

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 14 December 2012

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

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 14 December 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Programme for Government

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the milestone of '1175 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors' is not included as a target in their Departmental Plan 2012/13, even though it is detailed in the Programme for Government in relation to the development of the One Plan.

(AQW 14294/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The OFMDFM Business Plan relates to our high level objective for developing and co-ordinating the One Plan across government departments to ensure its success. OFMDFM has established an inter departmental group to work towards achieving the objectives of the One Plan. The commitment within the Programme for Government was to support the work of the One Plan.

North-South Bodies

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether their Department is making any plans to utilise the North-South bodies to gain full advantage from the forthcoming Irish Presidency of the EU.

(AQO 2566/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We recognise that there may be opportunities for us associated with the Irish EU Presidency between January and June 2013. We have discussed this with the Irish Government on a number of occasions, most recently at the NSMC Plenary meeting on 2 November 2012 where Ministers recognised the importance of engagement in order to maximise mutual benefit from the Presidency.

The Irish Government has offered to brief Executive Ministers on presidency related issues and to invite Ministers, including those with responsibilities for the NSMC Areas of Co-operation and North South Implementation Bodies, to presidency related meetings and events relevant to their areas of responsibility.

Unanswered Questions

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why AQW 14294/11-15 has not been answered.

(AQW 16153/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answer to AQW 14294/11-15 issued on 10 December 2012.

Maze Regeneration Board

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to reconcile the figure of 14 being deemed appointable in the March 2012 competition for the Maze Regeneration Board, as shown in the answer to AQW 15654/11-15, and the figure of 16 which appears in the answer to AQW 15657/11-15.
(AQW 16416/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There were 16 successful applications from 14 applicants for the Maze/Long Kesh Chair and Board Member positions in the March 2012 competition.

Two of the 14 successful applicants had applied for both the Chair and Board Member positions.

Arms-Length Bodies

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what practices, protocols and measures are in place within the Department and its arm's-length bodies to ensure prompt payment to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16797/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM and its sponsored bodies take all possible steps to pay suppliers as promptly as possible. The initial target for payment is to meet the 10-day prompt payment commitment made by the Executive in response to the current economic position.

In addition, the Department and all ALBs are legally bound to meet the terms of the Late Payment of Commercial debts (Interest) Act 1988 as amended and supplemented by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. This requires that all payments should be made within agreed terms or if no terms have been agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice.

To meet the 10-day and 30-day requirements, the Department and ALBs review their performance on a monthly basis against these two targets.

The annual accounts of the Department and each of its ALBs contain a note on the performance against the 30-day target each the financial year.

For construction contracts, procured through the Central Procurement Directorate, main contractors are required to comply with the 'Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains'. The Code sets out the core principles that should govern the behaviour of clients, contractors and subcontractors, including the need for fair dealing within the supply chain.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Social Investment Fund will provide additional resources to the projects and programmes already addressing the issues identified, or will new competing programmes be established.

(AQW 16866/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Social Investment Fund (SIF) will be targeted at addressing identified and evidenced need in eligible areas within each social investment zone. It will be for steering groups in consultation with the wider community to propose the interventions which best address such needs and include the detail of these in a strategic area plan.

This may include further roll out of existing interventions, which have demonstrated impact, or indeed new interventions. Regardless of whether proposals are new or an enhancement of existing, all interventions must demonstrate additionality to be successful for SIF funding.

Institutional Abuse

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration has been given to people from Northern Ireland who, as children, were placed in Protestant institutions in the Republic of

Ireland and who suffered institutional abuse, given that their circumstances were not investigated by the Ryan Inquiry and are unlikely to be included in the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.
(AQW 16968/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As these allegations fall outside the jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Executive, they cannot be investigated by the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse here.

We have registered our concerns about this group of victims and survivors with Alan Shatter TD, who is considering the issue.

Institutional Abuse

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what support mechanisms are in place for residents of Northern Ireland who, as children, were placed in Protestant institutions in the Republic of Ireland and who suffered institutional abuse.

(AQW 16969/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Support is currently available for any victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse through Lifeline, who can be contacted 24 hours a day on 0808 808 8000. Lifeline counsellors will help callers to get through the initial crisis and then refer callers to other support.

The NI Direct website Historical Institutional Abuse page, as well as providing information about the Inquiry and Lifeline contact details, provides other key contacts that victims and survivors may find useful.

Historical Institutional Abuse

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in establishing an advocacy service for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse; and what will be the criteria for availing of such a service.

(AQW 16970/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: By December we expect to have tendered a contract, to provide a support service to victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse in the following areas:

- Trauma Counselling and support
- Housing advice
- Information on benefit entitlements
- Support to search for records relating to their time in institutions
- Information on training and employment supports and opportunities
- PSNI referrals for those wishing to pursue criminal proceedings against perpetrators of abuse.

European Year for Active Ageing

Mr McClarty asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans they have to secure protection from age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services during this European Year for Active Ageing.

(AQW 17303/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Programme for Government includes a commitment to make it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the basis of age in the provision of goods, facilities and services. This will require new legislation to be taken through the Assembly.

There are a considerable number of steps which have to be undertaken prior to a new Bill being introduced to the Assembly. We are currently at the policy development stage which is essential to ensure that the legislation achieves the intended outcome.

Freedom of Information Requests

Ms Ruane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many of the Freedom of Information requests received by their Department in the last two years were not answered within 20 working days.
(AQO 2975/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information requested is published within the FOI Annual Reports for 2010 and 2011, which can be accessed from the OFMDFM website at:

http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/improving-public-services/information_management_and_central_advisory_branch/annual-reports-and-statistics.htm.

British Prime Minister Meeting

Mr Byrne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their meeting with the British Prime Minister on 20 November 2012.
(AQO 2997/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We had a very useful meeting with the Prime Minister during his visit on 20 November 2012.

We discussed at length issues impacting on our local economy, including Welfare Reform, and the general implications of devolving Corporation Tax.

We also discussed issues around the decision made by the Prime Minister to bring the G8 meeting to Enniskillen next June.

Other matters covered during the discussion included our local political situation, the shortfall in capital spend and issues relating to Cohesion, Sharing and Integration and the progress we are making with our strategy in that regard. More internationally, we touched upon the current political difficulties that have been widely publicised in the Middle East.

Signature Projects

Mrs McKeivitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the six signature projects announced on 10 October 2012 .

(AQO 2998/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 10 October 2012 we announced the development of six significant signature programmes under the Delivering Social Change delivery framework.

These Signature Programmes are designed to tackle multi-generational poverty and to improve children's health and wellbeing, and educational and life opportunities.

It is also the intention that the programmes will stimulate economic growth and tackle dereliction through encouraging social enterprise in communities.

Following on from the Ministerial announcement, lead departments and Senior Responsible Owners have been identified.

Departments were asked to urgently develop Outline Delivery Plans and Projected Expenditure Profiles, for each Programme, with the aim of having work rolled out at the earliest possible opportunity. This work is currently underway.

RT HON PETER D ROBINSON MLA
First Minister

MARTIN McGUINNESS MP MLA
deputy First Minister

Active Ageing Strategy

Mr Sheehan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline how the older persons sector has been involved in the development of the Active Ageing Strategy.

(AQO 3001/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In developing the Active Ageing Strategy, OFMDFM officials have worked closely with the Ageing Strategy Advisory Group. The Group includes representatives of many of the organisations that work with older people here including Age NI and the Age Sector Platform and also represented are older people who are active in the voluntary and community sector. It is chaired by Claire Keatinge, the Commissioner for Older People.

Officials have benefitted enormously from the regular meetings with the Advisory Group in recent months and its expertise and advice have led to the draft Strategy being extensively reworked to reflect best practice.

Junior Ministers also met with Claire Keatinge and representatives from the age sector to discuss the development of the Strategy.

Officials are currently working with the Advisory Group on the Early Actions Plan to implement the Strategy. Once finalised, we will have a Strategy and Early Actions Plan, the content of which has been strongly influenced by both older people and people who work closely with older people. We intend to publicly consult on the finalised Strategy in February or March of next year.

Investment Strategy

Mr McElduff asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether there is any opportunity for further capital investment programmes in addition to those within the Investment Strategy.

(AQO 3003/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Investment Strategy 2011-21 that we published in the Assembly in October sets out the Executive's high-level strategy to address the economic, social and environmental infrastructure needs of the region up to 2021. Over the period up to March 2015 some £5.1 billion of new capital investment will be delivered across the region, improving public service delivery and providing much needed employment in the construction and related sectors of our economy. Over the full period of the Strategy it is planned to invest £13.3 billion.

The Investment Strategy is not, however, exhaustive. Although priority schemes are listed in the document, Ministers have flexibility to alter plans and to bring forward new and additional schemes within their agreed ISNI budget settlement where they consider they better reflect local needs and circumstances at the time.

Robust capital monitoring procedures are also in place to identify quickly any funding that, for whatever reason, cannot be spent as planned and to reallocate such money to other priority investment schemes that can deliver output in the year concerned. This provides a regular opportunity for Ministers to access additional funding for schemes that could be delivered in the time available but would otherwise be delayed because of lack of funding. It may also be possible for Ministers to identify suitable projects which are close to deliverable if additional capital funding became available.

However it is important that we spend our capital money wisely and rigorous processes are in place to ensure that funding goes where it will do the most good to the economy and the community. This inevitably means that there is a considerable lead in time for major projects, which is why we publish the Investment Strategy on a 10-year cycle to ensure that investment decisions are made in good time relative to the availability of funding.

Unanswered Questions

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why they have not yet answered AQWs 14294/11-15 and 16153/11-15.

(AQW 17762/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to the answers to AQW 14294/11-15 AQW 16153/11-15 issued on 10 December 2012.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Animal Cruelty

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how organisations, charities and dog breeders can be informed if someone has been convicted of animal cruelty or been banned before giving or selling animals to them.

(AQW 16215/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Public access to any database or register of animal welfare offenders raises significant legal issues particularly on the implications for human rights and data protection legislation. Such matters would have to be considered in great detail before any decision could be made.

In the New Year, my officials will be engaging with the Department of Justice, the PSNI and the Councils to discuss issues including access to information relating to animal welfare court cases and the sharing of such information amongst enforcement bodies.

As regards dogs, under the Dogs Order 1983 it is an offence to keep a dog without a valid licence, and before a person takes possession of a dog, that person must obtain a dog licence for that particular dog. As a person who has been banned from keeping a dog, under animal welfare legislation, cannot obtain or hold a dog licence, it is a requirement that a person applying for a dog licence from a Council signs a declaration stating that he or she is not disqualified from keeping a dog. Where a licence has been falsely obtained by a disqualified person, the dog licence becomes void and an offence of possessing a dog without a licence has been committed.

Regarding organisations, charities and dog breeders who supply dogs, it is an offence under the Dogs Order 1983 for any person to give or sell a dog to any other person without first seeing a current dog licence for that particular dog or a block licence which is valid for that dog.

Animals Exported for Slaughter

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of live animals that have been exported for slaughter in each of the last four years, including the destinations; (ii) the number of animal welfare inspections that were carried out on live exports by her Department during this period; (iii) the number of violations the inspections discovered; and (iv) whether her Department has any policy regarding the slaughter of exported livestock in a manner which is illegal in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 16636/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Note:- Figures for 2012 are not for the full Calendar Year

(i) Cattle Exported for Direct Slaughter

	GB	South of Ireland	Other	Total
2008	7,685	14,175	0	21,860
2009	10,166	7,008	0	17,174

	GB	South of Ireland	Other	Total
2010	8,380	3,413	0	11,793
2011	5,675	10,602	0	16,277
2012	7,211	8,542	0	15,753

SHEEP EXPORTED FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER

	GB	South of Ireland	Other	Total
2008	13,806	249,397	0	263,203
2009	2,293	251,941	0	254,234
2010	2,664	363,279	0	365,943
2011	580	488,807	0	489,387
2012	2,813	377,025	0	379,838

PIGS EXPORTED FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER

	Great Britain	South of Ireland	Other	Total
2008	4,089	6,790	0	10,879
2009	14,883	1,016	0	15,899
2010	9,661	4,524	0	14,185
2011	14,448	5,116	0	19,564
2012	20,170	5,477	0	25,647

(ii) The number of Animal Welfare Inspections carried out on consignments of live exports is - 10,881 - broken down:

2009	2758
2010	2900
2011	2289
2012	2934

(iii) The number of violations inspections discovered is – 136 - broken down

2009	19
2010	40
2011	37
2012	40

(iv) Animals being exported directly for slaughter have only been consigned to Britain or the South of Ireland in recent times. For both this internal and intra-Community trade, the policy is governed by EC trade & welfare legislation

Agri-Food Industry

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps are being taken to ensure that extra funds are being directed to innovation in the agri-food industry.

(AQW 17233/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I recognise that the agri-food industry must innovate to make the most of the latest ideas, techniques and working practices so it can open up new market opportunities, grow and become more profitable.

The DARD Evidence and Innovation Strategy 2009-13 provides an over-arching framework for all DARD funded Research and Development and represents my Department's contribution to promoting innovation in the north. In addition to our annual investment of around £8.5 million on the DARD Directed Research Work Programme (which includes innovation) at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), and the DARD Postgraduate Studentships, we are planning additional expenditure in excess of £1,000,000 in 2013/14.

This additional expenditure will mainly be available through the Research Challenge Fund (RCF), with a further £60,000 being allocated to create a new EU research funding facilitator post.

The RCF is open to Small to Medium Enterprises, large enterprises and levy bodies. It aims to encourage industry and public sector research establishments to collaborate on innovative, high quality, pre-commercial research and technological development projects. The RCF has to date awarded grants to 11 industry led projects, worth around £1,370,000. These projects have the potential to further the sustainability and competitiveness of the north's agri-food and rural enterprises. The third tranche of RCF is currently open for applications.

Our excellent local research facilities and expertise also gives us an opportunity to access new European research funding, available under Horizon 2020, from 2013 onwards. In order to maximise the potential benefits of Horizon 2020 I recently announced that DARD would fund a local EU research funding facilitator to support businesses and researchers in the area of Food Security, Agriculture and the Bio economy. This new post, which will be based in AFBI, should help by informing local businesses and researchers about other available funding streams and help them access European funding for the research they need to do.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) under what conditions an inspector is accompanied by an immediate supervisor when completing an inspection under the Countryside Management Scheme; and (ii) in what percentage of inspections this scenario would be applied.

(AQW 17278/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) A supervisor may accompany a Countryside Management Scheme inspector when carrying out re-performance checks. Re-performance checks are required as a control measure by the EC to quality assure inspections. These checks ensure that inspectors comply with EC Regulations and reduce the risk of incorrect payments being made to claimants. These checks also identify any inconsistencies in approach to inspections and any potential training needs. Other circumstances where a supervisor may accompany an inspector are when inspections are of a complex nature or where there may be potential for conflict.

(ii) Approximately four percent of all agri-environment inspections will be carried out with a supervisor in attendance.

European Commission Disallowance

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the expected percentage reduction in the Single Farm Payment Schemes in 2009 and 2010 as a result of the European Commission disallowance.

(AQW 17294/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The financial correction for 2009 has not been finally confirmed, but is expected to be 5.19 percent. The financial correction for 2010 is currently estimated at 3 per cent.

Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the £16.2 million that has been invested in 69 projects through the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme since July 2008, how much was invested in projects in the North Antrim area.

(AQW 17299/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since 2008, my Department has approved funding of £1.9 million to 9 projects in the North Antrim area under the Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG). Details of the companies awarded funding are:

Company	Location
Chipmaster Ltd	Broughshane
Doherty & Gray Ltd	Ballymena
Ballygarvey Eggs Ltd	Ballymena
Ballymena Farm Shop	Ballymena
Red Heifer Ltd	Clooughmills
Glenview Foods Ltd	Ballycastle
K & G MacAtamney Butchery Ltd	Ballymena
Glens of Antrim Potatoes Ltd	Cushendall
Ballyeamonn Eggs	Cushendall

Field Boundary Restoration

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on when all the payments for field boundary restoration work completed in 2011 will be issued.

(AQW 17329/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Field Boundary Restoration (FBR) is an important habitat enhancement option within the NI Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) and as such is paid as part of a scheme participant's annual NICMS claim and not as a separate payment.

Payments for 2011 NICMS claims began on 27/9/2012 and at 4/12/2012 there have been 494 payments made from 907 claims. The timescale of payment for the remaining claims is determined by a number of factors including the findings at inspection and the number of errors discovered during the claim validation process.

Unfortunately, because of the high number of over-declarations we have discovered during earlier inspections of FBR claims for 2011, we have had to carry out additional Rapid Field Visit inspections. This is in-line with EU legislation and the additional workload associated with these inspections has delayed payments for many of those who claimed FBR. We cannot make payments until we are satisfied

that all claims are accurate and valid, however we are striving to pay all remaining claims as quickly as possible.

Carlingford Lough: Tidal Waterway

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development where the legislative competence lies in relation to any obstruction of the navigable tidal waterway that is Carlingford Lough.

(AQW 17379/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Warrenpoint Harbour Authority is responsible for the maintenance of the navigation channel in the Lough.

Relocation of Departmental Headquarters

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what other sites were considered as options when making the decision to relocate the Department's headquarters.

(AQW 17430/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There were 23 potential locations considered for the relocation of my departmental headquarters. These are listed below.

- Antrim
- Coleraine
- Limavady
- Ards
- Cookstown
- Lisburn
- Armagh
- Craigavon
- Newry & Mourne
- Ballymena
- Derry
- Newtownabbey
- Banbridge
- Down
- North Down
- Belfast
- Dungannon
- Omagh
- Carrickfergus
- Fermanagh
- Strabane
- Castlereagh
- Larne

Ministerial Direction

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 16628/11-15, why this Ministerial Direction was issued; and why the appraisal was deemed necessary.

(AQW 17431/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Standard procedure would be to appraise fully all options, even those which would not meet the Executive's commitment in the Programme for Government to advance the relocation of DARD HQ to a rural area. As you will appreciate, this would result in considerable nugatory work.

I have therefore directed my officials to carry out an appraisal which looks only at options on the Ballykelly site.

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why she has suspended the recruitment process for members of an advisory board for the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education; and how many people have applied for a position on the board.

(AQW 17435/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The recruitment process for members of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education Advisory Group was terminated because the pool of eligible candidates was insufficient in terms of numbers and representation across all of the required sectors. Fourteen people applied for positions on the College Advisory Group.

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the current recruitment process for board members for an advisory board to the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education; and what plans she has to improve this process.

(AQW 17436/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The recruitment process for members of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education Advisory Group was terminated because the pool of eligible candidates was insufficient in terms of numbers and representation across all of the required sectors. A review of the recruitment process and the associated selection criteria is nearing completion and my Department expects to undertake a new recruitment competition in early 2013. It is hoped that the revised application process will encourage a higher number of applicants who can meet the eligibility criteria.

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what essential and desirable skills are required from applicants to the advisory board to the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Education.

(AQW 17437/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The recent recruitment process for membership of the CAFRE College Advisory Group used the following essential eligibility criteria:

- (i) a detailed knowledge and understanding of the sector the applicant wished to represent; and
- (ii) at least 3 years in the last 10 years of working in that sector in a role which involved making management decisions.

In addition applicants were required to demonstrate:

- (i) A sound understanding of the main issues associated with the 5 DARD Strategic Goals;
- (ii) Proven communication and representation skills; and
- (iii) Experience of analysing problems and evaluating information to make recommendations.

My Department is currently reviewing the recruitment process and associated selection criteria and expects to undertake a new recruitment competition in early 2013.

Farming Community

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department ensures that there is adequate and equitable representation from the farming community on the relevant boards and fora; and how the various farming sectors, such as beef, sheep, cereals, potatoes, dairy and horticulture can be represented on, and have input into, these various Boards and fora.

(AQW 17439/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Equality is central to my Department's policy and decision-making processes. The Department recognises the important role and contribution made by representatives from the various farming sectors and, in order to ensure adequate representation on any boards/fora, aims to identify those groups or individuals that will be affected by any specific programme, scheme or initiative.

Careful consideration is given to the need for appropriate representation which will adequately reflect the views and concerns of the farming community and the Department seeks to encourage participation from a wide range of individuals and organisations, utilising both the formal public appointments process (in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments) and informal stakeholder approach (where the Department endeavours to ensure equitable representation from interested parties).

Farming Community

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what external advice she has taken to ensure that the widest pool of talent and expertise are represented on relevant Boards and fora; and how she plans to attract adequate and equitable representation from the farming community to these Boards and fora.

(AQW 17440/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department draws upon external advice where appropriate. For example, in relation to the Rural Development Programme (RDP) Monitoring Committee (for the 2007-2013 Programme) and the RDP 2014-2020 Programme development stakeholder group, representation is sought in accordance with guidance from the European Commission. Similarly, public appointments are conducted in line with the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The Department is keen to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are suitably represented on boards/fora and, for example, addresses the need to attract representation by suitable advertising in the local daily press and weekly agricultural press as well as writing directly to Agri-food/industry organisations, professional bodies and Section 75 groups.

Transport of Live Animals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what consideration she has given to developing a policy to set standards for the transport of live animals higher than those required by EU law.

(AQW 17483/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, came into force on 5 January 2007. The Regulation was transposed here through the introduction of The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Regulation 1/2005 covers the transport of all live vertebrate animals within the EU that takes place in connection with an economic activity. This is considered to be any transport of animals undertaken as part of a business or commercial activity which incurs financial gain, whether direct or indirect.

This legislation imposes tough conditions on the transport industry, particularly in relation to export journeys, including the need for observance of maximum journey times and rest periods, validated journey logs for each journey, specially approved vehicles, prior authorisation of the transporter and competency training of drivers.

My Department works with EU Member States to ensure consistent and even handed enforcement of the Transport Regulations.

At this time I have no plans to develop higher standards than these.

Dangerous Dogs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dogs have been destroyed in each of the last five years as a result of being classified as dangerous.

(AQW 17487/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Dog control is legislated for here by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. Councils enforce this legislation and are required to provide statistics to my Department regarding its operation.

The term 'dangerous dog' is not defined in the dog control legislation here and could mean two things, either;

- 1) a dog of a banned type, for example a pitbull; or
- 2) a dog of any kind that has attacked a person.

The statistics that the Councils have provided up to 2011 cover only the number of destruction orders issued by a Court following the prosecution of a dog owner whose dog has attacked a person. The figures for each of the last 5 years are set out in the table below.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Destruction orders issued	15	6	7	8	5

Department Headquarters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to list the locations considered for her Department's new headquarters.

(AQW 17494/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There were 23 potential locations considered for the relocation of my departmental headquarters. These are listed below.

- Antrim
- Ards
- Armagh
- Ballymena
- Banbridge
- Belfast
- Carrickfergus
- Castlereagh
- Coleraine
- Cookstown
- Craigavon
- Derry
- Down
- Dungannon
- Fermanagh
- Larne
- Limavady
- Lisburn
- Newry & Mourne
- Newtownabbey
- North Down
- Omagh
- Strabane

Forest Service

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the measures or programmes that Forest Service can initiate to help integrate forest parks and local communities.

(AQW 17530/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Our forests already deliver significant recreational and social benefits for local communities and I am keen to see this built upon. A key measure to encourage the development of community involvement with our forests is the establishment of working partnerships with local government.

This is in line with my vision is for improved partnership working with local government and other bodies to make sure that forests play as full a role as possible in supporting regional and local recreational and tourism agendas.

Good progress has been made with several councils in the development of partnership arrangements, expressed in the form of memoranda of understanding and development licences and this has led to the improvement of recreation and tourism facilities within forests.

River Inspection Report

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when does a River Inspection Report become public information.

(AQW 17565/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Once a river inspection report is finalised and complete, Rivers Agency would make it available to the public on request, subject to Departmental guidelines, and data protection on the release of information.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the cost of removing trees infected by Ash Dieback.

(AQW 17570/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At 5 December 2012, the direct costs incurred by Forest Service associated with removing trees affected by Ash Dieback amounted to approximately £2,300.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when did her Department formally notified the Criminal Justice Inspectorate of the existence of the Central Investigation Service within her Department.

(AQW 17635/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is not listed as one of the organisations that comes under the Criminal Justice Inspectorate's (CJI) statutory remit to inspect organisations. DARD is, therefore, under no obligation to formally notify the CJI of the existence of the Central Investigation Service (CIS). However, I can confirm that the CIS has liaised with CJI in the past and, as a consequence, the CJI are fully aware of the existence of CIS.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline which external organisation reviews the changes made in the Central Investigation Service following the recommendations made in the Deloitte review.

(AQW 17636/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The report by Deloitte on the Department's Central Investigation Service (CIS) was issued on 28 July 2010 and contained 10 recommendations, all of which were accepted.

External scrutiny was provided by the NIAO review of the policies and procedures in place in CIS in the context of financial audit work undertaken on the Department's 2010/11 Resource Account.

In addition, a follow up review of CIS by the Department's own Internal Audit Branch has recently been completed and a satisfactory opinion has been provided.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the running costs of the Central Investigation Unit for each of the last five years.

(AQW 17656/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The running costs to DARD of the Central Investigation Service for each of the last 5 financial years are as follows:

2008/09	£172,000
2009/10	£148,000
2010/11	£122,000
2011/12	£154,000
2012/13	£137,000 (projected)

The figures provided are net of income generated from work undertaken for other Government Departments and Agencies.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the Central Investigation Unit, to detail (i) the total value of incidents of fraud investigated; (ii) the total value of fraud cases prosecuted; and (iii) the amount of money recouped, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17658/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department publishes a Counter Fraud and Enforcement Activities Annual Report. The outcome of CIS investigations and their overall financial value are detailed in these Annual Reports. The most recent publication the 2011/2012 Counter Fraud Annual Report is available on the DARD website. www.dardni.gov.uk Previous Annual Reports are available on request.

In response to parts (i) and (ii) of your question, I have provided, at Annex A, a summary of the value of DARD incidents of fraud investigated and the value of fraud cases prosecuted over the last 5 full financial years. In response to part (iii), the CIS does not recoup money but makes recommendations on investigation outcomes for business areas to consider imposing/applying scheme penalties or to initiate the clawback of funding.

ANNEX A

Year	Total Estimated Value of Incidents of Fraud Investigated	Total Value of Fraud Cases Prosecuted
2011/2012	£174k	£4,113
2010/2011	£214k	nil
2009/2010	£490k	£28,365
2008/2009	£345k	nil
2007/2008	£124k	nil

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Central Investigation Unit

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department has employed the service of the Central Investigation Unit from within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the last five years,

(AQW 17332/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): DCAL has engaged the Services of DARD Central Investigation Unit since January 2009, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Cycling and Walking

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking to encourage people to increase their participation in sport and exercise through cycling and walking.

(AQW 17438/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, sets out a number of targets specifically designed to increase participation in sport and physical activity. To help achieve these targets, Sport NI, through its Active Communities Programme, has invested in the deployment of over 100 Active Community Coaches throughout the north who are responsible for delivering a wide range of sports and activities including cycling and walking. In addition to this, Sport NI has provided £65,892 over the last three financial years towards a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging people to increase their participation in sport and exercise through cycling and walking. Furthermore, over the

period 2009/13, Sport NI invested £483,254 in Cycling Ulster/Cycling Ireland through its Investing in Performance Sport programme, an element of which seeks to increase participation.

Allied to this, the Department is the owner of the Lagan and Coalisland Towpaths which, between them, provide a total of 18.5 miles of traffic free cycling and walking. On an annual basis, around 600,000 people visit the towpath, which is a sustainable transport route for cycles, and the Lagan valley Regional Park. DCAL also manages 20 water recreation sites which provide a variety of walking and cycling facilities used extensively throughout the year by individuals, walking groups and cyclists. In addition, DCAL facilitates numerous charity events and community activities involving walking and cycling at these sites.

Boat Patrols

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 15519/11-15, to detail the dates and times when the seven boat patrols took place.

(AQW 17496/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Details of the dates and length of the seven boat patrols as specified in AQW 15519/11-15 are outlined below.

20th Feb - 8 hrs

21st Feb - 8 hrs

23rd Feb - 8hrs

31st May - 6 hrs

19th June - 8 hrs

23rd June - 10 hrs

14th August – 8 hrs

Boat Patrols

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 15519/11-15, to detail the ownership of each boat used in the seven patrols.

(AQW 17497/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Only one vessel was used in the seven boat patrols undertaken by the Department as outlined in AQW 15519/11-15.

The vessel was the Dun an Salar owned and operated by DCAL.

Arts and Crafts Cooperative

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the funding or support that may be available to people or groups who wish to establish a cooperative for arts and crafts.

(AQW 17526/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Funding or support may be available to people or groups who wish to establish a cooperative for arts and crafts through the Arts Council. It can provide financial support to formally constituted organisations under its Small Grants or Lottery Project Funding programmes as well as advice and guidance in relation to suitable funding to potential applicants.

The Creative Industries Innovation Fund which is administered by the Arts Council provides support to creative businesses to develop commercially viable content, products, services and experiences capable of competing in global markets. A key priority is collaboration between businesses to encourage knowledge exchange and new market opportunities to enhance the wider impact of the creative industries across the economy.

Craft NI offer a range of information, training and exhibition opportunities for designer makers.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the funding for local communities in South Down to (i) adequately prepare for; and (ii) gain long term benefit from the upcoming World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQW 17527/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is no direct funding being provided by the World Police and Fire Games to local communities in South Down or in any other constituency.

There are however, a range of other activities which will be of benefit to communities where WPFG events are taking place. Local hoteliers and accommodation providers will benefit from the influx of athletes and visitors associated with the Games.

In the case of South Down the mountain bike events will take place in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor and around 200 competitors might be expected to take part. This will also mean increased business for local cafes and restaurants etc.

WPFG are in contact with Newry and Mourne Council discussing how the Games can be promoted in the area and how those visiting the Games can be encouraged to visit South Down, return in the future and recommend to others the north of Ireland as a holiday destination.

Active Communities Sports Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail how many gymnastics coaches have been supported financially through the Active Communities Sports Fund, or any other departmental funded initiative, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17535/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI's Lottery funded Active Communities Programme commenced on 1 April 2010. Since that date, no gymnastics coaches have been supported financially through the programme.

The Active Communities funding is allocated via eleven consortia of district councils. Responsibility for identifying priority sports and activities to be delivered under the programme rests wholly with each consortium.

During 2009/10, one gymnastics coach was supported through Sport NI's Practitioner Development Programme.

Financial Support: Gymnastics

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what financial support has been given to gymnastics in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17538/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the last five financial years, Sport NI has provided £561,330 exchequer and lottery funding towards the development of gymnastics in the north of Ireland. This funding can be broken down as follows: -

Financial Year	Exchequer	Lottery	Total Funding
2007/08	£57,523	£6,000	£63,523
2008/09	£104,635		£104,635
2009/10	£123,369	£11,675	£135,044
2010/11	£118,936		£118,936

Financial Year	Exchequer	Lottery	Total Funding
2011/12	£139,192		£139,192
Grand Total			£561,330

In addition to this, Sport NI also provided £5,000 in 2010/11 and £63,756 in 2011/12, towards the Pre Games Training Camps (delivery and events); and, to assist Gymnastics NI to attract visiting Olympic and Paralympic teams to the north.

Promotion of the Irish Language

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 14990/11-15, to details the amount of funding allocated by her Department to the listed organisations over the last 12 months.
(AQW 17550/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Pursuant to AQW 14990/11-15, the amount of funding allocated to the listed organisations, over the last 12 months, by my Department (through Foras na Gaeilge) is detailed in the table below.

Organisation	Funding (2012/13)
Summer Camps Scheme 2012	£3,500
Youth Events Scheme 2012 (Bunscoil Ard Naomh Caitríona comes under this scheme)	£5096
18th William Kennedy Piping Festival	£4,000
Cairdre Teo (This is part of Scéim Phobail Gaeilge 2011-2013).	£55,354
Armagh Pipers – Secondary School Day	£3,620
The Armagh Rhymers Educational & Cultural Organisation	£7,000
Patrún an Oirghialla (Gaeltacht Oirdheiscirt Uladh)	£1000
Total	£79,570

Foras na Gaeilge have advised that the funding allocated to Gael-Linn is not in its entirety for Armagh City. Gael Linn have an office in Armagh in which two members of staff are based however those staff work across the north and similarly events that are organised to promote the Irish Language are organised across the north.

Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries Strategy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she plans to ensure that Target PLS2 of the Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries strategy is realised, to ensure that 85 percent of households are within two miles of a library service.

(AQW 17566/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I require Libraries NI to operate within the standards set out in the 'Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries' strategy, including Public Library Standard 2 (PLS2).

This Standard is being examined as part of the Review of Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries. The ongoing consultation by Libraries NI on the Review of mobile library provision, which ends on 14th December, will also be taken into account.

Libraries NI works to meet this target through the provision of 96 Branch libraries and 28 mobile libraries (with over 700 stops) across the north of Ireland.

Research is currently being carried out by Land and Property Services (LPS) to ascertain the extent to which this Standard is being met. I will provide the result of this analysis to the member when it becomes available.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many participants have been registered for the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQW 17572/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Online registration for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games opened on 1 November 2012. As of 6 December 2012, 1268 athletes had registered to participate in the 2013 Games.

Kilcoo GAA Club

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any funding her Department has provided to Kilcoo GAA Club and for her assessment of the alleged racism that occurred involving Kilcoo GAA Club and Crossmaglen Rangers GAA Club.

(AQW 17627/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI awarded £245,000 exchequer funding to Kilcoo GAC on 29 April 2009. This funding was awarded under the Building Sport Programme for a full size GAA natural grass pitch with floodlights and extension to the existing pitch.

I am aware of the allegations of racist abuse that occurred during the Ulster Club Football Final between Kilcoo GAC and Crossmaglen Rangers GAC. There is no place for racism in our society or at any sporting event, it is utterly abhorrent and I totally condemn it.

This is, however, a matter in the first instance, for the GAA to deal with and I understand that the Ulster Council are to undertake an investigation into the incident. Furthermore, the GAA intend to discuss racism and how to deal with it at its annual congress next March. I welcome this development and am confident that the GAA will take appropriate action. In the meantime, and until investigations are completed, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further.

Department of Education

Enrolment to Pre-School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what steps he has put in place to prevent a recurrence of the difficulties experienced by parents attempting to gain a pre-school place for their child.

(AQW 17028/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Programme for Government commits my Department to ensuring that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

Of the 23,134 applications received from parents of target age children for 2012/13 pre-school places, 22,537 resulted in the offer of a funded place. Of the remaining applications:

- 24 were from parents who engaged fully with the process, but whose children remained unplaced at its conclusion;
- 31 were from parents who submitted late applications;
- 542 were from parents who chose not to engage fully with the admissions process by expressing further preferences when invited to do so.

I have increased the budget (4.13% higher than in 2012/13) available for the pre-school programme and my Department has liaised with Education and Library Boards (ELBs) so they can secure the estimated number of funded places required.

The pre-school admissions process is preference based, and until parents express their preferences for pre-school settings it is impossible to predict with certainty where pressures will arise.

My officials will continue to work closely with the ELBs to respond to the demand for funded places in each area.

Enrolment to Pre-School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education in which areas, of each Education and Library Board, it is expected that there will be pressure on pre-school places in 2012/13.

(AQW 17029/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Programme for Government commits my Department to ensuring that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

Of the 23,134 applications received from parents of target age children for 2012/13 pre-school places, 22,537 resulted in the offer of a funded place. Of the remaining applications:

- 24 were from parents who engaged fully with the process, but whose children remained unplaced at its conclusion;
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I have increased the budget (4.13% higher than in 2012/13) available for the pre-school programme and my Department has liaised with Education and Library Boards (ELBs) so they can secure the estimated number of funded places required.

The pre-school admissions process is preference based, and until parents express their preferences for pre-school settings it is impossible to predict with certainty where pressures will arise.

My officials will continue to work closely with the ELBs to respond to the demand for funded places in each area.

Education and Library Board: Funding

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how much funding each Education and Library Board received for Irish Medium Projects in each of the last three years; and how much of this funding was allocated to schools.

(AQW 17192/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funding received by each Education and Library Board for Irish Medium Projects in each of the last three years, and how much of this funding was allocated to schools, is set out in the table below.

£'000

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools
BELB	23	-	184	144	156	92
NEELB	20	-	5	-	8	-
SEELB	41	11	36	16	63	49

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools	Total funding to ELB	Amount of this funding allocated to Schools
SELB	20	-	74	54	24	-
WELB	41	21	63	43	125	105
Totals	145	32	362	257	376	246

Notes:

- 1 This funding relates to specific Irish Medium Projects only and does not include standard funding available to Irish Medium schools/units etc.
- 2 The funding to ELBs includes funding made available to the youth sector.
- 3 Funding is listed as allocated to schools when participants of courses run were school based, i.e. teachers, students etc.

School: First Language

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to list the first language of (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary school pupils for Northern Ireland as a whole, broken down by (a) percentage; and (b) totals.
(AQW 17194/11-15)

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

HOME LANGUAGE OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2011/12

Home language	Primary schools		Post-primary schools		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Afrikaans	19	0.0	10	0.0	29	0.0
Akan/Twi-Fante	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Albanian/Shqip	36	0.0	7	0.0	43	0.0
Arabic	153	0.1	97	0.1	250	0.1
Belarusian	-	0.0	*	*	*	*
Bengali/Bangla/Sylheti	87	0.1	48	0.0	135	0.0
Edo/Bini	#	#	*	*	19	0.0
British Sign Language	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bulgarian	42	0.0	26	0.0	68	0.0
Chinese (Any Other)	86	0.1	35	0.0	121	0.0
Chinese (Cantonese)	232	0.1	339	0.2	571	0.2
Chinese (Hokkien/Fujianese)	-	0.0	*	*	*	*
Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua)	153	0.1	66	0.0	219	0.1
Creole English	15	0.0	-	0.0	15	0.0

Home language	Primary schools		Post-primary schools		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Creole French	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Czech	46	0.0	22	0.0	68	0.0
Danish	*	*	*	*	*	*
Dutch/Flemish	26	0.0	11	0.0	37	0.0
English	156,984	95.3	142,016	96.8	299,000	96.0
Estonian	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fijian	#	#	*	0.0	19	0.0
Finnish	5	0.0	*	*	6	0.0
French	70	0.0	28	0.0	98	0.0
German	52	0.0	26	0.0	78	0.0
Irish	352	0.2	634	0.4	986	0.3
Greek	11	0.0	5	0.0	16	0.0
Gujarati	#	#	*	*	16	0.0
Hebrew	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hindi	132	0.1	50	0.0	182	0.1
Hungarian	115	0.1	68	0.0	183	0.1
Igbo	7	0.0	7	0.0	14	0.0
Icelandic	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Italian	34	0.0	21	0.0	55	0.0
Japanese	9	0.0	-	0.0	9	0.0
Kannada	7	0.0	-	0.0	7	0.0
Korean	15	0.0	7	0.0	22	0.0
Kurdish	#	#	*	*	7	0.0
Latvian	245	0.1	114	0.1	359	0.1
Lingala	-	0.0	*	*	*	*
Lithuanian	1,028	0.6	536	0.4	1,564	0.5
Luganda/Ganda	*	*	*	*	*	*
Macedonian	*	*	*	*	*	*
Malayalam	405	0.2	113	0.1	518	0.2
Marathi	#	#	*	*	17	0.0
Malay/Indonesian	46	0.0	16	0.0	62	0.0
Maltese	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Nepali	10	0.0	15	0.0	25	0.0

Home language	Primary schools		Post-primary schools		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Norwegian	-	0.0	*	*	*	*
Oriya	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Other Language*	138	0.1	50	0.0	188	0.1
Pashto/Pakhto	20	0.0	10	0.0	30	0.0
Pahari/Himachali (India)	#	#	*	*	18	0.0
Punjabi	55	0.0	49	0.0	104	0.0
Polish	2,256	1.4	1,231	0.8	3,487	1.1
Portuguese	469	0.3	286	0.2	755	0.2
Persian/Farsi	14	0.0	16	0.0	30	0.0
Rajasthani/Marwari	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Romany	20	0.0	8	0.0	28	0.0
Romanian	124	0.1	50	0.0	174	0.1
Russian	144	0.1	53	0.0	197	0.1
Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian	*	*	*	*	5	0.0
Sinhala/Sinhalese	#	#	*	*	10	0.0
Slovak	188	0.1	106	0.1	294	0.1
Slovenian	-	0.0	*	*	*	*
Shona	21	0.0	16	0.0	37	0.0
Somali	#	#	*	*	28	0.0
Spanish	69	0.0	44	0.0	113	0.0
Swahili/Kiswahili	12	0.0	8	0.0	20	0.0
Swedish	#	#	*	*	10	0.0
Tamil	43	0.0	14	0.0	57	0.0
Telugu	#	#	*	*	41	0.0
Tetum	79	0.0	17	0.0	96	0.0
Tagalog/Filipino	345	0.2	305	0.2	650	0.2
Thai	40	0.0	28	0.0	68	0.0
Tswana/Setswana	*	*	*	*	5	0.0
Tsonga	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Turkish	13	0.0	10	0.0	23	0.0
Ukrainian	8	0.0	5	0.0	13	0.0
Urdu	106	0.1	67	0.0	173	0.1

Home language	Primary schools		Post-primary schools		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Vietnamese	*	*	*	*	7	0.0
Xhosa	#	#	*	*	8	0.0
Yiddish	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Yoruba	20	0.0	10	0.0	30	0.0
Zulu	*	*	-	0.0	*	*
Total pupils	164,812	100.0	146,747	100.0	311,559	100.0

Source: school census.

Note:

- 1 Figures for primary schools include children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
 - 2 Pupils classified as Newcomer are a subset of this group. A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish. This has previously been referred to as English an Additional Language. It does not refer to indigenous pupils who choose to attend an Irish medium school.
- '*' relates to fewer than 5 cases.
- '#' means a figure relating to 5 or more cases has been treated to prevent disclosure of a small number elsewhere.

Regional Procurement Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update, including the financial costs, on the development of a regional procurement service for the education service.

(AQW 17238/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) were reaccredited with Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) status for supplies and services procurement in 2006. The ELBs have been permitted to retain their CoPE status until the establishment of ESA.

Departmental officials have developed proposals for the future delivery of procurement services for the education sector, which will be taken forward in the context of the wider ESA implementation programme. I hope to advise the Committee of the outcomes of this work in the near future.

Total project costs to date, excluding Departmental salary costs, are £1,980.

Regional Procurement Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when the Education and Library Boards' Centre of Procurement Expertise accreditation was renewed.

(AQW 17239/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) were reaccredited with Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) status for supplies and services procurement in 2006. The ELBs have been permitted to retain their CoPE status until the establishment of ESA.

Departmental officials have developed proposals for the future delivery of procurement services for the education sector, which will be taken forward in the context of the wider ESA implementation programme. I hope to advise the Committee of the outcomes of this work in the near future.

Total project costs to date, excluding Departmental salary costs, are £1,980.

Schools: Absenteeism

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to outline the levels of absenteeism in (i) controlled; (ii) maintained; and (iii) integrated schools at (a) primary; and (b) post-primary level in the Lagan Valley area during the last three years.

(AQW 17283/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The answer is outlined in the tables below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Overall absence rates (% of total half day sessions) for primary schools in the Lagan Valley area by management type of school

Management Type	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Controlled (not including integrated)	4.4	4.6	4.6
Maintained	5.0	5.0	5.2
Controlled integrated	7.9	8.4	8.8
Grant Maintained Integrated	3.7	4.6	4.2
Voluntary	2.8	2.7	2.7
Total	4.6	4.7	4.7

POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Overall absence rates (% of total half day sessions) for post-primary schools in the Lagan Valley area by management type of school

Management Type	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Controlled (not including integrated)	9.9	9.9	9.1
Maintained	9.6	8.7	8.3
Controlled integrated	10.1	10.2	9.3
Grant Maintained Integrated	N/A	N/A	N/A
Voluntary	4.4	4.1	3.3
Total	8.1	8.0	7.2

Notes:

- 1 Maintained includes Catholic and other maintained schools.
- 2 Figures for primary schools include Years 1-7 and for post-primary schools include Years 8-12.
- 3 The figures are based on schools in the Lagan Valley parliamentary constituency only. It should be noted that there are a small number of schools in some categories when broken down by management type.
- 4 Attendance is recorded for every pupil in half day sessions – morning and afternoon.
- 5 N/A = Not applicable. There are no schools of this management type in the Lagan Valley parliamentary constituency.

Education and Training Inspectorate: Inspectors

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to have Inspectors in the Education and Training Inspectorate return to the classroom and to school management teams on a regular basis to update their knowledge and skills.

(AQW 17358/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would like to refute the idea that the Inspectorate is lacking in knowledge and skills. Inspectors are in classrooms and other training and education settings almost every day they open and as a result they are up to date with and apprised of what constitutes effective learning and teaching and exemplary practice, both within the classroom and within the structure of leadership and management.

Westminster: Late Payment

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education how the late payment directive currently passing through Westminster will affect his Department.

(AQW 17363/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received, in accordance with the Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

In addition, my Department is bound by payment terms as set out in the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (interest) Act 1998 as amended and supplemented by the Late Payments of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. The Acts already enable one party to claim interest against another party for invoices that are unpaid beyond the contractually agreed payment terms.

For this current financial year to date, prompt payment performance for payment of all non-disputed invoices within 30 days currently averages 99%. Therefore it is expected that the late payment directive will have a minimal affect on my Department.

Early Years Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how his Department has sought to prioritise Early Years education, including reprioritising budgets.

(AQW 17397/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Despite economic pressures on the education budget, I have increased investment in early years education which now amounts to over £84m. This is a non-compulsory phase of education but in recognition of its importance there is a Programme for Government (PfG) commitment to make a pre-school place available for every child whose parents wish it. I have also recently launched 'Learning To Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning', which sets early years education in the context of overall education priorities.

I will continue to invest and re-profile existing resources to focus on raising standards and narrowing the gap in performance through high quality early years services which make the early education and learning needs of all children the key focus of provision.

Education and Library Board: Classroom Assistants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether consideration has been given to maintaining a pool of classroom assistants within each Education and Library Board area to reduce the delay between a child receiving a statement and the recruitment of a classroom assistant to provide the necessary support.

(AQW 17462/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) do not currently maintain a pool of Classroom Assistants.

The ELBs have previously considered central management of Classroom Assistants. However, this was found to be unsatisfactory as the high turnover of assistants resulted in the list becoming quickly out of date and some schools did not make use of the pool lists. An electronic system similar to the Substitute Teacher Register was also considered desirable but rejected due to governance difficulties.

The position may be reviewed following the SEN Review and transition to ESA.

Education and Library Board: Classroom Assistants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether his Department or the Education and Library Boards keep a record of classroom assistants who are trained to support pupils with Type 1 diabetes.
(AQW 17463/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not keep a record of classroom assistants who are trained to support pupils with Type 1 diabetes.

Each Education and Library Board holds a database of those employed in mainstream schools and funded by the Boards to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) adult assistance and the Board will be aware of those classroom assistants who have been trained to work with pupils with type 1 diabetes for whom the Board currently maintains a statement of SEN.

However, the majority of pupils with this condition are supported in schools and do not have a SEN statement or consequently a classroom assistant. The Board would not have details of the staff trained to deal with these pupils: these staff may be teachers, assistants or other personnel based within the school.

In cases where pupils have medical needs the board will instruct the Principal/Board of Governors to ensure that specialist training is sought prior to the assistant undertaking any medical interventions specific to the child being supported.

The local Health and Social Care Trust provides training to the relevant school staff in line with a pupil's Individual Health Care Plan. Sometimes there are delays in training due to pressures faced by the Health Trust. The training for medical needs is normally child specific and the skills developed by the adult assistance are unlikely to be transferrable.

School Curriculum: Sexual Orientation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether teaching school children about sexual orientation in an age appropriate manner is included in the school curriculum at either primary or post-primary level.
(AQW 17531/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The teaching of Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) is an important element within the Personal Development And Mutual Understanding (in primary schools) and the Learning for Life and Work (in post-primary) areas of learning in the revised curriculum. Through RSE, the curriculum contains sufficient scope to deal with sexual orientation.

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

Schools teach within this framework and the Department of Education has made them aware of guidance produced by the Equality Commission on Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination. The guidance relates to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006 and schools should take account of the Equality Commission's guidance in developing or reviewing their RSE policy.

School: Second Language

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to promote further the importance of a second language in schools to combat the decline in the number of pupils studying French.

(AQW 17567/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I very much recognise the importance of language learning both socially and economically. Learning a second language can help our young people to become creative, confident and articulate individuals, able to play their full part in our increasingly diverse society and to achieve to their full potential.

Modern languages are a statutory requirement at KS3 and a qualification choice at KS4 and Sixth form. Schools are encouraged to offer a wider range of modern languages and the recently introduced revised curriculum offers schools more flexibility in the choices of subjects they can offer to meet the needs of their pupils. Schools are now able to choose from any of the languages of the 27 EU member states, including French, to meet the requirements of the statutory curriculum, and can also add any other additional languages as they wish.

At Key Stage 4 the Entitlement Framework legislation will require schools to ensure that they offer pupils access to at least one course in a modern language, which will provide more pupils with the opportunity to choose to continue with languages at this key stage and post-16.

I have recently received a copy of the report 'Languages for the Future – NI Languages Strategy', which has been prepared by the joint University of Ulster-Queen's University Belfast, Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, and which considers language learning at all levels and across a broad spectrum of activity. I will study the report and will be looking carefully, within the resources available to me, at how best to move forward on those recommendations that are focused on the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools.

Flexi-Schooling

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of flexi-schooling.

(AQW 17576/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not undertaken an assessment of flexi-schooling and has no plans to do so.

Lagan Valley Constituency

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education for an update on the programme of planned school maintenance across the Lagan Valley constituency; and how the backlogs are being addressed.

(AQW 17577/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The maintenance of schools in the maintained and controlled sectors in the Lagan Valley constituency is the responsibility of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) and Southern Education and Library Board (SELB). I am advised by these Boards that the planned maintenance programme in the Lagan Valley constituency is as follows:

School Name	Estimated Value of Planned Maintenance Works 2012/13
Pond Park Nursery School	£4,244.00
Holy Trinity Nursery School	£4,000.00
Ballymacash Primary School	£263,765.00
Brownlee Primary School	£18,750.00

School Name	Estimated Value of Planned Maintenance Works 2012/13
Carr Primary School	£12,281.00
Dunmurry Primary School	£19,875.00
Harmony Hill Primary School	£63,250.00
Killowen Primary School	£55,201.00
Largymore Primary School	£12,113.00
Lisburn Central Primary School	£30,000.00
Maghaberry Primary School	£12,739.00
Old Warren Primary School	£131,843.00
Tonagh Primary School	£2,575.00
St Aloysius Primary School	£7,727.00
St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn	£11,323.00
Laurelhill Community College	£5,473.00
Lisnagarvey High School	£280,000.00
St Patrick's High School	£79,896.00
Fort Hill College	£361,587.00
Dromore Central Primary School	£4,000.00
Fairhill Primary School	£4,000.00
St Colman's Primary School, Dromore	£18,000.00
St Michael's Primary School, Finnis	£13,000.00
Dromore High School	£72,000.00
Total	£1,487,642.00

Backlog maintenance figures are derived from condition surveys carried out in five year cycles. The surveys identify the condition and associated make good costs of each item assessed, if appropriate. In addition, they identify the priority of the required work and in some cases a date where failure of the item is likely to occur, if remedial action is not taken. This data is an integral part of the planning process that identifies planned maintenance programmes of work.

Voluntary Grammar schools and Grant-maintained Integrated schools are entirely responsible for maintaining their own premises and have discretion to decide on the amount within their LMS budget which should be spent on maintenance. Accordingly, the Department of Education (DE) does not hold information on the programme of planned maintenance for these sectors.

Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education what evidence was collected for the validity audit of the Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy tests.

(AQW 17578/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not clear what is meant by the term "validity audit". The following answer includes information provided by CCEA on the process by which evaluation feedback was gathered from the trials of the assessments and the validity checks that were carried out.

In advance of implementing the new computer-based assessments, CCEA worked in conjunction with both suppliers to trial and then carry out final quality assurance checks on the new assessment systems.

The trial of the new computer-based assessments took place in March 2012 with a representative sample of primary schools to robustly test the new assessments. All participating teachers and pupils were asked to provide their feedback on both assessments via a questionnaire.

NILA was trialled in 185 primary schools and completed by 11,000 pupils. A total of 246 teachers and 7,968 pupils provided feedback on this literacy assessment.

NINA was trialled in 193 primary schools and completed by 13,000 pupils. A total of 244 teachers and 9,424 pupils provided feedback on this numeracy assessment.

Throughout both trials CCEA's CBA helpdesk was available as a support to schools. Only a small number of calls were received during both trials, and no calls were logged regarding technical difficulties.

50 primary schools participated in CCEA's final quality assurance checks of NILA and NINA in May 2012. 2,520 pupils completed the new computer-based assessments.

A total of 51 teachers and 1,621 pupils provided feedback on the literacy assessment.

52 teachers and 1,699 pupils provided feedback on the numeracy assessment.

In addition to the evaluation reports, both suppliers provided detailed reports following both the trial and final quality assurance checks. These reports outlined the supplier's findings to both stages of testing, and provided detailed statistical analysis on the validity of assessment items.

In advance of the implementation of the new computer-based assessments validity checks were also undertaken by CCEA on both assessments.

Throughout the development and trialling of both assessment systems, content validity was kept under review to ensure each respective assessment was relevant and fit for purpose. Both assessment systems were quality assured by CCEA and practising literacy and numeracy experts.

Construct validity of both assessments was also measured during the March trial and May quality assurance process. Assurance on validity has also been obtained through consultation with stakeholders. Subsequent to the May quality assurance process, both assessment providers met with a sample of teachers from 20 schools to discuss the alignment of pupil outcomes with teacher's professional judgement

Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education for the results of the validity audit of the Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy tests.

(AQW 17579/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not clear what is meant by the term "validity audit". The following answer includes information provided by CCEA on the process by which evaluation feedback was gathered from the trials of the assessments and the validity checks that were carried out.

In advance of implementing the new computer-based assessments, CCEA worked in conjunction with both suppliers to trial and then carry out final quality assurance checks on the new assessment systems.

The trial of the new computer-based assessments took place in March 2012 with a representative sample of primary schools to test the new assessments in terms of:

- compatibility with the C2k platform;
- assessment content;

- pupil interaction and engagement;
- potential difficulties/challenges schools may encounter; and
- to enable both assessments to test their items and algorithms.

The key objectives to the quality assurance process in May was to:

- check the degree to which developments informed by previous stages of testing and trialling were successful;
- trial both assessments' administration processes;
- obtain feedback on reports produced from both assessments; and
- collect feedback on the overall assessment process similar to the experience which schools will encounter in the 2012 autumn term.

Only a small number of calls to the CCEA CBA helpdesk facility were received during both trials, and no calls were logged regarding technical difficulties.

Subsequent to considering the findings from the trials and testing undertaken above, CCEA completed stewardship sign offs for both assessments at the end of August.

Outcomes from the March trial and May quality assurance process also enabled both assessment suppliers to undertake item level analysis, test their algorithms, assess the length of the assessments and analyse assessment outcomes in terms of normal distribution, year group and criterion. Outcomes from both stages of testing also informed improvements required to the layout and functionality of assessments, ensuring that the assessments focused on content and not the techniques required to answer items.

Findings from the evaluation of the May quality assurance process indicated that just over four fifths of teachers rated the reports from both assessment systems as useful. Virtually all teachers who did not rate these reports as useful indicated that they had not had an opportunity to view the reports. Furthermore, subsequent to the May quality assurance, both assessment providers met with a sample of teachers from 20 schools to discuss the alignment of pupil outcomes with teacher's professional judgement. Outcomes from this exercise revealed that the outcomes from both the literacy and numeracy assessment were generally in line with teacher expectation. Nevertheless, findings were taken on board by both suppliers.

Inspection Process

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how under performing teachers or managers are dealt with through the inspection process.

(AQW 17580/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The work of a teacher, principal or vice principal, may be evaluated as 'unsatisfactory' and hence underperforming, as part of a school inspection carried out by ETI.

The ETI will comment only on the teacher or principal's work as observed during an inspection and indicate the strengths and areas for improvement.

Where a teacher's or principal's work is evaluated as unsatisfactory the Board of Governors is required to provide a programme of support in consultation with the employing authority.

All of the above is carried out in line with the procedures drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities in consultation with the Department of Education.

Education and Training Inspectorate: Together Towards Improvement

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how effective the implementation of the self evaluation approaches outlined in the Education and Training Inspectorate document Together Towards Improvement has been in schools.

(AQW 17590/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 'Together Towards Improvement' (TTI) was introduced in 2003 and revised, to take account of feedback from stakeholders, and re-launched in 2010.

TTI is a resource for schools to use at any time, not just 'in preparation for an inspection'.

Whilst the quality indicators are provided to help schools self-evaluate the quality of the educational provision, the ETI evaluates self-evaluation in the round, not the use made of TTI.

Effective self-evaluation is a key feature of schools that are evaluated by the ETI as good or better. In fact, the increased emphasis given to self-evaluation helps in the effort to present inspection as part of a process, rather than as an event.

The recent Chief Inspectors' Report highlights that:

- the school development planning process is effective in 75% of the primary schools inspected; however,
- of all of the measures evaluated by inspectors in post-primary schools, the least effective is 'actions to promote improvement', which includes school development planning and self-evaluation, neither of which is good enough in nearly one-half of our schools.

Initial Capital Allocation

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's initial capital allocation; and the outturn expenditure in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 17591/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's opening capital budget and capital outturn expenditure in each of the last ten years was as follows:

Financial Year	Opening Capital Budget £000s	Capital Outturn Expenditure £000s
2002/03	109,284	128,850
2003/04	152,331	145,407
2004/05	201,734	149,608
2005/06	211,649	126,032
2006/07	213,461	132,512
2007/08	279,754	157,189
2008/09	214,600	198,899
2009/10	253,300	242,138
2010/11	169,308	186,793
2011/12	114,710	114,100

Primary School Extra-Curricular Activities

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what level of funding has been provided for primary schools to access extra-curricular activities outside normal school hours, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 17598/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Extended Schools (ES) programme provides additional funding to those schools serving areas of the highest social disadvantage, enabling them to provide for a range of services and activities outside of the traditional school day which have a clear focus on improving educational outcomes and removing barriers to learning.

The total amount of Extended Schools resources allocated to primary schools in each of the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years is outlined in Table 1 below.

The primary schools within the North Down constituency eligible to receive ES funding and the total amount allocated in respect of those schools in each of the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years is outlined in Table 2 below.

TABLE 1

Primary Schools ES allocations	2010/11 £s	2011/12 £s	2012/13 £s
	6,544,566	6,463,155	7,471,089

TABLE 2

DENI Ref No.	Primary Schools in North Down Constituency in receipt of ES funding	2010/11 ES Allocation	2011/12 ES Allocation	2012/13 ES Allocation
4011670	Clandeboye PS, Bangor	Did not qualify	£17,710	£21,677
4011681	Millisle PS	£17,840	£21,160	£23,920
4011688	Redburn PS, Holywood (closed 31st August 2012)	Did not qualify	£10,600	£2,400
4013023	Bloomfield PS	Did not qualify	£29,498	£34,613
4016002	Kilcooley PS, Bangor	£17,710	£18,745	£21,287
4036148	St Malachy's PS, Bangor	Did Not Qualify	£29,440	£33,800

Primary School Extra-Curricular Activities

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how much departmental money has been spent to help primary schools in North Down to access extra-curricular activities outside normal school hours, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 17599/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Extended Schools (ES) programme provides additional funding to those schools serving areas of the highest social disadvantage, enabling them to provide for a range of services

and activities outside of the traditional school day which have a clear focus on improving educational outcomes and removing barriers to learning.

The total amount of Extended Schools resources allocated to primary schools in each of the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years is outlined in Table 1 below.

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4036148	St Malachy's PS, Bangor	Did Not Qualify	£29,440	£33,800

Religious Education: Support

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to what support is currently offered to teachers of religious education, and how this compares to (i) five years ago; (ii) ten years ago; and (iii) twenty years ago.

(AQW 17697/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Religious Education (RE) is a compulsory part of the revised curriculum from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. Legislation provides that the Department sets a Core Syllabus for RE to be delivered in schools.

The RE Core Syllabus was revised in 2006 and came into operation on a phased basis from August 2007 to June 2010 in line with the implementation of the revised curriculum. Following the review of the Core Syllabus an RE Advisory Group was established and over the past 5 years the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has been working with the RE Advisory Group to support teachers and schools in the delivery of RE by developing guidance and support materials for teachers, including specific materials on world religions for new areas of the Core Syllabus at Key Stage 3, and to raise the awareness of RE by mapping the Learning Objectives across the curriculum

as a whole. Currently CCEA and the RE Advisory Group are preparing non-statutory guidance for RE at Primary to sit alongside the Core Syllabus. This is intended to provide teachers with guidance in RE which is more directly related to the language and methodologies of the curriculum.

Schools/teachers are also supported in the delivery of RE by the Education and Library Boards' RE Advisors who as well as producing guidance materials for teachers also provide additional support for schools on request. The Catholic maintained sector retain Diocesan Advisers for RE and also provides comprehensive support through their Alive 'O' and Fully Alive Curriculum Programme.

The Department does not hold specific information on the level of support provided to schools over the past 30 years however, during this period schools/teachers have been continually supported by the Education and Library Boards' RE Advisors in the delivery of RE.

Transfer: Schools and Associated Property

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail, by year, the organisations and individuals which have transferred schools, and associated property, to the responsibility of his Department since 1921 and which of these retain rights of nomination to Boards of Governors.

(AQW 17698/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold a list of the organisations and individuals which have transferred schools, and associated property, to the responsibility of the Department since 1921, and to produce such a list would be at disproportionate cost.

It should be noted that all transferors retain the right to nominate governors to transferred schools.

Education and Library Board: Primary Schools

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education which primary schools, in each Education and Library Board, have classes with thirty or more children.

(AQW 17699/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, it is a matter for school Boards of Governors and Principals to plan and use resources to maximum effect in accordance with their own needs and priorities, including setting staffing levels.

However, legislation does dictate that classes for our youngest children, Years 1-4, should be kept at 30 or fewer. Approval for a class size in excess of 30 pupils must be approved by the relevant Education and Library Board (ELB) which administer this policy. Such exceptions can apply if a school has to comply with a direction of an admissions appeal tribunal, a school attendance order or a statement of special educational needs. ELBs can also take into account the need to avoid unreasonable public expenditure.

The information requested is provided in the table below. This information relates to classes across Year groups 1-7 in primary schools and includes classes of 30 pupils, as well as classes of more than 30 pupils.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH AT LEAST ONE CLASS OF 30 OR MORE CHILDREN BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (ELB), 2011/12

School name	ELB
Botanic Primary School	Belfast
Carr's Glen Primary School	Belfast
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	Belfast
Edenbrooke Primary School	Belfast

School name	ELB
Finaghy Primary School	Belfast
Forth River Primary School	Belfast
Greenwood Primary School	Belfast
Harding Memorial Primary School	Belfast
Hazelwood Primary School	Belfast
Holy Child Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
Holy Cross Girls' Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
Holy Family Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
Lowwood Primary School	Belfast
Mercy Primary School	Belfast
Orangefield Primary School	Belfast
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
Rosetta Primary School	Belfast
St Anne's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Bride's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St John the Baptist Primary School, Finaghy	Belfast
St Joseph's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Malachy's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Matthew's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Michael's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Paul's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Peter's Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
St Therese of Lisieux Primary School, Belfast	Belfast
Strandtown Primary School	Belfast
Stranmillis Primary School	Belfast
Victoria Park Primary School	Belfast
Anahorish Primary School	North Eastern
Antrim Primary School	North Eastern
Ashgrove Primary School	North Eastern
Ballykeel Primary School	North Eastern
Ballymena Primary School	North Eastern
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	North Eastern
Ballynure Primary School	North Eastern

School name	ELB
Ballysally Primary School	North Eastern
Braidside Integrated Primary School	North Eastern
Broughshane Primary School	North Eastern
Buick Memorial Primary School	North Eastern
Camphill Primary School	North Eastern
Carnalridge Primary School	North Eastern
Carniny Primary School	North Eastern
Carnmoney Primary School	North Eastern
Carrickfergus Model Primary School	North Eastern
D H Christie Memorial Primary School	North Eastern
Damhead Primary School	North Eastern
Eden Primary School	North Eastern
Garvagh Primary School	North Eastern
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	North Eastern
Gracehill Primary School	North Eastern
Greenisland Primary School	North Eastern
Greystone Primary School	North Eastern
Harpurs Hill Primary School	North Eastern
Hezlett Primary School	North Eastern
Killowen Primary School, Coleraine	North Eastern
Kilrea Primary School	North Eastern
King's Park Primary School	North Eastern
Leaney Primary School	North Eastern
Lislagan Primary School	North Eastern
Loanends Primary School	North Eastern
Macosquin Primary School	North Eastern
Millquarter Primary School	North Eastern
Moorfields Primary School	North Eastern
Mossley Primary School	North Eastern
Mount St Michael's Primary School	North Eastern
Olderfleet Primary School	North Eastern
Portrush Primary School	North Eastern
Portstewart Primary School	North Eastern
Randalstown Central Primary School	North Eastern

School name	ELB
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	North Eastern
Spires Integrated Primary School	North Eastern
St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey	North Eastern
St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymena	North Eastern
St Brigid's Primary School, Knockloughrim	North Eastern
St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane	North Eastern
St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea	North Eastern
St Colum's Primary School, Portstewart	North Eastern
St Comgall's Primary School, Antrim	North Eastern
St James' Primary School, Newtownabbey	North Eastern
St John's Primary School, Coleraine	North Eastern
St John's Primary School, Swatragh	North Eastern
St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	North Eastern
St Joseph's Primary School, Dunloy	North Eastern
St Joseph's Primary School, Stiles	North Eastern
St Macnissi's Primary School, Larne	North Eastern
St Macnissi's Primary School, Newtownabbey	North Eastern
St Malachy's Primary School, Coleraine	North Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Bellaghy	North Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Draperstown	North Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Portglenone	North Eastern
St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School, Ballycastle	North Eastern
Templepatrick Primary School	North Eastern
The Diamond Primary School	North Eastern
Victoria Primary School	North Eastern
Whiteabbey Primary School	North Eastern
Whitehead Primary School	North Eastern
Whitehouse Primary School	North Eastern
Woodburn Primary School	North Eastern
All Childrens Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Andrews Memorial Primary School	South Eastern
Ballinderry Primary School	South Eastern
Ballyholme Primary School	South Eastern
Ballymacrickett Primary School	South Eastern

School name	ELB
Ballymagee Primary School	South Eastern
Ballynahinch Primary School	South Eastern
Bangor Central Primary School	South Eastern
Belvoir Park Primary School	South Eastern
Braniel Primary School	South Eastern
Cairnshill Primary School	South Eastern
Carrickmannon Primary School	South Eastern
Castle Gardens Primary School	South Eastern
Cedar Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Dunmurry	South Eastern
Clandeboye Primary School	South Eastern
Comber Primary School	South Eastern
Crawfordsburn Primary School	South Eastern
Cumran Primary School	South Eastern
Donaghadee Primary School	South Eastern
Downpatrick Primary School	South Eastern
Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough	South Eastern
Dromara Primary School	South Eastern
Dundonald Primary School	South Eastern
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Gilnahirk Primary School	South Eastern
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Harmony Hill Primary School	South Eastern
Killowen Primary School, Lisburn	South Eastern
Kilmaine Primary School	South Eastern
Lisnasharragh Primary School	South Eastern
Londonderry Primary School	South Eastern
Loughview Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Maghaberry Primary School	South Eastern
Meadow Bridge Primary School	South Eastern
Millennium Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Millisle Primary School	South Eastern
Moira Primary School	South Eastern
Moneyrea Primary School	South Eastern

School name	ELB
Newtownards Model Primary School	South Eastern
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School, Downpatrick	South Eastern
Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School, Dunmurry	South Eastern
Pond Park Primary School	South Eastern
Portavogie Primary School	South Eastern
Rathmore Primary School	South Eastern
Riverdale Primary School	South Eastern
Rowandale Integrated Primary School	South Eastern
Seymour Hill Primary School	South Eastern
St Bernard's Primary School, Belfast	South Eastern
St Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick	South Eastern
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	South Eastern
St Ita's Primary School, Belfast	South Eastern
St Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff	South Eastern
St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn	South Eastern
St Macartan's Primary School, Loughin Island	South Eastern
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	South Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Kircubbin	South Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle	South Eastern
St Mary's Primary School, Portaferry	South Eastern
St Patrick's Primary School, Ballynahinch	South Eastern
St Patrick's Primary School, Holywood	South Eastern
St Patrick's Primary School, Portaferry	South Eastern
Sullivan Upper School Prep. Dept.	South Eastern
The Holy Family Primary School	South Eastern
Towerview Primary School	South Eastern
Abercorn Primary School	Southern
Armstrong Primary School	Southern
Ballydown Primary School	Southern
Ballyholland Primary School	Southern
Bocombra Primary School	Southern
Bridge Integrated Primary School	Southern
Bronte Primary School	Southern

School name	ELB
Bush Primary School	Southern
Carrick Primary School, Lurgan	Southern
Carrick Primary School, Warrenpoint	Southern
Christian Brothers' Primary School, Armagh	Southern
Cloughoge Primary School	Southern
Cookstown Primary School	Southern
Derrylatinee Primary School	Southern
Donacloney Primary School	Southern
Dromintee Primary School	Southern
Drumadonnell Primary School	Southern
Edenderry Primary School	Southern
Fair Hill Primary School	Southern
Fivemiletown Primary School	Southern
Hardy Memorial Primary School	Southern
Hart Memorial Primary School	Southern
Howard Primary School	Southern
Iveagh Primary School	Southern
Kilkeel Primary School	Southern
King's Park Primary School	Southern
Maralin Village Primary School	Southern
Markethill Primary School	Southern
Millington Primary School	Southern
Moyallon Primary School	Southern
Orchard County Primary School	Southern
Orritor Primary School	Southern
Our Lady's Primary School, Dungannon	Southern
Portadown Integrated Primary School	Southern
Presentation Primary School	Southern
Rich Mount Primary School	Southern
Roan St Patrick's Primary School	Southern
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School, Armagh	Southern
St Anthony's Primary School, Legahory	Southern
St Brendan's Primary School, Moyraverty	Southern
St Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor	Southern

School name	ELB
St Clare's Convent Primary School, Newry	Southern
St Colman's Primary School, Banbridge	Southern
St Colman's Primary School, Kilkeel	Southern
St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint	Southern
St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Keady	Southern
St Francis Primary School, Lurgan	Southern
St John's Primary School, moy	Southern
St Josephs and St James Primary School, Poyntzpass	Southern
St Joseph's Convent Primary School, newry	Southern
St Joseph's Primary School, Galbally	Southern
St Joseph's Primary School, Killeavy	Southern
St Malachy's Primary School, Armagh	Southern
St Mary's Primary School , Aughnacloy	Southern
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	Southern
St Mary's Primary School, Dungannon	Southern
St Mary's Primary School, Mullaghbawn	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Aghaccommon	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Cullyhanna	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Hilltown	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Killyman Road, Dungannon	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Pomeroy Road, Dungannon	Southern
St Peter's Primary School, Cloughreagh	Southern
St Ronan's Primary School, Newry	Southern
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	Southern
Tandragee Primary School	Southern
Tannaghmore Primary School	Southern
Waringstown Primary School	Southern
Windmill Integrated Primary School	Southern
Ballykelly Primary School	Western
Broadbridge Primary School	Western
Drumachose Primary School	Western

School name	ELB
Drumahoe Primary School	Western
Drumrane Primary School	Western
Eglinton Primary School	Western
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	Western
Enniskillen Model Primary School	Western
Glendermott Primary School	Western
Good Shepherd Primary School and Nursery School, Waterside	Western
Hollybush Primary School	Western
Holy Child Primary School, Creggan	Western
Jones Memorial Primary School	Western
Kesh Primary School	Western
Lisbellaw Primary School	Western
Lisnagelvin Primary School	Western
Londonderry Model Primary School	Western
Longtower Primary School	Western
Loreto Convent Primary School	Western
Nazareth House Primary School	Western
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	Western
Rosemount Primary School	Western
Sacred Heart Primary School, Omagh	Western
Sacred Heart Primary School, Waterside	Western
Sion Mills Primary School	Western
St Anne's Primary School, Strabane	Western
St Canice's Primary School, Dungiven	Western
St Colmcille's Primary School, Claudy	Western
St Colmcille's Primary School, Omagh	Western
St Conor's Primary School, Omagh	Western
St Dymphna's Primary School, Dromore	Western
St Eugene's Primary School, Derry	Western
St Eugene's Primary School, Victoria Bridge	Western
St Lawrence's Primary School, Fintona	Western
St Mary's Girls' Primary School, Strabane	Western
St Mary's Primary School, Ballymagorrey	Western
St Mary's Primary School, Claudy	Western

School name	ELB
St Mary's Primary School, Omagh	Western
St Patrick's Primary School, Castlederg	Western
St Patrick's Primary School, Mullinaskea	Western
St Paul's Primary School, Irvinestown	Western
St Ronan's Primary School, Lisnaskea	Western
Strabane Controlled Primary School	Western

Source: school census.

School: Classroom Assistants

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of classroom assistants who are (a) Protestant; and (b) Catholic in (i) integrated; (ii) Irish language; and (iii) voluntary grammar schools

(AQW 17751/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold the information requested in respect of Grant Maintained Integrated and Voluntary Grammar schools. The information below has been provided by the Education and Library Boards.

(I) CONTROLLED INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

Protestant Community		Catholic Community		Non Determined	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
178	60.54	72	24.49	44	14.97

(II) IRISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Protestant Community		Catholic Community		Non Determined	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
4	2.84	119	84.39	18	12.77

Age-Weighted Pupil Unit

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the value of the Age-Weighted Pupil Unit in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17796/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Annex G of the "Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools" guidance (April 2012) sets out the details of the AWPU cash value for a financial year. This document is published on the Department's website. The table below sets out the values for the past five years.

Year	Value
2012-2013	£2,025.32
2011-2012	£2,041.01
2010-2011	£2,056.52
2009-2010	£2,020.49

Year	Value
2008-2009	£1,966.16

Primary School: Class Sizes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what consideration he has given to a cap on primary 5 to primary 7 class sizes.

(AQW 17797/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The quality of teachers and the instruction they provide is the key influence on learning outcomes. However, I am aware that there is evidence that smaller class sizes in early years learning can have a positive impact on outcomes.

In view of this, the Department requires schools to keep classes for the youngest children (years 1 to 4 in primary school) at 30 or fewer pupils. The Education and Library Boards administer this policy and are responsible for providing any additional funding to primary schools to enable the policy to be achieved.

In terms of class sizes for pupils in Year 5-7, School Boards of Governors have a degree of flexibility, afforded to them under the Local Management of Schools arrangements. The Board of Governors has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget and this would include taking decisions on class sizes. This allows the schools' Boards of Governors to determine how they use their delegated funding to maximum effect in accordance with their school's specific needs and priorities.

School: Composite Classes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what research his Department has carried out into the effect of composite classes in (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools.

(AQW 17798/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not carried out any specific research into the effect of composite classes.

However, there is evidence from inspections carried out in schools by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) that provision for composite classes is most effective when it is supported by thoughtful planning and preparation, skilful organisation and management and as in all classes, composite or otherwise, insight into how best to cater for different stages of development.

There is no evidence from inspections to suggest that the teaching of children in composite classes is any less competent than that received by children in classes with 1 year group only.

School Boards of Governors have a degree of flexibility, afforded to them under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, and it is the Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget. Any decision on the use of a composite class approach is therefore a matter for the Board of Governors.

Primary School: Class Sizes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what research his Department has carried out into the optimal class size for (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools.

(AQW 17799/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not carried out any research into optimal class sizes in primary or post-primary schools.

As stated in my reply to AQW 17797/11-15, it is a school's Board of Governors that has responsibility for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing the school's education budget and this would include taking decisions on class sizes.

At primary school, it is the Department's policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils and schools can apply to their Education and Library Board, for assistance to meet this policy requirement.

At Post-Primary school, class sizes are restricted to 35, except for those subjects defined as "practical" which should be limited to 20 pupils. DE guidance does however provide some flexibility for Science, Art and Design and Physical Education. The flexibility varies dependent upon the year group of pupils. More information on this can be found in DE's circular 2004/5 which is available on the Department's website at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/class_sizes_in_practical_subjects_circular_2004_5.pdf

Sharing Language and Sharing Culture Programme

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to renew Shimna College's funding for the Sharing Language and Sharing Culture programme which it is delivering in primary schools.

(AQW 17846/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not provided any funding for the Sharing Language and Sharing Culture programme which was an initiative undertaken by the school and which is additional to the curriculum requirements. Therefore it is not a question of "renewing" funding.

Against a background of pressures on the education budget, priority must be placed on meeting existing curriculum requirements. Should primary schools consider this programme of value, they have the choice of funding this initiative from their existing budgets.

While I recognise the importance of Shared Education, I am awaiting the report from the Ministerial Advisory Group before assessing how best to advance shared education in the north of Ireland. The report is due on 1 February 2013.

Orangefield High School

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education to outline his plans for the Orangefield High School campus following the planned closure of the school.

(AQO 3057/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I understand from the Belfast Education and Library Board that it intends to publish a development proposal this month to close Orangefield High School.

As you will be no doubt be aware Development Proposals are subject to a two month statutory consultation period after which I must make an assessment based on all the relevant information.

As no Development Proposal has been published and no decision taken I am not in a position at this time to comment on the future use of the Orangefield site.

The processes by which any surplus asset is disposed of are set out the guidelines drawn up by Land and Property Services. These are available on the DE website.

However, my main concern is for the pupils and staff currently served by Orangefield. Their futures will be my paramount concern if I have to make a decision about the future of Orangefield High School rather than the future of the site.

School: Allergies

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Education what training is provided to schools to support children with allergies.

(AQO 3058/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Department of Education document "Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs" was issued to all schools in 2008 and provides the overarching framework for meeting the medication needs of school pupils including those with allergies.

At the time of the policy being launched the Department provided £248k to the Education and Library Boards for the training of school principals on how to meet the needs of pupils with medication needs.

Training and support for school staff is available from both Health and Social Care Trusts and the Education and Library Boards to enable schools to meet the needs of children with medication needs, including those with allergies.

School principals are responsible for determining the training needs of their staff in conjunction with the School Health Service and they can avail of a wide range of training offered by boards, health bodies and other providers. Education and library boards therefore undertake an annual needs analysis of the training required by schools in the forthcoming academic year.

Education Bill

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education whether he will reconsider the level of consultation on the Education Bill that his Department has offered to pupils, parents and teachers.

(AQO 3059/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There was extensive public consultation during the previous Assembly mandate on the policy underpinning the Education Bill. The Education Committee is also consulting broadly at present, and the Assembly has agreed to extend Committee stage to facilitate this. In these circumstances I have no plans to reconsider consultation.

Teachers: Pension

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to ensure the protection of lower paid teachers in relation to pension contributions.

(AQO 3060/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is currently consulting on proposed increases to contributions from April 2013 for members of the NI Teachers' Pension Scheme. The proposals contained in the consultation document will at the very least guarantee that teachers earning less than £26,000 per year will see no further increase beyond that applied in April 2012.

As I did last year, I have asked key stakeholders to consider the proposal that there should be no increase in the contribution rate for teachers earning less than £32,000 per year. I have also included a proposal that teachers earning less than £32,000 per year should revert to the 2011-12 rate of 6.4%.

The consultation period closes on 16 January 2013. I will give careful consideration to the views expressed before I make my final decision on how the April 2013 increases will be applied.

Grammar Schools: Careers Advice

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Education what provision has been made to ensure that grammar schools provide alternative careers advice to pupils rather than placing a sole emphasis on degree programmes.

(AQO 3061/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am committed to ensuring that access to high-quality, careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is accessible for all our young people, no matter what type of school they attend. The increased choice of courses under the entitlement framework, both general and applied, brings with it a requirement for high quality CEIAG to help parents and young people in reaching decisions on pathways that match their aptitudes and aspirations. Careers management forms part of the statutory curriculum. Taught, timetabled provision of careers information includes opportunities for personal planning, cross-curricular development of employability skills and planned and relevant work-related learning.

Schools have a number of tools at their disposal to support them in the development of good careers education. The Education and Training Inspectorate has developed tailored, quality standards indicators

for self-evaluation, and my Department has published a map and guide to link careers across the curriculum.

My officials have recently written to all post primary schools reminding them of the commitment under the joint DE DEL careers strategy to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their education, training and employment choices and to help make informed decisions. Through schools partnership working with the careers service, pupils have access to impartial advice and guidance from the careers service at key transition points.

School Closure

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education what processes his Department has in place in the eventuality of a school closure to ensure that pupils are put first.

(AQW 17930/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to the answer to AQW 15635/11-15, tabled by Peter Weir MLA and published in the Official Report on 26 October 2010.

Department for Employment and Learning

City & Guilds 6131 Workshop Competency Qualification

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning where fully qualified teachers in Technology and Design with a PGCE in post-primary education can obtain a City & Guilds 6131 workshop competency qualification.

(AQW 17171/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Responsibility for the qualification requirements of teachers rests with the Department of Education (DE). In order to ensure that they can safely deliver the practical aspects of the Revised Northern Ireland Schools Curriculum, DE requires that all PGCE teachers of Technology and Design in Northern Ireland schools hold the City & Guilds 6131: Workshop Competency certificate (DE Circular 2007/22, paragraph 1.6 and Annex A). The course was developed, and is the property of, the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB).

In Northern Ireland, students of the University of Ulster's PGCE in Technology and Design undertake the C&G 6131 qualification in partnership with the BELB and, in the past, the BELB has run a number of ad hoc 6131 courses on behalf of DE for teachers already in posts within the Northern Ireland School System. At the request of DE, my Department also funded the course in 2010 for 7 teachers that had qualified in Great Britain (GB). This course was an interim measure while DE officials highlighted the existence of the C&G requirement to all GB providers of PGCE Technology and Design courses and provided information on measures to fulfil this requirement.

Currently, fully qualified teachers in Technology and Design with a PGCE in post-primary education cannot obtain the City & Guilds 6131: Workshop Competency qualification. However, my officials met with Department of Education (DE) officials on 4 December 2012 and agreed that the DE will explore whether the C&G 6131 course should be offered to returning teachers as a standalone qualification and, if so, how that course should be delivered.

Graduates: Engineering

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of engineering graduates in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17477/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total number of engineering graduates from the Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions in each of the last five academic years is detailed in the table overleaf.

Year	Total
2006/07	705
2007/08	700
2008/09	690
2009/10	720
2010/11	840

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 1 Figures in the table are rounded to the nearest 5.
- 2 The figures include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
- 3 Engineering includes all subjects within the Engineering and Technology subject area.
- 4 The latest year for which qualifications data are available is 2010/11.

Graduates: Engineering

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what systems his Department has in place to track the employment destinations of all engineering graduates.

(AQW 17478/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Higher Education Statistics Agency is responsible for collecting information on the destinations of graduates from Higher Education Institutions in the United Kingdom. These are collected through the means of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey and the data provide information on the activities of students after leaving higher education. The dataset for Northern Ireland is subsequently provided to analysts within my Department.

There are two stages to the destination survey:

- Stage 1- six months after graduating.

The first stage is a census of European Union domiciled graduates six months after they graduate. Response rates for engineering graduates from higher education institutions in Northern Ireland for Stage 1 in 2011/11 was 82%, therefore there is good coverage of engineering graduates' destinations for Northern Ireland allowing detailed analysis of the data for this group.

- Stage 2 - three and a half years after graduating.

The second stage of the survey is a follow up to Stage 1 and is carried out three and a half years after graduation. It is conducted on a sample of individuals who responded to the stage 1. The first Stage 2 survey was carried out in the winter of 2006 reporting on the 2002/03 graduates. It is currently a biennial survey. Analysis of engineering graduates may be available where sample sizes allow.

Information included within the survey focuses mainly on the type of work a graduate has entered or what sort of further study they may be engaged in where relevant. Data also include the type of industry sector and occupation type that graduates enter as well as location of employment and salary levels. Analysis of graduates can also be undertaken by students' attributes such as gender, subject of study and qualification obtained.

Engineering Jobs

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of engineering jobs, or jobs requiring an engineering degree, which have been advertised in each of the last five years.

(AQW 17479/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below outlines the total number of jobs within the engineering discipline advertised in each of the last five years on the Department for Employment and Learning's website JobCentre Online. The data has been extracted from the Department's Client Management System and covers the 5 year period 1 December 2008 to 4 December 2012. The Department is unable to advise regarding job opportunities advertised through other organisations, websites or newspapers.

Annex A contains a further breakdown of each discipline into occupational areas.

ANNEX A

Occupation/Engineering Discipline	At 1 Dec 2008	At 1 Dec 2009	At 1 Dec 2010	At 1 Dec 2011	At 1 Dec 2012	Total
Plumbing or Heating Engineer	19	10	17	13	25	84
Science and Engineering Professionals	46	67	65	84	154	416
Skilled Engineering Trades	193	156	123	149	155	776
Totals	258	233	205	246	334	1276

ANNEX A

	Occupation	At 1 Dec 2008	At 1 Dec 2009	At 1 Dec 2010	At 1 Dec 2011	At 1 Dec 2012
Plumbing or Heating Engineer	Pipe Fitters	8	4	12	5	15
	Plumbers, Heating and Ventilating Engineers	11	6	2	7	10
	Sheet Metal Workers	0	0	3	1	0
	Sub Totals	19	10	17	13	25
Science and Engineering Professionals	Biological Scientists and Biochemists	0	3	5	3	2
	Chemical Engineers	0	1	1	3	1
	Chemists	0	1	0	2	3
	Civil Engineers	1	2	1	3	2
	Design and Development Engineers	2	5	7	4	12
	Electrical Engineers	8	4	9	14	44
	Electronic Engineers	0	1	0	6	6
	Engineering Professionals N.E.C.	5	11	8	17	20
	Mechanical Engineers	19	6	12	17	36
	Physicists, Geologists and Meteorologists	2	0	0	1	2
	Planning and Quality Control Engineers	4	22	8	3	3

	Occupation	At 1 Dec 2008	At 1 Dec 2009	At 1 Dec 2010	At 1 Dec 2011	At 1 Dec 2012
	Production and Process Engineers	4	3	2	7	5
	Scientific Researchers	1	8	12	4	18
	Sub Totals	46	67	65	84	154
Skilled Engineering Trades	Electrical/Electronics Engineers	20	56	17	12	9
	Electricians, Electrical Fitters	16	34	24	38	26
	Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Precious Stone Workers	0	1	0	0	1
	Lines Repairers and Cable Jointers	4	13	3	0	0
	Metal Machining Setters and Setter Operators	5	2	0	6	32
	Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters	92	28	53	57	49
	Precision Instrument Makers and Repairers	6	0	0	1	2
	Telecommunications Engineers	1	12	5	4	9
	Tool Makers, Tool Fitters and Markers-Out	1	0	6	8	1
	TV, Video and Audio Engineers	8	0	1	1	1
	Welding Trades	40	10	14	22	25
	Sub Totals	193	156	123	149	155
	Totals	258	233	205	246	334

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 17493/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have placed the table detailing the total number of Northern Ireland domiciled students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance, broken down by constituency for academic year 2011/2012, in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website. This is the latest year for which complete data is available.

Higher Education Expansion Catalyst Project

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to the Higher Education Expansion Catalyst Project contained within the One Plan, to detail (i) the current Maximum Student Number (MaSN) cap at the Magee campus of the University of Ulster; (ii) the MaSN cap when the One

Plan was launched in 2010; (iii) what plans are in place to secure a 1,000 increase in MaSN at the Magee Campus by 2013, and (vi) what plans are in place to expand the Magee Campus to 9,400 full-time equivalents by 2020.

(AQW 17499/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that there is no Maximum Student Number (MaSN) cap applicable to the Magee campus of the University of Ulster. The MaSN applies to the University as a whole and for the 2010-11 academic year, this was 12,668.

A total of 572 additional places have been allocated to the University of Ulster between December 2011 and November 2012. As an independent body, the University has the authority to determine where any of its student places are located. I understand, in the case of these additional 572 places, it has decided to allocate them to the Magee campus.

When I took office no additional places were envisaged, it is encouraging we have secured since then, the funding for 1,200 additional places.

Any further increase in MaSN will only be possible if additional funding is provided by the Executive. Bearing in mind the competing calls on public funds and the legitimate demands for additional places at other locations across Northern Ireland, the aspiration to have 9,400 full-time equivalents at Magee by 2020 would appear ambitious.

Programme-led Apprenticeship Scheme

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what was the cost of the Programme-Led Apprenticeship scheme in each of the last 3 financial years, and what is the budget for the current year.

(AQW 17519/11-15)

Dr Farry: The costs for Programme-Led Apprenticeships across the last three financial years since its introduction in September 2009 are:

2009/2010	£8 million
2010/2011	£24 million
2011/2012	£33 million;
2012/2013	£23 million (to the 30 November 2012)

The programme is demand-led and apprenticeships are funded across six funding categories ranging from £8,320 to £10,770 over the 104 weeks in training.

South Eastern Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the educational work that the South Eastern Regional College undertakes in North Down.

(AQW 17569/11-15)

Dr Farry: The South Eastern Regional College currently delivers outreach provision in six community centres within the North Down Borough Council Area. There are currently 409 enrolments in these centres, undertaking courses in areas such as Administration; Art, Design, Photography; Computing and Information Communication Technology; Essential Skills; Horticulture; and Languages.

The college has also, recently, delivered provision in cooperation with groups, such as the Cedar Foundation, the Well2 project (Well-being, Education, Living and Learning) and the Gransha Care Farm.

Software Testers Academy Skills Programme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many graduates, who have completed the Software Testers Academy Skills Programme in the past year, have gained employment in the Information and Communications Technology Industry.

(AQW 17632/11-15)

Dr Farry: Nineteen graduates completed the first Software Testers' Academy, which started in October 2011.

Of this group of nineteen graduates, eighteen gained employment in the Information and Communications Technology Industry, seventeen as software testers. One graduate chose to take up employment in his original vocational area.

There has therefore been a very positive outcome to this first cohort of the programme. A second cohort commenced training in October 2012.

Welfare Reform

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the plans his Department has in place to deal with the potential increase in workload resultant from claimants, particularly people who suffer from mental health issues, moving from Incapacity Benefit and ESA to the new work groups proposed under Welfare Reform.

(AQW 17672/11-15)

Dr Farry: Since 2010, staff in the Employment Service in my Department have dealt with many people with mental health conditions who have been moving from Incapacity Benefit (IB) to both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). In addition to its highly trained professional staff working in front-line offices, the Employment Service has a range of programmes and services to help all of its clients progress towards, move into and sustain employment.

An interdepartmental Project Team is responsible for calculating the number of people who are likely to make a claim to the new Universal Credit across the different conditionality groups. Information on the likely volumes of claimants to the respective groups is still being developed. Therefore it is too early at this stage to make any assumptions as to potential workload increase for the Department's Employment Service as a result of the Universal Credit element of Welfare Reform.

Steps to Work Programme

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the Steps to Work programme and how it can assist the increasing numbers of young people who are unemployed.

(AQW 17674/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Steps to Work (StW) programme is my Department's main adult return to work provision, the aim of which is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.

StW is a flexible programme which offers opportunities for work experience, qualifications, training, assistance for those interested in self-employment and subsidised employment. The programme is available to anyone who is aged 18 years or over and who is unemployed or economically inactive.

A recent evaluation of the StW programme found that it had met its employment targets and was an effective employment intervention. The current target for Steps to Work participants moving into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more is 25%. From September 2008 to September 2011 (latest data available) an overall total of 28% was achieved.

My Department has recently introduced 'First Start', one of the measures announced as part of the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative. 'First Start', which is delivered through StW, provides a minimum of six months employment for 18 to 24 year olds in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for 26 weeks or more and will support 1,700 jobs for young people over the next three years.

Job Centres: Army Recruitment Posters

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether Job Centres accept Army Recruitment posters; and whether there have been any reported incidents in the past month where offers of such posters have been declined.

(AQW 17711/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has a longstanding arrangement to promote both Army recruitment opportunities and those within the Armed Forces in general. Each Jobs and Benefits Office and JobCentre has access to a dedicated Armed Forces Liaison Officer which has helped to promote good working relationships.

Both my Careers staff and Employment Service staff maintain regular contact with the Army recruitment service at their various locations when there is a need to discuss recruitment for clients. More recently my Department invited the Army Recruitment Service to take part in a Jobsfair in Belfast on the 21 November 2012.

There is a network of 35 offices across Northern Ireland, which includes eight JobCentres and 27 Jobs & Benefits offices. I have checked with both the Employment Service and the Careers Service staff across the network and there have been no reported incidents of Army Recruitment posters being declined in the past month. Currently there is a range of information leaflets and posters displayed in the offices.

Further Education Colleges

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what analysis his Department has undertaken to assess the employment prospects of students who are taking courses at further education colleges.

(AQO 3062/11-15)

Dr Farry: The primary aim set out in the strategy “Further Education Means Business” is to support economic and workforce development. This means that the curriculum in the colleges must meet the needs of employers and of learners.

Around 90% of the college provision funded by my Department is professional and technical in nature, and leads to qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The qualifications on this framework are based on nationally recognised occupational standards, and have been designed with input from employers.

Colleges also must focus their provision on the priority sectors which will rebuild Northern Ireland’s economy.

It is, of course, important that learners achieve the qualifications that they set out to gain. In the 2011/12 academic year, there were learner retention and achievement rates of 88% and 84% respectively in respect of professional and technical provision. This extremely encouraging performance represents a 4% increase on the previous year’s achievement rate and

is excellent news for those who are seeking employment or who want to progress within their job.

To complement the core areas of study, colleges are responding to the demands from employers for prospective employees to also have a range of employability skills, including the right attitude, values and standards of behaviour.

For example, as part of their induction process, learners at the South Eastern Regional College participate in a three week intensive enterprise programme which includes team working, communication skills and problem based learning which is focused on identifying solutions to industry specific problems. This programme has been designed specifically to give students the edge in acquiring the skills that are critical to employers.

Provision to develop employability skills is replicated across the colleges.

It is clear that individuals' participation in further education increases greatly their employment prospects.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Review of Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQO 3068/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise that my Department and the Department of Education launched a joint public consultation on the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme on Monday 30 July. The consultation ran for fourteen weeks and closed on Friday 2 November. The consultation document contained five options for the future structure of the scheme which were agreed with the Minister of Education. 62 consultation responses were received.

My Department and the Department of Education are now carefully analysing all responses received prior to making a joint recommendation on the future structure of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme. Final decisions on the way forward will rest with the Executive.

It is intended that all agreed changes to the scheme will be implemented from the 2013/14 academic year and an announcement made in order to ensure that current and prospective students are provided with sufficient notice of how any proposed changes to the scheme may affect them. It is also to ensure that there is sufficient time for the Student Loans Company, which administers the scheme on behalf of both Departments, to make the required changes to the ICT infrastructure, application forms and guidance documentation.

Agency Workers Directive

Mr Anderson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact that the Agency Workers Directive may have on workers and employers.

(AQO 3069/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Agency Workers Regulations, which transpose the Directive, have been in operation for less than a year. The Regulations are intended to increase the basic employment rights of agency workers, by bringing certain entitlements, such as pay and holidays, in line with those of directly-employed employees.

The cost and administration of these additional rights and entitlements inevitably have a knock-on impact on agencies and hirers. However, the introduction of a 12-week qualifying period for equal treatment was intended to offset the burden on business, compared with having equal treatment from day one of an assignment.

My Department will be carrying out a review of the operation and impact of these Regulations, and this will start early in 2013.

We are finalising terms of reference for a research project which will provide the evidence base for that review. It is intended that the research will cover the following issues: regulatory impact of the regulations; levels of awareness; the extent of compliance by agencies and hirers in providing access to the rights available under the regulations; and an assessment of whether there has been any under- or over-provision of rights.

Following completion of the research, I will ensure that the member is provided with a copy of the final report.

Further Education Colleges

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he has received requests from Queen's University Belfast and further education colleges for an increase in student places.

(AQO 3070/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Queen's University of Belfast made verbal representations from the Vice Chancellor and other senior staff to me for a share of the additional 500 STEM places and the further education colleges included additional MaSN places for higher education courses as part of their annual College Development Plans.

University of Ulster did not make any separate representations either verbally or in writing.

Job Creation Scheme

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an estimate of the cost of introducing a three year job creation scheme for training to apprenticeship level to address unemployment among the 18 to 35 age group.

(AQO 3071/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy. It is my Department's primary role to enhance an individual's prospects of getting into the labour market.

To this end, my Department already funds apprenticeship training through its ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Demand is determined by employers who recruit apprentices linked to their business needs. On the 4 December 2012, there were 11,379 apprentices undergoing training. The Department is planning a publicity campaign in the New Year to increase awareness amongst employers of the value and benefits of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme with the aim of increasing the number of employers likely to take on an apprentice.

The active engagement of employers in creating apprenticeships is crucial in opening up opportunities for young people. Through the Executive's Jobs and Economy Initiative we will also encourage further employer engagement with ApprenticeshipsNI by supporting apprenticeship training for up to 900 additional young people that have participated on the Youth Employment Scheme.

The funding available under ApprenticeshipsNI ranges from £1,550 to £ 12,300 depending on the age of the apprentice and the apprenticeship being undertaken.

My Department also offers programme-led apprenticeships for 16 to 17 year olds, with extended eligibility for those with a disability or from an in-care background. These apprenticeships aim to assist school leavers who have been unable to secure an apprenticeship through employment due to the economic downturn.

The funding on offer ranges from £8,320 to £10,770 and these apprentices also receive a non-means tested educational maintenance allowance of £40 per week.

I am determined that in this downturn we continue to invest in the training of our young people so they are well placed to seize employment opportunities as these arise, particularly as we come out of recession.

Further Education Colleges

Ms Fearon asked Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department intends to increase the delivery of higher education at further education colleges in 2013.

(AQO 3072/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am fully committed to encouraging further education colleges to deliver higher education courses and believe they are best placed to provide intermediate level higher education qualifications such as Foundation Degrees. Within Graduating to Success, the higher education strategy, I have set a target to increase full-time or part-time Foundation Degree enrolments to 2,500 by March 2015 from a baseline of 1,132 enrolments in 2010.

I have demonstrated this commitment by allocating an additional 140 full-time higher education places to the colleges since December 2011. These additional places are to be allocated to colleges in four

tranches over the academic years 2012/13 to 2015/16. There will be 47 new places allocated to colleges for the 2013/14 academic year.

These additional places will increase the total number of full-time Higher Education in Further Education places from 3,833 in 2010/11 to 3,973 by 2015/16.

There are also around 7,000 part-time higher education enrolments in further education. My Department does not place a cap on part-time higher education places and therefore expansion of part-time provision within existing budgets offers colleges another route to increase higher education provision.

For the academic year 2012-13, my Department has set a target of 11,018 higher education enrolments across all further education colleges. This is an increase of 536, or 5%, from the 2011-12 year.

Teacher Training Colleges

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the integration of teacher training colleges.

(AQO 3073/11-15)

Dr Farry: I recognise the need for change in the teacher training infrastructure in Northern Ireland. I support the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College with Queen's University but as the proposal does not enjoy sufficient cross party political support I have not yet proceeded to introduce the necessary legislation to effect it. The situation we have in Northern Ireland today for the training of our teachers is not sustainable, particularly given the number of unemployed teachers, teachers on short-term contracts and other real financial priorities. We need to ensure that the system in place for teacher training is of the highest quality, is efficient, offers value for money and benefits our society.

I have initiated a review of the teacher training infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The first stage of this review which looks at the sustainability of the teacher training colleges is drawing to a conclusion and I would hope to update members on the outcome in the new year. The second stage will set out options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education. Our objective must be to ensure that our teacher training infrastructure is fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Priorities for Youth Document

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what input his Department provided to the consultation document 'Priorities for Youth' issued by the Department of Education.

(AQO 3074/11-15)

Dr Farry: The proposed new "Priorities for Youth" policy is primarily a matter for the Minister for Education.

During the development stage of the policy, officials from the Department of Education and my Department met and discussed possible linkages between the policies of both departments. I am keen to build on these linkages and will contribute to relevant cross-cutting issues when the final policy is being established.

The issues most aligned to my Department's objectives include tackling the barriers to learning and encouraging positive supportive environments that complement formal education.

In that regard the Executive's strategy for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET – 'Pathway to Success') is very relevant and indeed the 'Priorities for Youth' policy was referenced in that strategy.

'Pathways to Success' made clear that addressing the needs of young people not in education, employment or training was a multi-departmental responsibility that was agreed by the Executive. I therefore very much welcome the contribution that the Department of Education will make through the 'Priorities for Youth' policy.

The Strategy seeks to join up effectively actions being taken across the Executive. My Department will lead a NEET Advisory Group to facilitate a partnership approach and joint working with government Departments, the voluntary and community sectors, the education and health and social care sectors, local government and the business sector.

My Department's Careers Service will also continue to engage with young people to help them to develop effective career plans and address barriers which may prevent them from implementing these plans.

Further Education Colleges

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department ensures that further education colleges and higher education institutes provide services which meet the needs of the local economy.

(AQO 3075/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's Skills Strategy, "Success Through Skills – Transforming Futures" sets the strategic direction for skills development in Northern Ireland, and outlines the key roles played by further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Further education colleges support the economy in a number of ways. Around 90% of colleges' provision leads to professional and technical qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Through sector skills councils, employers contribute to the design and content of these qualifications, to ensure that their needs are identified and met.

Each college has a dedicated Business Support Unit to provide bespoke assistance to local employers in areas such as innovation, productivity, research and product design and development. The Employer Support Programme, which was launched in November 2011, provides colleges with £6.9m to support local small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Department's Assured Skills programme, has a capacity building strand aimed at providing the skills needs of current and future employers. For example, this programme has recently had highly successful projects in finance and ICT, which included up-skilling university and college lecturers to design and deliver bespoke provision for inward investors in these priority sectors.

The higher education sector contributes to the success of the local economy in a variety of ways, including

- ensuring an appropriate supply of good quality graduates with the right skills to meet the needs of the economy
- helping to generate investment in the local economy through research and development and international collaborations,
- and promoting knowledge transfer, business engagement and innovation

The sector therefore has a key role to play in the Executive's plan for economic growth. I have recognised that role and have recently allocated some 1200 additional STEM undergraduate places and 300 additional PhD places in areas of economic relevance and increased research and development funding by some £1m as we work to develop a modern sustainable knowledge-based economy.

Graduate Jobs

Mr Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department has taken to help graduates to get appropriately paid jobs that relate to their qualifications.

(AQO 3076/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has developed a number of programmes to help graduates get appropriately paid jobs. "INTRO" Entry to Management Programme The Graduate Entry to Management Programme has been offered since 2007, operating under the INTRO brand. The programme is designed to provide well trained managers for businesses in Northern Ireland while at the same time helping unemployed graduates gain employment.

The programme provides graduates at degree/HND level with three weeks off-the-job training in essential management skills such as leadership and team building, managing people, finance, marketing, business excellence and strategic planning and a 21 week salaried placement. During this time the graduate undertakes a measurable Business Improvement Project with an employer as well as mentoring support and guidance.

The Graduate Acceleration Programme

In recognition of the fact that lack of experience in the workplace was a barrier for graduates seeking employment my Department introduced the Graduate Acceleration Programme in January 2010 as a strand of Steps to Work provision.

The aim of the Graduate Acceleration Programme is to provide a relevant, graduate level work experience placement lasting up to 26 weeks combined with the opportunity to undertake a vocationally relevant qualification.

This programme allows the participants to gain experience thereby enabling them to compete more effectively for jobs in the current economic climate. In addition the programme helps to prepare them for future job opportunities.

Careers Service

My Department's Careers Service delivers impartial careers information, advice and guidance to help people realise their careers aspirations, enabling them to contribute positively to their community and to the Northern Ireland economy. This service is available to everyone including graduates.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

InvestNI

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether InvestNI has any plans to repeat the March 2011 type of visit by International Sales Conference participants to the Coleraine area in 2013.

(AQW 17220/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Planning for Invest NI's International Conference in 2013 is at the early stages and locations have yet to be decided. Invest NI will be looking at the best way to engage with stakeholders as part of the conference programme.

Freight Trade: Air and Sea

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department envisages a growth in freight trade by sea and air over the next three years; and what action her Department is taking to support this.

(AQW 17280/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The overall focus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy is to improve our economic competitiveness in order to increase employment and prosperity for all. The Economic Strategy very clearly puts export-led growth at the centre of our ambitions.

All the measures identified within the Economic Strategy will support the growth of our private sector and lead to a greater number of our local firms competing in global markets and existing exporters entering new markets. By extension, I would expect this widening and deepening of our export base to result in the growth of Northern Ireland's freight trade.

Forest Parks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which forest parks have caravan sites.
(AQW 17289/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A list of licenced caravan & camping sites is available on the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) consumer website:

www.discovernorthernireland.com/Licensed-Caravan-and-Camping-Sites-A2515

This is not an exhaustive list as NITB has no regulatory function over caravan & camping sites. NITB only inspects sites participating in its voluntary quality grading scheme with a view to assessing its star rating. The sites listed are licenced to operate by local councils.

Information provided by the Northern Ireland Forest Service on www.nidirect.gov.uk/camping-and-caravanning-in-forests states that caravanning and camping and facilities are available in the following forests which are managed by Forest Service:

- Castlewellan Forest Park;
- Drum Manor Forest Park;
- Glenariff Forest Park;
- Gortin Glen Forest Park;
- Gosford Forest Park; and
- Tollymore Forest Park.

Other forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland may offer camping and caravanning facilities.

There is a variety of organisations which own and manage forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland, which are open to the public.

These bodies include the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), The Woodland Trust, The National Trust, The Colin Glen Trust and various councils such as Belfast City Council and Down District Council.

More information about some of these forests and woodlands is available via the following link:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/leisure-home-and-community/leisure-and-recreation/outdoor-recreation/forests/public-forests-in-northern-ireland/other-forests-and-woodlands-open-to-the-public.htm>

Ministerial Directions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 16684/11-15, whether she will specify the decisions which were made as a result of Ministerial Directions.
(AQW 17346/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Each of the decisions related to support to individual organisations. The details of the decisions are commercially sensitive.

Foyle Constituency

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the detail the amount of vacant former factory space in the Foyle constituency.
(AQW 17389/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI maintains an online database which contains the details of a range of available properties across both the private and public sectors. This information, whilst not available at the parliamentary constituency level, can be filtered by council area.

Invest NI is aware of 14 available factories within the City Londonderry council area. Further details on these and other available commercial properties can be found on the Northern Ireland Business Information website at www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk.

It is, however, important to be aware that the information within the database does not comprise a definitive list of all available properties. Invest NI is wholly reliant upon the accuracy of the information provided to it by commercial property agents and developers.

InvestNI

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of vacant industrial land owned by InvestNI at Skeoge in the Foyle constituency.

(AQW 17390/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI holds a total of 75 acres of land at its Skeoge Industrial Estate. Whilst a significant proportion of this has been developed and is occupied by businesses there remain 32 acres available.

Land held by Invest NI is provided in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses with an approved business case and immediate property need.

Foyle Constituency

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of vacant office space in the Foyle constituency.

(AQW 17391/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI maintains an online database which contains the details of a range of available properties across both the private and public sectors. This information, whilst not available at the parliamentary constituency level, can be filtered by council area.

Within the City of Londonderry council area, Invest NI is aware of available office space across 30 properties. Further details on these and other available commercial properties can be found on the Northern Ireland Business Information website at www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk.

It is, however, important to be aware that the information within the database does not comprise an exhaustive listing of all available properties. Invest NI is wholly reliant upon the accuracy of the information provided to it by commercial property agents and developers.

Foyle Constituency

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of full-time jobs, excluding full-time equivalents, created by each new inward investment company in the Foyle constituency since 2008.

(AQW 17392/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland only reports on the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of jobs promoted. Therefore, it is not possible to provide detailed information on the number of jobs created.

Trip to China: Benefits

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefits of her recent trip to China.

(AQW 17421/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Member will be aware that I gave initial feedback on the benefits of the Invest NI Trade Mission to China on Wednesday 21st November. I am delighted to report that companies making up the Northern Ireland trade delegation continue to report a high level of enquiries following the mission – particularly our food and drink companies who were exhibiting at the Food Hotel China Exhibition.

However, doing business in China is driven by building relationships and enquiries are one thing – converting even a small proportion of these to orders is something else and this will take time, commitment and patience. That is why Invest NI under its Boosting Business initiative now supports companies to make up to three return visits to market following any trade missions or exhibitions.

The benefits of the trip extend well beyond those of our companies. I promoted our universities and further education colleges and believe there to be significant potential for our education sector to continue to develop its footprint in China. I promoted our tourism industry and again believe there is potential to grow the number of tourists visiting Northern Ireland.

Importantly we reached out to our Diaspora in both Shanghai and Hong Kong and it was clearly evident that there is a real desire from our Northern Ireland “ex-pats” to help out where they can. One has already offered to give up some time over his return home this Christmas and to share his experience of China with a number of companies from our drinks sector.

I have no doubt going forward we will see more tangible benefits of the visit.

Natural Gas: Off Shore

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the prospect of finding off-shore natural gas.

(AQW 17472/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The sedimentary basins offshore Northern Ireland are considered prospective for oil and gas, as indicated by the petroleum licence for six blocks surrounding Rathlin Island awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to Providence Resources plc in February 2012. Blocks in the North Channel have been held under licence previously and this area was also made available in the recent 27th Round of offshore licensing which closed for applications on 1st May 2012.

The sedimentary basins lying below the seabed offshore Northern Ireland contain many of the same rock units that are found in the East Irish Sea Basin which contains the giant Morecambe gasfields and several smaller oil and gas fields. However, there are also significant differences in the geological history of the basins and there has been relatively little exploration in Northern Ireland's offshore basins to date, with no exploration wells drilled. Because of this, there is a relatively high financial risk associated with exploration in the area offshore Northern Ireland compared to many other offshore UK basins, when considering the chances of making significant discoveries of oil or gas.

NI2012: Our Time Our Place Campaign

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what methods were used to market ni2012: our time our place, including the cost to date for each method.

(AQW 17503/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Marketing activity for ni2012 focused around key anniversaries and events such as the Titanic centenary; the opening of major attractions such as Titanic Belfast and the new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre; golf and the Irish Open at Royal Portrush; and events such as the stopover of the Clipper Round the World Race and Peace One Day concert.

ni2012 has been promoted through TV, radio, cinema, print, online and outdoor advertising; PR and publicity campaigns; attendance at major consumer and trade promotions; “Home of Champions” golf campaigns; co-operative marketing campaigns with air and sea carriers serving Northern Ireland; media and trade familiarisation visits to Northern Ireland.

For GB and overseas markets. In addition to Tourism Ireland's core marketing activity the Department allocated an additional £4.7 million to Tourism Ireland for ni2012-specific promotional activity to be targeted at our main markets. The funds were allocated as follows:

GB	Offline and Online Advertising - TV, Print, Online and Outdoor	£2,400,000
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	PR and Publicity Campaign	£400,000
	Consumer and Trade Promotions	£400,000
	Air/Sea carriers cooperative marketing	£585,000
	Golf Campaign	£200,000
US	Engagement with the US trade	£43,000
	Consumer Promotions	£7,000
	Golf - Home of Champions campaign	£150,000
	Air/Sea carriers cooperative marketing	£250,000
Europe	Consumer Fairs	£50,000
	Air/Sea carriers cooperative marketing	£165,000
All markets	NI Industry Overseas Activation Programme	£50,000
Total		£4,700,000

In Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland markets. Northern Ireland Tourist Board has spent the following to date:

Method:	NI	ROI	Cost
TV	129,206.31	301,481.38	430,687.69
Radio	128,769.14	300,461.32	429,230.46
Press/magazines	125,757.05	293,433.09	419,190.14
Outdoor	162,195.84	378,456.95	540,652.79
Online	74,646.52	174,175.20	248,821.72
Ambient Dressing	205,128.58	-	205,128.58
Total	825,703.44	1,448,007.94	2,273,711.38

NI2012: Our Time Our Place Campaign

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to where the ni2012: our time our place was targeted in terms of specific countries and regions, broken down by cost for each area to date. (AQW 17505/11-15)

Mrs Foster: An extensive ni2012 promotional campaign has been underway overseas across the top four markets for tourism to Northern Ireland – Great Britain, the US, Germany and France. In addition, Tourism Ireland has been rolling out trade marketing and publicity campaigns for Northern Ireland in a further eighteen markets but with lower levels of resource and investment.

In GB and overseas markets. In addition to Tourism Ireland's core marketing activity the Department allocated an additional £4.7 million to Tourism Ireland for ni2012-specific promotional activity to be targeted at our main markets as follows:

Great Britain	£3,985,000
United States	£ 450,000
Europe	£ 215,000

All markets	£ 50,000
Total	£4,700,000

In the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets. NITB has spent the following to date with approximately 70% of the spend being allocated to ROI:

Northern Ireland	£ 682,113
Republic of Ireland	£1,591,598
Total	£2,273,711

NI 2012 Our Time Our Place

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of the ni2012: our time our place to date; and (ii) what specific input her Department had to the campaign. **(AQW 17506/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: My Department through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland delivered the ni2012 campaign as a step-change campaign building on the key tourism product coming on line in 2012 and the key events planned for 2012 and 2013.

The vision for the campaign is to create a platform from which to reposition Northern Ireland as a place to visit, work, learn and invest. The main objectives are:

- Change global perceptions of Northern Ireland;
- Raise the profile of Northern Ireland as a must see visitor destination;
- Drive visitor numbers;
- Generate economic impact; and
- Increase civic pride.

The campaign can only be truly assessed over the next 4-5 years as we change global perceptions and raise our profile but there are already positive indicators.

On global perception and raising the profile of Northern Ireland

Through an annual brand tracking survey we have seen strong increases in Northern Ireland's competitive positioning overseas with interest in visiting increasing in 9 of 10 key markets measured. This is a positive indication of how ni2012 has achieved its objective of raising awareness and changing perceptions of Northern Ireland as a place to visit. In addition we have independent confirmation:

- Belfast has been voted one of the world's top destinations for 2012 by the National Geographic Traveller magazine;
- Trip Advisor has said Belfast is the best value UK city break;
- The Lonely Planet has described the city as 'buzzing'; and
- The Financial Times has also listed Belfast as one of the 'Top 10 places in the world' to hold a conference or major event.

On visitor numbers and economic impact

Final end year figures on all of our key markets are not yet available and while provisional estimates for GB and overseas indicate a potential downturn there are many indications of the positive impact of ni2012 this year and for future years such as:

- In the period up to end November Titanic Belfast has smashed its original targets and attracted more than 621,000 visitors;
- The Giants Causeway Visitor Centre has welcomed over 300,000 visitors from over 130 countries between July and mid November;
- The Irish Open had a record-breaking 130,000 spectators;
- The ‘staycation’ market is growing with expenditure by Northern Ireland residents on overnight trips during January to September 2012 increasing by 3% on the same period in 2011, with £122 million spent;
- There has been an increase in hotel occupancy rates during January-September 2012, with an estimated 1.4 million rooms and 2.2m bed-spaces sold. This is an increase of 11% when compared to January-September 2011;
- By the end of the 2012 cruise season Belfast will have welcomed 45 cruise ships bringing 80,000 passenger and crew, with a further 8 ships visiting Londonderry;
- 2013 promises a further increase with 58 cruise ships and 114,000 passengers due to visit Belfast. This will mark a growth of around 30% over two years. These cruise ship visitors and their associated spend are not captured in the official overseas visitor statistics and are therefore additional to the published figures; and
- A total of 32 major conferences have been secured by Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau since April 2012 which will result in 14,000 delegates visiting the city up to 2016, with a £17.7 million boost to the economy.

On civic pride

The ni2012 campaign has captured the imagination with the tourism sector taking up the campaign alongside others outside of the sector. While not a direct tourism objective, raising civic pride indirectly impacts on the visitor as local residents who show pride in their city or town improving the overall experience:

- Evaluation reports on the ni2012 events are being finalised now, but early indications show that, on average, 90% of spectators attending all ni2012 events felt that events like these made them feel more proud of this country.

In summary, a campaign like ni2012 cannot be assessed against one year. The benefits of an initiative like ni2012 Our Time, Our Place alongside the opening of major attractions can only be assessed over the next 4-5 years as we change perceptions of Northern Ireland as a place to come and visit, invest, work and study. Initial indications of changing perceptions are very positive and our new visitor attractions have given us new products to promote and build on for the long term as the economic climate improves.

Attracting Visitors

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she is taking to ensure that events in 2013, such as the World Police and Fire Games, are utilised to address falling visitors numbers.

(AQW 17508/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The range of events in 2013 provide the perfect platform to build on the ni2012 campaign which has raised awareness of Northern Ireland as a new and exciting place to visit. My officials in the Department and NITB are working with key stakeholders to develop and support activity for 2013 to ensure that the momentum of ni2012 continues and the second year of this two-year step-change period continues to deliver against objectives.

Tourism Ireland will implement a comprehensive programme of promotional activity to highlight Londonderry as UK City of Culture 2013 overseas and other major events such as the World Police and Fire Games. We will also capitalise on the unprecedented opportunity of the G8 Summit, which

will be hosted in Fermanagh, to showcase Northern Ireland – not only to world leaders but also to the international media.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how much her Department has allocated to (i) Tourism Ireland; and (ii) the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in 2012 to date.

(AQW 17509/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

(i) Tourism Ireland was allocated £14.849 million in Financial Year 2012-13.

An additional £4.7 million was allocated to Tourism Ireland in year.

(ii) NITB was allocated £22.343 million in Financial Year 2012-13.

An additional £4.545 million was allocated to NITB in year.

Quinn Group: Job Losses

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the discussions that representatives from her Department or Invest NI have had with Senior Management within the Quinn Group with regards to the potential for further job losses.

(AQW 17524/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Both I and representatives of Invest NI have met regularly with Senior Management within Quinn Manufacturing Group to discuss ongoing operations.

The potential for job losses has been discussed and Quinn Manufacturing Group Senior Management confirmed that they do not have plans for job losses and continue to focus on consolidation and growth.

Caleb Foundation

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 16616/11-15, to detail each of the range of issues that were discussed with the Caleb Foundation at the meeting on 2 March 2010

(AQW 17525/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This meeting was held over 2 years ago and there is no official record of the meeting from which to detail the range of issues covered.

Broadband UK

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the provision of Broadband UK, (i) what criteria will be used to prioritise the roll out, (ii) what are the timescales for the roll out and (iii) in what order will the roll out take place.

(AQW 17573/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Pursuant to my response to oral question AQO 2716/11-15 on 22 October, I would re-iterate that in prioritising the roll-out of broadband infrastructure under the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project, my Department will consider matters such as the quality of solution designs, value and pricing, efficiency and economic viability, achieving the best value for money and providing services that are sustainable in the long term.

The intervention area for the project will be informed by the responses to the public consultation undertaken from 12 September to 19 October 2012. The feedback from this exercise is currently being analysed with the intention to publish the outcome on the DETI website by the end of 2012.

The timescales and logistics for the roll-out will be dependent on the project plans put forward by bidders responding to the procurement competition that the Department plans to commence in early 2013. It is however expected that any roll-out will be taken forward throughout 2013 and well into 2014.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how each of her Department's arm's-length bodies has performed on the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and whether any sector has been paid more quickly than others.

(AQW 17623/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the performance of the Department's Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) against the 30 day prompt payment target during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 financial years:

	2011-2012 %	2010-2011 %
Invest Northern Ireland	97	95
General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland	97	99
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	94	94
Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland	100	100

As regards whether any sector has been paid more quickly than any other, the information sought is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, the commitment towards the prompt payment of suppliers applies across all sectors.

Late Payment Directive

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the late payment directive currently passing through Westminster will affect her Department.

(AQW 17624/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Directive is likely to have a limited impact as the Department already applies the Northern Ireland Civil Service commitment to pay all suppliers within 10 days and is also bound by The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (as amended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debt Regulations 2002). It provides a statutory right for suppliers to claim interest on late payments of commercial debt. Payment is regarded as late if made outside the agreed terms, or 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice where no terms are agreed.

Administrator Appointment

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the time frame for appointing an administrator when a company has been declared insolvent.

(AQW 17630/11-15)

Mrs Foster: An administrator can be appointed at any time after a company has been identified as insolvent. This is subject to relevant statutory requirements to give notice to anyone holding security over company assets.

Tourism Signage Policy

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following the review of the Tourism Signage Policy, what consideration has been given to adjusting the siting and location of tourist signs for accommodation.

(AQO 3085/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has reviewed the NI Tourism Signage Policy, which is operated by DRD Roads Service, to ensure it reflects developments in tourism and is more flexible in its implementation, given the evolving nature of tourism product and experiences. I wrote to the DRD Minister to present our recommendations for proposed amendments and we subsequently met on 4 December, 2012 where I set out the context to the review and recommendations made by my Department.

As regards tourism accommodation, my recommendations include the need to cover new tourist accommodation categories and greater flexibility in signposting from A and B class roads. As always, a balance between tourism and traffic management needs must be found.

My officials will meet with DRD officials in the New Year to examine the detail of the proposed recommendations and progress with implementation when agreement has been reached.

Programme for Government

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the latest visitor statistics against the Programme for Government target of 4.2 million visitors by December 2014.
(AQO 3078/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Ambitious targets have been set to increase both visitor numbers and, more importantly, tourism revenue. The overall targets comprise GB and overseas, Republic of Ireland and domestic visitors.

Our challenge is to return the GB and overseas markets to growth and despite the very challenging global economic conditions, I remain positive about our prospects for achieving our Programme for Government targets to 2014 as we build on the changing perceptions brought about by the ni2012 campaign and the exciting events planned for 2013.

Electricity Price Reductions

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her efforts to secure a reduction in electricity prices for domestic consumers.
(AQO 3079/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The 14.1% reduction in domestic electricity tariffs from 1st October this year represents an average yearly saving of £83 to householders. The Regulator reports that this tariff reduction means that the domestic tariff is currently 4% lower than the GB average and 15% lower than in the Republic of Ireland.

My Department continues to engage with new electricity suppliers, to support increased competition in the electricity supply market in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, I very much welcome the Chancellor's recent announcement that Treasury will work with Brussels to secure an exemption from the Carbon Price Floor for Northern Ireland. In addition to ensuring a level playing field for Northern Ireland generators in the Single Electricity Market, it would mean consumers would not endure any tariff increase as a result of the new tax.

Natural Gas Network

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her plans for the extension of the natural gas network.
(AQO 3086/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has completed a detailed economic appraisal on gas network extension to further towns in the West and North-West and to towns in County Down, including Hillsborough, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Saintfield and Crossgar. Next steps include bringing a paper to the Executive on government subvention for gas network extension to the West and North West, and liaising with the Utility Regulator regarding a competition for gas licences for this area in 2013.

Regional Start Initiative

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the Regional Start Initiative to date.

(AQO 3087/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has now awarded the contract for Regional Start to Enterprise Northern Ireland. Regional Start, which was launched on 8 October 2012, is an accessible service that will help deliver on Jobs Fund targets through Not in Education, Employment or Training and start ups from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

The initial contract period is for 2 years with a target of generating 6,500 Business Plans.

Invest NI has provided a list of 'work in progress' to Enterprise Northern Ireland as part of the move from Invest NI's Interim Service to Regional Start.

A significant uplift in business plan approvals is expected during December 2012 and January 2013.

Foreign Direct Investment

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she plans to meet the demand for Grade A property for Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous expansion or consolidation.

(AQO 3088/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The availability of suitable office space is an important part of Northern Ireland's investment proposition.

Invest NI is aware of the concerns highlighted in the recent Lisney report concerning the lack of development of Grade A space.

It is the view of Invest NI that the current level of availability of Grade A office space is not having a negative impact upon investment within Northern Ireland.

Tir Eoghain Fleadh 2013

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support her Department can provide to existing hospitality businesses in Castlederg and the surrounding areas during the weekend of events scheduled to take place for the Tir Eoghain Fleadh in June 2013.

(AQO 3089/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has not received an application for financial assistance towards this event. The event organisers have not contacted NITB to explore promotional and marketing opportunities nor support for this event.

Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why there has been no mention of celebrating the centenary of the formation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross in the decade of anniversaries proposals.

(AQO 3090/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive agreed that it was appropriate and necessary to set an inclusive tone to examining major centenaries over the decade 2012-22.

The intention is not that the Executive will organise events to mark every anniversary but will take a lead by setting the tone and providing a supportive environment for the many organisations who will celebrate these anniversaries.

The key anniversaries that have been highlighted by the Executive are the signing of the Ulster Covenant, World War 1/Battle of the Somme, the rise of the Labour Movement, Easter Rising, universal male and limited women's suffrage and the Partition of Ireland.

These events influenced or were the direct cause of many developments of which the formation of the RUC, following Partition, is one and therefore the Executive's approach to commemoration in support of those organisations who wish to mark such anniversaries would apply.

NI2012: Our Time Our Place Campaign

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the funding allocated to the ni2012: our time our place campaign.

(AQO 3091/11-15)

Mrs Foster: NITB was allocated a bespoke budget of £4.59 million towards Tier 1 Events for ni2012, including the landmark Titanic Belfast Festival 2012 in April/May, the Irish Open in June/July and the Clipper Homecoming Maritime Festival in Derry~Londonderry in July 2012

In addition, NITB marketing campaign spend for ni2012: our time our place totaled £4 million with £2 million from European funding, and £2 million core funding.

All of Tourism Ireland's campaigns for 2012 carried the ni2012 logo as part of its core marketing but an additional budget of £4.7 million was allocated to boost Tourism Ireland's ni2012-specific promotional activity.

The additional funds were allocated for TV, print, outdoor and online advertising, PR and publicity, consumer and trade promotions, extensive "Home of Champions" golf campaigns and co-operative marketing activity with air and sea carriers.

Department of the Environment

Prompt Payment by Local Government to Contractors

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment what practices, protocols and measures his Department has in place to ensure prompt payment by local government to contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 16837/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I fully agree that there should be prompt payment by local government. I am engaging in a number of ways with local government to promote the improvement of the processes for paying suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors.

In June 2012, the Department issued guidance encouraging councils to meet the 10 day prompt payment target. I also issued guidance to standardise the collation of prompt payment statistics. Following a further meeting with officials, additional work is planned to improve performance in this area. Already, work is underway to establish councils' current software and processing capabilities in relation to recording and meeting the 10 day target and to scope options for addressing any issues that are identified. This will also inform the systems convergence work stream within the local government reform programme.

Disused Listed Buildings

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what responsibility Departments have for the maintenance and upkeep of disused listed buildings within their estate.

(AQW 17396/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer you to my reply to AQW 16721/11-15 of 21 November which remains relevant.

The Northern Ireland Executive requires all government departments and agencies to set a good example in the care of their historic estate. This includes disused listed buildings. More information is available in the Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate which was published by this department in June 2012. It can be downloaded:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/builthome/information/protocol_for_the_care_of_the_government_historic_estate.htm

Arms-Length Bodies

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment how each of his Department's arm's-length bodies has performed on the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and whether any sector has been paid more quickly than others.

(AQW 17549/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department's arm's-length bodies, the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC), are committed to the prompt payment of suppliers for goods and services in compliance with The Better Payments Practice Code.

Under this code proper practice is payment within 30 days from receipt of the goods or services or on presentation of a valid invoice, whichever is later, unless otherwise stated in the contract with the supplier.

NILGOSC and LGSC prompt payment performances for 2011/ 2012 are as follows:

- NILGOSC – 97.8% within 30 days (498 invoices paid, 11 considered as late payments);
- LGSC – 100% within 30 days (526 invoices paid within the 30 day limit, no late payments).

There is no distinction between sectors with regard to the timeliness of payments.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Parking Spaces

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number and cost of car parking spaces provided for civil servants, broken down by each town and city; and (ii) when each allocation was last assessed to determine whether the space was essential.

(AQW 2077/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The number and cost of car parking spaces provided for civil servants is as follows:

Town / City	Number of Spaces	Total
Belfast	1,006	£997,583
Londonderry	8	£3,200
Lisburn	19	£5,180
Omagh	93	£22,912
Armagh	29	£3,999
Banbridge	30	£6,399
Total	1,185	£1,039,273

All Departments review the need for spaces on an annual basis

INTERREG IV: Cross Border Groups

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of employees of INTERREG IV Cross Border Groups broken down by (i) job title; (ii) salary range; (iii) total annual pension contributions; and (iv) bonuses received, in each year of the Programme.

(AQW 16360/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf shows the information requested for the Cross Border Groups.

Year	Job Title	Salary Range ¹	Pension Contributions	Bonuses Received
2007/08	1 x Development Officer	£46,293 - £50,253	£29,976.53	NIL
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£30,600 - £37,545		
	2 x Project Officer	£23,751 - £29,730		
	1 x Administrative Assistant	£18,909 - £22,845		
	1x Clerical Officer	£11,577 - £16,218		
2008/09	1x Chief Executive	£60,434 - £61,038	£51,384.01	NIL
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£31,439 - £38,575		
	1 x Group Manager	£31,754 - £34,549		
	1 x Programme Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	2x Development Officer	£27,849 - £51,484		
	2 x Project Officer	£24,402 - £30,546		
	2 x Finance Officer	£27,849 - £30,011		
	1 x Assistant Finance Officer	£18,450 - £20,235		
	1 x Administrative Assistant	£19,427 - £23,473		
	1 x Administrator	£15,137 - £17,985		
	1 x Clerical Officer	£11,995 - £16,663		

Year	Job Title	Salary Range¹	Pension Contributions	Bonuses Received
2009/10	2x Chief Executive	£48,557 - £61,038		
	1x Corporate Manager	£45,701 - £48,557		
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£31,754 - £38,961		
	1 x Group Manager	£31,754- £34,549		
	2 x Programme Manager	£31,754 - £37,206		
	2x Development Officer	£27,849 - £51,484		
	1x Communications Officer	£27,573 - £29,714	£78,015.53	NIL
	3 x Project officer	£24,402 - £30,851		
	4 x Finance Officer (1 P/T)	£14,587 - £30,011		
	1 x Assistant Finance Officer	£19,621 - £21,519		
	1x Senior Administrator	£22,001 -£23,473		
	2x Administrator (1 P/T)	£16,054 - £19,126		
	1 x Administrative Assistant	£19,621 - £23,708		
	1 x Clerical Officer	£12,145 - £16,830		

Year	Job Title	Salary Range¹	Pension Contributions	Bonuses Received
2010/11	2x Chief Executive	£49,043 - £61,038		
	1x Corporate Manager	£46,158 - £49,043		
	2x Programme Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	1x Development Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£31,754 - £38,961		
	1 x Group Manager	£31,754- £34,549		
	1 x Development Officer	£27,849 - £31,754	£82,124.63	NIL
	1 x Communications Officer	£27,849 - £30,011		
	3x Project Officer	£24,646 - £30,851		
	5 x Finance Officer (1 P/T)	£22,221- £31,754		
	1 x Assistant Finance Officer	£19,621 - £21,519		
	1x Senior Administrator	£22,227- £23,708		
	2 x Administrator (1xP/T)	£16,054 - £19,126		
	1 x Administrative Assistant	£19,621 - £23,708		

Year	Job Title	Salary Range¹	Pension Contributions	Bonuses Received
2011/12	2x Chief Executive	£51,901 - £65,713		
	1x Corporate Manager	£46,158 - £49,043		
	2x Programme Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	1x Development Manager	£34,549- £37,206		
	1 x Group Manager	£31,754 - £34,549		
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£31,754 - £38,961		
	1x Development Officer	£27,849 - £31,754		
	1 x Communications Officer	£27,849 - £30,011	£82,821.65	NIL
	3x Project Officer	£24,646 - £28,636		
	4x Finance Officer (1 P/T)	£22,221 - £31,754		
	1x Assistant Finance Officer	£24,646 - £26,276		
	1x Senior Administrator	£22,221- £23,708		
	1 x Administrative Assistant	£19,621 - £23,708		
	1 x Clerical Officer	£12,145 - £16,830		

Year	Job Title	Salary Range¹	Pension Contributions	Bonuses Received
2012/13	2x Chief Executive	£58,919 - £65,713	£57,405.422	NIL
	1x Corporate Manager	£46,158 - £49,043		
	2 x Programme Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	1x Development Manager	£34,549 - £37,206		
	1 x Group Manager	£31,754 - £34,549		
	1 x Senior Project Officer	£31,754 - £38,961		
	2x Development Officer	£27,849 - £37,206		
	3x Project Officer	£24,646 - £30,851		
	4 x Finance Officer (1 P/T)	£22,221 - £31,754		
	1x Assistant Finance Officer	£24,646 - £26,276		
	1x Senior Administrator	£22,221 - £23,708		
	1x Administrator	£17,161 to £19,126		
	2 x Administrative Assistant	£15,725 - £23,708		

1 Salary scales identify the minimum and maximum remuneration of job title identified. This does not reflect the salary progression of each employee within this band.

2 Pension contributions are only available for the 2012-13 period from four of the five groups and represent part year payments.

British Telecom

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the process that led to awarding British Telecom the contract for handling calls from members of the public to Government agencies.

(AQW 17142/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Strategic Partner contract includes a range of services, including contact centre capability and business development, in addition to ICT expertise, support and infrastructure. The process that led to the award of the contract commenced through the NI Direct Strategic Partner Procurement Project in July 2011. The procurement process complied with public procurement policy and used the competitive dialogue procurement process. The stages of this process are outlined overleaf.

Stage	Completion date
Pre-Qualification Questionnaire	12 September 2011
Invitation to Participate in Dialogue	28 October 2011
Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions	19 January 2012
Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions	5 April 2012
Invitation to Submit Final Tenders	25 July 2012
Identification of Preferred Bidder	12 September 2012
Award of Contract	23 October 2012

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what proportion of public procurement contracts, in the last three years, have been awarded to small and medium sized enterprises; and what was the value of each contract.

(AQW 17243/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex 1 sets out the public procurement contracts awarded by Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) on e-SourcingNI categorised by size of supplier organisation. The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) does not have access to details of individual contracts awarded by other CoPEs. The value bands into which these contracts fall have been identified and are provided for the last three years. They exclude any contracts awarded outside e-SourcingNI. The figures for the 2012-2013 year are provided up to October 2012.

ANNEX 1 - E-SOURCINGNI PERCENTAGE COPE CONTRACT AWARDS BY SUPPLIER SIZE 2009-2012 (OCTOBER)

Supplier Awards 2009-2010	Contract Value							
	Supplier Size	Under £10k	Under £30k	Under £100k	Under £1m	Under £3.5m	Over £3.5m	Grand Total
Large (251 or more staff)	8.05%	6.00%	8.05%	4.98%	0.64%	1.40%	29.12%	
Medium (51 to 250 staff)	8.17%	4.47%	4.34%	2.81%	0.51%	1.40%	21.71%	
Small (11 to 50 staff)	8.56%	4.60%	6.00%	3.32%	1.02%	1.02%	24.52%	
Micro (1 to 10 staff)	5.75%	6.51%	4.85%	1.66%	0.38%	0.00%	19.16%	
Unknown	1.28%	1.40%	1.40%	1.02%	0.38%	0.00%	5.49%	
Grand Total	31.80%	22.99%	24.65%	13.79%	2.94%	3.83%	100.00%	

Supplier Awards 2010-2011	Contract Value						
	Supplier Size	Under £10k	Under £30k	Under £100k	Under £1m	Under £3.5m	Over £3.5m
Large (251 or more staff)	5.50%	3.37%	4.12%	3.57%	1.10%	1.03%	18.69%
Medium (51 to 250 staff)	6.87%	4.67%	3.71%	4.40%	1.51%	1.51%	22.68%
Small (11 to 50 staff)	13.81%	6.53%	4.81%	4.05%	1.79%	0.34%	31.34%
Micro (1 to 10 staff)	6.60%	5.70%	2.68%	4.05%	3.16%	0.00%	22.20%
Unknown	1.51%	1.37%	0.69%	1.24%	0.14%	0.14%	5.09%
Grand Total	34.30%	21.65%	16.01%	17.32%	7.70%	3.02%	100.00%

Supplier Awards 2011-2012	Contract Value						
	Supplier Size	Under £10k	Under £30k	Under £100k	Under £1m	Under £3.5m	Over £3.5m
Large (251 or more staff)	7.48%	2.77%	2.23%	2.98%	0.97%	0.71%	17.15%
Medium (51 to 250 staff)	8.70%	3.40%	2.56%	4.16%	1.51%	0.46%	20.81%
Small (11 to 50 staff)	17.91%	7.27%	4.37%	4.71%	1.43%	0.29%	35.98%
Micro (1 to 10 staff)	9.12%	4.88%	3.78%	2.02%	0.50%	0.13%	20.43%
Unknown	2.94%	1.30%	0.55%	0.59%	0.21%	0.04%	5.63%
Grand Total	46.15%	19.63%	13.49%	14.46%	4.62%	1.64%	100.00%

Supplier Awards 2012-2013	Contract Value						
	Supplier Size	Under £10k	Under £30k	Under £100k	Under £1m	Under £3.5m	Over £3.5m
Large (251 or more staff)	7.01%	1.39%	3.04%	2.84%	0.86%	0.93%	16.07%
Medium (51 to 250 staff)	9.92%	2.98%	2.78%	5.95%	1.06%	1.39%	24.07%
Small (11 to 50 staff)	15.67%	4.96%	5.29%	5.22%	0.93%	0.86%	32.94%
Micro (1 to 10 staff)	10.32%	3.97%	3.51%	3.77%	0.60%	0.07%	22.22%

Supplier Awards 2012-2013	Contract Value						
	Supplier Size	Under £10k	Under £30k	Under £100k	Under £1m	Under £3.5m	Over £3.5m
Unknown	2.25%	0.86%	0.66%	0.53%	0.20%	0.20%	4.70%
Grand Total	45.17%	14.15%	15.28%	18.32%	3.64%	3.44%	100.00%

Tables may not add up due to roundings

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to explain the reduction in the estimated revenue for 2009-10, compared with the estimates for 2008-09 and 2010-11, which were published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 17244/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland for the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11. It has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland’s aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

In producing this report, DFP officials liaise with counterparts in the Office for National Statistics rather than Treasury to request, and where necessary clarify, the information required to produce the fiscal balance estimate in line with the GERS methodology. The data used to derive the individual estimates which are then aggregated to provide the overall estimate of Northern Ireland revenue is taken from the Office for National Statistics PSAT2 Database. Details of the methodology employed and the various sources of data used in estimating total public sector revenue in NI are outlined in Annex B of the report. In particular, table B1 provides a summary of the apportionment methods applied and the source of data used to estimate each revenue stream.

Estimated revenue trends for UK and NI from 2006-07 to 2010-11 are provided in table 3.5 of the report. These estimates suggests that a number of key revenue elements in 2009-10 (i.e. Income Tax, Corporation Tax, National Insurance Contributions and VAT) fell vis-a-vis the 2008-09 estimates before recovering somewhat in 2010-11.

As stated in the most recent report for 2009/10 and 2010/11, estimates have been revised from previous reports as a result of changes in methodology, the use of alternative data sources and revision of figures previously used. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that the figures within this report are estimates and should therefore be viewed as such. Variations in methodologies or the subsequent provision of more actual data could produce a more accurate reflection of the true fiscal balance.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to explain the reasoning for the variations in the estimations of revenue which occur within the series of Net Fiscal Balance Reports produced by his Department between May 2010 and November 2012.

(AQW 17245/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland for the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11. It has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate

estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

In producing this report, DFP officials liaise with counterparts in the Office for National Statistics rather than Treasury to request, and where necessary clarify, the information required to produce the fiscal balance estimate in line with the GERS methodology. The data used to derive the individual estimates which are then aggregated to provide the overall estimate of Northern Ireland revenue is taken from the Office for National Statistics PSAT2 Database. Details of the methodology employed and the various sources of data used in estimating total public sector revenue in NI are outlined in Annex B of the report. In particular, table B1 provides a summary of the apportionment methods applied and the source of data used to estimate each revenue stream.

Estimated revenue trends for UK and NI from 2006-07 to 2010-11 are provided in table 3.5 of the report. These estimates suggests that a number of key revenue elements in 2009-10 (i.e. Income Tax, Corporation Tax, National Insurance Contributions and VAT) fell vis-a-vis the 2008-09 estimates before recovering somewhat in 2010-11.

As stated in the most recent report for 2009/10 and 2010/11, estimates have been revised from previous reports as a result of changes in methodology, the use of alternative data sources and revision of figures previously used. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that the figures within this report are estimates and should therefore be viewed as such. Variations in methodologies or the subsequent provision of more actual data could produce a more accurate reflection of the true fiscal balance.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11; and how it will be used by his Department.

(AQW 17246/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland for the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11. It has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

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are estimates and should therefore be viewed as such. Variations in methodologies or the subsequent provision of more actual data could produce a more accurate reflection of the true fiscal balance.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the ways in which his Department liaises with the Treasury regarding sources and estimations of revenue.

(AQW 17247/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland for the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11. It has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland’s aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

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Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many companies based in the Foyle constituency have (i) applied for; and (ii) been successful in securing tenders for work based in the constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 17260/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below sets out the activity of supplier organisations in relation to competitions run by Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) on eSourcingNI, and that have identified themselves as being based in the Foyle constituency.

Period	Supplier Activity				
	Year	Interest	Responded	Awarded	Grand Total
2009-2010		119	8	7	134
2010-2011		116	24	14	154
2011-2012		234	58	31	323

Period	Supplier Activity			
	Year	Interest	Responded	Awarded
2012-2013	177	44	32	253
Grand Total	646	134	84	864

'Interest' indicates that tender documents have been downloaded; 'Responded' indicates that tender responses have been submitted, and 'Awarded' means contracts have been awarded. The figures for 2012-2013 are current up to October 2012.

In relation to the statistics for work based in the Foyle constituency, the Central Procurement Directorate does not have access to details of contracts awarded by other CoPEs and many of the contracts are not tied to a specified location. However an examination of contract titles suggests that of the eighty four awarded at least fourteen relate, at least in part, to work based in the Foyle constituency.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many companies have (i) applied for; and (ii) been granted Small Business Rate Relief in the Foyle constituency since the inception of the scheme. **(AQW 17261/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: There is no application procedure for Small Business Rate Relief. Relief is applied automatically by Land & Property Services to all businesses that qualify.

Information on the number of companies that have been granted Small Business Rate Relief since the inception of the scheme is not available at constituency level as data is collated at district council level only. As at 25th November 2012, Small Business Rate Relief has been awarded for a total of 1,580 properties within the Derry City Council area since the scheme commenced in April 2010.

Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses in the (i) Coleraine Borough Council; and (ii) Limavady Borough Council areas will benefit in 2013 from the extension of the small business rates relief scheme.

(AQW 17285/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is estimated that there will be another 154 ratepayers in Coleraine Borough Council and another 47 ratepayers in the Limavady Borough Council that will benefit in 2013 from the extension of the small business rates relief scheme following implementation of the required legislation.

The 20% reduction will be applied automatically to the 'turn of year' bills which will be issued around April 2013.

Northern Ireland Census

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the current treatment of individual identity in the census complies with the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies which was published by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation High Commissioner on National Minorities on 7 November 2012, including specifically the primacy of voluntary self-identification.

(AQW 17333/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Section 15 of the Ljubljana Guidelines covers the collection and processing of information to provide robust evidence to support policy development. The section makes specific reference to the Census.

I am content that the 2011 Census met the requirements outlined in Section 15 of the Ljubljana guidelines.

Treasury

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many times he and his departmental officials have met with Treasury Ministers or officials regarding local sources and estimations of revenue.
(AQW 17381/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have met with Treasury Ministers on numerous occasions over the last two years to discuss a range of taxation policy issues where the level of revenues raised locally was of direct relevance in terms of either a potential cost to the Northern Ireland block grant or local industry.

Recently these have included four meetings of the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy to discuss the devolution of Corporation Tax where Treasury was represented by the Exchequer Secretary.

I met with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury last month to discuss the impact the Carbon Price Floor would have in Northern Ireland, while I have also had a number of meetings with both the current and previous Economic Secretaries to discuss both the devolution of the Air Passenger Duty and the suspension of the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme.

My officials are also in frequent contact with HM Treasury counterparts as we continue to progress these important issues.

Corporation Tax

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the distinctions between the methodology employed by his Department and that of the Treasury in estimating corporation tax, including the strengths and limitations of each methodology.

(AQW 17382/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Firstly, it is important to recognise that both methodologies are estimates of local corporation tax take – actual receipts attributable to Northern Ireland are not separately recorded by HMRC.

The Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 provides an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland by applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items such as corporation tax. The report aggregates these to provide an overall assessment of Northern Ireland’s broader fiscal position.

The Net Fiscal Balance Report’s corporation tax estimate has been produced in line with GERS methodology by apportioning a share of UK Corporation Tax receipts on the basis of Northern Ireland’s share of UK profits. While this is a simple and transparent approach, it is also based on a very high level assumption and should be interpreted with caution. For example, the extensive system of allowances and reliefs in the current UK corporation tax regime means that relative profit levels may not accurately reflect the Northern Ireland share of UK corporation tax receipts. This point is acknowledged in the report.

As part of the March 2010 Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy consultation document, HM Treasury also included an estimate of the level of Northern Ireland corporation tax receipts in 2009-10. While the HM Treasury estimate also has a number of caveats, it is based on a more detailed analysis of actual company tax returns. However, at that stage the HM Treasury estimate did not include the Corporation Tax liabilities in respect of the Northern Ireland activities of companies registered in the rest of the UK. Estimating the potential scale of these additional liabilities and the implications they might have for the costs associated with devolving Corporation Tax was a key element of the work of the Joint Ministerial Working Group which has now passed its report to the Prime Minister.

Foyle Constituency

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the manufacturing firms that have closed down in the Foyle constituency since 2008 and the number of jobs lost in each firm.
(AQW 17388/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on the total number of jobs lost or manufacturing firms that have closed down in Foyle as requested. NISRA collect information on the number of jobs at a particular point in time from all relevant businesses registered on the Inter Departmental Business Register and therefore can only provide the net change between two points in time.

Table 1 below provides information on the net change in the number of manufacturing firms operating in the Foyle constituency and employee jobs within these firms in the Foyle constituency as measured by the biennial Census of Employment in 2007 and 2011. The net decrease in employee jobs takes into account both job gains and losses during the period.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF MANUFACTURING JOBS AND FIRMS IN FOYLE CONSTITUENCY

Year	Number of firms	Number of Employee Jobs	Employee Job Change
2007	142	4,699	
2011	155	3,302	-1,397

Table 2 below provides information on the number of large and small manufacturing firms operating in the Foyle constituency and employee jobs within these firms.

TABLE 2 NUMBER OF MANUFACTURING JOBS AND FIRMS IN FOYLE CONSTITUENCY BY LARGE AND SMALL FIRMS

Year	Number of Large firms*	Number of Employee Jobs in large firms	Number of Small firms*	Number of Employee Jobs in small firms
2007	17	3,294	125	1,405
2011	10	2,385	145	917

* Large firms have been defined as being firms with employee jobs of 50 or more. Small firms are those with 49 employee jobs or less.

Registered Suicides

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW-16437/11-15, for his assessment of the (i) efficiency; and (ii) speed of the process by which a suicide is registered.
(AQW 17405/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As was indicated in my response to AQW 16437/11-15 a death which occurs due to any cause other than natural illness must be referred to the Coroner.

The registration process does not commence until the Coroner's certificate is received. I am satisfied that deaths are registered efficiently and speedily by the registration service. There are thus no plans to change the death registration process.

Registered Suicides

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to simplify the suicide registration process.
(AQW 17406/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As was indicated in my response to AQW 16437/11-15 a death which occurs due to any cause other than natural illness must be referred to the Coroner.

The registration process does not commence until the Coroner's certificate is received. I am satisfied that deaths are registered efficiently and speedily by the registration service. There are thus no plans to change the death registration process.

Suicide: Official Figures

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the accuracy of official suicide figures, given the length and complex process for suicide registration.

(AQW 17407/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated vital statistics, which include suicide statistics, as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act (2007) and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Death registrations undergo ongoing quality checks and suicides are given specific additional scrutiny.

Statistics on suicide include cases where the cause of death is either 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury'¹ or 'Undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'². All such registered deaths are based on a coroner's certificate. Clearly the coroner takes time to fully investigate any suicide. On average the length of time between a suicide occurring and being registered is just over 12 months. For example of the 289 suicides registered in 2011 (the published figure), 120 actually occurred in 2011, with the remainder occurring in earlier years.

Annual/quarterly death statistics, including suicide statistics, are published on a registration date basis and are clearly labelled as such. However further suicide statistics based on occurrence date are also published, but due to the time taken for the coronial process, these statistics are only published a number of years in arrears.

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0

2 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2

Fixed Property Assets: Tax

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will set up a departmental assessment of the financial impacts, on his Department and on business rate payers, of replacing the existing non-domestic rates charge on the fixed property assets of business ratepayers with a tax on the net profits of a business.

(AQW 17418/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Changing the basis of local taxation in this way would present a variety of legal, administrative and revenue issues. For a start it is doubtful whether Northern Ireland has the legal competence to change to a basis of taxation that so resembles a national tax. Furthermore, I would question the wisdom of moving away from a system of taxation that operates throughout the British Isles.

It would be extremely expensive to administer for both government and business. Its impact would be uneven and difficult to gauge. Some parts of the business community would be able to conceal profit, for example by shifting profit outside Northern Ireland; small local business would not have that advantage. The revenue yield would be difficult to predict and the system would be too volatile to use as the basis for funding local and regional services.

Whilst the system we have in place is far from perfect it has to be viewed in the context of its fit with other taxes on business and I do not believe that the business community would welcome such a radical move. Whilst I can understand why many struggling businesses would be attracted by any ideas that raise the prospect of paying less tax, I think such thoughts are governed by the principle that the only fair tax is the one that someone else pays.

You might be interested to know, however, that over 50% of business ratepayers get some form of relief or concession on their rates bill. This Executive has gone to considerable lengths to provide this level of support and will continue to look at ways to help businesses through the downturn, as my recent announcements about extending reliefs demonstrate.

For all of these reasons, I have no plans to set up such a “departmental assessment”.

Business Rates

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why he is incurring the cost of a 2015 business rates re-valuation, given that his declared intention is to maintain the present anticipated income from business rates by increasing the rate charge per pound.

(AQW 17419/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Revaluations are undertaken primarily for the sake of ratepayers, not government and are a regular feature of all business rates systems. A Revaluation makes sure that liability for rates is spread across all sectors in line with up to date rental values. It is not an exercise designed to take more money from the system, nor is it about delivering widespread relief. It is about rebalancing the rating burden to reflect changes in relative value with the aim of making the system fairer.

Those business premises that have experienced rental value decreases more than the average (since the last general Revaluation in 2003) will pay less following a Revaluation. Conversely, those areas and business sectors that have fared better than others over the period since the last Revaluation will face higher rate bills from April 2015. This is despite the fact that values have declined across the board since the downturn.

NI Water

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the monetary loss to NI Water due to recorded rates arrears in the last three years.

(AQW 17454/11-15)

Mr Wilson: None, directly, as NI Water is funded through the Northern Ireland DEL allocation, via the Department for Regional Development, rather than the Regional Rate.

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel which legislation empowers him to announce a cut in the budget of the Northern Ireland Audit Office in the next two financial years without reference to the Audit Committee.

(AQW 17488/11-15)

Mr Wilson: On the 7 November 2012 the Executive agreed a number of revisions to budgets for 2013-14 and 2014-15. This included the reduction of a number of departmental budgets. These budgets were reduced following an analysis of past underspend performance trends and an assessment of what resources would be needed to deliver services over the next two years. The key objective, from the Executive's perspective, was to ensure that unused resources could be redirected to front-line public services as quickly as possible.

In terms of the Northern Ireland Audit Office reduced allocations, the amount concerned (£167k) is considerably less than the £473k and £666k year-end resource underspends recorded in Final Outturn by the organisation in each of the last two years. Therefore the proposed reductions in the next two years should have no impact on the Audit Office and, in parallel allow resources to be released now for reallocation. The Audit Committee will want to consider this aspect further when fulfilling its statutory requirements. The Executive continues to support fully the important role that the Northern Ireland Audit Office fulfils.

Arms-Length Bodies

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how each of his Department's arm's-length bodies has performed on the 30 Day Payment Performance Targets; and whether any sector has been paid more quickly than others.

(AQW 17545/11-15)

Mr Wilson: DFP has five arm's-length bodies.

Prompt payment performance for the period April 2012 to October 2012 for the Public Service Commission and the Lay Observer was as follows:

Arms-length body	April - October Performance		
	No. of Payments	No. of Payments Paid Within 30 Days	% Paid Within 30 Days
Public Service Commission	3	3	100%
Lay Observer	9	9	100%

Prompt payment statistics for the Statistics Advisory Committee, NI Building Regulations Committee and Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) Governance Group are not separately recorded on the departmental accounting system. However, combined annual expenditure for these bodies is less than £7k, and for the period April 2012 to October 2012 the Department as a whole has paid 98.54% of valid invoices within 30 days of receipt.

Westminster: Late Payment

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the late payment directive currently passing through Westminster will affect his Department.

(AQW 17546/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The late payment directive currently passing through Westminster is not expected to significantly impact upon the Department.

The Department is already legally bound to meet the terms of the Late Payment of Commercial debts (Interest) Act 1988 as amended and supplemented by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002. Payment should be made within agreed terms or if no terms have been agreed, 30 days after receipt of a valid invoice. If payment is not made within 30 days or agreed terms then the supplier has the right to claim interest and late payment compensation.

For the period April 2012 to October 2012 the Department has paid 98.54% of valid invoices within 30 days of receipt.

Furthermore, in line with DFP guidance issued in November 2008 and now contained in the guidance 'Managing Public Money Northern Ireland' which applies to all NI Departments, the Department is committed to paying as many invoices as it can within 10 (working) days.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the difficulties that arise when allocating shares of UK tax revenue to each of its constituent countries, which are referred to on page 14 of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11; and what steps have been taken to resolve these difficulties.

(AQW 17556/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The key difficulty in assessing Northern Ireland's Net Fiscal Balance position is that regional tax data is not routinely published by HMRC. Therefore it is necessary to estimate Northern Ireland's share of the various tax revenues that are collected nationally in the UK. To do this, DFP applies the

methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication.

This approach, by necessity, involves making some high level assumptions in allocating tax revenues. This is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. Rather the report aggregates these to provide an overall assessment of Northern Ireland’s broader fiscal position.

In some cases, revenue figures can be directly attributed to Northern Ireland and require no further estimation. Examples include inheritance tax revenue and national insurance contributions. However, the majority of public sector revenues are collected centrally and their distribution by region is often unavailable. In these instances, UK figures are apportioned to Northern Ireland using specific methodologies that are summarised in table B1 of the report.

In general, the revenue elements are apportioned either by Northern Ireland’s share of UK population or Gross Value Added or by our share of UK expenditure on, or consumption of, the particular item upon which a duty is applied. Alternative methodologies could potentially involve a variation of these apportionment factors, but the approach taken in producing the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 uses those deemed most appropriate as per the GERS methodology, which has been specifically developed and refined for the purpose of estimating the fiscal balance.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cases in which a variety of alternative methodologies could be applied, each leading to variations in estimates, as referred to on page 42 of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11; and to detail the range and nature of the methodologies which are relevant to each case and the reasoning behind the selection of the methodology used within the Report and the rejection of other potential methodologies. **(AQW 17588/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The key difficulty in assessing Northern Ireland’s Net Fiscal Balance position is that regional tax data is not routinely published by HMRC. Therefore it is necessary to estimate Northern Ireland’s share of the various tax revenues that are collected nationally in the UK. To do this, DFP applies the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication.

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NI Direct Contract: BT

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) whether, when awarding the new NI Direct Contract to BT there was a precondition that all staff employed are Access NI checked; (ii) whether these checks have taken place; and (iii) how many staff have been checked.

(AQW 17628/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The NI Direct contract included obligations on BT to ensure that BT staff who will have access to the NICS network, ICT systems and information, as a result of providing the services under the contract, must be Access NI security cleared to the appropriate level.

98 BT staff require to be Access NI security cleared to work on NI Direct and 79 of these have been cleared. The remaining staff have submitted their Access NI forms and await clearance.

Foyle Constituency

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 15527/11-15, what is the average waiting time for a transfer from the priority pool to another post in the Foyle constituency.
(AQW 17683/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below shows the number of staff currently listed on the Civil Service Priority Pools for transfer to the Foyle constituency and the average length of time they have been waiting in the pools.

Number on priority pools	Average time on priority pools
12	656 days

Historical data is not available as once an employee is transferred, the relevant data is removed from HR Connect pools records and this information cannot be reproduced. The answer provided relates therefore to those currently on priority pools.

Reinvestment and Reform Initiative

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the Autumn Statement from the UK Chancellor that the Executive can now defer £50 million of borrowing through the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative from 2012-13 to 2014-15, will this consequential be used to fund the A5 road.
(AQW 17695/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The deferment of some £50 million RRI borrowing from 2012-13 to 2014-15 which I had agreed with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and which was announced by the Chancellor in the Autumn statement is to be welcomed. As you will be aware the A5 project is currently subject to legal challenge and decisions on profiling of spend cannot be taken by the DRD Minister until the outcome of that legal challenge is known.

This deferment of RRI borrowing allows the Executive to now accommodate the changing profile of A5 spend.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail in full the calculation used to estimate the share of income tax in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, including references to the source data.
(AQW 17701/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, the UK figure for income tax is taken from the PSAT2 database published by ONS, and is presented net of tax credits. Northern Ireland's share of UK income tax is derived from the Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) produced by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). This share is then applied to the UK figure for income tax published by HM Treasury.

The latest SPI survey provided data for 2009-10. Therefore, the 2009-10 apportionment ratio was also used for 2010-11. It should also be noted that the SPI data includes some records which cannot be allocated to a particular region - these have been excluded from the total used to estimate the NI share.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items such as income tax revenue. The

report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Senior Civil Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what arrangements are in place for the declaration of interests by Special Advisers, including business interests and any key personal relationships within the senior civil service.

(AQW 17759/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to the answer I gave on 23 October 2012 (AQW 15561/11-15). The arrangements in place for all civil servants, including Special Advisers, regarding declarations of interest apply irrespective of the nature of any potential conflict of interest and are underpinned by the Standards of Conduct chapter of the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook which, amongst other things, addresses such issues as honesty, integrity and misuse of position.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Health Service: Patients

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Health Service patients were referred to private clinics and private surgeons for treatment within the United Kingdom in the last five years.

(AQW 17259/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Health and Social Care Board procures services for Health and Social Care patients from independent sector providers in Northern Ireland on occasions when demand exceeds the HSC Trusts' capacity to deliver treatment within the specified elective access target waiting times.

My department began collecting information on completed waits within the Independent Sector from the beginning of 2008/09. Consequently information on the number of attendances in the Independent Sector in Northern Ireland is only available from 2008/09.

Data on the number of outpatient and inpatient attendances at an Independent Sector provider within Northern Ireland for each of the last four financial years, is shown in the table below.

Financial Year	Total Number of Attendances	
	Outpatients	Inpatients
2008/09	40,863	23,715
2009/10	54,873	21,404
2010/11	28,124	7,183
2011/12	48,762	15,905

Source: Departmental Return IS1 (Parts 1 and 2)

In addition, patients may be referred for treatment at private clinics outside of Northern Ireland, either because they require services not provided in Northern Ireland or because capacity in Northern Ireland is limited. The table below shows, for each of the last four financial years, the number of outpatient and inpatient attendances at private clinics within the United Kingdom (but outside of Northern Ireland).

Financial Year	Total Number of Attendances	
	Outpatients	Inpatients
2008/09	4,327	2,189
2009/10	3,121	1,320
2010/11	5,869	810
2011/12	3,548	920

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Alleged Neglect of Gerry McGeough

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety pursuant to AQW 16433/11-15, whether Gerry McGeough has submitted any formal complaint personally or through his legal team to the Northern Ireland Prison Service in relation to this or any of his previous allegations. **(AQW 17267/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Mr McGeough has not made any formal complaints about healthcare matters to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust who provide prison healthcare services. He has submitted one complaint to the Northern Ireland Prison Service regarding his medication.

Cancer: Screening Services

Mrs McKeitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what screening services are available for young women who are at high risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer. **(AQW 17307/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Surveillance of women who are at higher risk of developing breast cancer is currently provided through the symptomatic breast service. I have however recently asked the Health and Social Care service to put in place arrangements to incorporate women at high risk, i.e. those who are at 8 times the normal risk, into the Northern Ireland Breast Screening Programme from April 2013. This will allow a more consistent approach, using national protocols, to be implemented for the surveillance of these women.

Two clinical trials are currently ongoing looking into screening tests for ovarian cancer that may be helpful for women in general and women at high risk of ovarian cancer. I will consider the implications for Northern Ireland when the findings for these trials are published.

Altnagelvin Hospital: Radiotherapy Unit

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what staffing positions will be required when the Radiotherapy Unit becomes operational at Altnagelvin Hospital. **(AQW 17335/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Work is currently underway to ensure that staff will be in place when the Altnagelvin Radiotherapy Unit opens in 2016. The Health and Social Care Board has recently given approval to the Western Health and Social Care Trust to recruit for two key leadership posts in medical physics and therapeutic radiography. These positions will help provide the strategic leadership vital to shaping the services at the Unit. Other staff (by discipline/department) required include:

- Consultant Oncologists;
- Therapeutic Radiographers;
- Medical Physics: Clinical Scientists, Planning and Engineering Technicians;
- Pharmacy;

- Ward Nurses;
- Pathology;
- Medical Imaging;
- Allied Health Professions;
- Secretarial and Administrative;
- Facilities Management

Cancer: Pancreatic

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on (i) the treatment; (ii) the diagnosis; and (iii) raising awareness of pancreatic cancer, over the last five years.

(AQW 17342/11-15)

Mr Poots: Unfortunately information on expenditure related specifically to (i) the treatment (ii) the diagnosis and (iii) raising awareness of pancreatic cancer over the last five years is not available and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

My Department consistently raises awareness regarding epidemiological research of certain conditions e.g. smoking and obesity which can increase the risk of a range of health conditions including some cancers.

RGN Recruits

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of RGN recruits, who have been recruited in the last twelve months, have been offered (i) permanent; and (ii) temporary contracts.

(AQW 17351/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the percentages of medical and qualified nursing recruits from the last twelve months offered permanent and temporary contracts, excluding fixed-term medical training rotations appointed by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

PERCENTAGE OF RECRUITS TO HSC TRUSTS ON PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY CONTRACTS IN THE LAST YEAR

Contract Type	Medical staff	Qualified Nursing
Permanent	57.5%	74.4%
Temporary	42.5%	25.6%

These percentages are derived from figures received from the Health and Social Care Trusts, and have not been validated by the Department.

Medical Recruits

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of medical recruits, who have been recruited in the last twelve months, have been offered (i) permanent; and (ii) temporary contracts.

(AQW 17352/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below shows the percentages of medical and qualified nursing recruits from the last twelve months offered permanent and temporary contracts, excluding fixed-term medical training rotations appointed by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

PERCENTAGE OF RECRUITS TO HSC TRUSTS ON PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY CONTRACTS IN THE LAST YEAR

Contract Type	Medical staff	Qualified Nursing
Permanent	57.5%	74.4%
Temporary	42.5%	25.6%

These percentages are derived from figures received from the Health and Social Care Trusts, and have not been validated by the Department.

Westminster: Late Payment

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the late payment directive currently passing through Westminster will affect his Department.

(AQW 17365/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following consultation, the Late Payment Directive 2011/7/EU is due to be adopted in the UK in March 2013. The Directive highlights that public authorities are required to pay suppliers within 30 calendar days of receipt of an undisputed invoice, with the option to extend this period for certain sectors, such as healthcare, to 60 days.

For those payments made directly by my Department, the current terms are within 30 calendar days of receipt of an undisputed invoice. It is therefore anticipated that the Directive will have minimal impact on my Department's payments.

However, the majority of payments made by the Department's Arms Length Bodies are made under the terms and conditions of the Business Services Organisation (BSO) Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS) contracts, which state that payment is due at the end of the month following the month in which the invoice or goods and services are received, whichever is the later. This is in accordance with the extant late payment legislation.

At a meeting in June 2012, the HSC Regional Procurement Board took the decision to implement a standard 30 days payment terms for BSO PaLS contracts with effect from September 2013. Legal advice is being sought to determine the impact of the Late Payment Directive on the timing of the implementation of the standard 30 days payment terms.

Retired Social Workers

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 13914/11-15, (i) whether the retired workers competed for their roles in the same way as other advertised posts within the Health Service; (ii) why the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust does not advertise for social work bank staff; and (iii) whether the Trust is in breach of employment regulations by not advertising such posts.

(AQW 17380/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that, (i) as part of the Trust's flexible employment practices and to promote age equality, retired workers can opt to change their contract of employment from a permanent contract to a bank contract and thereby work as and when required by the Trust and accept work as they wish. In these circumstances recruitment to the permanent post is advertised in the normal way; (ii) the South Eastern Trust's Fostering Team have externally advertised for bank staff to complete fostering assessments as places were in demand and the Trust has plans to develop this further in the future to cover the general Social Worker's Bank list; (iii) I am satisfied that the steps taken by the Trust to employ Bank staff during periods when there are unplanned shortfalls in staffing levels does not breach employment regulations.

Early Years Provision

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department has sought to prioritise Early Years provision, including reprioritising budgets.

(AQW 17399/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has policy responsibility for the delivery of health and social care services in Northern Ireland and recognises the importance of early intervention has in improving population health and wellbeing outcomes. While it is important to remember that early intervention can occur at any stage in a person's life, a number of measures have been prioritised to ensure that children have the best possible start in life. This reflects overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first years of life.

The Families Matter, Healthy Child, Healthy Future and the Maternity strategies aim to support all parents and include parenting and family support programmes as key components. In addition, the draft year public health strategic framework Fit and Well: Changing Lives 2012-22, proposes that early years should be a strategic priority.

In 2012/13, £2.8m was allocated through my Department's Families Matter strategy to support services that deliver early intervention family support initiatives. Many of these services are aimed at supporting families and children in the earliest years.

In addition to this funding, the HSC Board, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the PHA have each seeking to re-prioritise funding for early intervention programmes initiatives that seek to ensure the best outcomes for children during their early years.

The PHA is currently seeking to develop a suite of evidence based early years interventions that improve outcomes for children during their early years. They have secured significant investment for a number of pilot initiatives with the aim of identifying new ways of delivering the best outcomes for children and young people through early intervention during the early years.

The PHA have secured £2m through the Support for Parents strand of OFMdFM's Delivering Social Change framework. From 2013/14 this funding will be utilised to deliver a two year suite of evidence based early years interventions to complement and expand promising programmes and introduce new programmes in NI.

Protect Life Strategy

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money has been invested in the Protect Life strategy in each of the last three years.

(AQW 17403/11-15)

Mr Poots: The amount of funding invested by the Public Health Agency in the Protect Life strategy in each of the last three years is set out below:

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£6.660m	£6.960m	£7.291m

In addition, other Health Service funding was allocated to implementation groups for suicide prevention as follows: £338,336 (2009/10) and £336,783 (2010/11).

Further details on the breakdown of this funding have been published in the "Evaluation of the Northern Ireland Protect Life Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action plan 2006-2011" which is available on the DHSSPS website. Appendix K of the evaluation report also identifies substantial funding from departments, other than Health, that contributes to the promotion of positive emotional wellbeing and mental health.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has to deal with the health issues of the ageing population in the North Down area.

(AQW 17420/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Local Commissioning Group working with the Health and Social Care Trust has developed a draft Population Plan to take forward the implementation of 'Transforming Your Care' (TYC) which includes a number of key areas of particular relevance to older people. The prioritised initiatives laid out in the Population Plan are to address the changing demographics and social complexity which will lead to increased demand on Health and Social Care Services. The initiatives will improve targeting for early intervention and preventative services, enhance joined up partnership working across all sectors, and maximise the use of technology to support the needs of the population and manage demand.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Development of Partnerships of Older People's Projects, focusing on falls and social exclusion;
- Development of a screening tool to assess and screen older people at risk of malnutrition within a home, residential, acute or community setting;
- Development of a reablement programme to maximise the independence of older people;
- Implementation of the Trust's 'Falls and Osteoporosis Strategy';
- Review of Statutory Residential provision to ensure that other models of care are developed to support people to live as independently as possible; and
- Introduction of telecare to support older people in their own homes.

The draft Population Plan is currently the subject of the consultation on the proposed changes emerging from Transforming Your Care. The consultation period runs until 15 January.

Private Healthcare Companies

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the proportion of health spending that was allocated to private healthcare companies for the provision of health and social care services in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 17426/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Health Service: Obesity

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the report detailing the cost of obesity to the Health Service, what public health strategies are being pursued to increase exercise, particularly cycling and walking.

(AQW 17441/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2012, known as A Fitter Future for All, was launched on 9th March 2012. This Framework aims to "empower the population of Northern Ireland to make healthy choices, reduce the risk of overweight and obesity related diseases and improve health and wellbeing, by creating an environment that supports and promotes a physically active lifestyle and a healthy diet" and its implementation is being led by the Public Health Agency.

The Department works in partnership with Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on the Sport Matters strategy, and Department of Regional Development on the Active Travel strategy, both of which help to promote increased physical activity in a range of settings. In addition, the Public Health Agency supports a number of schemes to promote participation in cycling and walking across Northern Ireland.

Public Health: Transport Policy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what input his Department has to ensure that public health is taken into account when strategies involving transport policy are being developed.

(AQW 17443/11-15)

Mr Poots: Transport has major health impacts for example through accidents, levels of physical activity, effects on air pollution, social cohesion, access to a range of services, including to employment.

My Department therefore encourages the completion of Health Impact Assessments on all relevant developing policies as detailed in the policy toolkit from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. My Department also continues to work with the Institute of Public Health to provide advice and support in the completion of Health Impact Assessments during the policy-making process.

As part of the development and implementation of the cross-Departmental Obesity Prevention Framework: A Fitter Future for All, bi-lateral discussions continue to take place between my Department and other Departments on the development and implementation of relevant supporting policies and strategies.

In addition my Department is a member of the Active Travel Forum and input into the development of the Department of Regional Development's draft Active Travel Strategy which in turn contributes to the outcomes in A Fitter Future for All.

Southern Health Trust

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail by programme of care, the amount of money being spent by the Southern Health Trust on using (i) private hire taxis; and (ii) rural transport services to transport service users to day care services.

(AQW 17455/11-15)

Mr Poots: Unfortunately, information on the expenditure incurred by the Southern Health and Social Services Trust on transporting service users to day care services by private hire taxis and rural transport services is not available and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Rural Transport Schemes

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Rural Transport Schemes are prohibited from operating across county boundaries.

(AQW 17456/11-15)

Mr Poots: Public and community transport arrangements in Northern Ireland, including Rural Transport Schemes, are a matter for the Department for Regional Development.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service's Patient Care Service provides pre-booked non-emergency transport for patients attending outpatient appointments and those being discharged from or transferred between hospitals who have been assessed by a medical practitioner as needing it. In addition, Health and Social Care Trusts operate transport fleets to facilitate client access to social care services, for example, day care.

Rural Transport Schemes

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Rural Transport Schemes are not permitted to bring patients to hospital appointments and to outline the rationale behind this, given the pressure on ambulance services.

(AQW 17457/11-15)

Mr Poots: Public and community transport arrangements in Northern Ireland, including Rural Transport Schemes, are a matter for the Department for Regional Development.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service's Patient Care Service provides pre-booked non-emergency transport for patients attending outpatient appointments and those being discharged from or transferred between hospitals who have been assessed by a medical practitioner as needing it. In addition, Health and Social Care Trusts operate transport fleets to facilitate client access to social care services, for example, day care.

Health and Social Care Trust: Staff Sick Days

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what are the current levels of sick leave among staff in each Health and Social Care Trust; and what is the trend of sickness absence since 2007.

(AQW 17460/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information relating to sickness absence monitoring by Health and Social Care Trust is published on a bi-annual basis and can be accessed on the departmental website:

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

The bi-annual trend in sick absence rates in each HSC Trust since April 2007 is provided in the table below. Note that there is a seasonal variation in sick absence, with rates being higher in the October to March period. The trend in sick absence compared to 2007 is generally downward when comparing the same bi-annual periods.

PERCENTAGE OF WORKING DAYS LOST (SICK ABSENCE RATE) APRIL 2007- SEPTEMBER 2007 TO OCTOBER 2011 - MARCH 2012

Period	HSC Trust						NI Ambulance Service
	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western		
April 2007-Sept 2007	6.5%	6.4%	5.6%	5.5%	5.2%		7.6%
Oct 2007-March 2008	6.9%	6.3%	6.4%	5.5%	6.0%		9.2%
April 2008-Sept 2008	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	5.9%		6.6%
Oct 2008- March 2009	6.2%	6.0%	6.1%	5.0%	5.8%		7.3%
April 2009-Sept 2009	5.6%	5.1%	6.2%	4.9%	5.2%		6.7%
Oct 2009-March 2010	6.4%	5.4%	5.8%	5.2%	5.2%		8.1%
April 2010-Sept 2010	5.6%	4.9%	5.5%	4.6%	4.9%		6.7%
Oct 2010-March 2011	6.0%	5.5%	5.6%	5.2%	5.0%		7.2%
April 2011 - Sept 2011	5.1%	5.2%	4.8%	4.9%	4.6%		6.4%
Oct 2011-March 2012	5.8%	5.4%	5.6%	5.3%	4.7%		8.0%

Source: Monitoring of Human Resource Activity Returns, HR Directorate DHSSPS.

Type 1 Diabetes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support his Department offers parents of children who are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

(AQW 17464/11-15)

Mr Poots: At the time of diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes, parents are provided with information about how to manage their child's diabetes, administer insulin, test blood glucose and what to do if the child's blood sugar levels are low.

Children and their families are in regular contact with the paediatric diabetes nurse after diagnosis and once the child's condition is stable they are reviewed on a quarterly basis at the diabetes clinic. The diabetes specialist nurse is also able to liaise with relevant agencies, including the child's school, in order to support the needs of the child and their parents.

Since 2009 all children are being offered a structured patient education programme called 'CHOICE' (Carbohydrate and Insulin Collaborative Education). Parents of younger children are encouraged to attend this.

There are also several trusted websites where information is available to families such as Diabetes UK and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what polices are in place in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to address complaints of sexual harassment in the work place; and whether it is procedure to notify the PSNI of such complaints.

(AQW 17489/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) have a Harassment Policy and Complaints Procedure and complaints of sexual harassment when reported are investigated under this policy and procedure.

NIFRS considers each case on its merits and if it is regarded as a criminal matter, it would be reported to the PSNI following discussion with the complainant.

The Harassment Policy and Complaints Procedure are currently subject to review and will be replaced with a Dignity at Work Policy.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Causeway Hospital

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with the Western Health and Social Care Trust on the possible transfer of the Causeway Hospital out of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 17490/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have to date had no discussions with the Western Health and Social Care Trust on the option to transfer the Causeway Hospital. The issue has however been discussed between my Department, the Health and Social Care Board and the Trust.

The public consultation on the proposed changes emerging from Transforming Your Care is currently underway and will continue until 15 January 2013. The consultation document sets out three options in regard to the future networking arrangements involving the Causeway, including the option that the Causeway would become the responsibility of the Western Trust. The aim is to ensure the future provision of safe, sustainable and resilient services for the population of the area. The options need to be considered carefully and the current consultation exercise provides the opportunity for everyone to give their views.

HRMC

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions have taken place with HMRC to ensure that cars operated by personnel in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service are fully compliant with tax regulations covering (i) private mileage; and (ii) private use.

(AQW 17491/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) confirm that staff are not permitted to use Fire Service vehicles for private use whilst off duty. There is no tax liability for Flexi Duty Officers whilst on duty.

NIFRS Flexi-Duty Officers' vehicles are classified as 'emergency vehicles' and HMRC has given a dispensation to NIFRS in respect of emergency vehicles under Section 248A ITEPA 2003 / Sc 81 Finance Act 2004.

NIFRS seek advice and guidance from HMRC as and when required on compliance with tax regulations.

Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 17013/11-15, (i) why Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm operations are no longer performed in Altnagelvin Hospital; (ii) why they stopped in October 2010; and (iii) whether there are plans to re-introduce this service.

(AQW 17498/11-15)

Mr Poots: Altnagelvin Area Hospital performed only a very small number of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) procedures. As with other low volume complicated surgical specialties the available evidence and professional consensus is that outcomes are better in larger units. The Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust therefore ceased providing AAA surgery at Altnagelvin hospital in October 2010 and all patients requiring this surgery are transferred to Belfast. At present, the Belfast HSC Trust is the only service provider in Northern Ireland that meets the quality standards for AAA surgery set by the Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland. A regional review of vascular services across Northern Ireland is currently underway. As part of this review the Health and Social Care Board will consider the most appropriate arrangement for the provision of AAA surgery for the population of Northern Ireland, consistent with UK national standards.

Changing Places Toilets for People with Disabilities

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which hospitals have changing places toilets for people with disabilities.

(AQW 17511/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present no hospitals in NI provide "Changing Places" Toilets. All Hospitals within Northern Ireland currently provide public ambulant toilets and wheelchair accessible toilets, which allow a wheelchair user to independently use the facilities.

Missing Children

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children, recorded as missing since 2009, have not been returned to either parental or Social Services care before their eighteenth birthday.

(AQW 17520/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not centrally available within the DHSSPS. The information requested may be available from the PSNI.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Speech Therapy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many computers are available for use by staff in each speech therapy unit across the various Health and Social Care Trusts; and what is the speech therapist to computer ratio.

(AQW 17521/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts have provided the following information for their respective areas:

Trust	Number of computers	Speech Therapist to Computer Ratio
BHSCT	121	1: 0.72
NHSCT	28	1: 0.65
SEHSCT	88	1: 0.93
SHSCT	55	1: 0.58
WHSCT	64	1: 1.02

Sexual Orientation Issues

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to provide mainstream support for families and young people on issues relating to sexual orientation.

(AQW 17533/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care is provided on the basis of need. The Department and its Arm's Length Bodies are subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine designated equality groups one of which is sexual orientation. Policies are screened to assess their impact on each of the groups and where possible mitigations are introduced to address any adverse impacts or special needs.

In relation to public health, the Public Health Agency takes a dual population-wide and targeted approach in the delivery of services. The targeted approach is directed towards communities and individuals who are at increased risk in any area of public health. Men who have sex with men are known to have elevated risk of poor sexual health, and LGB&T people generally are at increased risk of suicide and poor mental wellbeing. These issues are addressed through services provided under the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and through the Protect Life Strategy.

In addition, to help address the needs of children and young people in a more effective way, the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency have established the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership (CYSP). A sub-group of the CYSP will focus on the health needs of LGB&T young people and will develop an action plan to address issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Diabetic Retinopathy

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is current interval for diabetic retinopathy screening in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 17552/11-15)

Mr Poots: The screening interval standard for the Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme (DRSP) is 12 months however due to photography staff shortages at the start of 2012, the screening interval increased for some General Practices to 18 months. The staff shortages were addressed in the summer and with a full complement of staff in place from September 2012, the DRSP expect the screening interval to reduce to 15 months by the end of December 2012 and to restore the standard screening interval of 12 months for all General Practices by 31 March 2013.

Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinics

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the waiting time for genito-urinary medicine clinics; and for his assessment of the adequacy of the current service provision in meeting the demand for this service.

(AQW 17554/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest available published waiting times for consultant led outpatient appointments at Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics, which relate to the quarter ending September 2012, are outlined in the following table:

	Waiting time (in weeks)							Total Waiting
	0-6	6-9	9-13	13-18	18-21	21-26	>26	
Northern Ireland	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	30

These figures indicate that, in general, the current service is able to meet demand.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is doing in the North Down area to promote healthy eating and exercise. (AQW 17563/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are a wide range of services and projects funded by the Public Health Agency to contribute towards the promotion of physical activity and encourage healthy eating. These are delivered by various partners including the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Councils and organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

Many of the services addressing healthy eating and physical activity are delivered on a regional or Trust-wide basis and therefore include the North Down area.

PHA Projects and services which are specific to North Down area include:

- Community Development worker for North Down;
- Kilcooley Allotment Worker;
- Kilcooley Community Health Development Worker;
- Workplace Health initiative; and
- Age Concern over 50s

Independent Funding Request for Cancer Treatment

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 15541/11-15, in which circumstances may an Independent Funding Request exceed the one week response time.

(AQW 17582/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care (HSC) Board has advised that the process for considering individual funding requests (IFR) is a robust one and that where the HSC Board has been provided with the necessary information, there should not be a circumstance where a response to a request from the referring HSC Trust is not provided within one week of the date of the (weekly) meeting of the HSC Board's IFR Panel.

Hospitals: Remote Access

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has given consideration to the use of new technology to aid specialists in one hospital to remotely assess patients in another.

(AQW 17644/11-15)

Mr Poots: Yes I have actively promoted the application of technology to improve patient care. There are a number of initiatives already underway. The Telepresence robot which has recently been introduced in the High Dependency Unit at Daisy Hill Hospital will allow intensive care specialists at Craigavon Area Hospital to assess patients without the need for transfer. The Northern Ireland Picture Archiving and Communications System (NIPACS) which was launched in 2009 allows specialists in one hospital to access both radiology reports and the associated images acquired in another hospital resulting in quicker diagnosis and treatment. In addition, multi-disciplinary (MD) teams caring for cancer patients use technology to actively communicate with each other during MD team meetings without having to travel to a single location. The Electronic Care Record which is being introduced will allow specialists in one hospital to access information on patients acquired in another hospital.

Work is currently underway on projects to allow some patients to be reviewed by hospital doctors from home or local hospitals/health centres using video conferencing technology; and to allow speech therapists to provide therapy remotely via video conferencing.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Direct Payment Schemes

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is an approved schedule of services that would be funded by Health and Social Care Trusts' direct payment schemes; and what are the hourly and daily rates that would apply.

(AQW 17657/11-15)

Mr Poots: The aim of direct payments is to promote independence. In order to achieve this, Trusts should seek to leave as much choice as possible in the hands of the individual, allowing people to address their own needs in innovative ways whilst satisfying themselves that the person's assessed needs are being met and that public funds are being spent appropriately.

The Health & Social Care Board has advised me that when arranging a Direct Payment, a Trust will discuss how the potential recipient intends to secure services to meet their assessed needs. My Department's guidance to Trusts makes it clear that Trusts are encouraged to explore innovative and creative options to meeting a client's needs, whilst still achieving value for money. Trusts can supply information on approved providers to Direct Payment recipients, as required, but would not be serving the principles of individual choice and control were they to require recipients to contract with only certain providers.

Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to mark the 50th anniversary of the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald.

(AQW 17665/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 29 October 2012 a year of events began to mark the 50th anniversary of the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald. A photographic exhibition, depicting the hospital's history and early years, was mounted in the foyer. Cake and cupcakes were delivered to every ward and as many departments as possible, and also made available in the staff restaurant. Former and current members of staff were invited to take part in a media photo call.

UTV spent several weeks in the Ulster Hospital making a documentary on the hospital's history and its place in the community. "The People's Hospital" was broadcast on 2 November 2012.

On 16 November 2012, the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust held a conference in La Mon Hotel focussing on the changes in medical and nursing practice throughout the years to which current

and former members of staff were also invited. A range of speakers charted the founding of the Ulster Hospital and the evolution of the services provided today.

A nursing conference is planned for the New Year and a committee is currently discussing other events such as a Ball and a Family Day.

Welfare Reform

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has any plans to undertake an assessment of the projected costs to health and social care as a result of the implementation of the welfare reforms; and to outline these assessments.

(AQW 17689/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department is currently considering what the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit alongside other Welfare Reform changes will be on health and social care services. My officials will continue to liaise with their counterparts in the Department for Social Development and with their counterparts in Great Britain to assess any potential implications for services and patients.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: Uniforms

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to ensure that the existing level of stock of new uniforms required by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is sufficient to meet the expected number of new recruits within the next three months.

(AQW 17716/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is confident that it has sufficient stock of safety critical uniform and Personal Protection Equipment to allow the next trainee course to commence.

A full sizing exercise of the trainees will be completed, which could result in the need to order further stock of non-safety critical uniform.

Rural Areas: Community Transport

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hospital appointments have been cancelled in the last twelve months because of the withdrawal of community transport in rural areas.

(AQW 17741/11-15)

Mr Poots: The provision of community transport in rural areas is a matter for the Department for Regional Development and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the level of community transport available. However, my Department understands that community transport providers do not transport patients to hospital appointments so no patient will have missed an appointment due to the unavailability of community transport.

Meningitis B Vaccine

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce the Meningitis B vaccine which was recently approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

(AQW 17768/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vaccination policy in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is guided by the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers on matters relating to the provision of vaccination and immunisation services. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered.

The JCVI has begun an evaluation of the impact and cost effectiveness of possible Meningitis B vaccination strategies. The evaluation required is a highly complex analysis and final JCVI advice is not expected until 2013. I will consider the JCVI recommendation once it has been received.

Craigavon Area Hospital: Electro-Physiological Studies

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action the Southern Health and Social Care Trust is taking to reduce the waiting list for electro-physiological studies in Craigavon Hospital from its current position of fifty two weeks.

(AQW 17786/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust that Craigavon Area Hospital will be commencing additional sessions in January 2013 for patients to have electrophysiological (EP) studies. The Trust is also seeking to secure additional capacity from the Independent Sector for this service. I understand that 1 patient was waiting 48 weeks for an EP test at 10 December 2012.

Department of Justice

Death of Colin Bell

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will provide a copy of the review pursuant to the death in custody of Colin Bell on 1 August 2008, even in a redacted format.

(AQW 17044/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): A copy of the report has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Kenneth Douglas

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16398/11-15, (i) to provide the timeline for the release and return to custody of this prisoner; (ii) whether the prisoner spent time in the Prisoner Assessment Unit or other pre-release facility; and (iii) how long he spent in that facility before he was released.

(AQW 17146/11-15)

Mr Ford: In line with Phase 3 of the Northern Ireland Prison Service Pre-release Programme, Mr Douglas had been residing in the community on a full time basis, subject to the supervision of a Community Probation Officer, since 23 April 2012. He was returned to the custody of Maghaberry Prison on 28 October 2012.

Mr Douglas did not spend any time in the Prisoner Assessment Unit.

Prisoner Held in HMP Maghaberry Under a False Name

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16110/11-15, on how many occasions in each of the last five years a (i) remand; and (ii) sentenced prisoner has been found to have entered each prison facility under a false name.

(AQW 17147/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained / compiled at disproportionate cost.

Prisoner Welcome Packs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the annual cost of the Prisoner Welcome Packs in each prison facility.

(AQW 17175/11-15)

Mr Ford: The annual cost of Prisoner Welcome Packs for the most recent full financial year of 2011/12 was £3,935 in Maghaberry and £2,172 in Hydebank Wood. There was no cost for Welcome Packs in Magilligan as it is not a committal prison and receives its intake from the other two establishments.

Limavady Courthouse

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice to detail the estimated costs of improving Limavady Courthouse so that it meets the standard required to remain open.

(AQW 17202/11-15)

Mr Ford: The recent estimated figures for improvement costs for Limavady Courthouse are as follows:

Building work	Electrical work	Mechanical work
£163,560	£70,800	£76,200

Rehabilitation Courses: Prisons

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what rehabilitation courses are available for the prison population.
(AQW 17205/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) recognises that effective resettlement and rehabilitation is a key element in reducing the risk of reoffending.

NIPS, in partnership with its Multi Agency and Departmental partners, have developed 'The Pathways Interim Framework'. The model identifies a total of nine key pathways which, if effectively addressed, will contribute to a reduction in offending behaviour and to the successful rehabilitation of offenders. The nine pathways are:

- 1 Accommodation;
- 2 Education, Training and Employment;
- 3 Health – Mental and Physical;
- 4 Drugs and Alcohol;
- 5 Finance, Benefits and Debt;
- 6 Children and Families;
- 7 Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviours;
- 8 Supporting offenders who have been abused, raped or who have experienced domestic violence; and
- 9 Supporting offenders who have been involved in prostitution.

A comprehensive list of the programmes available is included at Annex 1.

PATHWAY 1 – Accommodation ANNEX 1

- Housing Rights Service
- Thrucare Pre-Release Programme
- NIACRO Welfare Advice – Benefits, Housing and Debt
- Extern Floating Support Project

PATHWAY 2 – Education, Training and Employment

- NIACRO Jobtrack
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

- Thrucare Pre-Release Programme
- Extern Recycle
- Extern Pre Release Assessment Scheme

PATHWAY 3 – Health, Mental and Physical

- Acupuncture
- Art Therapy
- Samaritan's Listener Scheme Support HEARTMATH
- Cruse Bereavement Care

PATHWAY 4 – Drugs and Alcohol

- AD:EPT (comprehensive drug and alcohol service)
- Alcohol Management
- Alcohol Related Violence Programme
- Basic Substance Awareness Programme
- Drug Education Awareness Programme
- Combined Substance Programme
- Core Harm Reduction

PATHWAY 5 - Finance, Benefit and Debt

- NIACRO Welfare Advice – Benefits, Housing and Debt
- Money Management Programme
- Thrucare Pre-Release Programme

PATHWAY 6 - Children, Families and Communities

- Barnardo's Parenting Matters Being a Dad
- Barnardo's Partners Together
- Barnardo's Parents on release
- Barnardo's Talking to Children about Tough Issues
- Barnardo's Parenting
- Barnardo's Staying in Touch
- NIACRO Services – Family
- Prison Fellowship NI – Supporting Families
- Baby Massage
- The Big Book Share

PATHWAY 7 – Attitudes, Thinking and behaviours

- Motivational Enhancement Group (MEG)
 - Gaining Opportunities & Living Skills (GOALS)
 - Gaining Opportunities & Living Skills (GOALS) Support
 - Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it (CALM)
 - Alcohol Related Violence Programme (ARV)
-

- Cognitive Self-Change Programme
- Enhanced thinking Skills (ETS)
- Enhanced thinking Skills Booster Programme (ETS Booster)
- Think First
- Safer Lives (for young offenders)
- CORE Sex Offender Treatment Programme (CORE)
- ROLLING Sex Offender Treatment Programme (ROLLING)
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Programme

PATHWAY 8 - Supporting offenders who have been abused, raped or who have experienced domestic violence

The Women's Strategy identifies a need to work with specialist services to provide greater support for those women (and men), both in custody and in the community, with emotional needs related to issues such as domestic violence, rape and abuse. NEXUS are also contacted to provide counselling for sexual / violence abuse. NIPS is working in partnership with PBNI and DOJ in relation to this issue, including exploring how the Service can better collaborate with specialist organisations working in this field, as well as with the wider women's community sector.

PATHWAY 9 - Supporting offenders who have been involved in prostitution

As well as the services listed under all other Pathways, The Women's Strategy also identifies a need to work with specialist services to provide greater support for those women, both in custody and in the community, with needs related to their involvement in prostitution.

Magherafelt Court House

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the closure of Magherafelt Court House, how does he intend to address the issue of it being in the Londonderry County Court Division, as all cases dealt with there arise in that divisional area, and any crown cases are moved to Londonderry Crown Court for hearing, when he intends to move cases originally destined for Magherafelt to Antrim Magistrates Court, which is outside the Londonderry County Court Division and the corresponding policing district.

(AQW 17213/11-15)

Mr Ford: Magherafelt Courthouse will not be closed until after the implementation of a single jurisdiction for magistrates' and county court business anticipated by April 2014.

Current policing district boundaries are not co-terminous with court boundaries.

Court Estate Inspections on Designated Smoking Areas

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice pursuant to AQW 14948/11-15 whether he will consider introducing unannounced audits or inspections in relation to this matter.

(AQW 17215/11-15)

Mr Ford: I do not intend to make any changes to the current arrangements.

Prisoner Held in HMP Maghaberry Under a False Name

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice pursuant to AQW 16110/11-15 in relation to this particular prisoner under his accurate identity (i) for what conviction was he jailed and for how long; (ii) did he have similar offences on his correct record; and (iii) would his correct previous record have affected the durations of his sentence in this specific case.

(AQW 17216/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prisoner's previous record would not influence his time in custody as he was being held on remand. However, both records had already been merged by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

There was one previous sentence of four months for a similar offence.

Prison Service: Tuck Shop

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice with the exception of confectionery and tobacco products, what other items are available from Prison Service tuck shops per facility.

(AQW 17217/11-15)

Mr Ford: Excluding confectionery and tobacco products, the table below provides information on the range of stock items available for prisoners to purchase from the Tuck Shops at each establishment.

Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Wood
Batteries	Batteries	Batteries
Audio/Electrical	Audio/Electrical	Audio/Electrical
Groceries	Groceries	Groceries
Handicrafts	Handicrafts	Handicrafts
Food storage containers	Flasks/storage containers	Flasks/storage containers
Health food items	Health food items	Health food items
Laundry items	Laundry items	Laundry items
Stamps/stationery	Stamps/stationery	Stamps/stationery
Greeting cards	Greetings cards	Greetings cards
Toiletries	Toiletries	Toiletries
Pet food		Fruit

The availability of goods in each tuck shop is in line with the expectations included in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons Expectation document. This document states that prisoners should have access to a wide range of products which are comparable in range and cost to those in a local supermarket.

In addition to these items, a limited selection of items is available for prisoners to purchase through a range of catalogues.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, from 2000 to date, to detail (i) whether any Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff were suspended for gross misconduct and later granted ill-health retirement on the recommendation of the Prison Service; (ii) the date of each dismissal and retirement; (iii) the nature of the gross misconduct; (iv) any criminal convictions, court proceedings or informal police action taken; and (v) the level of staff involved in each case.

(AQW 17250/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not hold any records in relation to staff suspended for alleged gross misconduct and subsequently granted ill-health retirement.

Kenneth Douglas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16398/11-15, the offences for which the prisoner has been charged.

(AQW 17266/11-15)

Mr Ford: Kenneth Douglas has been charged with 12 offences that include false imprisonment, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, theft, possession of class A drugs and taking and driving away.

Department Electricity Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail his Department's electricity costs in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 17291/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice (DOJ) came into existence on 12 April 2010.

Electricity costs for the DOJ, including its Agencies but not its arm's length bodies, for the financial years 2010/11 and 2011/12, and the current financial year up to the end of October 2012 are shown in the table below:

2012/13 (April to October 2012)	2011/12	2010/11
£1,310,651.90	£2,481,642.97	£2,309,547.81

Limavady Courthouse

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the individuals and organisations in the Limavady area that responded to the consultation on the future of courthouses.

(AQW 17295/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were 11 responses to the Hearing Centre consultation from individuals and organisations in the Limavady area:

Alan Robinson	Councillor
David Gilmore	c/o DUP Constituency Office, Limavady
EAH Boyle	Private Individual
George Robinson	MLA East Londonderry
Gregory Campbell	MLA East Londonderry
James McCorkell	Councillor
Liam Flannigan	Chief Executive, Limavady Borough Council
Mr JE Scott	Private Individual
Peter Jack	Solicitors Association, Limavady
Philip Kingston	President, Roe Valley Chamber of Commerce
Secretary	DUP Constituency Office, Limavady

Convictions for Drug Related Offences

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of people convicted and prosecuted for drug related offences in each year since 2008, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 17311/11-15)

Mr Ford: Drug related offences may be prosecuted under a range of legislation including the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Medicines Act 1968 and the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

The table below gives the number convicted of drug related offences for the calendar years 2008 and 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available), based on the known address provided for the offender. It is not possible to provide prosecution data for 2008 and 2009.

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS FOR DRUGS RELATED OFFENCES BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, 2008 – 2009

Parliamentary Constituency	2008	2009
Belfast East	31	42
Belfast North	77	100
Belfast South	48	46
Belfast West	71	92
East Antrim	41	38
East Londonderry	98	94
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	45	27
Foyle	51	54
Lagan Valley	30	21
Mid Ulster	35	49
Newry and Armagh	43	51
North Antrim	50	69
North Down	40	19
South Antrim	58	54
South Down	44	48
Strangford	27	23
Upper Bann	45	66
West Tyrone	43	31
Unknown	136	180
Total	1,013	1,104

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Officers

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice how the current target absence rate for Prison Service Officers, of 10.3 days per year, compares with rates in England, Scotland and Wales.
(AQW 17327/11-15)

Mr Ford: As the information requested relates to Prison Services outside this jurisdiction, I would suggest that you address these matters directly with the relevant Departments involved.

Prisoner Supporting Prisoner at Risk

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) what level of Prison Service staff are responsible for completing Supporting Prisoner at Risk; (ii) who has access to the SPAR records; and (iii) what guidelines determine when a case is closed.

(AQW 17336/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Any member of staff working with a prisoner can commence the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process. Responsibility for the ongoing management of the process is fulfilled at Senior Prison Officer level.
- (ii) The SPAR booklet which records the daily management of the prisoner must accompany the prisoner at all times; therefore all staff who have direct contact with the prisoner will have access to the SPAR booklet. SPAR data is also captured on the Prison Record Information System (PRISM). Staff with direct contact with the prisoner, and senior managers in the prison establishment will have access to the electronic PRISM records. Staff in the Safer Custody Branch at Prison Service headquarters also have access to these PRISM records on a read only basis.
- (iii) A SPAR is closed when agreement is reached at a multi-disciplinary case conference.

Non-Natural Deaths in Custody

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16393/11-15, with the exception of the one stated case of suicide, whether the 12 remaining cases are regarded as suicide and whether the outcome of each case is subject to challenge.

(AQW 17339/11-15)

Mr Ford: When a death in custody occurs the Coroner advises the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) of the inquest verdict. Further information relating to these cases should be sought from the Coroner's Office as NIPS is unable to comment on the Coroner's decision.

Code of Conduct and Discipline by the Secretary of State

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to 16541/11-15 and the responses to AQW 12701/11-15 and AQW 13722/11-15, whether he can confirm that the Prison Service's Code of Conduct and Discipline was not legally approved by the Secretary of State, as required by Rule 6 of the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995.

(AQW 17340/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the responses previously provided, and in particular my response to AQW 12701/11-15. This confirmed that the minute from the Secretary of State's Office approved the Code of Conduct and Discipline in line with Rule 6 of The Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland).

Closure of Courthouses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the closure of four courthouses, for an estimate of the percentage of cases that will now be dealt with outside their respective County Court area each year.

(AQW 17341/11-15)

Mr Ford: The closure of the Hearing Centres will not result in any cases being dealt with outside their respective County Court area.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16241/11-15, to detail (i) the training, in terms of investigative techniques, skills and procedures, provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to each governor and principal officer involved in the investigation; (ii) when and where the training took place and its duration; (iii) who provided the training; and (iv) to provide a copy of the Terms of Reference for the investigation.

(AQW 17344/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Governors involved in this investigation were authorised by the

Northern Ireland Prison Service to conduct the investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and Discipline (COCD), and were assisted by two Principal Officers. No specific training was provided.

A redacted copy of the Terms of Reference is attached.

Prison Estate

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice for an estimate of the cost of purchasing wave scanners for the Prison Estate if the pilot scheme is a success.

(AQW 17385/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently evaluating millimetre wave body scanning search technology and has leased two machines from two different suppliers. The evaluation process will not be completed until January 2013 and I am currently unable to assess whether this technology is appropriate for use in the prison environment.

The indicative costs of the equipment currently being tested range from £100,000 to £110,000 per unit, with support costs in the region of £8500 per unit after the initial year. There will also be a training cost for operators of up to £3000 per site.

These figures should be viewed as indicative only and have not been subject to NIPS procurement procedures which may change the overall costs.

Prison Officers: Security Threat

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice (i) for his assessment of the correlation between the security threat to prison officers and their level of sickness absence; and (ii) what action he is taking to reassure security personnel about their safety.

(AQW 17386/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) While it is not possible to assess the extent to which a correlation exists between the security threat to prison officers and their levels of sickness absence, I have acknowledged publicly that the sickness absence levels within NIPS reflects the particular nature of the stresses and conditions of the role these NIPS staff perform.
- (ii) I continue to receive updates on meetings held between Prison Service officials and PSNI regarding the security of prison officers. All relevant staff are made fully aware of the security situation and measures have been put in place to reassure staff. As you can appreciate it would not be appropriate for me to place specific details of the security measures being made available to prison staff within the public domain.

Smuggling: Counterfeit Goods

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to work with the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to reduce the smuggling of counterfeit goods.

(AQW 17387/11-15)

Mr Ford: As Chair of the Organised Crime Task force (OCTF), I can advise that intellectual property crime is one of the major organised crime threats. The OCTF has a dedicated Intellectual Property Crime (IPC) sub-group which acts as a forum for law enforcement agencies and business partners to develop strategies to deal with issues associated with intellectual property crime, including the smuggling of counterfeit goods. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is represented on the IPC sub-group.

Courthouse Closures

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what discussions he has had with the Judiciary, particularly District Judges, on the closure of courthouses and hearing centres.

(AQW 17411/11-15)

Mr Ford: Officials from Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) presented the Hearing Centre closure proposals to members of the Judiciary for discussion. They were also discussed at the NICTS Agency Board which includes judicial attendees.

Copies of the Hearing Centre closure consultation document were issued to the Lord Chief Justice, Lords Justice of Appeal, High Court Judges and the representative Judicial bodies.

I also mentioned the Hearing Centre Closure proposals to the Lord Chief Justice.

Prisoner Assessment Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the report into incidents at the Prisoner Assessment Unit and the subsequent closure of the Unit and disciplinary action against staff, what changes have been made to the guidance of the Unit's running, to ensure that similar errors do not occur when it is reopened; and whether any of the original staff will be returning to their posts.

(AQW 17412/11-15)

Mr Ford: Further to my statement to the Assembly on 26 November, I can confirm that a project team comprising of officials from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Department of Justice and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland has been established to develop proposals on how best to operate and manage the proposed Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) on the Crumlin Road.

This team will take into account the recommendations of a number of recent reports, including the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) review of the management of life and indeterminate sentence prisoners in Northern Ireland (July 2012); the Prison Review Team report (February 2012); and the internal NIPS review of the working of the PAU (October 2011), and will consider a range of issues including the deployment of staff.

Kenneth Douglas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16398/11-15, what are the nature of the charges; and whether any application has been made for bail.

(AQW 17413/11-15)

Mr Ford: Kenneth Douglas has been charged with 12 offences that include false imprisonment, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, theft, possession of class A drugs and taking and driving away.

Mr Douglas has not made any application for bail.

Youths and Juveniles Charged with Rape

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many youths or juveniles are within the court system who are charged with rape, broken down by court division; and how many are remanded in custody or are on bail.

(AQW 17414/11-15)

Mr Ford: As at 5 December there were eight youths within the court system on rape charges. The breakdown by Court Division and status of the defendant is set out below:

County Court Division	Bail	Custody	Summons	Total
Antrim	1	0	1	2
Ards	1	1*	0	2
Belfast	2	1	0	3
Fermanagh & Tyrone	1	0	0	1

* Appeal case – defendant currently in custody pending appeal.

Fuel Smuggling

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what more his Department can do to tackle fuel smuggling.
(AQW 17422/11-15)

Mr Ford: Fuel smuggling is primarily an excise offence and therefore an excepted matter that falls to HMRC. Nevertheless it is an area which the Organised Crime Task Force, of which I am the chair, considers.

In addition, the OCTF Cross Border Fuel Fraud Enforcement Group meets on a regular basis to share information; plan joint operations; and discuss new methods of addressing the issues related to all types of fuel fraud. The group is currently involved in the development of a new fuel marker aimed at preventing fuel laundering. It is anticipated this will be introduced in summer 2013.

My Department will be consulting in the New Year on legislation to enable sentences for the offence of evasion of duty, which includes fuel smuggling, to be referred to the Court of Appeal if the Director of Public Prosecutions regards them as unduly lenient.

Smuggling: Cigarettes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what more his Department can do to tackle cigarette smuggling.
(AQW 17423/11-15)

Mr Ford: Tackling the issue of smuggled cigarettes is primarily a matter for HMRC and UK Border Force. In 2011/12, these organisations seized over 23 million counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes in Northern Ireland.

Under the auspices of the OCTF, which I chair, law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border were brought together to form a Cross Border Tobacco Fraud Enforcement Group. The aim of the group is to identify key criminal gangs involved in this activity and to use a partnership approach to ensure they are disrupted.

In addition, my Department will be consulting on legislation to enable referral to the Court of Appeal of sentences for the offence of evasion of duty which the Director of Public Prosecutions considers to be unduly lenient.

Forensic Laboratories

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice, following the criticism from a Derry magistrate on the time taken to get samples analysed and reports completed, what he is doing to address the backlog of cases in forensic laboratories.
(AQW 17429/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the Magistrates' Court case referred to, all examinations requested from Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) were reported within the agreed timescales, prior to the Court hearing.

FSNI liaises closely with the Public Prosecution Service to ensure reports are available for court hearings. FSNI issues approximately 9000 reports a year: the current number outstanding to the PPS is 14.

Prostitution

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted for offences relating to prostitution in each of the last three years.

(AQW 17470/11-15)

Mr Ford: During the period in question, offences relating to prostitution were prosecuted under Sections 13 and 13(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, Sections 52 and 53(1) Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Section 167 of the Belfast Improvement Act 1845.

The table below gives the number prosecuted and convicted for the calendar years 2004 -2006 and the number convicted for the calendar years 2007 – 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available). It is not possible to provide prosecution data for 2007 to 2009.

NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS FOR PROSTITUTION OFFENCES 2004 – 2009

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions
2004	2	2
2005	3	3
2006	0	0
2007	N/A	5
2008	N/A	5
2009	N/A	3

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Court Interpreters

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of using interpreters for court cases, including accommodation and travel, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 17492/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the cost of court interpreter and document translation services, including travel and accommodation, for the last two financial years:

Interpreter Costs	Total (£)
1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011	475,784.81
1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012	625,372.83
Total (£)	1,101,157.64

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether he can give an assurance that Bangor Courthouse will not be allowed to fall into dereliction and become a hub for anti-social behaviour once it ceases to operate as a court facility in April 2013.

(AQW 17529/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department will continue to retain responsibility for ensuring that Bangor Courthouse is appropriately maintained and secure until such times as it is disposed of.

Royal Ulster Constabulary Part-Time Reserve

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to reopen applications for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Part-Time Reserve gratuity scheme to make use of the £392,000 surplus funds.

(AQW 17641/11-15)

Mr Ford: While I sympathise with those who have missed the deadline for various reasons, the Gratuity payment was an ex gratia payment. Due to the terms of the Scheme there had to be a deadline as the value of each payment was dependent on the number of verified applications. The onus had to be with applicants to ensure their application was made within the deadline. Therefore I am unable to reopen the scheme to allow late applications.

This residue will be retained until the Department is confident that no further payments may be made. No decisions have yet been taken on how the residue can and should be used.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice whether an assessment was made as to the cost of upgrading Bangor courthouse to the standard required for it to remain in use, and if so, to outline the cost.

(AQW 17647/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Condition Survey and a Disability Discrimination Act Survey carried out on Bangor Courthouse recommended improvements at estimated costs of £364,000.

Department for Regional Development

‘Welcome to Northern Ireland’ Signs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether all the ‘Welcome to Northern Ireland’ signs along the border which were stolen or vandalised have been replaced; and to state the reasons if any have not been replaced.

(AQW 17268/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I can advise the Member that all the “Welcome to Northern Ireland” signs erected by Roads Service along the border, which were stolen or vandalised have been replaced.

‘Welcome to Northern Ireland’ Signs

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether anyone has been made amenable for the theft and criminal damage of ‘Welcome to Northern Ireland’ signs along border roads.

(AQW 17269/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There have been no prosecutions in relation to the theft and vandalism of ‘Welcome to Northern Ireland’ signs.

It is an offence under Article 33 of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981 for a person to unlawfully and intentionally interfere with or damage a traffic sign and anyone caught doing so will be prosecuted.

Where there have been incidents of sign theft, these have been reported to the PSNI, however, the Member will appreciate the courts require substantial and clear evidence before a successful prosecution can be brought.

Roads Service will continue to identify damaged or missing signs as part of its routine inspections, which will be prioritised for replacement or repair as necessary.

Pond Park Road and Pond Park Road East, Lisburn

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the work being carried out by the Roads Service and the Rivers Agency at Pond Park Road and Pond Park Road East, Lisburn.
(AQW 17272/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised a scheme was recently completed to prevent water discharging onto Pond Park Road. The scheme involved construction of a new manhole and cleaning of the existing back channels. In addition, Roads Service officials also met with an adjacent landowner as water was discharging onto the road from his field. I understand that the landowner has subsequently carried out remedial work that is intended to prevent future reoccurrences.

Roads Service officials have further advised that since these work has been completed, no further flooding has taken place during periods of heavy rainfall.

Gritting

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the savings his Department made in the purchasing of grit as a result of the mild winter in 2011/2012.
(AQW 17275/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have assumed that the Member's question relates to rock salt, which is the primary material used in Roads Service's winter service programme.

I can advise that in 2011/12 Roads Service used approximately 48,000 tonnes of salt. This represents a saving of approximately 49,000 tonnes compared with the average of around 97,000 tonnes a year during the period 2008/09 to 2010/11, and a saving of approximately 5,000 tonnes compared with the 10 year average of 53,000 tonnes per year, in the period prior to 2008/09.

Unfortunately for reasons of commercial sensitivity and in the interests of securing best value for money in future procurement exercises, I am unable to provide you with specific information on the savings achieved.

Lagan Valley: Road Claims

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development how many compensation claims his Department has received from drivers whose vehicles have been damaged as a result of the condition of the roads in the Lagan Valley area in the last year.

(AQW 17276/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not record information on claims for compensation on a constituency basis. However, the geographical area covered by Lisburn and Banbridge Section Offices is similar to the Lagan Valley constituency area. I can advise that in the 2011/12 financial year, 181 claims for vehicle damage were received in the Lisburn and Banbridge Section Office areas.

Illegal Posters and Signs

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department plans to reduce the number of posters and signs that are erected illegally.
(AQW 17277/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the illegal erection of advertising signs along the public road is an offence under The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. Article 87 of the Order, deals with advertisements, pictures, signs, etc, unlawfully affixed to the surface of a road, or any tree, structure or other works in or on a road, that is, signs on Roads Service property.

In addition, Article 21(1) of the Order states that "any person who erects or exhibits or causes or permits to be erected or exhibited any advertisement or notice which is sited or designed wholly or mainly for the purpose of being visible to persons using a special road or which is likely to prejudice the safety of traffic using a special road shall be guilty of an offence and liable under summary conviction to a fine". All motorways and the Westlink are examples of special roads.

Where an advertising hoarding is erected illegally on Roads Service property or adjacent to special roads, action is taken by Roads Service to try and remove these under Articles 87 & 21 respectively of the Roads (NI) order 1993. The Department may subsequently seek to recover costs, as appropriate.

Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development how his budget will benefit the Foyle constituency up until the end of this Assembly mandate, broken down by the allocation of funds.
(AQW 17279/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following table details my Department's resource and capital budget up until the end of this Assembly mandate.

TABLE 1

	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Roads	229.9	194.4	197.4	268.0	195.0	222.1
Transport	102.2	52.2	71.4	18.1	70.1	29.7
EU Structural Funds	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3
Water and Sewerage	171.1	164.4	181.6	165.7	180.3	163.8
Total	503.2	410.0	450.4	451.9	445.5	415.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

My Department and its arm's-length bodies, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), do not maintain detailed analysis of spend on a parliamentary constituency basis.

Roads Service

Roads Service maintenance expenditure is allocated on the basis of need using a range of weighted indicators tailored to each maintenance activity. Divisions use these indicators when apportioning funding across council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds across the whole of Northern Ireland.

The priority and advancement of the schemes within the major roads programme and other capital works are assessed and prioritised taking into account a range of criteria.

The table below details the major road improvements that are planned in the North West region during the current Assembly mandate.

TABLE 2

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total Project Cost	Estimated Completion Date
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
A5 Londonderry to North of Strabane and A5 South of Omagh to Ballygawley*	64	119	100	330	2015/16

* Dependant on outcome of legal challenge.

I would also advise you of the availability of my Department's Roads Service report to Londonderry City Council which highlights in greater detail the schemes undertaken in 2011-2012 and planned works for the 2012-2013 year, the link to which is provided below.

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=8032

Northern Ireland Water (NIW)

NIW's capital and resource budgets are set at an overall budget allocation level reflecting the fact that DRD sets overall programme priorities and does not control individual projects.

The table below sets out the proposed water programmes in the Foyle Area. The investment levels and project numbers for 2013-14 and 2014-15 are indicative and will be determined by the Utility Regulator through the ongoing regulatory price control process for water (PC13).

TABLE 3

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total Project Cost	Estimated Completion Date
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Carmoney Water Treatment Works Upgrade	109	0	0	5,226	2012/13
Glengalliagh Pumping Station and Pumping Main	12	9	0	4,615	2015/16
Ardan Road Culmore Foul and Storm Sewer Extension	87	0	0	94	2012/13
Londonderry DAP: Work packages	1,785	900	0	16,250	2013/14
Bank Place, Londonderry Sewer	59	0	0	68	2012/13
Strathfoyle, Londonderry Siphon Inlet Screen	1,197	0	0	1,408	2012/13
Maydown WWPS Replacement	126	0	0	259	2012/13

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total Project Cost	Estimated Completion Date
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Carmoney to Strabane Strategic Link Watermain	11	0	0	8,703	2016/17
Major Incident Mitigation Project North Region Freeze Thaw Improvements	381	1,315		1,837	2012/13
Lone Moor Road, Londonderry Storm Sewer Extension	500	0	0	696	2012/13
Culmore WWTW's Phase 2 Base Maintenance	192	444	0	636	2013/14
Circular Road, Londonderry Storm sewer extension	242	307	0	564	2013/14
Donnybrewer WWTW's Phase 2 Base Maintenance	91	408	0	497	12/13
Tobermore WWTW Upgrade	321	0	0	426	2012/13
Maydown WWPS Replacement	126	0	0	259	2012/13
Faughan Crescent WWPS, Londonderry. Pumping station and pumping main upgrade	11	120	6	137	2014/15
Magheramason WWTWs	13	700	800	1,523	2014/15
Tamnaherin WWTW Feasibility Study	991	0	0	1,367	2012/13
Nixons Corner, Londonderry WWTW Feasibility Study	10	1,000	200	1,240	2014/15
Forecast Total	6,264	5,203	1,006	45,805	

Transport

It is not possible to identify resource expenditure for public transport for the Foyle constituency, as expenditure does not relate to an individual constituency. The Department has provided and will continue to provide funding for public transport services and initiatives, including transport services for people with disabilities and concessionary fares, throughout the country, which although used by residents in the Foyle constituency, are not specific to that constituency.

The projects listed in the table below are directly relevant to the Foyle area, but Foyle also benefits from general rail and bus projects. The entire Translink network benefits from the impact of the New Trains project and the new Goldline vehicles and provision of Wi-Fi on both Goldline vehicles and trains. The Translink figures below are estimates and are subject to change.

TABLE 4

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total Project Cost	Estimated Completion Date
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Coleraine to Londonderry Track Relay Phase 1	17,900	0	0	22,300	2012/13
Coleraine to Londonderry Track Relay Phase 2	1,700	3,500	14,700	19,900	2015/16
Coleraine to Londonderry line track safety improvement works	1,400	0	0	4,700	2012/13
Bann Bridge Coleraine Refurbishment Works	2,800	0	500	3,500	2012/13
User Worked Crossing Reconfiguration Brolleys/McConaghys	700	400	0	1,100	2013/14
Forecast Total	24,500	3,900	15,200	51,500	

Department Electricity Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his Department's electricity costs in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 17290/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department's electricity costs in each of the last three financial years are detailed in the table below.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total (£000's)	9,445	11,347	11,995

The majority of the Department's electricity costs relate to non-accommodation charges, for example traffic signs, signals and street lighting.

Waterside Car Park, Coleraine

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much revenue the Waterside Car Park in Coleraine has generated since it became a pay and display car park; and (ii) whether the revenue raised correlates with the projected revenue.

(AQW 17296/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that some £12,000 has been generated from the Waterside Car Park in Coleraine since it became pay and display in July 2012.

Roads Service does not have projected revenue figures for specific car parks, as revenue is dependent on the level of usage which can fluctuate. However, I can confirm that since the introduction of pay and display at Waterside Car Park, the indications are that there has been a significant reduction in all-day parking, resulting in a higher turnover of parking spaces. This helps to keep the most convenient spaces available for shoppers, or other visitors, with the aim of helping the vitality and viability of town centres.

Waterside Car Park, Coleraine

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development how much it cost to install car parking meters in the Waterside Car Park, Coleraine.

(AQW 17297/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the cost of providing the Pay and Display machines, including associated works and signage, at the Waterside car-park in Coleraine is approximately £25,000.

Carlingford Lough Bridge

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what role his Department will have in the construction and planning of the proposed road bridge across Carlingford Lough.

(AQW 17372/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: While my Department has no direct involvement in this project, nor has it made any commitment to contribute funds to the scheme, I understand that my Department's Roads Service officials have worked with the scheme development team. These deliberations have focussed on resolving issues relating to the potential for queues to build up on the approaches to Narrow Water Roundabout if installed, when the bridge is closed to road traffic and open for navigation purposes.

In the meantime, Roads Service is continuing to work on the Newry Southern Relief Road proposal, which would provide a strategic link between the A2 Warrenpoint dual carriageway and the A1 Belfast to Dublin Road.

Water Infrastructure Projects

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to apply for EU funding for road and water infrastructure projects.

(AQW 17376/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Across my Department this year, applications have been submitted for EU funding towards the Coleraine to Londonderry track relay, the ecars project, the York Street Interchange feasibility study, the redevelopment of Portadown Railway Station and the procurement of 53 new sustainable buses.

During the remainder of the current EU programme period, my Department hopes to apply for EU funding towards the A8 Belfast to Larne project, a feasibility study in relation to a Belfast Transport Hub and the next phase of the Coleraine to Londonderry track relay. However, the submission of applications will be dependent on the announcement of 'calls' by the managing authorities / European Commission and the nature of the call criteria.

My Department is also exploring EU funding options for the Belfast Rapid Transit Project and potential water related projects.

In addition, my Department is continuing to engage with Europe and the appropriate managing authorities to influence the next set of EU funding programmes to ensure they provide opportunities for transport, road and water infrastructure projects. Until there is more clarity on the programmes' regulations and the availability of national and regional budgets, definitive details of my Department's plans to apply for EU funding in the next programme period cannot be provided.

Link Road from the A5 to the New Hospital in Omagh

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 16346/11-15, to outline his plans to extend the proposed link road from the Bankmore Road/Crevenagh Road roundabout to the existing A5.

(AQW 17394/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that I plan to meet with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to discuss the potential for both our Departments to work together, to explore the possibility of delivering the proposed link road from Bankmore Road/Crevenagh Road to the existing A5.

I am unable to make any comment in relation to the proposed link road, or the manner in which this could be achieved, until this meeting has taken place.

Grit Boxes in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department intends to increase the number of grit boxes in the North Down area.

(AQW 17495/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service provides salt bins for use by the public, on a self help basis, on roads which do not qualify for inclusion in the salting schedule, and where the following criteria are met:

- the location in question is on the publicly maintained road network;
- the gradient on the road in question exceeds 5%;
- no reasonable alternative route is available; and
- the subject road qualifies through an assessment process that considers factors such as road geometry, residential usage, community welfare and commercial usage.

There are no limits placed on the number of salt bins which may be provided. However, salt bins will not normally be provided within 100 metres of an existing salt bin.

There are currently 181 salt bins within the North Down Borough Council area. Roads Service will consider the provision of additional salt bins if requested by a member of the public and a suitable location for the bin is available.

Translink Bus Services

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development what action Translink has taken to establish a bus service on the Culmore Road, Derry.

(AQW 17510/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This is an operational matter for Translink. However Translink has advised me that they have made several applications to DOE Licensing Division for a Road Service Licence to operate a bus service to Culmore Point. These applications have been unsuccessful.

Currently the Lough Swilly Bus Company operates a service part-funded from my Department's Rural Transport Fund along this route.

Rural Community Transport

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of reinstating community transport in rural areas for hospital appointments.

(AQW 17559/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My response to AQW 9282/11-15 and AQW 12014/11-15 sets out my Department's position in regard to this issue. There has been no change to this approach. However you may be

interested to learn that my Department is currently developing proposals to run a small pilot project in the Dungannon area in conjunction with the other Government bodies, including the Health Trusts that fund and deliver public transport services. It will examine the opportunities for a more joined up approach to the planning and delivery of publicly funded transport services.

Smartcard Technology

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what actions he has planned in regard to smartcard technology to enable people to move more freely and easily when travelling throughout the UK. (AQW 17604/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has recently authorized Translink to undertake a feasibility study into the options for a new ticketing system. Among the matters which the study will consider will be the technical and cost implications of making the new travel products compatible with the different smartcard systems being implemented in the various regions of the UK. The feasibility and implications of also using EMV (Europay MasterCard VISA) bank cards will be considered as part of the study, which is due to be completed by December 2013.

Department for Social Development

Freedom of Information Requests

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Freedom of Information requests received by his Department in each year since 2007; (ii) the proportion of requests each year that were not answered within the time limit; (iii) the number of requests currently outstanding by more than (a) one to two months (b) three to four months; (c) five to six months; (d) seven to twelve months; and (e) more than twelve months.

(AQW 16782/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):

Year	Requests Received	Proportion of Requests Not Answered Within Time Limit
2007	200	13.5%
2008	174	2.3%
2009	164	3.0%
2010	183	2.2%
2011	224	22.3%
2012	227	27.3%

	Number of Requests Currently Outstanding
1-2 months	0
3-4 months	0
5-6 months	0
7-12 months	0
More than 12 months	1

Co-Ownership Schemes

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total number of applications to the Co-Ownership Scheme for every month since January 2007 that were (i) approved; and (ii) not approved.

(AQW 17079/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total number of applications received and successfully supported by the Co-Ownership Scheme for each month since January 2007 are outlined in the attached table. Of the remainder that were unsuccessful, a significant number would have been approved after the initial processing of their application but ultimately were unable to complete. This can be for a number of reasons, for example; the vendor withdrew the property from sale or they were unable to secure an appropriate mortgage.

It should be noted that due to financial restrictions, the Co-Ownership Scheme closed during the period April to October 2008 and an applications quota was in place from April 2009 to September 2011.

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2007	27	16
Feb 2007	41	29
Mar 2007	69	55
Apr 2007	105	75
May 2007	174	122
Jun 2007	134	90
Jul 2007	111	66
Aug 2007	139	82
Sep 2007	140	88
Oct 2007	192	130
Nov 2007	176	118
Dec 2007	106	68

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2008	183	117
Feb 2008	334	140
Mar 2008	180	12
Apr 2008	n/a	n/a
May 2008	n/a	n/a
Jun 2008	n/a	n/a
Jul 2008	n/a	n/a
Aug 2008	n/a	n/a
Sep 2008	n/a	n/a

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Oct 2008	n/a	n/a
Nov 2008	136	51
Dec 2008	49	18

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2009	54	23
Feb 2009	95	40
Mar 2009	255	94
Apr 2009	207	68
May 2009	176	25
Jun 2009	195	33
Jul 2009	137	39
Aug 2009	106	37
Sep 2009	76	24
Oct 2009	82	30
Nov 2009	80	24
Dec 2009	93	20

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2010	76	32
Feb 2010	61	28
Mar 2010	87	38
Apr 2010	99	37
May 2010	88	41
Jun 2010	92	52
Jul 2010	82	35
Aug 2010	80	42
Sep 2010	131	62
Oct 2010	165	101
Nov 2010	48	21
Dec 2010	70	16

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2011	92	23

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Feb 2011	115	20
Mar 2011	141	24
Apr 2011	183	38
May 2011	160	40
Jun 2011	190	68
Jul 2011	93	45
Aug 2011	91	49
Sep 2011	122	65
Oct 2011	167	97
Nov 2011	121	63
Dec 2011	95	56

Month/Year	Total Received (Individual Applications)	Total Successful (Purchase Completed)
Jan 2012	91	51
Feb 2012	141	88
Mar 2012	156	82
Apr 2012	129	65
May 2012	162	68
Jun 2012	127	45
Jul 2012	144	10
Aug 2012	148	10
Sep 2012	118	1
Oct 2012	190	-
Total	7907	3247

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.

Double Glazing Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how a saving of £15.1m arises from the proposed change of hinge type to be used in the Housing Executive double glazing scheme.
(AQW 17128/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Savings of £15.1m arises by changing the Housing Executive's requirement to fit windows from the inside and also hinges. By fitting from the inside a tenants decor is not disturbed negating the need to pay redecoration grants of an average £400-£450 per dwelling. With regard to the type of hinges used in the Housing Executive's double glazing programme, the estimated associated savings could be as much as £500k or higher. These savings can be used in other priority areas, such as new kitchens and heating schemes.

Double Glazing Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development whether reversible hinge windows can be installed from the outside in, negating the need for a redecoration grant; and whether this has been taken into consideration in his review of the Housing Executive double glazing installation scheme.
(AQW 17148/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that reversible hinge windows can be installed from either the inside or the outside dependent on the construction of the property. The saving on redecoration allowances is as a result of the minimum disturbance to the internal surfaces and decoration of the property irrespective of the installation method. This means that in the vast majority of cases regardless of which installation method is used a redecoration grant will not be needed.

Double Glazing Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development what savings are associated with the proposed change in specification of the type of hinge used in the Housing Executive double glazing programme.
(AQW 17152/11-15)

Mr McCausland: With regard to the type of hinges used in the Housing Executive's double glazing programme, their preferred option now is to use casement type hinges in their low to medium rise stock and the estimated associated savings could be as much as £500k or even higher.

Charities Act (NI) 2008

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development when charities will be required to register under the terms of the Charities Act (NI) 2008.
(AQW 17228/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Charities Bill will address a legal issue which has arisen regarding public benefit provisions within section 3 of the Charities Act (NI) 2008. This legal uncertainty has prevented the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) from initiating a local register of charities. It is expected that the Charities Bill will receive Royal Assent in early 2013.

This will enable CCNI to conduct public consultation on its draft public benefit guidance. CCNI then expects to commence the registration of charities in the autumn of 2013. The registration process will be completed on a phased basis and charities will be invited to come forward for registration by the Commission.

Universal Credit

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has identified a need for additional resources to support further advice services that can assist claimants during the transitional process to universal credit.
(AQW 17318/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department supports frontline advice services through its Community Support Programme which provides approximately £1.6 million annually to councils who add their own funding allocation, £1.9 million in 2012/13, and commission services for their local areas.

Regional support for advice is delivered by the Northern Ireland Advice Services Consortium – made up of Advice NI, Citizens Advice NI and Law Centre NI - with a funding contract from my Department of £3.5 million in place from 1 October 2012 to 31 March 2015. My officials are engaging with the Advice Services Consortium to discuss how the Department can work with the Advice Sector to best support our claimants through the implementation of Universal Credit, including any resourcing implications.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development how the £12 million boiler replacement scheme funding will be allocated over the remainder of this mandate; and how much of it has already been committed.

(AQW 17324/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The boiler replacement scheme commenced on 3rd September 2012. The £12m that has been allocated to the scheme will be spent at the rate of £4m per year for the three years to 2014/15. As at 3rd December just over £900K has been committed, however it is anticipated that the £4m allocated for this year will be spent by the year end due to the high interest in the scheme.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will consider reallocating any of the £12 million boiler replacement scheme funding to other fuel poverty initiatives, such as insulation restoration schemes in existing housing stock.

(AQW 17325/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The £12m that has been set aside by the Northern Ireland Executive for the boiler replacement scheme can only be used for replacing an inefficient boiler 15 years old or more for a more energy efficient condensing oil or gas boiler, switching from oil to gas, or switching to a wood pellet boiler. It cannot be allocated to other fuel poverty initiatives; however the Warm Homes Scheme offers a range of insulation measures to households receiving a qualifying benefit.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of applications that have been received for the boiler replacement scheme; (ii) the income ratio figures of those who have applied; and (iii) the number of applications that have been successful.

(AQW 17326/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There have been 21,000 applications issued and 8,498 received. The income ratio of applicants is 70% earn less than £20k with 30% earning between £20k and £39,999. Almost 1,200 approvals have been issued to date.

Ballymena and Antrim New Town Commission

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Social Development how the covenants, that were issued by the Ballymena and Antrim New Town Commission, on the leases for ground were selected; and whether these covenants are deemed to be in breach of the Human Rights Act because of their restrictive nature.

(AQW 17350/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The terms and conditions imposed on leases relating to New Town Land were put in place to maintain an element of control over the use of the land in order to ensure that the 'new towns' of Antrim and Ballymena developed in accordance with the New Town Commissions' plans.

With regards to the extent to which such covenants comply with the Human Rights Act, I am unable to say as all such leases pre date this legislation and the legislation cannot be applied retrospectively. I can say however that my Department has previously acted reasonably when asked to remove or relax covenants on leases and will be happy to consider doing so again, if asked.

Single Room Rate

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down will be affected by the introduction of the single room rate.

(AQW 17371/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On 1 January 2012 changes were introduced which increased the age criteria from 25 years to 34 years for single people who were limited to a single room rate (Shared Accommodation Rate) of the Local Housing Allowance. Claimants aged 25-34 in receipt of Housing Benefit before 1 January 2012 were protected from the changes until their next anniversary of their claim. Protection ends for all cases on the 31 December 2012.

The number of people affected in North Down is detailed in the table below: -

Council area	Claimants under 35yrs on SAR* at 31/10/12	Claimants aged 25-34 on SAR* at 31/10/12	Anticipated number of claimants (25-34) still to be affected by SAR* changes
North Down	198	122	19

* Shared Accommodation Rate

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Executive: North Down District

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many declarations of unfitness have been issued by the Housing Executive in the North Down District over the last twelve months; and for what reason was each declaration issued.

(AQW 17486/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has confirmed that no declarations of unfitness have been issued by their Bangor District office, which covers the North Down area, over the last twelve months.

Erne Hospital Site

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has looked at the possibility of relocating (i) Enniskillen Jobs & Benefits Office; and (ii) Enniskillen Housing Executive Office to the proposed public sector hub on the old Erne Hospital site.

(AQW 17540/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Security Agency, in conjunction with colleagues in the Department for Employment and Learning, delivers social security and employment services in the current Jobs and Benefits location at the Crown Building, Queen Elizabeth Road, Enniskillen site. The Department of Trade and Investment Trading Standards also has a separate public office facility in the building. The Crown Building is owned by the Department of Finance and Personnel and has been significantly upgraded, both by my Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel, to enable the delivery of services by a number of Departments. This investment was seen as long term and any changes at this stage could undermine the benefits realisation and value for money aspects, as detailed in the business case. The Crown Building continues to meet the Department's accommodation requirements at this time.

Nevertheless, my Department has co-operated with the requests for information from the consultants engaged by Fermanagh Council to enable them to develop proposals for the Erne Hospital Site as a possible Public Centre Hub. Should any new solution of a shared site at the proposed Erne Hospital Site demonstrate value for money, then this would have to be considered by the Department of Finance and Personnel in its role in providing public sector accommodation to NICS Departments and by my Department in its role of providing a service to the community in Enniskillen.

The Housing Executive has advised that they expressed an interest in the shared facilities at the Erne Hospital site. They have provided the consultants with all the information requested and await an indication of the costs involved. They have made it clear that an economic appraisal would be required before seeking Housing Executive Board approval but they also have to take restructuring

into consideration as well as the future of the Fermanagh District Office which they own. They remain interested but are unable to give a firm commitment at this time.

Window Replacement Schemes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development, having considered representations made to him by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive office in Downpatrick, whether he will add UPVC doors to the UPVC window replacement scheme operating in Down District between October 2012 and February 2013. **(AQW 17592/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has confirmed that the scheme currently on site in Downpatrick is a window replacement scheme and there is no scope to include replacement of doors in this current scheme. An External Cyclical Maintenance scheme is provisionally programmed for the Downpatrick area in 2014/15. Prior to the scheme commencing, a survey will be carried out and any external doors that require replacement will be included in the scheme.

Cheap Alcohol

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development whether he is aware of any proven correlation between the availability of cheap alcohol and the number of people who are sleeping on the streets. **(AQW 17594/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: It is well documented that one of the factors associated with rough sleeping is alcohol and drug addiction. However there is no available evidence of a correlation between the availability of cheap alcohol and the number of people who sleep rough on the streets.

Planned Schemes Framework PPQ2030

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development why the tender for a Planned Schemes Framework PPQ2030 only allows for large contractors to apply for maintenance contracts with the Housing Executive. **(AQW 17685/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive recently advertised its procurement exercise for the provision of a Planned Schemes Framework. This framework will replace the existing Revenue Replacement/External Maintenance Framework. The framework will be used to carry out planned maintenance to Housing Executive properties. This will include both residential and office accommodation for buildings below four storeys tall. The value of the procurement over the period of the framework is around £150m.

The framework is divided into six lots, each lot specific to a geographical area within Northern Ireland. The highest valued lot is valued at around £9.7m while the lowest is valued at around £3.9m. The forecast number of schemes that will be progressed in any given year, subject to budgetary provision, will be in the region of 130. It is also the Housing Executive's experience that of this total some 65 could be in progress at any given time.

In order to ensure that successful tenderers have the requisite capability and capacity to carry out the work the Housing Executive has set certain basic requirements within the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). These requirements are set in accordance with regulations 23, 24 and 25 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The financial element of the PQQ requires applicants to have a category value of no less than £3.4m. This is based on the fact that the Housing Executive's highest estimated valued lot is some £9.7m while the lowest is £3.9m. Based on the figure of 50% of schemes being in progress at any one time they further estimated that £4.85m and £1.95m of work in the highest and lowest lot could be in progress. In order to then obtain one category value the Housing Executive decided to obtain the average of these figures which was £3.4m.

It is clear that the setting of the Category Value was done as an objective factual exercise. The value was not set to discriminate against any part of the construction sector and the Housing Executive's procurement process is designed to be as open, fair and transparent as possible.

They aim, as a matter of course, to issue tenders that allow as many economic operators as possible to tender, irrespective of their size. The Housing Executive's Planned Schemes Framework Procurement is no different. However, they have built in the category value as a matter of best practice to ensure that only those contractors that have the capacity to carry out the work are considered.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development whether the current Warm Homes Scheme extends to topping up roofspace insulation, which was fitted under previous similar schemes.
(AQW 17715/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The current Warm Homes Scheme can include topping up roofspace insulation fitted under previous schemes where that insulation fails to meet the current building regulations.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 14 December 2012

(AQW 2077/11-15)

I replied on 28th November 2011 to AQW 2077/11-15 in which you asked at part (i) to detail the number and cost of car parking spaces provided for civil servants, broken down by each town and city; and (ii) when each allocation was last assessed to determine whether the space was essential.

In order to respond to this question my officials had to request part inputs from all departments. I have subsequently been advised by the Department of Rural Development (DARD) of errors in the input received from them.

In the original response issued to the AQ, the number and cost of car parking spaces provided for Civil Servants was as follows:-

Town/City	Number of Spaces	Total
Belfast	1,006	£997,583
Londonderry	8	£3,200
Lisburn	19	£5,180
Omagh	93	£22,912
Armagh	29	£3,999
Banbridge	30	£6,399
TOTAL	1,185	£1,039,273

Having now received a revised part input from DARD I can confirm that the number and cost of car parking spaces provided for Civil Servants is as follows:-

Town/City	Number of Spaces	Total
Belfast	1,017	£1,000,541
Antrim	2	£840
Londonderry	8	£3,200
Lisburn	19	£5,180
Omagh	93	£22,912
Armagh	29	£3,999
Banbridge	30	£6,399
TOTAL	1,198	£1,043,071

I apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

I have copied this letter to the Speaker and all MLAs. A copy has also been placed in the library.



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