas Storage Project at Islandmagee

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the regulatory environment which needs to be established to enable the gas storage project at Islandmagee to be delivered at no additional cost to gas consumers; (ii) the cost of providing such an environment; and (iii) the potential costs to the consumer of the gas storage project if such an environment was not established.

(AQW 16008/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The regime for economic regulation of a gas storage facility in Northern Ireland will comprise a licence to store gas from the Utility Regulator, a third party access regime for the facility as required by European law, and a tariff regime. The Utility Regulator granted a gas storage licence to Islandmagee Storage Ltd on 17 October 2012 and published its decision on third party access on 5 July 2012. The Utility Regulator advises that it is working jointly with the Commission for Energy Regulation in the Republic of Ireland on the development of the tariff regime to ensure a consistent approach across the island. This work is ongoing and the tariff will be approved by the Utility Regulator.
- (ii) The cost of providing this regulatory environment has been minimal and involves only the internal costs borne by the Utility Regulator in consulting and analysing these issues.
- (iii) It is a legal obligation to have this regulatory environment in place. Without an appropriate regulatory environment, it would seem unlikely that a gas storage project would proceed, hence the issue of consumer costs would not be relevant.

Spare Capacity in Transmission Pipelines

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the current situation in relation to spare capacity in transmission pipelines within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 16009/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Utility Regulator has advised that there is sufficient capacity in gas transmission pipelines in Northern Ireland to accommodate current gas demand and that the situation is monitored on an ongoing basis. Spare capacity is offered for sale in line with European regulations. The situation in relation to spare capacity in gas transmission pipelines in the Republic of Ireland is a matter for their regulatory body, the Commission for Energy Regulation.

Gas Storage Facility at Islandmagee

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the need for a tariff structure to allow the gas storage facility at Islandmagee to compete with facilities in Great Britain.

(AQW 16010/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Utility Regulator has advised that it is working with the Commission for Energy Regulation in the Republic of Ireland on the development of the tariff regime for gas storage to ensure a consistent approach across the island. As in Great Britain, the tariff structure will need to be consistent with European legal requirements, and under European law, the regulatory authorities must consider the impact to trade and competition when developing tariff structures.

Tourist Accommodation During the World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, based on the trend of the last five years and anticipated availability, to outline (i) the spare capacity in tourist accommodation during the World Police and Fire Games 2013; and (ii) the likely additional demand to be generated by the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQW 16011/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The 2013 World Police & Fire Games aims to attract 25,000 visitors from over 70 countries. This will include an estimated 10,000 competitors competing in 57 sports, plus 15,000 friends and family. The key challenge is to ensure that there is enough accommodation capacity to meet the demand.

Work is well advanced in carrying out an analysis of potential capacity to meet this anticipated demand and to manage any constraints and constructive negotiations have been held with the hotel sector.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, based on the trend of the last five years and anticipated availability, to outline (i) the spare capacity of restaurants during the World Police and Fire Games 2013; and (ii) the likely additional demand to be generated by the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQW 16012/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The 2013 World Police & Fire Games aims to attract 25,000 visitors from over 70 countries. This will include an estimated 10,000 competitors competing in 57 sports, plus 15,000 friends and family. The key challenge is to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the demand in all aspects of the visitor experience including food and drink.

Comprehensive information on the capacity of restaurants and/or the likely additional demand to be generated (aside from total numbers expected) is not collected or held.

There are opportunities for the private sector to work together and develop loyalty, offers and “passes”, to maximise the opportunities of large groups of visitors to restaurants, cafes and shops.

The Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau (BVCB) is working with 2013 WPFG Ltd to deliver a quality visitor experience including food and drink.

Proposed Job Losses at DuPont in Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she is aware of any proposed job losses at DuPont in Derry.

(AQW 16017/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Between July and September 2012, 12 contract staff left DuPont as a result of the global economic downturn.

It is expected that around 5 DuPont Maydown employees will be made redundant in the coming 6 - 12 months. The company anticipates this will be achieved through a voluntary process. The posts involved will be machine operatives and general operative roles.

Funding Allocated to InvestNI

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) how much funding in total the Executive, British Government and European Union has allocated to InvestNI for the manufacturing and engineering sector; (ii) how much has been distributed to businesses; (iii) how many businesses benefited; (iv) the location of each business; (v) how each business used the money; and (vi) what proportion of the funding each business allocated to administrative budgets.

(AQW 16023/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's budget is allocated annually by my Department, which receives its funding via the NI Block allocated to the Executive. The funds allocated to Invest NI's Programme budget are derived from various sources including the EU. In each of the last three years the total Programme budget allocated to Invest NI was as shown below:

- 2009 - 2010: £173.4million, of which £20.8million was EU funding
- 2010 – 2011: £168.9million, of which £25.2million was EU funding
- 2011 – 2012: £125.4million, of which £17.9million was EU funding

Invest NI's annual budget allocation is used to meet new and existing financial assistance commitments as well as elements of programme expenditure not directly paid to businesses, such as expenditure for trade activities, business start up, inward investment marketing activities and skills development programmes.

(ii, iii & iv)

During the three years in question, Invest NI committed a total of £369.45million to 5,683 businesses in the manufacturing & services industries across Northern Ireland. This is broken down as:

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2009-10

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Belfast East	34	8.78	67	10.26	101	19.04
Belfast North	24	1.42	54	6.64	78	8.07
Belfast South	26	0.43	113	18.12	139	18.55
Belfast West	25	2.23	18	1.43	43	3.67
East Antrim	33	1.72	24	2.03	57	3.76
East Londonderry	51	1.44	43	0.63	94	2.07
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	81	3.82	57	1.53	138	5.35
Foyle	39	14.79	61	2.43	100	17.22
Lagan Valley	56	6.09	42	1.48	98	7.57
Mid Ulster	118	10.87	59	1.37	177	12.24
Newry And Armagh	77	2.41	57	3.08	134	5.50
North Antrim	50	5.52	33	0.58	83	6.10
North Down	22	1.51	24	1.16	46	2.67
South Antrim	72	4.15	44	1.08	116	5.24
South Down	62	3.63	44	0.71	106	4.35
Strangford	38	2.39	17	0.70	55	3.09
Upper Bann	69	8.72	37	10.02	106	18.74
West Tyrone	54	2.56	47	0.86	101	3.42

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Unknown	2	0.01	1	0.24	3	0.25
Total	933	82.50	842	64.39	1,775	146.89

Notes:

1. In addition 91 Organisations / Businesses were offered over £30million of assistance at which this level of detail is unavailable.
2. Table may not add due to rounding.

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2010-11

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Belfast East	35	6.48	71	14.42	106	20.91
Belfast North	15	0.70	34	3.44	49	4.15
Belfast South	25	0.80	103	10.08	128	10.87
Belfast West	13	0.18	16	0.16	29	0.34
East Antrim	32	2.01	20	0.26	52	2.27
East Londonderry	25	0.91	31	0.46	56	1.37
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	68	2.03	43	0.91	111	2.93
Foyle	32	0.38	47	1.91	79	2.29
Lagan Valley	62	4.71	35	0.43	97	5.14
Mid Ulster	98	2.68	57	0.92	155	3.60
Newry And Armagh	49	1.07	40	5.68	89	6.75
North Antrim	31	5.66	32	0.50	63	6.16
North Down	13	0.24	24	0.25	37	0.49
South Antrim	61	11.18	41	0.58	102	11.76
South Down	45	0.57	39	0.57	84	1.13
Strangford	43	0.51	16	0.15	59	0.66
Upper Bann	48	0.86	39	5.16	87	6.02
West Tyrone	36	0.49	28	0.25	64	0.74

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Unknown			1	0.00	1	0.00
Total	731	41.47	717	46.13	1,448	87.60

Notes:

1. In addition 128 Organisations / Businesses were offered over £16million of assistance at which this level of detail is unavailable.
2. Table may not add due to rounding.

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2011-12

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Belfast East	42	6.49	82	3.35	124	9.83
Belfast North	24	0.83	52	1.83	76	2.66
Belfast South	37	0.91	136	12.77	173	13.68
Belfast West	23	2.08	29	2.12	52	4.19
East Antrim	45	0.78	26	0.57	71	1.36
East Londonderry	41	0.92	46	0.53	87	1.44
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	76	1.88	49	1.00	125	2.88
Foyle	48	2.24	87	1.07	135	3.32
Lagan Valley	59	3.33	48	0.94	107	4.28
Mid Ulster	106	5.52	61	1.30	167	6.81
Newry And Armagh	79	1.75	55	0.80	134	2.55
North Antrim	44	1.96	37	0.53	81	2.49
North Down	28	1.05	32	0.55	60	1.60
South Antrim	53	2.95	49	1.26	102	4.21
South Down	62	1.21	61	1.40	123	2.61
Strangford	39	0.72	17	0.57	56	1.28
Upper Bann	65	0.89	50	5.11	115	6.00
West Tyrone	37	1.00	38	0.53	75	1.52

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £million
Unknown	2	0.03	6	0.20	8	0.23
Total	910	36.54	961	36.42	1,871	72.96

Notes:

1. In addition 370 Organisations / Businesses were offered over £16million of assistance at which this level of detail is unavailable.
2. Table may not add due to rounding.

Of the above, the following was allocated to companies in the engineering sector:

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED WITHIN THE ENGINEERING SECTOR BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2009-10

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s
Belfast East	3	327	2	28	5	355
Belfast North	1	35			1	35
Belfast South	1	4	4	55	5	59
Belfast West	1	4			1	4
East Antrim	4	208			4	208
East Londonderry	7	227	1	85	8	312
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	11	491	4	92	15	583
Foyle	4	83	3	111	7	194
Lagan Valley	4	52	2	129	6	181
Mid Ulster	22	503	9	164	31	668
Newry And Armagh	8	78	5	67	13	145
North Antrim	7	178	2	55	9	233
North Down	3	787			3	787
South Antrim	2	43	2	7	4	51
South Down	12	332			12	332
Strangford	3	66	3	96	6	162
Upper Bann	6	162	3	220	9	382

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s
West Tyrone	5	75	3	72	8	146
Unknown	2	14			2	14
Total	106	3,670	43	1,181	149	4,851

Notes: Table may not add due to rounding.

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED WITHIN THE ENGINEERING SECTOR BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2010-11

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s
Belfast East	4	198	3	284	7	483
Belfast North	1	31	1	0.1	2	31
Belfast South	4	51	3	6	7	57
Belfast West	2	7	1	3	3	9
East Antrim	6	118			6	118
East Londonderry	2	29	4	38	6	67
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	11	213	3	28	14	241
Foyle	4	97	1	33	5	129
Lagan Valley	5	80	1	7	6	87
Mid Ulster	15	221	8	209	23	430
Newry And Armagh	2	56	1	10	3	66
North Antrim	4	39	2	15	6	54
North Down	2	3			2	3
South Antrim	2	1	1	3	3	4
South Down	6	122			6	122
Strangford	1	2	4	56	5	58
Upper Bann	4	57	3	15	7	73
West Tyrone	4	42	2	5	6	47
Total	79	1,368	38	712	117	2,080

Notes: Table may not add due to rounding.

INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED WITHIN THE ENGINEERING SECTOR BY MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2011-12

PCA	Manufacturing		Services		Total	
	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s	No of Businesses	Total Assistance £000s
Belfast East	4	51	3	80	7	131
Belfast North	2	28	1	5	3	33
Belfast South	3	257	6	17	9	274
Belfast West	3	14	1	9	4	24
East Antrim	7	103	2	66	9	169
East Londonderry	7	313	2	3	9	316
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	13	292			13	292
Foyle	4	93	3	9	7	102
Lagan Valley	3	81	3	94	6	176
Mid Ulster	14	817	10	233	24	50
Newry And Armagh	6	222	3	9	9	230
North Antrim	5	319	3	33	8	352
North Down	3	811	1	1	4	811
South Antrim	4	60	2	39	6	100
South Down	4	29			4	29
Strangford	2	30			2	30
Upper Bann	4	48	4	111	8	159
West Tyrone	2	8	2	26	4	34
Unknown			1	0.2	1	0.2
Total	90	3,577	47	736	137	4,312

Notes: Table may not add due to rounding.

Financial assistance is negotiated on the basis of the requirements of each individual project, its use will therefore vary considerably from company to company. Specific targets are agreed as part of each offer of support relevant to the business development activities being undertaken and these will typically include appropriate milestones for employment growth, innovation, R&D and improving competitiveness.

Administrative expenses are not considered eligible for financial support.

Exports from the Manufacturing and Engineering Sector

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) by county, the number of exports from the manufacturing and engineering sector; and (ii) how the exports are distributed geographically.

(AQW 16024/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Exports data are not available at county level. However, there are two sources available for Northern Ireland as a whole.

Regional Trade Statistics are published by HM Revenue and Customs on a quarterly basis and detailed results, including geographic destinations of exports, are publically available to download from <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/statistics/rts/pages/default.aspx>.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publish a Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey each year which provides estimates of the sales and exports generated by all businesses within the manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland. The latest figures available are for 2010/11, with 2011/12 results due for release in early December 2012. The results of this survey are publically available to download from the DETI website: <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-manufacturing-sales-exports.htm>

You should note that various engineering activities are included in, but not limited to, the Manufacturing and Construction sectors, and various services sub-sectors such as Wholesale and Retail, Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities and Administrative and Support Service Activities. Exports information is not available for the majority of these industries, however, the recent integration of the Annual Business Inquiry and the Manufacturing, Sales and Exports Survey means that this information will be available going forward. More details of the integration are available on the DETI website at http://www.detini.gov.uk/notice_to_users_-_integration_of_the_annual_business_inquiry_and_the_manufacturing_sales_and_exports_survey.pdf. In some of the above industries, not all of the activity within these sectors would be classified as engineering, and hence any estimate of activity would likely be an over-estimate.

Exports data are published in terms of value rather than number of exports. Table 1 below summarises the total value and the broad destinations of manufacturing exports from Northern Ireland over the last three years.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND MANUFACTURING EXPORTS (CURRENT PRICES) - 2008/09 – 2010/11

	2008/09 (£million)	2009/10 (£million)	2010/11 (provisional) (£million)
Republic of Ireland	£1,590	£1,459	£1,230
Rest of EU	£1,479	£1,062	£1,228
Rest of World	£2,658	£2,566	£2,599
Total Exports	£5,727	£5,087	£5,057

Source: Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey, NISRA

People Employed by InvestNI

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of people employed by InvestNI, broken down by (i) job title; (ii) grade; and (iii) salary band.

(AQW 16026/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI currently employs 629 full and part time staff members, 612.41 full time equivalent.

The breakdown of employees by (i) job title; (ii) grade; and (iii) salary band is set out in the attached table.

Job Title/Grade	Salary Band		No of Staff
	Min	Max	
Ancillary	<£18,038		1
Administrative Officer and Equivalent	£18,038	£22,180	60
Executive Officer II and Equivalent	£21,392	£23,250	138
Executive Officer I and Equivalent	£23,336	£26,086	28
Staff Officer and Equivalent	£27,115	£30,520	104
Deputy Principal and Equivalent	£34,163	£38,893	184
Deputy Principal (Personal to Holder)	£40,000	£44,000	4
Grade 7 and Equivalent	£44,796	£50,796	85
Grade 6 and Equivalent	£52,127	£62,407	5
Grade 5 and Equivalent	£57,300	£116,000	15
Grade 3 and Equivalent	£81,600	£160,000	4
Grade 1 and Equivalent	£160,000	£205,000	1

Jobs at Forth and Foyle

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 15203/11-15, in relation to the transfer of ten jobs from Foyle to the Ballylumford Power Station, whether she can offer an assurance that the remaining jobs will be secured.

(AQW 16027/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The company has advised Invest NI that the 10 jobs at Ballylumford Power Station have been secured, with employees taking up positions with the Shaw Group Inc. who have been awarded the service contract.

Unfortunately the company has also advised that the outstanding employees, 8 of which are based at the company's Londonderry office and 4 in the company's Scottish office, have been issued notice letters.

Invest NI has offered an advisory service to those employees affected and awaits the company reply.

Applicants for Ministerial Appointments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the success rates of (i) catholic; and (ii) protestant applicants for Ministerial appointments from May 2007 to April 2011.

(AQW 16030/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There were 34 ministerial appointments made to DETI-sponsored Non Departmental Public Bodies in the period May 2007 to April 2011. Of these, 20 appointees (59%) declared community background as Protestant, 11 appointees (32%) as Roman Catholic and 3 appointees (9%) as "Neither".

InvestNI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what land bank InvestNI holds in (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle.

(AQW 16056/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's land is held in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses with an approved business case and immediate property need.

Within the Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle Council areas Invest NI holds a total of 104 acres. Whilst a significant proportion of this has been developed and is occupied by businesses, there remain 36 acres available. The breakdown of these figures by Council area is as follows:

District Council	Landholding (acres)*	Land Availability (acres)*
Ballymena	85.34	29.23
Ballymoney	12.75	4.50
Moyle	6.03	2
Total	104.12	35.73

* Figures correct as at 30 September 2012.

Invest NI employs a long term strategy in respect of its land holding and does not hold land in reserve.

Data on Businesses

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what new types of data her Department has started collecting on businesses in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16092/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information below relates to new surveys of business introduced during the period 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2012.

My Department collects energy efficiency data from energy suppliers and government departments only (i.e. not all businesses) to assist with the UK's compliance with the Energy Efficiency and End-Use Services Directive. The Department started collecting this data from 1 April 2008 and has done so annually since.

DETI and DSD are currently undertaking a scoping exercise on the size and scale of the Third Sector, including an assessment of the potential of community and voluntary organisations to make the transition to the social enterprise model. This exercise involves a survey of around 3,800 known Third Sector organisations across Northern Ireland. The final report is expected by December 2012 and will be used to help shape future policy developments across relevant Executive departments.

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, DETI has collected occupancy statistics from all hotels and a sample of Bed & Breakfasts/Guesthouses and Guest Accommodation on a monthly basis (from July 2010 – June 2011). DETI also collected annual data from self-catering establishments and visitor attractions in 2011. Up until 2010 these same surveys were carried out by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

From 1 April 2011, the responsibility for the collection of data and production of official labour market and economic statistics, including business surveys, transferred from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, an agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel. This transfer mirrored the position in Great Britain where most business surveys and labour market data collection and statistical production have been transferred from the departments with policy responsibilities to the Office for National Statistics.

During the last five years two new statistical business surveys have been introduced by NISRA. The first, Northern Ireland Access to Finance, part of an EU wide survey of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), was introduced in 2010 and is conducted on an ad-hoc basis. Secondly there is the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES); a statutory, sample survey, which provides estimates for the number of employee jobs in all industries except agriculture. This was introduced in 2010 and will be conducted on a biennial basis.

Changes to surveys in existence prior to 1 October 2007 are not included. Such changes may be made to enhance the robustness and coverage of results, for example, by combining surveys or boosting the number of businesses sampled. All such changes are made in consultation with users and are assessed in terms of policy need and the implications for additional burden on businesses.

Commercial Data

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she last reviewed the commercial data collected by her Department.

(AQW 16093/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Commercial data collected by, or required by my Department to fulfil its policy responsibilities is subject to ongoing assessment by my officials and changes to business survey needs communicated to NISRA through both formal and informal mechanisms. In addition, officials within my Department regularly consider the need for any changes to data collection in response to emerging issues.

From the 1st April 2011, the responsibility for the collection of data and production of official labour market and economic statistics including business surveys transferred from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). This transfer mirrored the position in Great Britain where most business surveys and labour market data collection and statistical production have been transferred from the departments with policy responsibilities to the Office for National Statistics. Business surveys affected by this transfer of function were, and remain, collected under the Statistics of Trade and Employment Order 1988 and are subject to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

All commercial data collected through business surveys classified as a National Statistic are subject to an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority and are subject to regular reviews including engagement with users and providers of data.

Statistical surveys by Government are subject to survey control procedures which apply to all statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities where there is potentially a burden, or a perceived burden on those approached to participate. To fulfil the survey control obligation, NISRA published a statistics notice on 4th July 2012 summarising survey activity by all Government Departments in 2010 and the associated compliance costs.

Consultation on the Future Agri-Food Strategy

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that the date for responding to the consultation on the future Agri-Food Strategy has passed, (i) when she plans to publish her initial findings and those of the Agri-Food Strategy Board on the way forward for the agri-food sector; and (ii) for her assessment of the responses received.

(AQW 16094/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB) is currently assessing nearly 40 responses received from stakeholders via a public Call for Evidence issued by the Board in August 2012. The AFSB also established 9 sectoral sub groups, comprising approximately 60 industry representatives, to obtain feedback from the Agri-Food sector on specific challenges and opportunities for each of the main sub sectors.

The information received via the Call for Evidence, and the sectoral sub groups, will be used by the Board to inform the creation of a draft Strategic Plan to develop the Agri-Food sector to 2020 and beyond.

EU Funded Programmes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many EU funded programmes her Department expects to operate in (i) 2013/14; (ii) 2014/15; and (iii) 2015/16.

(AQW 16098/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department currently acts as Managing Authority for the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland 2007–2013.

In addition, DETI acts as the Northern Ireland Accountable Department for tourism, enterprise, energy and telecoms elements of the Interreg IVA Programme (2007-2013) for which the Special European programmes Body (SEUPB) is the Managing Authority.

The EU Structural Funds Programmes for 2014 – 2020 are currently being developed and decisions around the administration of these have yet to be made.

CIDO Innovation Centre in Craigavon

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations her Department or InvestNI has made to potential investors of the CIDO Innovation Centre in Craigavon.

(AQW 16130/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is keen to build on previous FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) success across Northern Ireland and actively works with local stakeholders to maximise investment and employment opportunities in all areas. Invest NI has facilitated nine potential investor visits to the Craigavon District Council area over the previous four years. These investors visited a number of sites including Silverwood Business Park, Magowan West, the Exchange and the Seagoe Industrial Estate.

Invest NI continues to offer a wide range of support to encourage the start up and growth of high technology focused businesses located at the Craigavon Industrial Development Organisation (CIDO) Innovation Centre. Invest NI currently markets the Innovation Centre through its Property Database and through the Northern Ireland Business Info website. The Centre is also profiled in Invest NI's Southern Regional Office sales proposition.

The Regional Start Initiative contract was awarded to Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI) last month. This contract will be delivered through the Local Enterprise Agencies including CIDO.

Growth Loan Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 15722/11-15, in light of the level of public funding allocated to Whiterock Capital Partners, why details of the other bids cannot be disclosed.

(AQW 16177/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have disclosed details of the winning bid for the Growth Loan Fund.

Details of other bids cannot be disclosed. In respect of future fund manager procurements, it could be detrimental to disclose details of other bids since it provides an insight to other bidders and may enable them to bid tactically which could have an adverse impact on value for money and ultimately be detrimental to the public purse. It may even prevent fund managers from bidding. Significant effort goes into making a market of fund managers and disclosure would detract from this effort.

Dangers of Working on Farms

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has given any further consideration to the commissioning of a television advertising campaign, similar to the successful road safety campaigns, to highlight the dangers of working on farms following recent on-farm fatalities.
(AQW 16385/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I can confirm that the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland have commissioned an advertising agency to take forward the development and production of a farm safety advertising campaign. The campaign is scheduled to go live in late February/early March 2013.

Department of the Environment

Chief Executive of Councils

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to list the councils in which the post of Chief Executive is currently (i) filled on a permanent basis; (ii) filled on a temporary basis; and (iii) vacant.
(AQW 14472/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The information requested is provided in the table below.

Councils	Current Chief Executive/s post is (i) filled on a permanent basis; (ii) filled on a temporary basis; or (iii) vacant
Antrim Borough Council	Permanent
Ards Borough Council	Permanent
Armagh City & District Council	Permanent
Ballymena Borough Council	Permanent
Ballymoney Borough Council	Permanent
Banbridge District Council	Permanent
Belfast City Council	Permanent
Carrickfergus Borough Council	Permanent
Castlereagh Borough Council	Permanent
Coleraine Borough Council	Permanent
Cookstown District Council	Temporary
Craigavon Borough Council	Permanent
Derry City Council	Permanent
Down District Council	Temporary
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	Temporary
Fermanagh District Council	Permanent
Larne Borough Council	Permanent
Limavady Borough Council	Permanent
Lisburn City Council	Permanent

Councils	Current Chief Executive/s post is (i) filled on a permanent basis; (ii) filled on a temporary basis; or (iii) vacant
Magherafelt District Council	Permanent
Moyle District Council	Permanent
Newry & Mourne District Council	Permanent
Newtownabbey Borough Council	Permanent
North Down Borough Council	Permanent
Omagh District Council	Permanent
Strabane District Council	Temporary

Staff Charged with Criminal Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether any departmental staff have been charged with criminal offences; and (ii) what is her Department's position regarding staff employment whilst court proceedings are pending.

(AQW 15419/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Prior to March 2008, when Human Resource services within the Department were centralised, it was the practice of the Department and its Agencies to record disciplinary cases on individual personal files. Consequently, no central record was held. As a result it is not possible to obtain information prior to March 2008, without incurring a disproportionate cost.

However, I can confirm that since March 2008, a total of 15 officers have been charged, arrested or convicted of a criminal offence. Arising from these cases, each is considered under the NICS disciplinary policy and subsequent penalties have ranged from formal written warnings to dismissal. In total, 3 officers have been dismissed.

Under the NICS Handbook the onus is on an officer to notify their employing Department, as soon as possible, if they have been arrested, charged or convicted by a Court of a criminal offence (except a traffic offence with a private vehicle for which the penalty has not included imprisonment or disqualification from driving). Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Department.

Upon notification of a charge, arrest or conviction the Department decides on a case by case basis if the officer should remain in their post pending the outcome of the police investigation or the conclusion of court proceedings and whether it is appropriate that formal disciplinary action should commence. I can confirm there have been occasions where, upon notification of a charge of a criminal offence and pending court proceedings, that the Department has deemed it appropriate to suspend an officer from duty until the conclusion of the Department's disciplinary investigation.

Proposed Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast: Planning Application

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment whether a planning application has been received for the proposed Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast.

(AQW 15537/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A planning application was received on the 1st March 2012 for a change of use from office accommodation to medical and health services. The application site was described as 8th floor, 14-16 Great Victoria Street, Belfast and the applicant was R & A Developments, Bangor.

The proposal was advertised in the local press and neighbours were notified in line with normal Departmental procedures. No objections were received and

Belfast City Council was consulted in accordance with the agreed Streamlined Council Consultation arrangements.

The planning application was approved on the 18th May 2012 and the approval permits a medical or health facility to operate from the premises.

Items Disposed of at Auctions

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the items which his Department has disposed of at auctions in (i) 2010/11; and (ii) 2011/12, including the auction value of each item.
(AQW 15572/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has disposed of the following items at auctions in 2010/11 and 2011/12:

Assets	2010/11 Sale Value (£)	2011/12 Sale Value (£)
Vehicle Registration Marks	898,476	860,882
Motorcycles/Mopeds	23,135	1,748
Total	921,611	862,630

In relation to the proceeds from the sale of vehicle registrations, proceeds are returned to the Department for Transport (DfT) as the function of vehicle licensing is an excepted matter under Section 4(1) and Schedule 2(9) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Sale of Registration Marks Regulations 1995 makes provision for the acquisition of a registration mark from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport. Accordingly, registration marks belong to the SoS for Transport and likewise the revenue from their sale.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment which councils charge building control fees for home insulation that is provided under the Warm Homes Scheme; and how much each council charges.
(AQW 15602/11-15)

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

Council	Does the Council charge building control fees for home insulation provided under the Warm Homes Scheme	Amount Council Charges
Antrim Borough Council	Yes	£60
Ards Borough Council	No	-
Armagh City & District Council	Yes	£60
Ballymena Borough Council	No	-
Ballymoney Borough Council	No	-
Banbridge District Council	Yes	£60
Belfast City Council	Yes	£60
Carrickfergus Borough Council	Yes	£60
Castlereagh Borough Council	Yes	£60
Coleraine Borough Council	Yes	£60

Council	Does the Council charge building control fees for home insulation provided under the Warm Homes Scheme	Amount Council Charges
Cookstown District Council	Yes	£60
Craigavon Borough Council	Yes	£60
Derry City Council	Yes	£60
Down District Council	Yes	£60
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	Yes	£60
Fermanagh District Council	Yes	£60
Larne Borough Council	Yes	£60
Limavady Borough Council	No	-
Lisburn City Council	Yes	£60
Magherafelt District Council	Yes	£60
Moyle District Council	No	-
Newry & Mourne District Council	No	-
Newtownabbey Borough Council	No	-
North Down Borough Council	No	-
Omagh District Council	Yes	£60
Strabane District Council	Yes	£60

Pilot Cockle Fishery

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Northern Ireland Environment Agency had any input into the pilot cockle fishery, which was initiated by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Belfast Lough in 2008; and whether the Agency is aware of the findings of the most recent Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute Report on the Belfast Lough Cockle Fishery.

(AQW 15688/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) did not have any input to the 2008 pilot cockle fishery in Belfast Lough.

The Department has just received the Belfast Lough Cockles monitoring report for 2012 prepared by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute. The Department will review this report, evaluate any management implications for the Area of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Area and as appropriate discuss these with DARD.

Proposed Asda Store at Loughside Playing Fields

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the proposed Asda store at Loughside playing fields and given the choice of a notice of opinion instead of an Article 31 public inquiry, to outline the duties of a developer to engage in a meaningful and wide public consultation with the local community when a proposed development affects a whole neighbourhood.

(AQW 15739/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I will consider the need for a public inquiry in relation to this major Article 31 planning application when I have received a recommendation from my officials.

It is the case that at present, there is no statutory obligation for a developer to engage in pre-application community consultation prior to the submission of a planning application. The Department however encourages all applicants to engage positively with those most closely affected by a development proposal at an early stage in the development process, from experience this early dialogue can avoid misunderstanding and avoid delay later in the process. In this regard, in advance of the transfer of planning powers to councils I am bringing forward a Planning Bill that will accelerate the implementation of a number of the reforms in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to be administered by the Department.

The Bill will introduce strengthened community consultation for major planning applications. A statutory requirement will be placed on developers to consult the community, before submitting a major application to the Department, and to take account of their views when drawing up proposals for the major development. It also gives DOE the power to decline to determine an application if this consultation is not carried out to the Department's satisfaction. This provision provides a mechanism for third parties to influence applications for major development early in the process and for developers to improve the acceptability of their proposals.

Giants Causeway World Heritage Site

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how much money has been received, in each of the last five years, from the World Heritage Fund for preserving and promoting the Giants Causeway World Heritage Site.

(AQW 15885/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No funding has been received over the last five years from the World Heritage Fund for preserving and promoting the Giants Causeway World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Fund is available primarily for developing or post-conflict countries to secure threatened properties.

In Britain or the North of Ireland, no site has applied to the World Heritage Fund for assistance. World Heritage Site status does not bring any financial awards from Government or UNESCO, although it can attract indirect funding from other sources such as Lottery funding or from the private sector.

New Retail Development at the Castlebawn Site in Newtownards

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether an assessment was made of the impact on existing shops from the new retail development at the Castlebawn site in Newtownards prior to his decision to grant planning permission; and to outline the process and findings of this assessment.

(AQW 15946/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The proposal involves approximately 20,000 square metres of comparison shopping which will straddle the town centre boundary with one quarter of the retail floorspace within the town centre itself. In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Retailing and Town Centres, my Department assessed the impact of the proposal on Newtownards primary retail core as well as the impact of that part of the proposal which lies outside the town centre on the existing shops within Newtownards town centre.

The assessment concluded that the proposed development will have a retail impact on Newtownards primary retail core, the town centre and Ards Shopping Centre. The process and findings of that assessment are presented as part of the Development Management Report for the planning application. It involved the calculation of the amount of trade which will be diverted from existing centres within the catchment to the comparison retailing provided at the Castlebawn site. However in contrast to the calculated impacts, the proposal has an edge of centre location and could support and enhance Newtownards town centre by promoting linked trips and attracting a new modern retail offer with increasing choice for consumers. These benefits could potentially bring a greater number of shoppers offsetting any initial impacts in the short term.

I fully considered the findings of the retail assessment and balanced those findings against other considerations which were material to the proposal, including the positive and regenerative effects which the proposal will have on listed buildings within Court Street and the restoration of the historic “Bawn Wall” – a Scheduled Monument to include public access.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any powers to prevent local councils from removing the waiver on building control fees on loft insulation installed under the Warm Homes Scheme. **(AQW 15948/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: I have no powers to prevent councils from removing the waiver of building control fees on loft insulation installed under the Warm Homes Scheme. This is a matter for the councils themselves to determine. However, I note that some councils do not ‘charge’ the fee and I welcome this approach. Due to an ongoing dispute on this issue, it would not be appropriate to comment further, save that I liaise with DSD on the issue.

Drivers: Category Tests

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the initiatives he has used to raise public awareness on the necessity for drivers, who wish to tow a trailer in excess of 750KGs, to undertake the B+E and C1+E category tests.

(AQW 15965/11-15)

Mr Attwood: EU directive 2006/126/EC, which comes into force on 19 January 2013, introduces new driving licence rules for drivers of cars and small vehicles (categories B and B+E) who want to tow trailers. The new rules apply to drivers who pass their tests on or after that date. Driving entitlements obtained before that will not be affected.

The rules on what a driver can tow are different depending on when they passed their driving test. A driver who passed their car test before 1 January 1997 is generally entitled to drive a vehicle and trailer combination of up to 8.25 tonnes maximum authorised mass (MAM). A driver who passed the test after 1 January 1997 and who has an ordinary category B (car) licence can drive either:

- a vehicle up to 3,500kg MAM towing a trailer of up to 750kg MAM (with a combined weight of up to 4,250kg in total);
- a trailer over 750kg MAM as long as it is no more than the unladen or ‘kerb’ weight of the towing vehicle (with a combined weight of up to 3,500kg in total).

For anything heavier, the driver will have to take a category B+E driving test.

Drivers who pass their tests to drive cars from 19 January 2013 will be able to tow:

- light trailers weighing no more than 750kg;
- trailers weighing more than 750kg where the combined weight of the towing vehicle (the car/ small vehicle) and the trailer is not more than 3,500kg.

Anyone wishing to tow a trailer that weighs more than 750kg, where the combined weight of the towing vehicle and the trailer is more than 3,500kg, will have to pass a further test to obtain category B+E (car and trailer) entitlement.

After passing the B+E test, the trailer being towed must not be heavier than 3,500kg and the combined weight must not be more than 7,000kg.

To tow a trailer that weighs more than 3,500kg with a car or small vehicle (category B), a driver will need to pass additional tests for category C1+E (medium-sized goods vehicles with trailers).

The table below sets out the current arrangements and the changes being introduced, with the new requirements.

Category	Current Arrangements	3rd Directive	Requirements
B	Car or light van with light trailer of <750kg (trailer can be >750kg if total weight of combination does not exceed 3500kg)	Car or light van with light trailer of <750kg (trailer can be >750kg if total weight of combination does not exceed 3500kg)	Normal car (B) licence
B+E	Car or light van with trailer > 750kg, no vehicle/trailer weight ratio prescribed	Car or light van with heavy trailer, where total weight of combination >4250kg, up to a maximum of 7000kg (Car or light van 3500kg, trailer 3500kg)	Normal car licence plus B +E test

The main change to the current licence entitlement is to the total weight combination of the car and trailer. Currently there is no car/trailer weight ratio prescribed; the only thing that governs this is the legal design weight the vehicle can tow. When the changes are introduced the combination weight will be capped to a maximum of 7,000kg on the driving licence entitlement. The legal design weight will remain, which will mean that in some cases, due to the design of the vehicle, it may not be legally permissible to reach the 7,000kg maximum. New drivers who wish to tow trailers in excess of 3,500kg will have to pass a category C1+E test.

The initiatives used to raise public awareness of the changes to date include:

- in December 2011, the establishment of a stakeholder group made up of those who responded to the consultation document issued in January 2010;
- from 20 April 2012, the publication of information through NI Direct;
- in May 2012, the publication of an article in the newsletter issued to all approved driving and motorcycle instructors;
- in July 2012, the issue of a press release on the forthcoming changes;
- from August 2012, the display of posters at DVA test centres, theory test centres and vehicle licensing offices;
- in September 2012, the issue of a leaflet to every theory test and practical motorcycle test candidate;
- the distribution of leaflets at the Balmoral Show, the North West 200, through the PSNI Bikesafe initiative, and at other motorcycle and car events;
- the distribution of leaflets on request to approved driving and motorcycle instructors.

Further initiatives planned include:

- a new booklet, containing full details of the forthcoming changes, to be issued with all provisional licences from 19 November 2012;
- information seminars for driving and motorcycle instructors in early November 2012;
- a further article in the next edition of the newsletter for approved driving and motorcycle instructors;
- a trade bulletin to be published on the DVA website and to be issued via email to the trade and to other stakeholders including MLAs;
- information bulletins issued via the NI Direct SMS text messaging and Twitter services;
- a “newsroom” article on NI Direct;
- a further press release.

Planning Application for a Single Dwelling near Claudy

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment when he will be able to announce the outcome of the planning application for a single dwelling near Claudy, about which he met the homeowner and the MP for East Londonderry, on the 31 August 2012.

(AQW 16004/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As you are aware this application remains under consideration. I hope to make a decision on it shortly.

Ardglass Railway Station

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to secure and restore Ardglass Railway Station.

(AQW 16018/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Responsibility for the repair, maintenance and upkeep of a listed building rests with the owner. Departmental policy advises that although there is no specific duty on owners to keep their buildings in a good state of repair, it will normally be in their interests to do so. If necessary, the Department will serve an Urgent Works Notice under Article 80 of the Planning (NI) Order, which provides a statutory authority to carry out urgent works for the preservation of a listed building.

The current position in relation to this building is that both planning permission and listed building consent was granted for the conversion of the listed structures and additional new-build units in the vicinity of the listed building on 8 November 2011. The Department's conservation architect visited the site in November 2011, and noted that no works were being carried out. A letter seeking an update on actions to secure and protect the listed building from further damage, and providing information on the NIEA listed buildings grant-aid scheme, was issued to the owner in November 2011. No response was provided by the owner. The NIEA area architect visited the building again in May 2012, and the complex is assessed by NIEA as priority 'A'; i.e. the Department is seeking urgent action to be undertaken by the owner. A schedule of works to secure the building has been prepared, and recent engagement with the owner has been undertaken, seeking the securing of the building from unauthorised access and water ingress.

If works to secure the listed structures are not undertaken by the owners, my Department will issue an Urgent Works Notice to secure and protect this important constituent component of Co. Down's railway heritage.

Planning Application by Bayshore Developments on Loughside Park, North Belfast

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether the proposed planning application by Bayshore Developments on Loughside Park, North Belfast, has been withdrawn following Asda's decision not to proceed with relocating to this site; and, if the application has not been withdrawn, what impact the decision by Asda to withdraw its interest in the proposed relocation to Loughside will have on his decision on whether this proposal should proceed.

(AQW 16019/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The applicant has indicated that they wish the planning application to be determined. My officials are currently reviewing the planning application in light of the change in circumstances prior to submitting a report for my consideration.

Applicants for Ministerial Appointments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the success rates of (i) catholic; and (ii) protestant applicants for Ministerial appointments from May 2007 to April 2011.

(AQW 16028/11-15)

Mr Attwood: During the period May 2007 to April 2011, my predecessors made Ministerial Appointments to the following public bodies:

- The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC);
- The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (LGSC);
- The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC);
- The Historic Buildings Council (HBC); and
- The Historic Monuments Council (HMC).

During this period the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, 11 Assistant Local Government Boundaries Commissioners and the Chair of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group were also appointed by the previous Ministers of the Environment.

There were a total of 214 applications received by the Department to serve on these bodies between May 2007 and April 2011. Of these, the Department made a total of 77 appointments.

A breakdown of the figures by religious background is detailed in the table below.

Background	Number of applicants	Number of Appointments	Percentage of successful applicants
Protestant	90	40	44%
Catholic	73	24	33%
None	51	13	25%

Compensation to Driver and Vehicle Agency Customers

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been paid in compensation to Driver and Vehicle Agency customers in each of the last five years; and why this compensation was paid.

(AQW 16044/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The amounts paid in compensation to Driver & Vehicle Agency customers in each of the last five years, and the reasons why compensation was paid, are as follows.

Year	Amount
2007-08	£36,679.61
2008-09	£32,700.92
2009-10	£45,731.05
2010-11	£28,270.19
2011-12	£66,493.74
Total	£209,875.51

Amount Paid (£)	Reason(s)
2007-08	
14,175.14	7 payments – 6 for damage caused during vehicle tests and 1 for damage caused during a vehicle licensing inspection
12,302.31	471 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled because no examiner was available eg due to illness

Amount Paid (£)	Reason(s)
2007-08	
2,017.25	118 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to equipment failure eg faulty brake tester, burst hydraulic hose, server failure
1,683.81	102 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to the unavailability of staff eg because of illness
2,593.44	Multiple payments - compensation in relation to administrative errors eg payment for replacement number plates, travel costs, bank charges, postage, etc
3,907.66	Multiple payments – compensation in relation to loss of documents eg passports, identity documents, marriage certificates, insurance certificates
Total Paid in 2007-08 - £36,679.61	
2008-09	
4,250.00	3 payments - litigation regarding personal injury
4,909.50	17 payments – damage caused during vehicle tests
2,593.44	Multiple payments - compensation in relation to administrative errors eg in relation to replacement number plates, travel costs, bank charges, postage, etc
1,705.55	Multiple payments – compensation in relation to loss of documents eg passports, identity documents, marriage certificates, insurance certificates
10,564.35	113 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled because no examiner available to conduct the test eg due to illness
7,492.34	460 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to equipment failure eg faulty brake tester, power failure, vehicle lift inoperable, server failure
1,185.74	77 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to the unavailability of staff eg illness
Total Paid in 2008-09 - £32,700.92	
2009-10	
10,088.32	5 payments – litigation regarding personal injury, loss of vehicle value, damage to motorcycle, and car hire
15,299.66	25 payments – damage caused to vehicles during vehicle tests
2,527.16	Multiple payments - compensation in relation to administrative errors eg payments for replacement number plates, travel costs, bank charges, postage, etc
2,000.00	1 payment – loss of vehicle value due to error in first registration date
6,119.40	157 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled because no examiner was available eg due to illness
8,116.88	603 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to equipment failure eg faulty brake tester, burst hydraulic hose, server failure

Amount Paid (£)	Reason(s)
2009-10	
1,579.63	103 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to the unavailability of staff eg due to illness
Total Paid in 2009-10 - £45,731.05	
2010-11	
2,939.43	2 payments – litigation regarding personal injury and loss of earnings
9,706.90	29 payments - damage caused to vehicles during vehicle tests
2,535.06	Multiple payments - compensation in relation to administrative errors eg replacement number plates, travel costs, bank charges, postage, replacement documents, medical forms, loss of earnings, etc
1023.75	Multiple payments – compensation in relation to loss of documents eg passports, identity documents, marriage certificates, insurance certificates
410.00	11 payments – compensation in relation to cancelled driving tests due to motorcycle failure
1,812.00	59 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled because no examiner was available eg due to illness
9,064.05	491 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to equipment failure eg faulty brake tester, server failure, faulty vehicle lift
779.00	47 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to the unavailability of staff eg as a result of illness
Total Paid in 2010-11 - £28,270.19	
2011-12	
43,750.00	3 payments – litigation regarding personal injury
12,740.18	35 payments - damage caused to vehicles during vehicle tests
3,466.46	Multiple payments - compensation in relation to administrative errors eg replacement number plates, travel costs, bank charges, postage, errors with test bookings, etc
467.33	Multiple payments – compensation in relation to loss of documents eg passports, identity documents, marriage certificates, insurance certificates
1,300.00	1 payment – compensation paid as vehicle crushed in error
336.96	13 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled due to errors made during booking
138.00	6 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests abandoned eg due to severe traffic congestion
3,349.81	116 payments – compensation in relation to driving tests cancelled because no examiner was available eg due to illness
929.00	47 payments – compensation in relation to vehicle tests cancelled due to equipment failure eg faulty brake tester, burst heating pipes, failure of exit door

Amount Paid (£)	Reason(s)
2010-11	
16.00	1 payment – compensation in relation to a vehicle test cancelled due to the unavailability of staff
Total Paid in 2011-12 - £66,493.74	

It should be noted that the amounts of compensation paid are recoverable in some cases eg from the Post Office, in relation to payments for items lost in the post, or from the contractor responsible for providing and maintaining vehicle testing equipment, in respect of tests cancelled due to equipment failure.

The amounts paid in compensation are monitored very closely by the Agency, and some success has been achieved in driving the levels of compensation down in some categories eg in relation to tests cancelled. However, efforts to minimise compensation payments are continuing.

I have raised a series of questions in relation to the nature of the matters listed above.

Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the particulars supplied in the planning application relating to the Marie Stopes clinic in Belfast.

(AQW 16060/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The agent completed the particulars specified in the prescribed P1 Application Form for planning permission. Questions completed by the agent on the P1 Application Form included the applicant's details - R&A Developments Ltd; and the agent's details - Like Architects. Information was also provided about the application site. The full postal address was given as 8th Floor, 14-16 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, the area of the site in hectares - 0.0324ha and the present use of the building was given as office accommodation.

Particulars supplied about the development proposal included the type of application - full permission and details of the proposed development were described as change of use from office accommodation class B1(a) to class D1(a) medical and health services.

The agent confirmed on the P1 Form that the proposal involved a change of use and that it would make use of an existing unaltered access to a public road. . Further questions on the P1 Form confirmed that the agent was not aware of the existence on the site of any protected wildlife species and that a public right of way was not within or adjoining the site. The agent confirmed on the P1 Form that the proposal would source mains water supply and that foul sewage would be disposed with mains. The agent detailed floorspace figures for the existing and proposal use and the average number of persons attending the premises daily.

The agent signed Planning Certificate A on the prescribed Notice under Article 22 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 which confirmed that the applicant owned the application site and confirmed that the applicant did not own or control any adjoining land. The postal addresses of occupied buildings on neighbouring land were provided as required for the purposes of neighbour notification and a fee of £1,464.00 accompanied the application.

The site was clearly indicated outlined in red on the site location plan supplied. Other plans which detailed the existing and proposed layout of the 8th floor of the building at the appropriate scale were submitted.

The particular details which were received met the statutory requirements of planning legislation and the guidance for applicants.

Vintage or Old Vehicles: MOT Certificates

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment what measures are in place to ensure that vintage or old vehicles are not driven on public roads without an MOT certificate.

(AQW 16072/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Vintage vehicles or cars over four years old are required to be tested and licensed annually under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 before they can be legally driven on a road or in a public place.

The Driver & Vehicle Agency actively promotes compliance by issuing MOT and vehicle licence reminder letters each year, and a valid MOT certificate must be available before a vehicle can be licensed.

MOT certificates and licence discs also have to be displayed on vehicle windscreens, and failure to display them is an offence. These items serve as visual reminders to motorists of the relevant requirements, and their absence can trigger enforcement action such as wheelclamping.

The Agency also utilises roadside checks and Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to identify non-compliant vehicles.

Legislation Relating to Changes in the Taxi Industry

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the timescale for the introduction of any planned legislation relating to changes in the taxi industry.

(AQW 16084/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I plan to introduce a new single tier taxi licensing, new taxi vehicle regulations and taxi fare regulations during 2013. While I am committed to introducing the changes in a timely manner, the timing of each change will be subject to the legislative scrutiny progress. In bringing forward the changes I am mindful of the financial impact of taxi operator licensing on the taxi industry and will structure subsequent changes so that taxi business can adjust their operations so that they comply in a timely manner.

The new Taxi Driver Testing regime and a new specification for wheelchair accessible vehicles will follow in 2014.

In delivering the changes in this controlled manner I am confident that my Department can deliver a new modern taxi licensing framework that improves customer confidence and is affordable.

Future of MOT Centres

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on plans for the future of the MoT centres.
(AQW 16126/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has initiated a strategic review of options for the future delivery of vehicle testing services in Northern Ireland. A Strategic Outline Case, which sets out a number of high level delivery models, has been developed and approved and work is currently ongoing to more fully explore those options and identify the most appropriate way forward for the delivery of the service into the future. This has involved research into vehicle testing models operating in Britain, Ireland and other European countries.

At this stage in the Review a broad range of delivery solutions is still being evaluated, and it is not yet possible to assess the impact of any emergent preferred option on the existing test centres. However, further details on the Review and its findings will be provided to the Environment Committee as progress is made.

Improving Waste Disposal

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in improving waste disposal, over the last three years.

(AQW 16128/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In Northern Ireland, the Department, councils and the community & voluntary sector have all been actively encouraging more waste prevention, reuse and recycling which reduces the amount of our waste that has to be disposed of to landfill.

Over the past three years my Department's Rethink Waste Campaign has played a key role in encouraging behavioural change by promoting initiatives to increase waste prevention, re-use and recycling. Under the Rethink Waste Funds, grants in excess of £7 million have been awarded to councils to cover the capital costs of improving or extending their existing waste collection, re-use and recycling infrastructure. Revenue grants in excess of £1.7 million have also been made available to community & voluntary bodies, and others, to assist with the costs of projects targeting re-use and recycling and reducing the amount of waste to landfill.

The percentage of all waste recycled/composted by Councils in Northern Ireland has increased from 31.6% to 35.5% over the most recent three year period for validated data (2008/09 to 2010/11). Provisional data for 2011/12 shows an increase in recycling to 38.3%. I am also on record as stating a 60% recycling target by 2020 is achievable. Additionally, in the three years from 2008/09 to 2010/11 Councils collectively reduced the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill by 124,353 tonnes, a reduction of some 26%. I regard all of these results as indications that we are continuing to improve our performance in relation to waste disposal.

Climate Change Unit

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the results of the assessment of the Climate Change Unit in his Department has made of the impact of climate change on Northern Ireland over the last three years.

(AQW 16129/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The full impact of global climate change will take place incrementally over a long period of time. The latest UK Climate projections indicate that by the 2050s Northern Ireland will experience an increase in winter and summer mean temperatures of approximately 2°C, a change in winter mean precipitation of approximately +9%, and a change in summer mean precipitation of approximately -12% (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/protect_the_environment/climate_change/uk_climate_change_projections-3.htm).

There will also be an increased frequency of extreme weather occurrences such as heatwaves, dry spells, heavy rain and flooding. We are already vulnerable to, and beginning to experience a change in our climate e.g. a recent increase in localised flash flooding throughout Northern Ireland.

Combating climate change is the collective responsibility of all Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive. I chair the Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change (CDWG CC) which provides annual reassurance to the Executive that appropriate progress is being made across all Departments towards the Programme for Government target for greenhouse gas emission reductions and also in our preparations to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In terms of mitigation over the last three years my Department's Climate Change Unit has:

- provided support to allow the CDWG CC to produce a Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Action Plan (February 2011 (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_action_plan_on_greenhouse_gas_emissions_reductions.pdf) and its first Annual Report (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_greenhouse_gas_emissions_reduction_action_plan_1st_annual_progress_report.pdf) (presented to the Executive in May 2012);
- facilitated the implementation of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme;

- commissioned the Committee on Climate Change to produce a report on the appropriateness of Northern Ireland climate change legislation (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/the_appropriateness_of_a_northern_ireland_climate_change_act.pdf);
- monitored greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland through inventories (http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/reports/cat07/1208241153_DA_GHGI_report_2010_Issue1_r.pdf); and
- provided input to EU and UK policies e.g. the EU Emissions Trading System;

In terms of adaptation to climate change over the last three years my Department's Climate Change Unit has:

- overseen the launch of the latest UK Climate Change Projections (<http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>) in 2009 and associated training and guidance; worked with DEFRA and the Northern Ireland departments to develop UK and Northern Ireland Climate Change Risk Assessments. The reports, published in January 2012, identified and assessed the key climate change risks and opportunities at UK and Northern Ireland (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/climate_change_risk_assessment_ni_2012.pdf) level.
- liaised with Northern Ireland departments to assist development of an Adaptation Programme which will set out government policies and actions needed to address the climate change challenges that face us. The adaptation programme will be presented to the Assembly in 2013; and
- allocated additional resources to widen the understanding and knowledge of the impacts of climate change and the adaptation actions necessary to deal with it.

I believe that the ambition for government in the North should be to become a world leader in carbon reduction with the economic prospects that this provides. In our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the risks and opportunities provided by our changing climate we must ensure that we are at the forefront of new ideas and new technology. We need to actively encourage innovation in identifying new ways to ensure a clean and green future for everyone as we make the transition towards a low carbon sustainable economy.

Grievance Cases and Whistleblowing Complaints

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) grievance cases have been taken; and (ii) whistleblowing complaints have been made, against (a) his Department; and (b) its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last five years; and at what cost to the public purse.

(AQW 16155/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) From 1 November 2007 to 29 October 2012 a total of 87 grievance cases have been lodged against the Department by members of staff. No grievance cases have been lodged against the Departments 5 Arms Lengths Bodies. The table below provides a break down of the number of cases lodged per financial year and has been provided by HRConnect. HRConnect has the responsibility for the provision of HR services following centralisation of Departmental HR Services in March 2008.

Financial Year	No of Grievance cases in DOE
2007/2008*(see note 1)	2
2008/2009	27
2009/2010	11
2010/2011	15
2011/2012	13

Financial Year	No of Grievance cases in DOE
2012/2013*(see note 2)	19
Grand Total	87

Note

- 1 No central record in DOE was held prior to 1 November 2007.
- 2 2012/2013 provides the number of cases received up to 29 October 2012.
- (ii) HR services within the Departments were centralised in March 2008. It is therefore possible for the Department to confirm that from March 2008, 6 instances of reports to the Department have been treated as whistleblowing allegations and have been/are being dealt under the Department's Whistleblowing Policy and under the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998. No allegations have involved the Departments 5 Arms Length Bodies.

The Department does not hold information in relation to costs.

Senior Enforcement Staff Employed in the Planning Office in Downpatrick

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many senior enforcement staff employed in the planning office in Downpatrick have been suspended or dismissed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16166/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No senior enforcement staff employed in the Area Planning Office in Downpatrick have been suspended or dismissed in the last three years. However, within the last three years, one planning officer who worked in the enforcement section in Rathkeltair House, Downpatrick, was suspended and was subsequently dismissed from the NICS in September 2012.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Department of Education sought guidance on the preparation or commissioning of a business case on the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; and when such guidance was sought and provided.

(AQW 15252/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The Department of Education submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) to my Department, and this was approved after discussions between the two departments in 2008. This gave approval for the Department of Education to proceed to the development and submission to DFP of a Full Business Case (FBC) prior to the establishment of the ESA.

I understand delays with progressing the legislation and the need to take on board changes to the Body's remit would have affected the timing of any further submission. In December last year I re-stated the DFP position on the need for an FBC to the Minister for Education and our officials met earlier this year to discuss the requirements for this exercise. The FBC has yet to be submitted to my Department.

Residential Management Companies

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what progress has been made in ensuring that there is effective legislation in place to govern residential management companies.

(AQW 15600/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Law Commission has, for some time, been looking at the law relating to the use of multi-unit development and their management. The Commission has undertaken to

publish a consultation paper by 15th November 2012 and that consultation will run for 10 weeks, until 21 January 2013. The Commission will then consider the representations it receives and publish its final report by 1 May 2013. That final report and recommendations will need to be critically assessed and we would have to then draft and consult on any required legislation and secure a legislation slot. I am concerned about whether we will be able to do all this in what remains of the current mandate. However I will do all in my power to expedite the legislative process and to ensure that effective and accessible solutions are made available.

Legislation Governing Management Companies

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how often the group established to examine legislation governing management companies has met; (ii) when the next scheduled meeting is due to take place; and (iii) when the group last met.

(AQW 15601/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Law Commission has, for some time, been looking at the law relating to the use of multi-unit development and their management. The Commission has undertaken to publish a consultation paper by 15th November 2012 and that consultation will run for 10 weeks, until 21 January 2013. The Commission will then consider the representations it receives and publish its final report by 1 May 2013. That final report and recommendations will need to be critically assessed and we would have to then draft and consult on any required legislation and secure a legislation slot. I am concerned about whether we will be able to do all this in what remains of the current mandate. However I will do all in my power to expedite the legislative process and to ensure that effective and accessible solutions are made available.

Funding for Siege Heroes Museum

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) when the date for the event to announce funding for Siege Heroes Museum was agreed; (ii) who has been invited; and (iii) how and when an invitation list was drawn up.

(AQW 15893/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), PEACE III Managing Authority, advise that the date for the launch of the project was agreed in late August / early September. All planning for the event was conducted by a working group led by the Apprentice Boys of Derry. The group included representatives from Derry City Council (the project's lead partner), the General Committee for the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Strategic Investment Board and SEUPB.

The invitation list for the event, drawn up in September, included representatives of all project funders, including the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (represented by Minister Foster), the Department for Social Development, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Republic of Ireland's Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and SEUPB. The invitation list is attached.

Name	Association
Minister Nelson McCausland	DSD
Minister Arlene Foster	DETI
Minister Carál Ní Chuilín	DCAL
Minister Phil Hogan TD	Department of the Environment Community and Local Government
Mark Durkan MP	
Gregory Campbell MP	
Diane Dodds MEP	
Martina Anderson MEP	

Name	Association
Jim Nicholson MEP	
Brett Hannam	SIB
Pat Colgan	SEUPB
Alan Clarke	NITB
Brenda Burns	SIB
Wesley Emmett	Derry City Council
John Kelpie	Derry City Council
Francis Morrison	Derry City Council
Sharon O' Connor	Derry City Council
Kevin Campbell	Mayor Derry City Council
Willy Hay	ABoD
Billy Moore (Trustee 1)	ABoD
Ivan Taylor (Trustee 2)	ABoD
Philip Gillen (Trustee 3)	ABoD
William Stewart (Trustee 4)	ABoD
Jim Brownlee	Governor of the Apprentice Boys of Derry
Rev David Latimer	First Derry Presbyterian
William Morton	St Columb's
Adrian Kerr	Museum of Free Derry
Richard Doherty	Historian
Dr Brian Scott	Archaeologist
Aideen Mc Ginley	ILEX
Caoimhin Corrigan	ILEX
Pauline Ross	Playhouse
Martin Melarky	City of Culture
Brenda Mc Ginn	Culture Programme
Stella Mc Dermott	HLF
Mark Lusby	City Walls Heritage Project
Eamonn Deane	City Walls Heritage Project
Craig Mc Guicken	Museum Services DCC
Graeme Farrow	City of Culture
Tony Monaghan	Derry City Council
Natalie O' Rourke	NIEA
Manus Deery	NIEA

Name	Association
Edward Montgomery	The Honourable The Irish Society
Mr Heafley	Foyle and Londonderry College
Laura Cooke	Immaculate Conception
Mrs Canning	Oakgrove Integrated College
Eleanor Mc Daid	St Cecilia's College
Finvola Mc Caul	St Joseph's Boys School
Marion Mc Clintock	St Mary's College
Mr Condren	St Peter's High School
Jareth Parlour	Thornhill College
Leorna O Donnell	St Brigid's College
Claire Bell	Lisneal College
Mrs Mc Hugh	St Patrick's and St Brigids
Mr Meenan	St Columbs College
Dr Gormely	Lumen Christi College
Professor Ian Thatcher	Magee College
James Kerr	Verbal Arts
Sarah Lapsley	Verbal Arts
Maoliosa Boyle	The Void
Brenda Hegarty	SEUPB
Lorraine McCourt	SEUPB
Garret McGinty	SEUPB
John McCandless	SEUPB
Martin Bradley MBE	Culture Company
Alwyn Ferguson	Treasurer of General Committee ABoD
David Mc Keegan	Lay Chaplin – General Committee ABoD
Craig Jefferson	ABoD
Rev Storey	Minister of St Augustine's
Niall-McCaughan	The Playhouse
Bill Irwin	DUP Waterside Office
John Smith	Chairman of the Social Club
Gordon Porter	Secretary of the Social Club
	City Grandmaster of the Orange Order
Sue Divin	Good Relations Department DCC
Paul Jordan	Good Relations Council

Name	Association
David Hoey	
Barry Mulholland	Western Education Board (rep)
John Edmund	
Fergal Rafferty	Manager of Foyleside Shopping Centre
	Manager of Richmond Shopping Centre
Luke Hasson	Austins
Garvan O'Doherty	Garvan O'Doherty Group
Jim Roddy	City Centre Manager
Martin Mc Crossan	City Centre Trade Association
Maurice Devenney	
Sinead McLaughlin	
Mary Blake	
Odhran Dunne	
Shaun Henry	Director of Managing Authority, SEUPB
Aisling Heffernan	The Office of Public Works
Eugene Keane	
Fergal Martin	
Frank Flood	
Eamonn Rossi	
Noel Moore	
Andrew McCartney	McCartney Accountants
Shona McCarthy	City of Culture
Mary McNamee	City of Culture
Martin Graham	NITB
Oliver McKeown	NITB
Andrew Johnston	DSD
Glenn Hampton	DSD
Tony Mc Kibben	DSD
Martin Turner	SIB

Report on the Inquiry into Public Procurement in Northern Ireland

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what actions he has taken since the publication of the four recommendations on collaborative procurement and efficiencies, contained within the Report on the Inquiry into Public Procurement in Northern Ireland undertaken by the Committee for Finance and Personnel.

(AQW 15894/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in conjunction with Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) reviewed the four recommendations on collaborative procurement and efficiency and have agreed a set of actions with the Procurement Board. These actions have included:

The issue of revised guidance for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The guidance includes encouraging greater collaboration through the establishment of consortia.

The establishment of a Business Industry Forum for Northern Ireland(BIFNI) which includes representatives from the business and social economy sectors. The Forum has met on seven occasions.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CPD and the UK Government Procurement Service. This sets out a framework within which relationships between each jurisdiction will be conducted. The MoU supports co-operative working including joint working on collaborative contracts where appropriate.

CPD has established a Collaborative Contracts Group, comprising Heads of Procurement from the Supplies and Services CoPEs to oversee future collaborative competitions. This Group has agreed a schedule of all potential pan-government contracts and is putting in place arrangements to implement these contracts.

House Price Index

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has any plans to provide information relating to the House Price Index on either the Land and Property Services or Land Registry websites.
(AQW 15905/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Land & Property Services Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index was published for the first time on 23 May 2012. The statistics report and the accompanying data are already published on both the Land & Property Services website <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/about-lps/publications/statistics-and-research-publications.htm> and the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency website <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/HousePriceIndex/hpi.html>

This quarterly Index will next be published on 21 November and available on the website from 9:30am.

House Price Index

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the Housing Price Index is not included on the Land and Property Services or the Land Registry websites, as is the case on the equivalent websites in England and Wales.
(AQW 15906/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Land & Property Services Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index was published for the first time on 23 May 2012. The statistics report and the accompanying data are already published on both the Land & Property Services website <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/about-lps/publications/statistics-and-research-publications.htm> and the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency website <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/HousePriceIndex/hpi.html>

This quarterly Index will next be published on 21 November and available on the website from 9:30am.

People Available for Employment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of people available for employment in each of the last 24 months; and (ii) the number of people available for employment (a) 3 years ago; (b) four years ago; and (c) five years ago.
(AQW 15933/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Estimates of those available for employment are defined as those who are economically active and are sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). The economically active comprises of people in employment or those who are unemployed. The most recent LFS data available,

for the period June – August 2012, estimate that there were 868,000 people, aged 16 and over, described as being economically active.

The design of the LFS sample is such that data published are for rolling three month average time periods and, therefore, comparisons over time should only be made within series of non-overlapping quarters.

The requested breakdown of those available for employment is shown in Table 1

TABLE 1 - NUMBERS AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT, NORTHERN IRELAND

Quarter	Available for Employment (000's)
Jun-Aug 2007	807
Jun-Aug 2008	825
Jun-Aug 2009	806
Jun-Aug 2010	837
Sep-Nov 2010	833
Dec-Feb 2011	842
Mar-May 2011	863
Jun-Aug 2011	867
Sep-Nov 2011	862
Dec-Feb 2012	859
Mar-May 2012	862
Jun-Aug 2012	868

Number of People Employed

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people employed (i) in each of the last 24 months; (ii) three years ago; (iii) four years ago; and (iv) five years ago.
(AQW 15934/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of those in employment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). The most recent LFS data available, for the period June – August 2012, estimate that there were 796,000 people, aged 16 and over, in employment.

The design of the LFS sample is such that data published are for rolling three month average time periods and, therefore, comparisons over time should only be made within series of non-overlapping quarters.

The requested breakdown of those in employment is shown in Table 1 overleaf.

TABLE 1 – TOTAL IN EMPLOYMENT, NORTHERN IRELAND

Quarter	Total in Employment (000's)
Jun-Aug 2007	777
Jun-Aug 2008	790
Jun-Aug 2009	750
Jun-Aug 2010	779
Sep-Nov 2010	767

Quarter	Total in Employment (000's)
Dec-Feb 2011	781
Mar-May 2011	802
Jun-Aug 2011	801
Sep-Nov 2011	804
Dec-Feb 2012	802
Mar-May 2012	802
Jun-Aug 2012	796

In-House Legal Adviser for the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether his Department approved the recent search to recruit an in-house Legal Adviser by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation; and what is the salary band for this position.

(AQW 15999/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As NIAUR has been granted delegated authority in relation to pay related matters, DFP has no responsibility for approving the detailed numbers and terms and conditions of service of NIAUR staff. The Utility Regulator has the authority to set its own pay, terms and conditions of employment.

Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, whose funding is approved by his Department, is recruiting a full-time permanent in-house Legal Adviser instead of using the facilities of the Departmental Solicitor's Office

(AQW 16000/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As NIAUR has been granted delegated authority in relation to pay related matters, DFP has no responsibility for approving the detailed numbers and terms and conditions of service of NIAUR staff. The Utility Regulator has the authority to set its own pay, terms and conditions of employment.

Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions (i) he has had; and (ii) intends to have, with stakeholders in relation to the future of the Rates Relief Scheme.

(AQW 16015/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Welfare Reform, and its implications for the rating system, is something that has been and is being actively considered by the Executive Subgroup on Welfare Reform.

The Executive agreed in May of this year to preserve entitlement to the current level of rates support for up to two years, following the change in funding arrangements which will occur in April 2013. The Press Release can be accessed at the link below:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-dfp/news-releases-dfp-june-2012/news-dfp-010612-finance-minister-sammy.htm>

This holding operation will soon become impracticable and unaffordable and therefore the Executive will have to consider alternatives. Officials in the Department for Social Development are looking at long term solutions that look at a range of non social security benefits that will sit outside Universal Credit and over which NI has discretion in spending. This may present an opportunity to better target vulnerable households and make better use of limited resources.

In the meantime, however, I believe we will need to have a new rates support scheme ready when Universal Credit is established. Accordingly, I will be asking the Executive to agree to a preliminary consultation in the New Year.

This will not only present some challenging issues and high level choices to be made, it will also afford stakeholders the opportunity to come forward with evidence. The process will help inform policy direction for a scheme that effectively supports households least able to pay domestic rates. A further public consultation will occur when detailed options are sufficiently developed and impacts assessed.

Incidentally, I note that you refer to rates relief in your question. I appreciate that you are referring to the rates element of Housing Benefit, better known as rate rebate. There is a separate low income rate relief that acts as an enhancement to rate rebate and its future will also have to be reviewed alongside the main rates support scheme.

Non-Identifiable Expenditure

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the benefits of the locally attached non-identifiable expenditure.

(AQW 16022/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Non-identifiable expenditure comprises spending on areas such as defence, debt interest and international services and is incurred by the Government on behalf of the UK as a whole. While the specific benefits of this expenditure for individual regions cannot be distinguished, it is considered to benefit the UK as a whole in terms of the services that are funded, for example in terms national security in the case of defence spending or the servicing of the national debt which has been incurred by the country as a whole.

Applicants for Ministerial Appointments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the success rates of (i) catholic; and (ii) protestant applicants for Ministerial appointments from May 2007 to April 2011.

(AQW 16031/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I make appointments to 5 bodies as follows:

- Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR)
- Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee (NIBRAC)
- Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC)
- Lay Observer for Northern Ireland
- Public Service Commission (PSC)

Information on the number of appointments and the community background the successful applicants belong to can be found for all bodies except PSC in the Public Bodies and Public Appointments Annual Report for the appropriate years on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) website.

There were no Ministerial appointments to the PSC between May 2007 and April 2011.

Economically Inactive People

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people considered economically inactive are engaged in some type of training.

(AQW 16073/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The latest available information from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (for the period April – June 2012) estimated that 23,000 people considered economically inactive took part in job related training or education in the previous three months.

Economically Inactive

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people considered economically inactive are students or involved in some type of education programme.

(AQW 16074/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The latest available information from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (for the period April – June 2012) estimated that 101,000 people considered economically inactive were classified as students, either in a full-time (88,000) or a part-time (13,000) capacity.

Of those economically inactive and not classified as being a student, a further 5,000 people took part in job related training or education in the previous three months.

House Prices

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether a legislative change would be required to enable the prices at which houses are sold to be published; and whether such a change has been considered.

(AQW 16091/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Within the Land Registration system there is no requirement to include the purchase price of a property within the Memorial document lodged in the Registry of Deeds.

Within the Land Registry there is a requirement to include the purchase price in the transfer document but this figure relates to all of the lands transferring and therefore may include a house and land, land alone or commercial premises and land. There is no legislative requirement to provide information on the type of property which is transferring or indeed to give a property address. Therefore it is difficult to identify from the Register prices which relate solely to dwelling houses.

The purchase price may also not reflect the full market value if, for instance, the transfer is an inter family transaction.

It is proposed to review the Land Registration Act (NI) 1970 following the implementation of the Land Law Reform Legislation and the requirement to provide further details of house prices can be considered at that time.

However, Land & Property Services already publishes the Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index (NIRPPI) created from details of individual property sales provided by HMRC. LPS is not permitted to pass the individual level data to anyone outside LPS.

The NIRPPI can be accessed on the LPS website <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/about-lps/publications/statistics-and-research-publications.htm> and on the NISRA website <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/HousePriceIndex/hpi.html>

Savings Delivery Plan Monitoring Exercise

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on each Department's compliance in the recent Savings Delivery Plan monitoring exercise.

(AQW 16100/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My officials have recently commissioned an exercise seeking an update from departments on implementation of their Savings Delivery Plans as at 30 September 2012. This information, collated every six months, is then provided to both the Executive and the Committee for Finance and Personnel for information.

In response to this most recent request, returns have been received from eight departments. It is disappointing that the remaining departments have failed to meet the deadline set for this exercise. However I am anticipating responses from all departments with the notable exception of the Department of Education.

Disappointingly, the Education Minister wrote to me advising that his department would not be participating in the Savings Delivery Plan monitoring exercises. As a consequence, in a time of constrained budget allocations it remains difficult for the Executive, Assembly and citizens of Northern Ireland to gain assurance that the Education Minister is making every effort to deliver service efficiencies and thereby protect the quantum of resources available for frontline educational services.

Sale of UDA and UVF Music CDs at the Ulster Covenant Event

Mr McKay asked Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 14881/11-15, whether his Department has contacted the organisers of the Ulster Covenant event in the Stormont Estate after it was revealed that UDA and UVF music CDs were on sale at the event, which were not historic and commemorative goods associated with the Ulster Covenant.

(AQW 16103/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No contact was made with the organisers following the event.

INTERREG IV Programmes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the total spend under INTERREG IV Programmes on cross-border groups in each year since the programme began.

(AQW 16109/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Spend by each of the cross border groups since the inception of the INTERREG IVA Programme is as outlined below:-

Cross Border Group	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total 2007-13
	Total Spend (£)*	Total Spend (£)	Total Spend (£)	Total Spend (£)	Total Spend (£)	Spend To Date (£)	Spend to Date (£)
COMET	-	8,330	59,811	87,722	90,444	13,021	259,328
EBR	-	-	307,487	394,092	619,205	144,678	1,465,462
ICBAN	-	7,732	321,646	400,558	820,337	56,622	1,606,895
NWRBCBG	-	-	137,593	167,415	314,503	54,331	673,842
NEP	-	-	57,007	80,565	286,097	18,824	442,493
TOTAL	-	16,062	883,544	1,130,352	2,130,586	287,476	4,448,020

* An exchange rate of £1=€1.25 has been used where necessary

Inquiry into Public Procurement

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why he has not accepted the recommendation in the Committee for Finance and Personnel report on its Inquiry into Public Procurement, to introduce a requirement on main contractors to pay sub-contractors within 10 days of receipt of valid invoices.

(AQW 16113/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The standard payment period for government contracts is 30 days. This is reflected in standard forms of contract and widely accepted throughout industry. During the recent consultation on amendments to the Construction Order there were no calls for changes to these arrangements.

While earlier settlement is encouraged, enforcing it in every case could increase finance requirements for main contractors and could result in serious cash flow difficulties.

I have frequently emphasised the importance of ensuring that main contractors meet their contractual commitments. A number of measures have been introduced to help ensure this happens. Where contractors fail to comply with payment terms they can now be excluded from future government tender opportunities for a period of twelve months.

Social Enterprises

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration he has given to the introduction of awarding extra points for social enterprises which bid for tenders for social benefit.
(AQW 16114/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended), which implement the EU Directives on public procurement, do not allow for this. The Regulations state (Regulation 4.3) that contracting authorities must treat all tenderers equally and in a non-discriminatory way.

Public Procurement Contracts

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the actions being taken to break public procurement contracts into lots which are more manageable for small and medium sized enterprises in the public procurement process.

(AQW 16115/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Procurement Board Strategic Plan requires all procurements over the EU threshold to have a documented procurement strategy, including early engagement with local suppliers. Part of this process includes consideration of breaking a contract into lots.

The EU Commission is currently considering changes to the Procurement Directives. Northern Ireland has lobbied the EU to limit the number of lots which can be awarded to one tenderer. This follows instances where a contract has been broken into lots but a single contractor has won all or most of the lots. Current indications are that the new Directives will include such measures. This would allow Contracting Authorities to provide greater access to large contracts for small and medium sized enterprises.

Public Procurement Processes

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how he has reduced bureaucracy for small and medium sized enterprises involved in the public procurement process.
(AQW 16116/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Small and medium sized enterprises play an important role in the Northern Ireland economy. I am keen that they can access public contracts with the minimum of bureaucracy. The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has developed an extensive set of Procurement Guidance Notes aimed at assisting smaller businesses and simplifying procurement processes. They include measures which will help to:

- explain public procurement processes and show how procurement opportunities can be accessed;
- reduce and remove barriers for smaller businesses wishing to compete for public sector opportunities – examples include reductions in the levels of experience and financial requirements needed;
- increase the visibility of opportunities by requiring all contracts above £30,000 to be advertised on a single procurement portal;
- streamline procedures for procurements below the EU thresholds and reduce the paperwork associated with tendering for these contracts;
- reduce liability and insurance requirements by making these proportionate to the risks associated with the project; and
- ensure that departments operate small and medium sized enterprise friendly procedures in their supply chains.

These measures are supported by a programme of 'Meet the Buyer' events undertaken by CPD and Centres of Procurement Expertise. This year, for example, CPD has attended events with representation from over 1,200 smaller businesses.

Public Procurement Processes

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what work he has undertaken to improve the public procurement processes during this Assembly mandate.

(AQW 16117/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Substantial progress has been made during this Assembly mandate in improving public procurement processes. This work has been undertaken by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) under the auspices of the Procurement Board and includes the following measures:

- Issue of a revised Procurement Board Strategic Plan with three key objectives, namely:
 - to deliver best value for money in a challenging economic climate;
 - to use public procurement to support economic growth; and
 - to provide confidence in the public procurement environment.
- Development and approval of revised proposals for the achievement of greater consistency and assurance of best practice in public procurement.
- Development and approval of a new model for the accreditation of Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs).
- Implementation of the recommendations arising out of the Committee for Finance and Personnel Inquiry into Public Sector Procurement.
- Issue of nine Procurement Guidance Notes focused on simplifying public procurement, particularly for smaller businesses; and on improving procurement processes more generally. A list of these Guidance Notes is set out at Annex A.
- Initiating a programme of procurement skills training.

In improving procurement processes the CPD has liaised closely with industry. During this Assembly mandate, there have been five meetings with the Construction Industry Forum and four with the Business Industry Forum. These formal events are supplemented by one to one engagements with supplier representative bodies.

I have also lobbied for changes to the new EU Procurement Directive which, if accepted, will lead to further improvements in and simplification of procurement processes.

ANNEX A

LIST OF PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE NOTES

2012

- Procurement Guidance Note 06/12 – Helping SMEs Benefit from Subcontracting Opportunities
- Procurement Guidance Note 05/12 – Simplified Approach to Procurement Over £30k and Under Threshold
- Procurement Guidance Note 04/12 – Procurement Control Limits and the Basis for Contract Awards
- Procurement Guidance Note 03/12 – Liability and Insurance in Government Contracts
- Procurement Guidance Note 02/12 – Public Procurement: A Guide for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Procurement Guidance Note 01/12 – Contract Management – Procedures and Principles

2011

- Procurement Guidance Note 03/11 – Award of a Contract Without a Competition
- Procurement Guidance Note 02/11 – Helping Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) access the Public Sector contracting opportunities
- Procurement Guidance Note 01/11 – A Guide for Social Economy Enterprises

Rate Relief Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what changes the implementation of welfare reform will mean for the rate relief scheme in relation to housing benefit.

(AQW 16159/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Welfare Reform, and its implications for the rating system, is something that has been and is being actively considered by the Executive Subgroup on Welfare Reform.

The Executive agreed in May of this year to preserve entitlement to the current level of rates support for up to two years, following the change in funding arrangements which will occur in April 2013. The Press Release can be accessed at the link below:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-dfp/news-releases-dfp-june-2012/news-dfp-010612-finance-minister-sammy.htm>

This holding operation will soon become impracticable and unaffordable and therefore the Executive will have to consider alternatives. Officials in the Department for Social Development are looking at long term solutions that look at a range of non social security benefits that will sit outside Universal Credit and over which NI has discretion in spending. This may present an opportunity to better target vulnerable households and make better use of limited resources.

In the meantime, however, I believe we will need to have a new rates support scheme ready when Universal Credit is established. Accordingly, I will be asking the Executive to agree to a preliminary consultation in the New Year.

This will not only present some challenging issues and high level choices to be made, it will also afford stakeholders the opportunity to come forward with evidence. The process will help inform policy direction for a scheme that effectively supports households least able to pay domestic rates. A further public consultation will occur when detailed options are sufficiently developed and impacts assessed.

Incidentally, I note that you refer to rates relief in your question. I appreciate that you are referring to the rates element of Housing Benefit, better known as rate rebate. There is a separate low income rate relief that acts as an enhancement to rate rebate and its future will also have to be reviewed alongside the main rates support scheme.

Cost of Event Held in the Grounds of the Stormont Estate on Wednesday 27 June 2012

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 15044/11-15, for a breakdown of the costs incurred and to who the payments were made, including how the suppliers of the goods and services were decided upon.

(AQW 16167/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A breakdown of the costs incurred is provided in the table overleaf. All payments were made to H&J Martin and delivered through an existing property management contract.

BREAKDOWN OF COSTS:

Description of Spend	Spend (£)
Supply and delivery of directional road signage	£6,502.60

Description of Spend	Spend (£)
Site clearance work at Park and Ride car parks	£950.00
Supply and delivery of commemorative Jubilee banners	£9,765.22
Post-event repairs to grounds due to Jubilee event	£43,000.00
Total	£60,217.82

INTERREG IV Programmes

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the total (a) allocation to; and (b) spend by cross border groups under INTERREG IV Programmes; (ii) the total (a) management cost allocation; and (b) management cost spend; and (iii) the percentage of each programme allocated to technical assistance.

(AQW 16168/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below provides the information requested under (i) and (ii).

Cross Border Group	Total Allocation To Date 1 (£)*	Total Expenditure To Date 2 (£)*	Total Management Cost Allocation (£)*	Total Management Cost Expenditure To Date (£)*
COMET	1,500,213	259,329	450,732	250,496
EBR	26,416,970	1,465,462	861,078	569,174
ICBAN	10,052,281	1,606,894	886,127	674,327
NWRCBG	15,517,154	673,843	764,057	466,499
NEP	8,315,491	442,494	519,193	204,252
TOTAL	61,802,109	4,448,022	3,481,187	2,164,748

The total budget for the INTERREG IVA Programme is £204.8 million*. From this total budget, 4.7% (£9.6m) has been allocated to Technical Assistance.

These figures include approved applications, letters of offer accepted and letters of offer issued only.

These figures include management cost expenditure.

* An exchange rate of £1=£1.25 has been used where applicable

Non-Domestic Rates Initiatives

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses in (i) Larne; and (ii) Carrickfergus town centres have benefited from the recent non-domestic rates initiatives.

(AQW 16197/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses that have benefited from the recent non-domestic rates initiatives in (i) Larne and (ii) Carrickfergus town centres is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward levels only. Information is available for the Larne and Carrickfergus Borough Council Areas.

As at 28th October 2012, there were 106 businesses in the Larne Borough Council Area and 131 businesses in the Carrickfergus Borough Council Area which have benefitted from the recently introduced 20% rate of Small Business Rate Relief. To date one property in the Larne and one property in the Carrickfergus Borough Council Areas have benefitted from the Empty Premises Relief.

No properties in either Larne or Carrickfergus Borough Council Areas have benefited from the Shop Window Display relief which also commenced on 1st April 2012.

Private Sector Jobs in the Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many private sector jobs have been created in the Foyle Constituency in each of the last four years.

(AQW 16198/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on the total number of private sector jobs created in Foyle as requested. NISRA collect information on the number of jobs at a particular point in time and therefore can only provide the net change between two points in time.

The table overleaf provides information on the net change in all private sector employee jobs in the Parliamentary Constituency of Foyle as measured by the biennial Census of Employment. The net decrease takes into account both job gains and losses during the period.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEE JOBS IN FOYLE PCA

Year	Private Sector Jobs	Net Change from previous period
2007	27,534	
2009	27,141	-393
2011	25,800	-1,341

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Women Diagnosed with Oestrogen Sensitive Breast Cancer

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what qualitative research has been carried out on the detrimental effects that soya can have on women diagnosed with oestrogen sensitive breast cancer.

(AQW 15795/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has funded several studies looking at phytoestrogens and cancer which contributed to the review by the Committee on Toxicity on Phytoestrogens and Health in 2003 and the research recommendations in this report. (Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring compounds found in some plant based foods, notably soya). The Committee on Toxicity in 2012 reviewed this research programme. A link to this report is provided below.

<http://cot.food.gov.uk/pdfs/cotstatements201201>.

Waiting Time for a Replacement Battery for a Pacemaker

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current waiting time for a replacement battery for a pacemaker; and what steps have been taken to reduce the waiting time.
(AQW 15847/11-15)

Mr Poots: Surgery for a replacement battery for a pacemaker is undertaken at the Belfast and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts. This procedure requires a cardiac catheterisation laboratory. I am advised by the Health and Social Care Board that the number of people waiting for a replacement battery for a pacemaker, at 15 October 2012, was 78. Of this total, 79% (62 people) were waiting less than 13 weeks.

The Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2011-2015 includes a commitment to expand cardiac catheterisation capacity to improve access to diagnostic intervention and treatment for all cardiology procedures by 2015. A percentage of this additional capacity will be used to address the demand for a replacement battery for permanent pacemakers.

Governance and Management of the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much it has cost to date to investigate the governance and management of the Fire and Rescue Service.

(AQW 15851/11-15)

Mr Poots: Recent investigations into the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service which have included governance and management issues have cost a total of £23,650.

Car Parking at the Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail all the contracts in place which are associated with car parking at the (i) Antrim Area Hospital; and (ii) Causeway Hospital, including the purpose, length, cost and associated revenue of each contract.

(AQW 15852/11-15)

Mr Poots: The list of all contracts associated with car parking at Antrim Area and Causeway Hospitals, including the purpose, length and cost of each contract, is as follows:

Advanced Parking Solutions -

Purpose - To provide comprehensive maintenance cover for all SkiData car parking equipment on both sites. Equipment covered - Pay stations, barriers, ticket columns, intercoms and system PCs.

Contract duration - 12 months (18/05/12 - 17/05/13)

Cost - £28,421 plus VAT

Parking Enforcement Agency (PEA) -

Purpose - To provide parking enforcement on both sites to ensure all access routes are kept free and to help prevent the abuse of all hospital car parks.

Contract duration - 24 months (18/04/11 - 17/05/13) (with the option of a one year extension)

Cost - Up to £42761.25 (including possible usage on bank holidays)

Scan Coin -

Purpose - To provide maintenance cover for 2 coin counting machines.

Contract Duration - 12 months (12/06/12 - 11/06/13)

Cost - £1208

Longmore Electronics -

Purpose - To provide maintenance cover for NHSCT security cameras. This contract not only covers the cameras relevant to car parking but the internal camera system within each hospital site.

Contract Duration - This contract is currently being renegotiated.

Cost - See above

This contract applies to all CCTV on the Antrim & Causeway sites with a small percentage directly linked to car parking.

The Trust has Measured Term Contracts (MTC) in place for repairs on all road surfacing, white lining and winter maintenance. A proportion of expenditure relates to car parking but information relating specifically to car parks is not available separately.

In relation to "Associated Revenue", the only contractor who receives additional revenue from the provision of the service is PEA. The contractor is not required to provide details of this revenue.

Purchase of Land Around the Ballee Children's Home

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the business cases that he has received over the last three years from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the purchase of land around the Ballee Children's home for the purpose of alternate access routes to (i) the existing building; and (ii) the new building.

(AQW 15883/11-15)

Mr Poots: No business cases were received by the Department in relation to the purchase of land around the Ballee Children's Home for the purpose of alternate access routes over the last three years.

Cardiology Services

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the plans for cardiology services in the next five years, particularly in relation to Craigavon Area Hospital.

(AQW 15891/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2011- 2015 includes a commitment to expand cardiac catheterisation capacity to improve access to diagnostic intervention and treatment for all cardiology procedures and the development of a new primary percutaneous coronary intervention (primary PCI) service model for Northern Ireland by 2015.

I am advised that the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board has approved proposals for the expansion of cath lab capacity in the Belfast and Western HSC Trusts to include the provision of a primary PCI service. This is planned to take place by September 2013.

It is anticipated that further expansion of cath lab capacity will be required beyond 2013/14 and the service provision for Northern Ireland will be reviewed by the HSC Board at this time. A decision will then be made on the level and location of any additional capacity required.

In relation to Craigavon Area Hospital, the HSC Board is currently working with the Southern HSC Trust to assess the need for any further investment required to ensure ongoing continuity and quality of care for patients.

Prisoners Services

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust engages with the Prison Service to ensure that prisoners receive services comparable to those in the community.

(AQW 15895/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is responsible for the delivery of healthcare services in all prison establishments in Northern Ireland. The South Eastern HSC Trust engages with the Northern Ireland Prison Service through a number of strategic and operational fora on issues that might affect the delivery of prison healthcare services.

The requirement on the South Eastern HSC Trust to provide services that are equivalent to what a patient could access in the community is set out in the Partnership Agreement between my Department and the NI Prison Service. The South Eastern HSC Trust's performance in delivering prison healthcare services is monitored by the Health and Social Care Board through its normal governance and performance management arrangements.

Cystic Fibrosis

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Cystic Fibrosis sufferers have the specific gene mutation G551D.

(AQW 15897/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand that there are approximately 30 - 35 cystic fibrosis patients in Northern Ireland who have at least one copy of the G551D gene mutation.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the Public Health Agency (PHA) are aware that this new drug treatment is presently undergoing an assessment process on behalf of specialist NHS commissioning bodies in England. That assessment will be available in England in the coming weeks or months. When the commissioning decision for England is determined, the HSCB and PHA will make every effort to work towards a comparable evidenced-based approach to the availability of Kalydeco (ivacaftor) in Northern Ireland.

Cystic Fibrosis

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to make the drug Kalydeco available to Cystic Fibrosis patients.

(AQW 15898/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand that there are approximately 30 - 35 cystic fibrosis patients in Northern Ireland who have at least one copy of the G551D gene mutation.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the Public Health Agency (PHA) are aware that this new drug treatment is presently undergoing an assessment process on behalf of specialist NHS commissioning bodies in England. That assessment will be available in England in the coming weeks or months. When the commissioning decision for England is determined, the HSCB and PHA will make every effort to work towards a comparable evidenced-based approach to the availability of Kalydeco (ivacaftor) in Northern Ireland.

Stroke Patients

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many stroke patients have been admitted to each hospital since the start of 2012; and how many of these were treated with Thrombolysis.

(AQW 15910/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available on the number of stroke patients that have been admitted to each hospital since the start of 2012; or the number of these that were treated with Thrombolysis.

Information is however available on the number of emergency admissions to each HSC Trust between 1st January and 31st March 2012 where a primary diagnosis of ischaemic stroke was recorded; and the number of times during this period that Thrombolysis was administered as shown in the table below:-

HSC Trust	Number of Emergency Admissions	Number of Thrombolysis Administrations
Belfast	151	11
South Eastern	122	8
Northern	132	11
Southern	121	11
Western	93	10
Total	619	51

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System & Priority 2 – Stroke Services Return

Figures do not include patients who attended an Accident and Emergency Department and were not subsequently admitted. Deaths and discharges have been used to approximate admissions.

Ross Thompson Unit in the Causeway Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the planned future for the Ross Thompson Unit in the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 15911/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has submitted a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) outlining their assessment of need for the provision of mental health inpatient services across the Trust area.

The SOC is currently with Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) for their approval and a decision is expected within the next few weeks. Subject to approval, the Trust will then be asked to develop a business case for the provision of acute mental health inpatient services across the Northern Trust. As part of the business case process, the Trust will consider a range of options including the use of Ross Thompson Unit in Causeway Hospital.

I can assure you all of the options identified in the business case will be fully explored to determine which model delivers best in terms of optimising care, strategic fit and affordability.

Any changes to services identified through this or other processes will be subject to further consultation.

Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying Patient

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying Patient is used in local hospitals.

(AQW 15920/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department published 'Living Matters:Dying Matters a Strategy for Palliative and End of Life Care in Northern Ireland in March 2010. The Strategy recommends the use of improvement tools to improve the quality of care in the last few days of life. The Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) which was developed by Marie Curie Cancer Care is such a tool. It is an established and respected tool that is recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) and it has been used in hospital care in Northern Ireland for a number of years.

The LCP is initiated by clinicians who are trained and competent to do so. The use of the LCP is discussed with patients, if appropriate, and with relatives/carers before use.

Delivery of Domiciliary Care Services in Rural Areas

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that care is now being delivered in a task centred way, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate isolation and loneliness caused by the change in the delivery of domiciliary care services in rural areas, such as the Ards Peninsula.

(AQW 15956/11-15)

Mr Poots: Given the wide range of circumstances which can lead to social isolation, the solutions require involvement and input across a range of services designed to help people remain active and involved in their communities whether rural or urban

My Department published a Service Framework for the Health and Wellbeing of Older People for consultation at the beginning of October. The overall aim of the Framework is to improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Northern Ireland, promote social inclusion, reduce inequalities in health and improve HSC quality of care for all older people.

Within the South Eastern locality the Public Health Agency (PHA) are currently funding a 'Safe and Well' service targeting older people at risk of social isolation. This service has been developed with a range

of local partners and offers a co-ordinated response from local statutory, voluntary and community partners to assess and address the needs of at risk older people. There are similar schemes in all Local Commissioning Group (LCG) localities, funded from various sources. The PHA is currently working to develop a regional service model and to support the implementation of the model with LCGs as part of the future development of older people's services.

Better Services for Rural Areas

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department can support and resource programmes that specifically address ageing issues and volunteering to help deliver better services for rural areas, given that there is a move towards utilising the voluntary community sector to deliver better health outcomes, as highlighted in the Compton Review.

(AQW 15957/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department provides funding towards voluntary and community sector organisations which deliver a wide range of services to different client groups, including older people. This funding is provided to organisations working on a regional basis throughout Northern Ireland, including rural areas.

The process of funding individual organisations on a local basis, or for any allocation of contracts open to the voluntary, community or private sectors, would be a matter for local Health and Social Care Trusts and the Health and Social Care Board to consider, in the context of the level of services required in each situation and the resources available.

Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, having become aware in January 2012 of the prospect of a Marie Stopes clinic in Belfast, when he first sought advice from the Attorney General.

(AQW 15967/11-15)

Mr Poots: As the member will be aware there is a strong convention that whether the Attorney general has been consulted is not disclosed and I do not intend to breach that convention.

Applications for Direct Payments

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many applications for Direct Payments were authorised, in each of the last three years, from (i) clients with mental health issues; and (ii) clients with a learning disability, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 15973/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of Direct Payment applications authorised is not held centrally within the Department. The Department does however hold information on the number of Direct Payments in effect at the end of each quarter.

Tables 1 and 2 below detail the number of Direct Payments in effect at the end of the financial year for the last three years, for both Mental Health and Learning Disability programmes of care, by HSC Trust.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DIRECT PAYMENTS IN EFFECT AT 31 MARCH (2010-12) FOR A MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME OF CARE, BY HSC TRUST.

Year	HSC Trust				
	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
2010	8	*	*	59	*
2011	12	*	*	59	*

Year	HSC Trust				
	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
2012	22	5	*	58	*

* Less than 5 payments in effect

Source: DHSSPS CC8 Returns provided quarterly by HSC Trusts

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF DIRECT PAYMENTS IN EFFECT AT 31 MARCH (2010-12) FOR A LEARNING DISABILITY PROGRAMME OF CARE, BY HSC TRUST.

Year	HSC Trust				
	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
2010	60	65	96	170	79
2011	70	75	118	203	95
2012	86	87	129	225	109

Source: DHSSPS CC8 Returns provided quarterly by HSC Trusts

Causeway and Altnagelvin Hospitals

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether, under any new possible arrangement between the Causeway and Altnagelvin Hospitals, it would be possible to operate a maternity unit based at the Causeway Hospital, which would attract expectant mothers from the Limavady area, freeing up Altnagelvin while sustaining numbers at the Causeway.

(AQW 16005/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department's recently published document, A Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012-2018, recognises that a change in the model of maternity care is inevitable. Any change will need to complement the broader aspects of the reconfiguration of community and hospital services, as outlined in Transforming Your Care, which is being formally consulted on at present.

The Maternity Strategy makes clear that it will be for Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations to consider how best to maximise choice for local women and, where appropriate, develop a regional networked approach, with cross boundary flows between Trusts and other jurisdictions. Such an approach may improve local access and enhance care for women. It may make some maternity units more sustainable and reduce pressure on others.

It is for the HSC Board, as commissioner of services and working in collaboration with Trusts and other organisations to lead on the Strategy's implementation.

Family Support Hubs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what mechanisms will be put in place to identify the locations of the ten family support hubs.

(AQW 16035/11-15)

Mr Poots: The locations of the ten new family support hubs will be identified by the HSC Board working with other agencies, including the Locality Planning Groups of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

There are a number of different models for family support hubs, with the most appropriate model being dependent upon a number of factors, including social, educational and health needs which must be taken into consideration before any decision on the location or the format of a family support hub.

Family Support Hubs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what examples of good practice exist to inform the establishment and development of the ten family support hubs.

(AQW 16036/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present, there are 17 family support hubs established across Northern Ireland. There are a number of different models for family support hubs, with the most appropriate model for each location being dependent upon a number of factors, including the current infrastructure in a particular area.

Any new Family Support Hub will provide a focused, personal service for a family and can assist them to obtain the support they may require from existing services and services the family support hubs can offer. Best practice learning derived from the establishment of the existing Family Support Hubs will inform the establishment and development of the ten new hubs.

Department's Expenditure on Public Health

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department's expenditure on Public Health was in (i) 2010/11; and (ii) 2011/12.

(AQW 16051/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department's expenditure on Public Health, represented by the total expenditure of the Public Health Agency in the financial years 2010/11 and 2011/12 was £69.648m and £77.605m, respectively.

Direct Payment Scheme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how is the direct payment scheme being promoted; and to outline the process for personal budgets being allocated on the direct payment scheme.

(AQW 16124/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present in Northern Ireland we do not have personal budgets. We have the Direct Payment Scheme. Direct Payments enable the Health and Social Care Trusts to offer individuals an alternative to traditional service provision whilst ensuring public funds are being used both effectively and efficiently. Direct Payments are cash payments, made in lieu of social service provision, to individuals who have been assessed as needing services. Direct Payments increase choice and promote independence.

A pilot scheme based on Self Directed Support has been rolled out by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and as a result of this the Board and the Department are now working together to progress this area further with agreement having been reached to develop and plan the roll out of similar pilots across all Trusts and all programmes of care.

On 9 October 2012 the Health and Social Care Board launched a three-month consultation "Transforming Your Care: From Vision to Action" which outlines proposals for change in Health and Social Care services in response to the report "Transforming Your Care: A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland" (published December 2011). This includes a clear focus on a more personalized approach.

Incidents of Self-Harm or Suicide

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how incidents of self-harm or suicide are recorded in each Health and Social Care Trust, including whether drugs and alcohol were a factor; and what are the protocols in each Trust for referring patients for appropriate aftercare, and how information is shared between health and social care professionals.

(AQW 16132/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since April 2012 each Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland has been collating anonymised data on incidents relating to self harm attendances at each acute Accident and Emergency Department. The data is recorded onto the NI Deliberate Self Harm Registry.

The Deliberate Self Harm Registry holds the following data items: gender, age, date and time of attendance, admission details (where applicable), and method(s) of self harm. Information also includes whether drugs and alcohol were involved and details of psychiatric assessments undertaken at Accident and Emergency Departments. This information is subsequently made available to the Health and Social Care system to assist with planning the delivery of accident and emergency services such as: targeting of resources to deal with increases in specific self-harm methods, and treatment of people who self-harm while under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

With regard to how suicides are recorded in each Trust, in recognition of the importance of early identification of potential clusters and response, in 2012 the Sudden Death process was introduced regionally. Sudden Death forms (SD1) are completed by PSNI officers when attending a sudden death, whereby the cause is possible or probable suicide. These are then shared with the relevant Trust and HSC representatives, to ensure that support can be provided to those bereaved by suicide. The SD1 process also provides for more timely data collection on suspected suicide, along with the opportunity to identify potential clusters, and put in place a Community Response Plan (CRP). The involvement of drugs and/or alcohol is not recorded on these forms.

When someone presents in hospital after an attempted suicide or having self harmed they are assessed and treated medically in the first instance. When they are deemed to be fit for a mental health assessment they are referred - either for an urgent assessment that day, or for low risk patients, or those unwilling to wait for a mental health assessment, given a next day mental health appointment through the "Card Before You Leave" (CBYL) scheme.

Mental health assessment arrangements in the Emergency Department, including the operation of "Card Before you Leave" are currently under review.

Part-Time or Reserve Fire-Fighters

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what employment agreements are relied upon to allow part-time or reserve fire-fighters to attend emergency call-outs or training.
(AQW 16133/11-15)

Mr Poots: The employment agreement for Retained Firefighters is the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service. This document outlines the terms and conditions for Firefighters including payment for emergency call outs, pre-arranged work and attendance at training courses. This document is noted in the Written Statement of Employment Particulars.

Delivery of Urological Care

Mr A Maginnes asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to improve the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's capacity to improve the delivery of urological care and cope with the level of demand.
(AQW 16134/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board is: supporting recruitment of additional consultants, including locum staff where available; and, working with the three Northern Ireland Urology Teams and Local Commissioning Groups to agree key actions and timescales which will facilitate redirection of core urological conditions from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to local units. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust also continues to run a partial booking pilot to offer urology day surgery patients a choice of procedure date. This initiative should help reduce the current number of patients not attending appointments. The Trust is also considering how the team can be more effective by introducing initiatives such as centralisation of referrals and pooling of waiting lists.

UK Safe and Sustainable Review in England and Wales

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will take account of the recent decision on the UK Safe and Sustainable Review in England and Wales; and whether he will consider a full review into the closure recommended by the report.

(AQW 16135/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not reached any decision on the provision of paediatric cardiac surgical services for the population of Northern Ireland.

I announced on 25 September 2012 the commencement of a 12 week period of consultation on the draft service specification and the standards that are proposed for the future commissioning of this service, as well as a number of options for the delivery of this service in the future. The consultation is being carried out by the Health and Social Care Board and will run until 21 December 2012, following which I will take a decision on the future provision of this service for Northern Ireland.

Health Service Dentists

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current average waiting time in each Health and Social Care Trust to become a patient of a Health Service dentist.

(AQW 16137/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

Services Available in North Down to Help Drug Abusers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available in North Down to help drug abusers.

(AQW 16139/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is a range of services available in the North Down to help prevent and address the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse in the area. These are set out below:

Prevention

- School health alcohol harm reduction project (SHAHRP) alcohol awareness education and teacher training programme operates in all of the post-primary schools.
- Targeted drug awareness education programmes for young people are provided by ASCERT/ Opportunity Youth for vulnerable young people.

Treatment and Support - Adults

- Harm reduction outreach project - Specific service for the North Down and Ards area targeting drug and alcohol users provided by the Simon Community.
- Addiction NI - Services for adults, older population and those people with drug and alcohol problems who have committed offences.
- Family Treatment and Support Service (The Pharos Project) - Service for parents who have a substance misuse problem covering South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) area, delivered by Barnardos through their family centre in Bangor.
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust - Community Addiction Teams based in Lough House, Ards Hospital covers North Down and Ards Peninsula area. The Inpatient Addiction Unit at Shimna House also provides services right across the Trust Area, including North Down.
- Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre - Adult Counselling Service, 226 Stewartstown Rd, Belfast. Service level agreement with SEHSCT for taking appropriate referrals across SEHSCT area.

Treatment and Support - Young People

- DAISY Project - Youth treatment and support service for young people and their families delivered by ASCERT and Opportunity Youth and covers SEHSCT area.
- One Stop Shop Service in North Down and Ards - FASA provide an information, support and sign posting service in their Bangor office for young people and their families in relation to substance misuse and wider issues including mental health, sexual health, employment etc.
- Dedicated substance misuse workers based within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - Treatment service for those with substance misuse and mental health problems.

Services for the Community

- Community Support Service - Service provides support to local groups helping them address local problems.
- Community Drug Awareness Training - Access to this training is coordinated via the community support workers and is delivered by ASCERT/FASA and Falls Community Council offering.

Services in North Down for People who are Contemplating Suicide

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available in North Down for people who are contemplating suicide.

(AQW 16140/11-15)

Mr Poots: During my term as Health Minister a range of services has been provided regionally which are available to people from the North Down constituency. These include:

- Lifeline 24/7 helpline and associated, locally-based, support services;
- The Deliberate Self Harm Registry, which operates at all A&E Units
- operation of the Card Before You Leave (CBYL) protocol at all A&E sites;
- Training on suicide/mental health awareness; and
- Public information campaigning to: encourage help-seeking; raise awareness of suicide and positive mental health; and reduce stigma associated with suicide and mental health.

In relation to North Down, the Public Health Agency and Northern and Southern Trusts work with, and help fund, a number of organisations to deliver suicide and self harm prevention services. These organisations, some of which are based in North Down and some of which have Trust-wide coverage, include North Down CRUSE Bereavement Care, Holywood Family Trust, FASA, Opportunity Youth, ASCERT, Bangor YMCA, New Life Counselling, Belfast Central Mission, Aware Defeat Depression, Action Mental Health, Mindwise, CAUSE and Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health.

Services provided include crisis response and counselling for high risk groups such as families affected by suicide, young men, people who self harm, and people with substance misuse problems. Personal development programmes, and drama based awareness/education interventions have also been supported. In addition, community emergency response plans have been developed to respond to potential suicide clusters in the area.

Respite Care

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that respite care is provided by the Health and Social Care Trusts in Trust facilities, how the proposal to close some Trust facilities in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust will impact on Transforming Your Care in the area.

(AQW 16146/11-15)

Mr Poots: 'Transforming Your Care' has demonstrated that changing how our services are provided is an inevitability. With more people being supported to live independently in their own home, as they wish to do, the model of care must change to meet their needs. I want to ensure that those changes

are planned and managed so that they will bring optimum benefits to patients, service users, staff and the wider community. It is crucial that safe, suitable and better alternatives to residential care, such as supported living, self-directed support and more respite care, are in place for those who need it.

In that context, and as outlined in its draft Population Plan, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust is reviewing its residential care provision with a view to developing alternative models of care, which will reduce reliance on its care homes for long term placements as well as for short break provision. Any consequential closures will be taken forward in a planned and phased way, with residents, families and local communities involved in the local consultation process. The Trust has confirmed that closure of facilities will not reduce capacity to provide respite: indeed its aim is to provide a range of innovative alternatives for respite, and other forms of carer support, by integrating respite care into the local community and promoting independence, choice and control.

Grievance Cases and Whistleblowing Complaints

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) grievance cases have been taken; and (ii) whistleblowing complaints have been made, against (a) his Department; and (b) its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last five years; and at what cost to the public purse.
(AQW 16171/11-15)

Mr Poots:

(a) The Department

(i and ii) The table below details the number of Formal Grievances and Whistleblowing cases made against my Department in each of the past 5 years.

Financial Year	Grievances Taken		Whistleblowing Cases
	Dignity at Work	Other	
2007/08	0	0	0
2008/09	1	2	0
2009/10	0	1	0
2010/11	0	3	0
2011/12	2	1	0

The cost of action taken to investigate grievance cases is not available as this is undertaken as part of normal duties/processes.

(b) Arms Length Bodies

NIFRS

(i) The table below details the number of Grievance claims that have been lodged within NIFRS in each of the past 5 years.

Year	Grievance Claims
2008	28
2009	25
2010	19
2011	21
*2012	48
Total	141

* As at 29 October 2012

- (ii) The table below outlines the number of Whistleblowing complaints received against NIFRS in each of the past 5 financial years to date.

Financial Year (Apr-Mar)	External Provider	Internal Process
2007/2008	6	1
2008/2009	6	0
2009/2010	8	0
2010/2011	1	0
2011/2012	1	3
2012/2013 (to date)	0	1
Total	22	5

NIFRS is unable to give costs for Grievance cases and Whistleblowing complaints as extracting this information can only be done at disproportionate costs.

HSC

- (i) HSC organisations are responsible for dealing with grievances and whistleblowing issues locally. Due to the local aspect to these processes, records of the numbers handled by HSC organisations are not held centrally by my Department and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost. The costs associated with grievances and whistleblowing cases, heard by HSC employers, is not available and could only be provided at a disproportionate cost. This work is undertaken by line managers as part of their normal duties.
- (ii) My Department has received 9 complaints from whistleblowers about related HSC issues. The “cost to the public purse” of dealing with these whistleblowing complaints is not held centrally by my Department and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Sure Start Programme for North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the role (i) his Department; and (ii) the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, have in the Sure Start programme for the North Down area.

(AQW 16180/11-15)

Mr Poots: While the Department for Education has lead responsibility for policy and funding of Sure Start, the operational implementation of the policy is done by the local Childcare Partnerships within the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) through service level agreement with DE.

Childcare partnerships were established by the NI childcare strategy “Children First”. One of their responsibilities is the delivery of Early Years services including Sure Start programmes.

The South Eastern Trust is one of a number of organisations working in partnership to contribute to the planning and delivery of the Sure Start programme in the North Down area.

Compton Review

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the implementation of the Compton Review.

(AQW 16196/11-15)

Mr Poots: ‘Transforming Your Care: a review of health and social care in Northern Ireland’ proposes significant changes across health and social care services. It focuses on reshaping how services are to

be structured and delivered in order to make best use of all resources available to us and, in so doing, ensure that our services are safe, resilient and sustainable into the future.

Following the publication of Transforming Your Care, Draft Population Plans were produced by the Local Commissioning Groups in liaison with the Health and Social Care Trusts and others. An over-arching Strategic Implementation Plan was also prepared by the Health & Social Care Board to draw together the key elements of the Population Plans, including cross-cutting, regional aspects. These draft Plans were subject to a quality assurance process over the summer period.

Following this quality assurance process, I made a Statement to the Assembly on 9th October 2012, launching a consultation to seek the views the response to the proposals set out in Transforming Your Care. I would encourage everyone - patients, clients, service users, service providers and citizens - to engage with this important consultation. Full details of how you can get involved are available at www.tycconsultation.hscni.net. This consultation will remain open until 15 January 2013.

Car Parking Charges at Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the car parking charges at Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 16202/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since April 2011, car park charging for visitors and patients has been in place at Antrim Area hospital. The charging bands are currently:

Charge Bands	£
Up to 1 hour	1.00
1-2 hours	1.50
2-3 hours	2.00
3-4 hours	2.50
4-5 hours	3.00
5-6 hours	3.50
6-8 hours	4.00
Over 8 Hours	5.00

My Department issued a policy on car parking to all trusts at the end of July 2012. The policy allows for charging for car parking to both staff and visitors subject to consultation at local level on the detail of the proposed charges.

The Northern HSC Trust commenced a 12 week consultation on 10 October on the introduction of staff charging at Causeway and Antrim Hospitals.

Senior Positions in the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many senior positions have been filled in the Fire and Rescue Service in each of the last five years; (ii) what procedure was followed for the recruitment of each of these positions; and (iii) in which publications were the positions advertised.

(AQW 16205/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i The table below outlines the number of senior positions* filled in NIFRS in each of the last five years:

Year	Operational Posts	Support Staff Posts
2008	0	4
2009	4	5
2010	1	0
2011	2	0
2012	6	0

* Senior posts are defined as Principal Officer grade for support staff and Area Commander and above for operational staff

- ii. The procedure followed was in accordance with NIFRS' Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and included Assessment and Interview arrangements.
- iii. The Support Staff posts were advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter as well as the Careers Section of the NIFRS' Website.

The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts were advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, News Letter, Irish News and Irish Times. They were also advertised on the Chief Fire Officer's Association website, on the Careers Section of the NIFRS' website, by internal Establishment instruction and distributed UK-wide via the Fire Information National Data Service.

The Area Commander posts were advertised internally by Establishment Instruction and distributed UK-wide via the Fire Information National Data Service.

Health: Research and Development

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what he is doing to promote research and development in health.

(AQO 2773/11-15)

Mr Poots: In July this year, I was very pleased to announce our contribution to the funds for the research programmes of the National Institute for Health Research, thereby, increasing potentially by up to 25% our annual investment in health and social care research. This will help to ensure that our HSC researchers remain competitive with colleagues UK-wide and internationally.

The very important MoU on 'Connected Health and Prosperity' which the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and I signed jointly last year will contribute to the Programme for Government commitment to support £300 million investment by businesses in R&D. On 24th October in Boston, I announced a further £4.7 million investment in health research by InvestNI which is an early confirmation of this.

Another focus is on ensuring increased drawdown of EU Commission R&D funding.

Good research leads to innovation and the delivery of more effective health and social care services. Our work in Connected Health, for which R&D is essential, will make a vital contribution to the success of Transforming Your Care.

Alleged Use of Fire Service Property in Orange Halls

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking in response to the alleged use of Fire Service property in Orange Halls.

(AQW 16276/11-15)

Mr Poots: This allegation has been raised with me and, as I advised in my written statement to the Assembly on Thursday 1 November, where appropriate, all material allegations will be investigated rigorously and proportionately.

I have tasked the Departmental Accounting Officer with the responsibility to ensure that a satisfactory and independent investigation is carried out into the material specific allegations that have been made.

Suicides in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department and its agencies are taking to ensure that a cluster of suicides is not allowed to develop in County Fermanagh following the recent spate of deaths by suicide in the county.

(AQW 16277/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency activated a pre-prepared emergency community response plan on 19 October and Agency staff are working closely with other organisations in Fermanagh to prevent further suicides in the area. These organisations include the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Western Education and Library Board, Fermanagh District Council, Lifeline, local churches and community groups involved in suicide prevention and bereavement support.

The purpose of the emergency community response plan is to quickly put in place multi-agency actions to prevent further deaths when it is suspected, through established surveillance systems that a potential suicide cluster is developing in an area. These plans have been developed in each Health and Social Care Trust area in Northern Ireland in partnership with local voluntary, community, and statutory organisations.

Smoking-Related Deaths

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the action he is taking to reduce deaths from smoking.

(AQO 2778/11-15)

Mr Poots: In February 2012, I launched a new ten-year tobacco control strategy for Northern Ireland. The strategy is aimed at reducing the number of people starting to smoke; encouraging more smokers to quit; and protecting the population from tobacco-related harm. The Public Health Agency will be leading on the delivery of the strategy and has established an implementation group to take this work forward.

My Department has also been engaged in a programme of legislative change with regards to tobacco control, the main aim of which is to prevent the uptake of smoking by young people. This includes banning the sale of tobacco from vending machines, from 1 March 2012, and banning displays of tobacco products in large shops, which was introduced just last week. The display ban legislation will be extended to include small shops from 6 April 2015.

In the forthcoming months, I also intend to introduce a Bill to the Assembly which will impose tougher sanctions on retailers who persistently sell tobacco to under eighteens.

Other legislative options under consideration are the introduction of plain packaging for tobacco products and a ban on smoking in private vehicles. Decisions on these issues will only be made following comprehensive consultation exercises and considered analysis of the responses.

I will also continue to invest in public information campaigns to inform people about the dangers of smoking, and in the development of smoking cessation services provided in a range of accessible settings.

All of the above actions will help to reduce the appalling toll of preventable morbidity and premature deaths from smoking.

E. coli: Flicks Restaurant

Mrs McKeitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the E Coli outbreak linked to Flicks Restaurant, Belfast
(AQO 2779/11-15)

Mr Poots: As of Friday November 2nd, the number of laboratory-confirmed cases of E. coli infection linked to this outbreak was 137 and the number of probable cases stood at 164.

The total number of confirmed and probable cases levelled off during the week commencing 22 October.

The Public Health Agency, Belfast City Council and the Food Standards Agency are continuing to investigate this outbreak. They are not in a position yet to confirm the cause of the outbreak.

All of the laboratory-confirmed cases from this outbreak that have been typed so far are E. coli Type 54. This is a different strain from the cases that were linked to Flicks Restaurant in August.

Antrim Area Hospital: Accident and Emergency

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have presented with fractures at Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency department since 2010.
(AQO 2780/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Health and Social Care Board that during the period from January 2010 to September 2012, the total number of patients presenting at Antrim Area Hospital emergency care department with any fracture diagnosis is 10,766.

Department of Justice

CCTV Surveillance in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14270/11-15, to provide a copy of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Registration Requirement Notification in relation to the use of CCTV in prisons and the relevant approval of the Information Commissioner's Office.

(AQW 15854/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The information required is publicly available on the following website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/ESDWebPages/DoSearch.asp>.

Prison Service Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 replaced all aspects of legislation in the Prison Service Code of Conduct, including the 1995 amendments.

(AQW 15855/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 made no amendments to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Charge of Knowingly Engaging the Services of a Prostitute

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 12907/11-15, whether he will address the issue of removing statutory barring.

(AQW 15857/11-15)

Mr Ford: Although I have no plans to change the time limit for making a complaint to a magistrates' court, I will look into any difficulties raised in relation to the time limit for making a complaint in relation to the summary offence of paying for the sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force.

Young Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether young offenders are encouraged to enter into education on leaving custody or whilst on probation; (ii) what is the percentage uptake; and (iii) what agencies are involved in pursuing this issue with young offenders.

(AQW 15859/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Young people of school age are actively supported to remain in, or engage with, the appropriate education provision whilst on probation supervision by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) or on release from the Youth Justice Agency's (YJA) Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. In Woodlands, all young people undergo an assessment that informs a personal education plan and programme. This is subsequently shared with the relevant Education and Library Board, to ensure that the progress that they have made in custody informs their education placement in the community. However, the majority of young people in Woodlands are beyond compulsory school age. While remedial education programmes provide a valuable way of helping them in addressing certain key deficits, a greater emphasis is now placed on providing them with a wider range of life and vocational skills. Under a recently developed joint initiative, between the YJA and the Department of Education and Learning (DEL), these young people are referred direct to career services to maximise their opportunity of securing further education, training and employment.
- (ii) There are currently no complete figures available for the percentage uptake of education in the community. The joint initiative with DEL will be reviewed in March 2013, after which both DEL and YJA data will be available.

Agencies include:

- (iii) the Department of Education, through schools and education welfare officers; the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, through social services; the Department for Employment and Learning; PBNI and the YJA. PBNI also assists young people to access personal development programmes, which include educational elements, from a range of third sector providers such as NIACRO, Challenge for Youth and Opportunity Youth.

Prison Service Staff

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many members of staff in the Prison Service have been dismissed for either criminal or disciplinary conduct, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 15876/11-15)

Mr Ford: As less than five members of staff have been dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, for either criminal or disciplinary conduct, in each of the last five years, the actual number has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Families of Prisoners who Died in Custody as a Result of Suicide

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how many families of prisoners, who died in custody as a result of suicide, have instigated legal proceedings against the Northern Ireland Prison Service for failing in their duty of care, broken down by prison; (ii) how many of the proceedings have concluded; and (iii) how many are outstanding.

(AQW 15916/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) claims database holds records for the last 13 years and shows that 10 families of prisoners who died as a result of suicide have instigated legal proceedings against NIPS.

Seven prisoners died from suicide in Maghaberry, two died in Hydebank Wood and one died in Magilligan.

Of these 10 claims, four have concluded, two are statute barred, one has been abandoned and three remain live.

Prison Service Staff who were Disciplined for Paying a Prisoner's Drug Debt

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 11464/11-15, if, and when, one of the governors has since resigned from the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 15919/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that a governor, as referred to in AQW/11464/11-15, voluntarily left the service on 3 June 2012.

Death in Custody at HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the death in custody of Michael McDonagh at HMP Maghaberry on 15 October 2012, whether (i) he was a remand or sentenced prisoner; (ii) he was considered at risk and accommodated as such; and (iii) any staff have been suspended whilst a investigation is carried out.

(AQW 15921/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr McDonagh had been remanded in Maghaberry Prison since June 2012.

During his current period in custody Mr McDonagh was not considered to be at risk. His behaviour was of no concern and he had not failed any of his drug tests. There was no active 'Supporting Prisoner At Risk' (SPAR) in place and no previous recorded placement on SPAR monitoring. The staff on duty in Erne House did not have any concerns regarding Mr Connors' behaviour or mood and there were no indications of him planning to self harm or take his own life.

No staff have been suspended whilst an investigation is being carried out.

Mandatory Drug Tests

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14744/11-15, to detail the advice supplied in relation to alcohol intoxication being viewed as an aggravating factor, particularly in light of court cases where charges have been reduced due to a defence of diminished responsibility through intoxication.

(AQW 15922/11-15)

Mr Ford: AQW 14744 referred to people arrested and charged with disorderly behaviour. The case law referred to in my answer derived from DPP v Majewski (1977) in relation to voluntary intoxication and R v Kingston (1995) in relation to involuntary intoxication.

The law regarding diminished responsibility is contained within sections 5 (diminished responsibility generally) and 6 (diminished responsibility by virtue of voluntary intoxication) of the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966. Section 5 was amended by Section 53 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 with effect from 1 June 2011.

Paying External Companies to Clean Cells in Roe House, Maghaberry Prison

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice how much the Prison Service has spent (i) paying external companies to clean cells in Roe House, Maghaberry Prison; and (ii) buying supplies such as acro absorbent compound to address the on-going protests effects, broken down by (a) each month since the beginning of the protest; and (b) the total cost.

(AQW 15940/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has spent £446,913 on paying external companies to clean cells in Roe House at Maghaberry Prison up to 30 September 2012.

The monthly costs of buying supplies such as the Arco absorbent compound are set out in the following table. These total £55,738.

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £
April		192
May		5,134
June	3,209	57
July	935	7,924
August	1,046	1,505
September	4,395	7,163
October	4,921	
November	2,600	
December	4,932	
January	6,147	
February	2,149	
March	3,429	
Total	33,763	21,975

DNA Database

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice for details of any instances when a test profile, that was uploaded onto the DNA database, has matched a profile already on the system.

(AQW 15964/11-15)

Mr Ford: FSNI do not upload test profiles to the DNA database.

Camera Hidden in a Prisoner's Watch in HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the circumstances behind the alleged discovery of a camera hidden in a prisoner's watch in HMP Maghaberry.

(AQW 15977/11-15)

Mr Ford: During a routine search of a prisoner on 8 October 2012 he was found to be wearing a watch which had an inbuilt camera and recording facility. This is a prohibited article and was confiscated by staff. The prisoner has been charged with an offence under Prison Rules.

Separated Republican Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many separated republican prisoners have had submissions made by Amnesty International.

(AQW 15979/11-15)

Mr Ford: As stated in my answer to AQW/14564/11-15, Amnesty International wrote to my Department on 13 February 2012 in respect of Marian McGlinchey.

Amnesty International has not made submissions on behalf of any other separated republican prisoners.

Edward Connors

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether convicted sex-offender Edward Connors was ever placed in, or resided in, Thompson House, Belfast.

(AQW 15980/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Data Protection Act 1998 precludes the provision of information relating to a prisoner's placement or residence after his release from prison.

Offender Levy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Offender Levy is applicable in instances where police officers issue fixed penalty notices.

(AQW 15981/11-15)

Mr Ford: A £5 Offender Levy applies to fixed penalty notices issued by police under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 for certain low level offences, which include criminal damage and disorderly behaviour.

The Levy has not yet been extended to fixed penalties issued by police for road traffic offences.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the arrangements in place for co-operation between Forensic Science Northern Ireland and similar bodies in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 15989/11-15)

Mr Ford: Bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been established between Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) and the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) Forensic Services and Eolaíocht Fhóiréinseach Éireann (EFÉ) respectively. Each MoU provides for mutual aid in the event of the loss of facilities or demand surges; the scope for brokering of some excess demand and best practice support on specialist and quality issues. A similar trilateral agreement is also in place between FSNI, EFÉ and the SPSA Forensic Services.

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Co-operation on Criminal Justice Matters also supports cooperation between FSNI and EFÉ. Officials from each laboratory meet regularly under the auspices of that agreement.

FSNI staff have also participated in joint training and sharing of best scientific practice with the Ministry of Defence Forensic Explosives Laboratory.

Considerable collaboration also takes place through FSNI's membership of the UK & Ireland Association of Forensic Science Providers and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes. FSNI staff are involved in a number of specialist working groups in both organisations.

In addition, co-operation takes place through FSNI's membership of the UK Regulator's Forensic Science Advisory Council and its specialist working groups.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) why the Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2011/12 does not contain an appendix detailing the statistics for self inflicted injuries and deaths in custody in the last five years, since such information was published in previous years; (ii) whether such an appendix will be included in future annual reports; and (iii) who made the decision to exclude the appendix in the Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11 and 2011/12 and the rationale for the decision.

(AQW 16046/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following publication of its 2009/10 Annual Report, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) carried out a review of the annual report template with a view to making improvements and

better aligning it to the new 2011-2015 Corporate Plan. The report's format was also streamlined to avoid duplication of information. The decision was also taken to rationalise a number of appendices, including the one referred to in the question. However, subsequent Annual Reports have continued to provide information relating to any deaths in custody which have occurred during the period of time covered by those reports in the context of Significant Internal Control Issues.

NIPS will continue to keep the format for the annual report under review although at this stage it is not possible to say definitively whether future reports will include an appendix on self inflicted injuries and deaths in custody. However, I can confirm that information on deaths in custody will continue to be provided in future reports. In addition, NIPS' 2012-2013 Business Plan sets a specific Key Performance Target (KPT) for the Service for reducing the number of instances of self harm and the 2012/13 Annual report will provide information on performance against this KPT.

The Annual Report format was approved by the Director General of NIPS and the Acting Director General of NIPS in the 2010/11 and 2011/12 reports respectively.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Nursing Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to all Northern Ireland Prison Service nursing staff who have been dismissed or suspended over prisoner suicides, how many were trained in Supporting Prisoners at Risk prior to the incidents.

(AQW 16049/11-15)

Mr Ford: All Prison Officers who applied for and were found suitable at selection for the specialism of Hospital Officer, including those suspended or dismissed as a result of the death in custody in 2009 of a prisoner at Maghaberry prison, would have completed the nurses induction training which included training in the Prisoner at Risk (PAR) process, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) training.

These suspensions pre-date the introduction of the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process which was introduced in December 2009.

Court Estate Inspections on Designated Smoking Areas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 14948/11-15, how many instances of non-compliance have occurred at each court house in which security staff have raised concerns with local management.

(AQW 16050/11-15)

Mr Ford: Security staff at Newry Courthouse have recently raised one instance of possible non-compliance with the Court Administrator.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Nursing Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to all Northern Ireland Prison Service nursing staff who have been dismissed or suspended over prisoner suicides, how many were trained in Prisoner At Risk procedures and the completion of PAR1 or Supporting Prisoners at Risk forms prior to the incidents.

(AQW 16052/11-15)

Mr Ford: All Prison Officers who applied for and were found suitable at selection for the specialism of Hospital Officer, including those suspended or dismissed as a result of the death in custody in 2009 of a prisoner at Maghaberry prison, would have completed the nurses induction training which included training in the Prisoner at Risk (PAR) process, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) training.

These suspensions pre-date the introduction of the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process which was introduced in December 2009.

Vacancies in the Northern Ireland High Court

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many competitions have been held to fill vacancies in the Northern Ireland High Court since 2005; (ii) how many valid applications were received from (a) males; and (b) females; (iii) how many (a) males; and (b) females have been appointed as a result of these competitions; and (iv) how many successful applicants were practising barristers at the time of their appointment.

(AQW 16077/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service retains records on competitions to fill vacancies for three years. There have been eight competitions to fill staff vacancies in the High Court since 2008. The table below relates to concluded competitions:

Number of competitions	Male applicants	Female applicants	Male appointees	Female appointees	Practising Barristers appointed
7	19	59	2	6	0

One competition has not concluded, there were 11 male and 12 female applicants.

In November 2010 the Lord Chief Justice appointed five persons with a social work background as General Visitors to support the Master of Care and Protection:

Number of competitions	Male applicants	Female applicants	Male appointees	Female appointees	Practising Barristers appointed
1	1	10	1	4	0

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission is the independent body for the appointment of judicial office holders and is sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Therefore I cannot provide an answer for judicial appointments to the High Court.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total number of people who have been assisted by the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) in each year since it was established; and the number of police officers retiring under the Patten severance scheme that have been assisted by PRRT in each of year since it was established.

(AQW 16105/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the total number of people assisted by PRRT since 1 April 2007. The information requested, since PRRT was established on 2 March 1999 to 31 March 2007, is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
Training & Education	339*	389*	496	495	327	2046
Personal Development	432	306	259	190	167	1354
Psychology	331	237	178	169	210	1125
Physiotherapy	370	415	546	635	709	2675
Total	1472	1347	1479	1489	1413	7200

- * Training & Education – the number of new clients is only available from 2009/10 onwards therefore an average has been taken for the years 2007/08 and 2008/09.

PRRT does not make a distinction between Patten and non-Patten retirees as the organisation was set up to provide a service to all former police officers. Therefore I am unable to confirm the number of police officers retiring under the Patten severance scheme that have been assisted by PRRT in each of year since it was established.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Justice to list all companies with whom the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust has had (i) service level agreements; (ii) contracts; or (iii) commercial transactions since it was established; and the value of each.

(AQW 16106/11-15)

Mr Ford: In line with guidance received from both the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and from OFMdFM, it is not appropriate to publish the names of contractors awarded DoJ contracts.

The table below details the total value of (i) service level agreements; (ii) contracts; or (iii) commercial transactions that the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) has had with companies from 1 April 2007 to 29 October 2012.

Category	Amount £
(i) Service Level Agreements	2,852,535
(ii) Contracts	1,329,318
(iii) Commercial Transactions	6,731,603
Total	10,913,456

The information requested, since PRRT was established in 1999 to March 2007, is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Board of Directors of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Justice to list the Board of Directors of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust in each year since it was established; and to detail any relevant interests which were declared by the Directors.

(AQW 16107/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Board of Directors of the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT), since it was established on 2 March 1999, together with the period they served as a member and the interests declared by the Directors in post from 1 April 2007 to date are detailed in the table below. For the period 2 March 1999 to 31 March 2007 no declared interests were recorded by PRRT.

Board Member	Membership Period	Declared Interests
Blair, George	March 1999 – June 2000	Not Recorded
Brown, Billy	March 1999 –March 2007	Not Recorded
	April 2007 – Present	None
Courtney, David	June 1999 – June 2005	Not Recorded
D'Arcy, Jackie	April 2000 –March 2007	Not Recorded
	April 2007 – Present	Castlerobin Consultancies -Provision of professional services (marketing courses)

Board Member	Membership Period	Declared Interests
Dixon, Catherine	March 1999 – June 2006	Not Recorded
	August 2009 – Present	None
Fairburn, James	April 2000 – July 2000	Not recorded
Hamill, Sheamus	March 2006 – Present	Chair of Futures (NI) Ltd
Hanna, Teddy	July 2009 – Present	Chair of Audit Committee for NI Police Fund; Chair of Audit Committee for Action Mental Health; Honary Treasurer Ulster New Zealand Trust
Irvine, Jim	March 1999 – June 2005	Not recorded
Lewis, Tim	August 1999 – June 2007	Not recorded
	August 2009 - Present	None
Maginnis, Ken	March 1999 – June 2001	Not recorded
McClurg, David	March 1999 – June 2006 June 2008 - Present	Not recorded Chair of NI Police Fund; Practice Manager of Edwards & Co Solicitors (private company); Vice President of NI Retired Police Officers Association
Montgomery, Irvin	June 2006 – March 2007	Not recorded
Sherrard, Aidan	October 2000 – Present	None

Board Member	Membership Period	Declared Interests
Spence, Terry	June 2007 – March 2008 April 2008 – March 2009 April 2009 – March 2010 April 2010 – March 2011 April 2011 – March 2012	Police Dependents Trust; RUC Benevolent Fund; Harp and Crown Credit Union Chair of Police Federation; Director of NI Police Fund Chair of Police Federation; Vice Chair of PSNI/RUCGC Benevolent Fund; Chair of Police Dependents Trust; Director of NI Police Fund Chair of Police Federation; Vice Chair of PSNI/RUCGC Benevolent Fund; Chair of Police Dependents Trust; Director of NI Police Fund; Trustee of National Police Memorial Day Committee; Executive Committee member of European Confederation of Police; Director of NI Police Fund Director of NI Police Fund; Chair of Police Federation; Vice Chair of PSNI/RUCGC Benevolent Fund; Chair of Police Dependents Trust
Stewart, Joe	February 2002 – April 2007 April 2007 – March 2009 April 2009 – Present	Not recorded None Director of HR for PSNI
Strudley, David	April 2000 – June 2003	Not recorded
Toner, Roy	June 2008 – June 2009	Not recorded
Walker, Richard	March 1999 – March 2007 April 2007 – March 2008 April 2008 – March 2009 April 2009 – Present	Not recorded None Provision of consultancy services for PRRT None
Watkins, David	August 2009 – Present	None

Supporting Prisoners at Risk Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Supporting Prisoners at Risk cases have been opened in each prison facility in each year since the introduction of the scheme.

(AQW 16108/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process commenced in all three establishments on 1 December 2009, however the recording of SPARs was not introduced onto the Prisoner Record Information System (PRISM) until the 12 January 2010. The table below details the number of SPAR cases opened since 12 January 2010.

Year	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood (Female)	Hydebank Wood (Male)
2010	425	32	80	133
2011	489	47	88	201
2012*	467	44	98	143

* Covers the period 1 January - 30 September 2012

Prisoner Held in HMP Maghaberry Under a False Name

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how a person was prosecuted and held in HMP Maghaberry under a false name; and how this only came to light after the prisoner's death in custody.

(AQW 16110/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prisoner in question was committed into custody in HMP Maghaberry on 27 June 2012.

At the point of committal the identity of the person being committed is confirmed by a member of the PSNI or a member of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's Prisoner Escorting Court Custody Service (PECCS) staff, who has escorted the person to prison following their attendance at court.

On this occasion a member of PECCS identified the person being committed as having associated alias records. NIPS staff were aware that he was known to the PSNI by both names. It is not unknown for persons being committed into custody to have a number of "alias records".

Prisoners at Risk Initiative

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many staff were trained in the Prisoners at Risk initiative; and whether this training was available to all staff.

(AQW 16111/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner at Risk 1 (PAR1) process was replaced by the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process in 2009.

Since its launch in 2009, SPAR training has been delivered to over 600 staff including new recruits, discipline managers, discipline staff and staff in specialist and supporting functions.

Prior to the introduction of SPAR, PAR1 awareness sessions were made available to all staff.

Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Thomas Ward was ever placed in, or was resident in, Thompson House.

(AQW 16112/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Data Protection Act 1998 precludes the provision of information relating to placement or residence of an offender after his release from prison.

Victims of Sexual Abuse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether any reassessment is taking place of the way that victims of sexual abuse are treated within the judicial process.

(AQW 16121/11-15)

Mr Ford: I recently published for consultation a new five year strategy for victims and witnesses of crime. This aims to provide better quality services, responsive to the needs of victims and witnesses, and secure a more positive experience for all those who engage with the criminal justice system.

In this respect it is important that victims of sexual abuse have access to a range of support services as they move through the criminal justice process and that the support offered is tailored to their individual needs, as much as possible.

A number of actions in the draft strategy will help secure this including the establishment of a new Victim and Witness Care Unit; a comprehensive formal assessment process to identify the needs of individual victims and witnesses; commencement of Article 16 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, dealing with video recorded cross-examination and re-examination; and the development and implementation of a process to collate the experiences of victims of serious crime. Taken together this should improve the services provided to some of the most vulnerable in our society.

You will be aware that my Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety are the lead Departments in tackling sexual violence. The current "Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse" Strategy will end in 2013. A new joint Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy, is due to be published in Autumn 2013. The new joint strategy will be developed through consultation with key stakeholders and a public consultation in 2013.

Attacks on Orange Halls

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Orange Halls have been attacked in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16122/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the following information details the number of attacks on Orange Halls and Apprentice Boys' Halls for each of the last five years.

	July 2007 to June 2008	July 2008 to June 2009	July 2009 to June 2010	July 2010 to June 2011	July 2011 to June 2012
No. of Attacks on Orange/ Apprentice Boys' Halls	63	61	72	58	32

Legal High Substances

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice whether he will consider changes in legislation on the availability of the legal high substances which are currently available in retail outlets.

(AQW 16136/11-15)

Mr Ford: The issue of legal highs, or new psychoactive substances, fall within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which is a reserved matter for the UK Government.

Selling Illegal Fireworks

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted for; and (ii) convicted of selling illegal fireworks, in the last three years.

(AQW 16141/11-15)

Mr Ford: Selling of illegal fireworks may be prosecuted under Regulation 4(2) and 13 of the Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

There have been no convictions for selling of illegal fireworks in the calendar years 2004 – 2009, the latest year for which conviction figures are available. There have been no prosecutions from 2004-2006, however prosecution data are not available for 2007 to 2009.

There have been prosecutions and convictions, however, for a number of fireworks related offences prosecuted under the Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. These are given in the table below.

NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS FOR FIREWORK RELATED OFFENCES 2004-2009¹.

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions
2004	26	21
2005	18	17
2006	12	10
2007	N/A	48
2008	N/A	26
2009	N/A	21

- 1 The offences included are, unlawfully keeping fireworks for sale, throwing firework, unlawfully exposing fireworks for sale, possession of the “banger”, possession of fireworks without a licence, possession of prohibited fireworks, selling fireworks without production of a licence, failing to keep proper records of fireworks sales, purchasing fireworks without a licence and using fireworks without a licence.

In the run-up to Hallowe'en last year, PSNI seized 9,760 fireworks. There were 24 arrests and 27 prosecutions were initiated.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Justice how many police officers, who retired under the Patten severance scheme, have undergone employment training provided by the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust; and how many of those retired officers have subsequently taken up new employment. **(AQW 16143/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) provide business training courses for all retired police officers. PRRT does not record whether officers retired under the Patten severance scheme or whether retired officers have subsequently taken up new employment.

The table below details the total number of people for whom PRRT provided business training courses since 1 April 2007 to date. The information requested since PRRT was established on 2 March 1999 to 31 March 2007 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
132	96	93	75	53	23

Northern Ireland Prison Service Nursing Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Northern Ireland Prison Service nursing staff, who are currently suspended or were dismissed over prisoner suicides, had been fully Prisoner At Risk trained prior to the respective incidents.

(AQW 16165/11-15)

Mr Ford: All Prison Officers who applied for and were found suitable at selection for the specialism of Hospital Officer, including those suspended or dismissed as a result of the death in custody in 2009 of a prisoner at Maghaberry prison, would have completed the nurses induction training which included training in the Prisoner at Risk (PAR) process, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) training.

These suspensions pre-date the introduction of the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process which was introduced in December 2009.

Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Injury on Duty awards have been appealed, and of those, how many resulted in the award being (i) varied upwards, (ii) varied downwards, and (iii) the same, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16191/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department only holds detailed records of completed medical appeals from 2010. During this period 435 appeals were completed. Details of the outcomes are provided in the table below:-

Year	Upwards	Downwards	The same
2010	37	7	184
2011	17	9	87
2012	3	1	37

In addition to the above the decision to refuse an Injury on Duty award was overturned in 52 appeals and one award was removed on appeal.

Applied Language Solutions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether the current failure of Applied Language Solutions to function in dispensing court interpreters in England and Wales is likely to have a knock on effect in this jurisdiction.

(AQW 16218/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is not expected to be any knock on effect in Northern Ireland of the problems associated with Applied Language Solutions in England and Wales as the Northern Ireland contract is with a different supplier.

The current interpretation services contract for face to face interpretation for the courts (both civil and criminal) along with all other criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland was awarded to CONNECT- NICEM for foreign language interpretation and to Action on Hearing Loss for sign language interpretation. The contract has currently been running smoothly and there have been no complaints regarding the quality of service provided.

Protests at Holy Cross Primary School in North Belfast

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of (i) prosecutions; and (ii) convictions arising out of the protests at Holy Cross Primary School in North Belfast.

(AQW 16326/11-15)

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

Department for Regional Development

Translink: Cases of Anti-Social Behaviour and Abuse of Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many successful prosecutions there have been for cases of anti-social behaviour and abuse of staff taken by Translink, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 15860/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Translink advise that in the case of NIR there are bye laws in place which facilitate them in pursuing prosecutions for a range of offences. The table below details the number of incidents that have been pursued successfully through the Court system for NI Railways:

Calendar Year	Anti-Social Behaviour	Abuse of Staff
2007	45	12
2008	35	3
2009	29	4
2010	29	13
2011	39	9

The above figures relate to the years in which the prosecutions were brought; the incidents themselves may well have taken place in a previous year.

In the case of Metro and Ulsterbus, such matters would routinely be pursued by PSNI as criminal matters. Translink does not hold details of successful prosecutions in this regard.

Proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide an estimate of any financial benefits of the proposed A5 western transport corridor to the economy west of the Bann.

(AQW 15870/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Economic assessments associated with the A5 Western Transport Corridor scheme indicate that, over the standard 60-year assessment period, the financial benefits associated with implementing the entire A5 dualling project would be of the order of £1.072 billion.

This includes accident and time savings which generate benefits associated with existing use as well as wider economic benefits associated with regeneration of the local area.

Rural Primary Schools in the Coleraine Area

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 14848/11-15, to list the schools involved.

(AQW 15928/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the rural schools, in the Coleraine Borough Council area, which have requested additional traffic safety precautions in the vicinity of the school, in each of the last five years are:-

- Gorran Primary School, Garvagh;
- Ballyhackett Primary School, Castlerock;
- Culcrow Primary School, Coleraine;
- Ballerin Primary School, Garvagh; and
- St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School, Garvagh (two requests).

Accidents on the B7

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to reduce the number of accidents occurring on the B7, at the black spot 500 meters south of the Derrylecka Road entrance, Newry.

(AQW 15939/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has no plans to carry out any further improvements at the location you have described. The Member may be aware that an improvement scheme at the junction of Derryleckagh Road/Bridge Road, costing £172K, was completed in April 2012.

I can also advise that collision records supplied by the PSNI, covering the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2011, indicate that there has been one minor collision involving personal injury at this location.

New Traffic Lights Planned for the Holywood Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new traffic lights are planned for the Holywood area.

(AQW 15951/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that the work programme for the present financial year for Roads Service's Eastern Division may be viewed on-line by selecting 'Roads Service reports to councils' from the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information.htm

Work programmes for subsequent years have not yet been finalised.

Increased Problem of Flooding

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development how regularly Roads Service officials co-operate with other Departments in relation to the increased problem of flooding in each divisional area.

(AQW 15971/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service officials are in regular contact, and co-operate fully, with other Departments in relation to flooding related issues in each divisional area. To facilitate this co-operation, Roads Service has established a network of Divisional Flood Liaison officers to provide clear channels of communications for other departments, local Councils and Area Health Emergency Planning Co-ordinators (EPCO's).

Roads Service also plays a key role in multi-agency flooding groups, such as the Flood Liaison group (FLG), which promotes co-operation and co-ordination between the main organisations required to

respond to flooding incidents, namely: Rivers Agency, NI Water, Roads Service and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

This group meets at both Regional and Divisional level, maintaining and reviewing on an ongoing basis a schedule of combined and multi-agency flooding hotspots. This group discusses the issues associated with individual flooding instances and, where possible, agrees multi-agency solutions to either resolve the causes of flooding, or put forward flood alleviation schemes. Roads Service officials have regular contact with their counterparts in the FLG, and although the group only meets formally every six months, contact is maintained on an almost-weekly basis, with the facility to meet on an ad hoc basis when required, or following a flooding incident.

On a more operational level, the FLG has developed a Best Practice Guidelines document which provides a framework for the three drainage agencies to coordinate their response to flooding incidents. This document establishes lines of communications and reporting procedures across the various agencies.

Unfinished Sewerage System at Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the unfinished sewerage system at Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass, involving NI Water and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, including timescales and expected outcomes.

(AQW 15996/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the sewers and pumping station at Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass are private because the developer did not enter into an agreement for the future adoption of the system. Since it is not part of the public sewerage system, NIW has no involvement in its maintenance or repair.

Unfinished Sewerage System at Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the unfinished sewerage system in Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass, (i) for an update on the investigations carried out by McAdam Design engineering company; (ii) to detail the nature of the investigations; and (iii) who instructed that the investigations be carried out.

(AQW 15997/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the developer did not enter into an agreement for the future adoption of the sewers and pumping station at Loughdian Brae, Poyntzpass and the system remains private. NIW therefore has no obligation to consider adoption of the sewerage system and no responsibility for its maintenance or repair. However, following a request from a public representative NIW did ask McAdam Design, who were undertaking work in the area, to carry out a visual inspection of the private pumping station to identify the properties served by it. This confirmed that the pumping station services three of the houses in the development and that it would not meet the standard specification or requirements for adoption by NIW.

Bus Shelters on the Glen Road, West Belfast

Ms McCorley asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of bus shelters on the Glen Road, West Belfast; and (ii) what plans he has to increase the number.

(AQW 15998/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that there are 2 bus shelters on the Glen Road.

Roads Service has further advised that it currently has no plans to provide any more bus shelters through its contract with Adshel.

Prosecutions for Fare Evasion on Trains and Buses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of prosecutions for fare evasion on (i) trains; and (ii) buses, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16003/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the number of prosecutions for fare evasion on trains in each of the last three years.

Year	2009	2010	2011
No. of prosecutions	22	12	6

The above figures relate to the calendar years in which the prosecutions were brought; the incidents themselves may well have taken place in a previous year.

As far as the bus companies are concerned, the nature of operations does not lend itself to fare evasion, as passengers boarding have to interact with the driver to either purchase a ticket or present a smartcard for validation. The introduction of an increasing range of such facilities over recent years has resulted in negligible levels of fare evasion.

Flood Prevention Measures

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to reinforce existing, and invest in more, flood prevention measures in anticipation of flooding in North Antrim in the upcoming months.

(AQW 16006/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that 12 locations in the North Antrim area are in the process of being investigated by representatives from Northern Ireland Water, Roads Service, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Rivers Agency, to establish the causes of recent flooding and decide what measures could be considered by each Department to reduce the risk. Until the results of these investigations are known, I am unable to commit to any programme of works or investment by my Department.

I have also been advised by the Department for Agriculture and Regional Development that Rivers Agency plans, as a result of its investigations, to undertake flood alleviation schemes at Sea View Terrace, Waterfoot and at Knocknacarry, Cushendun, in this financial year.

Comber Bypass

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 13777/11-15, whether it is still the case that no major maintenance work has been carried out on the Comber Bypass since it was opened to traffic and that the cost of routine maintenance is not available for individual roads.

(AQW 16040/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that officials in my Department's Roads Service have confirmed that no major maintenance work has been carried out on the Comber Bypass since it was opened to traffic.

In addition, as indicated in my recent response to the Member's question (AQW 13777/11-15 refers), I can advise that details of the cost of carrying out routine maintenance for individual roads are not available, as expenditure on such activities is recorded on a District Council basis.

Parking Enforcement Services

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the tender for the delivery of parking enforcement services.

(AQW 16041/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department awarded the new contract for the provision of parking enforcement and car park management services to NSL Ltd on 19 July 2012 and it commenced on 30 October 2012.

Department's Buildings: Biomass Heating

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether feasibility studies have been conducted to assess the potential savings that could be achieved by switching his Department's buildings to biomass heating.

(AQW 16053/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Pilot projects to assess the suitability of the use of biomass have been installed at three sites within the NICS Office Estate. None of these pilot projects are taking place within buildings for which DRD is responsible.

Cutting Overgrown Hedge Along Roads

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on cutting overgrown hedge along roads, in each of the last two financial years.

(AQW 16062/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the information requested is not held in a format that can be readily extracted to provide figures specifically for spend on hedge cutting.

Roads Service has further advised that the vast majority of roadside hedges belong to adjacent landowners and responsibility for maintenance lies with these landowners. When hedges become overgrown causing an obstruction or danger to road users, Roads Service officials consult with the relevant landowners to have them cut, and in some cases will serve Notices under The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

Traffic Calming Measures in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on traffic calming measures in the North Down area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 16071/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my response to AQW 12904/11-15.

Parking Enforcement Services

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has signed a new contract with NSL to provide parking enforcement services; and to provide the details.

(AQW 16080/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department awarded a new contract for the provision of parking enforcement and car park management services to NSL Ltd on 19 July 2012. This contract commenced on 30 October 2012 and will operate for an initial term of four years, with an option to extend up to a maximum total period of 10 years.

Mobile Traffic Wardens

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has undertaken a pilot scheme involving mobile traffic wardens; and to detail the cost of the scheme.

(AQW 16081/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not undertaken a pilot scheme involving mobile traffic wardens.

However, I can advise the Member that Mobile Traffic Attendants have been deployed since the commencement of the initial parking enforcement contract in October 2006. Currently, Traffic Attendants are routinely deployed to their patrol locations by various means, including by foot, by car or moped.

Removal of Vehicles Obstructing Bus Lanes or Parked Dangerously

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department, through NSL, has the power to remove vehicles obstructing bus lanes or parked dangerously, and, if not, who has the power to remove these vehicles.

(AQW 16083/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Under the Traffic Management (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, my Department has the power to remove vehicles on a public road, or in a parking place, under the following conditions:

- (a) a traffic attendant has fixed a penalty charge notice to the vehicle; or
- (b) an amount is recoverable from the owner of the vehicle under Article 15 and prescribed conditions are satisfied.

Currently, my Department only removes vehicles for debt recovery purposes, under condition (b) above.

However, under condition (a) above, officials will be developing procedures that will allow my Department to commence removal of vehicles illegally parked on bus lanes and urban clearways. I hope to introduce this in 2013 through my Department's contract with NSL.

Newly Surfaced Roads and Footpaths Being Dug Up

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department intends to take to improve the joined-up approach with companies such as Phoenix Gas to prevent newly surfaced roads and footpaths being dug up.

(AQW 16097/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that my Department's Roads Service already co-ordinates work with Phoenix Natural Gas and other utility companies to minimise the risk of newly surfaced roads and footpaths being dug up. However, some utility works cannot be planned sufficiently far in advance so as to avoid the excavation of some newly surfaced roads and footpaths. Such utility work would include a request for a new customer connection, which is a more frequent occurrence for companies, such as Phoenix Natural Gas, which have a growing customer base, than for those utility companies which already provide a connection to virtually every property.

Traffic Calming Measures

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the procedures involved in the introduction of traffic calming measures, in particular when objections have been raised by local residents.

(AQW 16149/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service's traffic calming policy aims to manage vehicle speed and driver behaviour, primarily in order to reduce collisions, especially those involving vulnerable road users. Traffic calming will be considered for residential and urban areas, thereby reducing the speed and volume of local and through traffic, consequently improving their environmental quality and local amenity value.

The assessment process to prioritise traffic calming schemes takes account of collision history, volume of traffic and its speed and also environmental factors.

Those residents most likely to be affected by a traffic calming scheme, are consulted before it is implemented. In addition, the Emergency Services, Translink, Councils, etc are normally consulted during the design process of schemes, and statutory notices of intention to proceed with schemes are placed in the local press and at appropriate points on the road, as required by Article 65 of The Roads (NI) Order 1993.

When a scheme is proposed, frontagers directly affected by the proposals are normally notified by letter and/or leaflet with an accompanying map outlining the proposed scheme. For larger, complex, or more controversial schemes, it is sometimes appropriate to meet with local residents' groups or hold public exhibitions in the affected area.

When individuals object to a traffic calming proposal (and the objection is made within the specified period), Roads Service gives full and sympathetic consideration to the objections and will try to address any concerns raised as quickly as possible.

In all instances, Roads Service will write to the individuals concerned explaining why the scheme is required, what precisely is being proposed and the implications for traffic in the area. The letter also addresses the objections or points raised and requests that the objector considers withdrawing his/her objection.

If, following correspondence with the objector, it is not possible to overcome objections, Roads Service may decide to:

- hold a public inquiry;
- proceed with the scheme without recourse to a public inquiry;
- re-advertise the scheme and invite objections or representations anew; or
- abandon the scheme.

Grievance Cases and Whistleblowing Complaints

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) grievance cases have been taken; and (ii) whistleblowing complaints have been made, against (a) his Department; and (b) its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last five years; and at what cost to the public purse.

(AQW 16156/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The numbers of grievance cases within my Department in each of the last five years are set out in the table below. No central record of whistleblowing complaints concerning the Department is maintained.

Year	Number of grievance cases
2008	19
2009	26
2010	14
2011	11
2012	27 (to date)

Over this period, the total cost to the public purse in terms of compensation awarded by the Department as a result of grievances amounted to £5,886.

As far as the Department's Arm's-Length Bodies are concerned, the numbers of grievance and whistleblowing cases within Translink and NI Water during each of the last five years were detailed in my recent answers to AQW 15212/11-15 and AQW 15148/11-15 respectively.

I am advised that, over this period, no compensation in relation to internal grievances or whistleblowing complaints was awarded by Translink. In the case of NI Water, costs of £40,000 were incurred on grievance cases with no costs incurred as a result of whistleblowing complaints.

Magherafelt Bypass

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the Magherafelt Bypass.
(AQO 2799/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member may be aware, the focus of the Strategic Road Improvement (SRI) Programme in the current Budget period to 2015 is on the delivery of the A8, A5 and A2 dual carriageway schemes. My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Magherafelt Bypass is at an advanced stage, with the Notice of Intention to Proceed, associated with the Environmental Statement and the Direction Order for the scheme published in 2010. The timing of procurement and construction of Magherafelt Bypass will, however, be dependent on subsequent budgetary settlements.

Public Transport: Schoolchildren

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he has given to extending free public transport to all school children.

(AQO 2802/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At present children under 16 are entitled to half-price concession fares on public transport. School children over 16 can get one third off their public transport fares by using a y-Link smartcard. A large number of children are also eligible for free transport to and from school but via Department of Education funding arrangements. Given the current pressures on my budget I am not in a position to extend free public transport to all school children.

Concessionary Fares schemes currently in place currently costs around £30 million per annum and over the next few years this budget will come under significant pressure.

A5 Dual Carriageway: Costs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the cost implications resulting from the delay in the commencement of the A5 scheme.

(AQO 2804/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am advised by my Department's Roads Service that the main construction contracts were due to start in mid-October 2012, and the delay in commencing construction as programmed will certainly result in increased costs in a number of areas. Assuming that there is no change to the total construction period, there would be direct, quantified inflationary increases arising from month-on-month delays to the start of construction. The project team will attempt to mitigate the impact of any delay; however, the initial assessment of a delay to the starting date is in the order of £700K to £750K per month.

Railways: Coleraine to Londonderry

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made on the relaying of the Coleraine to Londonderry rail link, including an estimate of the completion date.

(AQO 2808/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is closely monitoring progress with the relaying of the Coleraine to Londonderry rail link and is represented at Project Board Meetings. Work on site commenced as planned in July 2012 and I am pleased to report that the contractors are making good progress. The work is on programme to be completed by April 2013 when services on the line will resume as planned.

A2: Greenisland

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the scheme to alleviate congestion on the A2 at Greenisland.

(AQO 2809/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, following a series of meetings with Executive colleagues and a review of spending priorities across my department for the budget period, I issued a statement on 14 February 2012, announcing that funding had been secured for delivery of this scheme within the 2011-15 budget period.

Following this, my Department's Roads Service commenced the procurement process for the scheme which included a pre-qualification competition to select suitable tenderers followed by the tendering procedure for the Design and Build contract. This tendering procedure is ongoing.

Subject to successful completion of the procurement process, it is anticipated that the construction stage will commence in early 2013 and will take approximately 2 years to complete.

My Department has recently acquired the lands necessary to construct the scheme, through the publication of the Vesting Order on 31 October 2012.

A26: Dual Carriageway

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the upgrading of the A26 north of Glarryford.

(AQO 2810/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that development of this scheme commenced in 2006.

The draft Vesting Order, draft Direction Order, draft Stopping-Up of Private Access Order, and the Environmental Statement were published on 20 March 2012 initiating the formal consultation period for the scheme, which ran until 11 May 2012. Although my Department received only a small number of objections to this scheme, I decided that it was important to hold a Public Inquiry to discuss and debate the issues of contention. The Public Inquiry will commence on 5 November 2012 at the Tullyglass House Hotel in Ballymena.

As the Member may be aware, the funding levels within the current budget do not allow for construction to start before April 2015 with the focus of the Strategic Road Improvement (SRI) programme in the current Budget period to 2015 on the delivery of the A8, A5 and A2 dual carriageway schemes.

Beyond 2015 the recently published Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011 - 2021 envisages the A26 being delivered as part of a package of high priority highway schemes, using alternative finance. Roads Service will investigate this delivery option on the basis of affordability, relative value for money and compliance with public expenditure rules.

Progression of the A26 scheme will therefore be subject to a successful outcome to the Public Inquiry and confirmation of funding in future budget settlements.

Department for Social Development

Re-Development of Derelict Buildings in Town Centres

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Social Development what grants or funding are available to assist property owners with the re-development of derelict buildings in town centres, particularly in rural areas. **(AQW 15805/11-15)**

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): My Department's physical regeneration programmes are delivered in urban areas which are defined by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group' as being settlements of 4,500 people and over.

Urban Regeneration Grants can be applied for by owners of eligible properties. These grants are targeted at bringing derelict or vacant Town Centre properties back into productive use and at enhancing the commercial viability of existing properties. The scheme operates in specific priority urban areas with the aim of encouraging their economic, physical and social regeneration by:

- encouraging investment in property to improve the economy;
- assisting the expansion of local businesses and the creation of jobs; and,
- improving the appearance of existing buildings and supporting the erection of new buildings on derelict or run down sites.

My Department also operates the pilot ReStore programme which aims to direct funding at distinct commercial districts and small independent retailers and traders. The initiative seeks to provide technical and funding assistance to design and improve streetscapes and building frontages and promote the areas as shopping destinations. Several pilot schemes have recently been rolled out in Northern Ireland with the possibility of further funding for similar projects.

Universal Credit

Mrs Dobson asked Minister for Social Development, given that the moves towards Universal Credit will necessitate the purchase of a considerable number of scanners and other computer related equipment, whether he is giving consideration to providing additional funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

(AQW 15908/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department provides funding in the region of £3m per annum to a number of organisations to support advice provision, including Citizens Advice Bureau. We are currently considering what further support our customers require in relation to Universal Credit. Consultation with customers and stakeholders has already begun and officials will shortly be meeting with representatives from the voluntary and community sector to discuss the role they can play in implementing Universal Credit in Northern Ireland.

Building Control Fees Wavier on Loft Insulation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what impact the removal by local councils of the building control fees wavier on loft insulation, installed under the Warm Homes Scheme, will have on fuel poverty.

(AQW 15949/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Building Control professionals have expressed concerns about the lack of ventilation in roof spaces which is leading to serious problems with damp. They argue that there is a need to inspect insulation given the focus there has been in recent years on roof space insulation. Article 13(2) (e) of The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland Order) 1979 authorises district councils to charge prescribed fees for inspection of roof space insulation. There is no mandatory obligation to do so but where District Councils decide to charge fees they can. The fees that are applicable are those set by

the Department of Finance and Personnel. However, District Councils may absorb the fee i.e. pay the fee itself using powers provided by Section 115 of The Local Government Act 1972.

A dispute process is underway between the Warm Homes Scheme managers and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to ascertain who is obliged to pay the Building Control Fee and this matter has not been concluded.

I am confident that the Public Service Agreement target of assisting 9,000 vulnerable homes with energy efficiency improvements will be met. The commitment of both the Warm Homes Scheme managers and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has ensured that, since the contract was awarded in 2009, the target has consistently been exceeded.

Housing Executive Properties: Fitting of Showers

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development why does it take up to 40 weeks for a shower to be fitted in a Housing Executive property, even after a recommendation from an occupational therapist.
(AQW 15950/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Demand for housing adaptations has risen as a result of increasing numbers of elderly and disabled people opting to live at home rather than being cared for in residential care facilities. Upwards of 11,000 showers/other shower adaptations were completed between 2004 and 2012.

The Housing Executive currently classifies the need for shower adaptations as either “urgent” or “non-urgent”, based on arrangements in place with the Community Occupational Therapy Service. The Service Standard for delivery of “urgent” showers is 10 weeks and 40 weeks for “non-urgent” showers.

However, an Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptation Services has been jointly approved by myself and the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and it is intended that this will be considered by my Executive colleagues this month. One of the recommendations emanating from that is to initiate a review to develop common standards of customer service across all housing tenures and Health and Social Care Trusts. On that basis, historic performance targets (such as the 40 week “non-urgent” shower target) are being reviewed to reflect current operational performance standards.

Community Groups in North Down: Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding his Department has awarded to community groups in North Down, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 15985/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Details of funding awarded by my Department to community groups in North Down, in each of the last five years, are as follows:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£268,937.88	£437,755.12	£477,541.84	£530,903.19	£526,024.69

My Department also provides funding to community groups through the Community Support Programme, a jointly funded programme between DSD and councils, with councils taking responsibility for allocation of funding in accordance with their local Community Support Plans. Whilst North Down Borough Council provides Community Support Programme funding to community groups in North Down, a breakdown of DSD funding from this programme is not readily available.

Work Planned for the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the work his Department has planned to carry out in the North Down constituency in 2012/13.

(AQW 15986/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is currently working with North Down Borough Council on a major public realm scheme for both Bangor and Holywood. The Council has appointed an Integrated Consultancy Team to develop the concept design and complete an economic appraisal and this report is due to be completed in December 2012. When completed the economic appraisal will be submitted to my Department for consideration and subject to funding being available and all necessary approvals, the schemes will commence on the ground in January 2014.

The process of commissioning a consultancy team to carry out a masterplan for Holywood Town Centre and this assignment will commence in February 2013.

Under its Neighbourhood Renewal programme, the Department continues to work in Kilcooley in Bangor where, in addition to the programme of measures already underway, a number of new projects are being advanced in conjunction with the South Eastern Education and Library Board, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and Kilcooley Allotments Ltd. These include a new literacy and numeracy programme with the necessary Information Technology facilities to complement this together with the provision of new outdoor play equipment in Kilcooley Primary School, new Family Health and Wellbeing and Men's Health & Education Projects and a Healthy Living Centre Project to compliment the Kilcooley Allotments initiative.

Under the Areas at Risk programme, work is ongoing with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the local community association in Beechfield in Donaghadee to explore the potential for carrying out some minor environmental improvements within the Beechfield estates. This will complement the programme of community capacity work already underway in the area.

Under the Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme, funding has been allocated to Rathgill Community Association and Bangor YMCA to fund community, economic or social renewal projects in Rathgill Estate, Bangor and the Harbour, Bangor respectively.

The Housing Executive advises that its maintenance programme for the North Down area for 2012/13 is as follows:

Scheme	Dwellings	Start Date
Lisnabreen/Clanmorris double glazing	168	On site (August 2012)
Bangor (Rathgill/Kilcooley/Loughview) double glazing	167	On site (October 2012)
Whitehill double glazing	257	November 2012
Bangor medium-rise flats fire doors	84	January 2013
Bangor low-rise flats fires	632	January 2013
Bangor frost stats	94	November 2012
Bangor smoke detector replacements	153	On site (August 2012)
Bangor district carbon monoxide detectors	318	November 2012

In 2012/13, my Department's Voluntary and Community Unit is providing funding totalling £142,149.10 to help support the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the North Down Constituency. This is broken down as follows:

Organisation	Funding Programme	Funding Award
Holywood Family Trust	Community Investment Fund	£61,786.00
North Down Community Network	Community Investment Fund	£49,890.74
Kilcooley Women's Centre	Women's Centres Childcare Fund	£30,472.36

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.

Houses of Multiple Occupancy Registered in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses of multiple occupancy are registered in North Down.

(AQW 15988/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has registered 35 Houses in Multiple Occupancy in North Down.

Double-Glazing Scheme for Housing Executive Properties

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the double-glazing window replacement scheme for Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties.

(AQW 16039/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has put in place a programme to install double glazing windows in all of its dwellings by 2015. To date the Housing Executive and its contractors have already started double glazing and external cyclical maintenance schemes, which include double glazing, for 4,260 dwellings. Subject to the remaining schemes in this year's programme going on site, including 13 double glazing schemes recently approved by me, the Housing Executive will have started work on over 9,000 homes this year. The remainder of the Double Glazing programme will be delivered in 2013/14 and 2014/15 through a new separate contract which will be in place by the end of this financial year.

Housing Executive Tenants Evicted for Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants have been evicted for anti-social behaviour, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 16066/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive tenancy agreements do not capture the number of people resident at a property. However, the table below details the number of Housing Executive properties recovered, on the grounds of anti-social behaviour for the period 2007/08 to 2011/12.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total	33	43	54	62	51

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to publish the written communication from Lord Freud detailing the commitments given in relation to the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 16088/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is not normal practice to routinely publish correspondence between Ministers. However, I would re-affirm what I said in my statement to the Assembly on 22 October 2012, that Lord Freud has given me a written commitment that the Universal Credit IT system will have specific functionality to:

- automate the payment of housing costs to both social and private sector landlords;
- split the payment between parties in a household; and
- make bi-monthly payments of Universal Credit.

He has also confirmed that this functionality will be incorporated in time to allow me to launch Universal Credit here in April 2014, so ensuring Northern Ireland maintains parity on this social security issue with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Indigenous Renewables Industry

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, given that there is an indigenous renewables industry, why there is no mention of renewable heat on his Department's website advertising the Warms Homes Scheme.

(AQW 16089/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive manages the Warm Homes Scheme on behalf of my Department. For heating installations, my Department's preferred option is gas where gas is available. Wood pellet boilers however, are offered in exceptional circumstances, commonly in rural areas where there is no alternative to oil.

I have asked the Housing Executive to ensure that information on the Warm Homes website is amended to include reference to the availability of wood pellet boilers.

District Heating Systems

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment has been made of the benefits of the use of district heating systems for social housing projects, including the impact on fuel poverty.

(AQW 16090/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has considered District Heating but has advised that in order for such a system to be viable, it would require a critical mass of dwellings. Due to house sales, the Housing Executive does not have sufficient numbers of dwellings in housing estates to make this financially viable. The one exception to this relates to high rise flats and the Housing Executive is currently assessing an Ecopod system which is a form of District Heating for such flats.

Housing Associations similarly advised that they have an insufficient concentration of properties across their respective portfolios to make District Heating schemes viable.

However, Oaklee Homes Group has advised that consideration had been given to a District Heating system for 70 properties in Carryduff but the relative small scale, remote generation location and distribution of heat and water would make it difficult to be cost effective. It is for these reasons as well as advice from consultants that Oaklee decided against installing such a system.

Clanmil Housing Association currently has a District Heating system in an eco village in Lisburn, but the bio mass wood chip system now has to be replaced and they are planning to provide gas as a substitute for their tenants.

Fort George Masterplan

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development when the Fort George Masterplan will be fully implemented.

(AQW 16150/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Development Framework was submitted to the Planning Service in July 2012 as an application for outline planning permission for the entire Fort George site. The consideration of the application is ongoing and my Department and Ilex hold regular meetings with the Planning Service to address emerging issues.

The implementation of the Development Framework will involve infrastructure works and the engagement of private sector partners to construct the planned development. The timescale for implementation will be over a longer period of a minimum of 10 years.

Single Room Rate

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in East Belfast will be affected by the introduction of the single room rate.

(AQW 16190/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Shared Accommodation Rate which was extended to include persons aged 25-34 years was introduced on 1 January 2012. The number of single persons aged 25-34 currently claiming housing benefit in East Belfast is 336, of these 178 are currently affected by the Shared Accommodation Rate.

Universal Credit

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the effect of the delay of universal credit from October 2013 to April 2014; and to explain how this does not represent a breach of parity with Great Britain.

(AQW 16321/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As agreed with Lord Freud, to enable the development of the necessary IT functionality to support payment flexibilities, I have decided to launch Universal Credit in Northern Ireland in April 2014. This timing has the added advantage that any lessons learned in the early stages of the UK-wide roll-out can be reflected in local implementation and delivery.

The implementation of Universal Credit in Great Britain commences in April 2013 with early pathfinder activity in the greater Manchester area followed by a phased national roll-out commencing from October 2013. I have agreed with Lord Freud that the launch in Northern Ireland will be a part of the phased UK-wide roll-out, and as such, that this does not constitute any breach in social security parity with other parts of the United Kingdom.

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