

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 6 December 2013

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Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 6 December 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Children's Nurture Units and Family Support Hubs

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the location of the (i) ten family support hubs; (ii) ten social enterprise incubation hubs; and (iii) twenty new and seven existing children's nurture units contained within their announcement of 10 October 2012; and who will be taking the lead in each of these projects.

(AQW 15374/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety is taking forward the establishment of ten Family Support Hubs. These Hubs are a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations providing co-ordinated referral services for families needing early intervention services.

Two Family Support Hubs have been established in the Northern Trust area in Coleraine/Ballymoney/Moyle and Magherafelt/Cookstown and work is ongoing to bring a third Hub online in Newtownabbey. Seven Family Support Hubs are planned for the Belfast Trust area and work is ongoing to identify potential locations. The initial four Hubs will be located in North, South, East and West Belfast.

The Department for Social Development along with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment have been tasked with taking forward the development of ten Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs. An additional eleventh Hub has recently been identified for establishment under the Programme. These Hubs will tackle the lack of local employment in areas of multiple deprivation by encouraging social enterprise business start-up within local communities. The locations of the eleven Hubs are as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| ■ Belfast North | ■ Enniskillen | ■ Derry~Londonderry |
| ■ Belfast South | ■ Downpatrick | ■ Ballymena |
| ■ Belfast East | ■ Lurgan | ■ Lisburn |
| ■ Belfast West | ■ Strabane | |

The Department of Education and the Department for Social Development have been working together to establish an additional twenty Nurture Units within Primary School settings. These units will help address barriers to learning among children arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Primary Schools in which the new Nurture Units are located are as follows:

Blackmountain	Belfast
Currie	Belfast
Edenbrooke	Belfast
St Patrick's	Belfast*
Harmony	Belfast
Holy Trinity	Belfast
John Paul 11	Belfast**
St Clare's	Belfast
St Joseph's	Belfast
St Malachy's	Belfast
Taughmonagh	Belfast
Fountain	Derry/Londonderry
St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle	Derry/Londonderry
St Paul's, Slievemore	Derry/Londonderry
Tullygally	Craigavon
St Malachy's	Newry
Ballycraigy	Antrim
Hapurs Hill	Coleraine
Harryville	Ballymena
West Winds	Newtownards

*formerly Edmund Rice Primary School. Now amalgamated with Star of the Sea Primary School

**formerly St Aidan's Primary. Now amalgamated with St Bernadette's Girls' Primary School

In October 2012, the Department for Social Development was supporting seven Nurture Units through its Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund, as follows:

Rathcoole	Newtownabbey
Kilcooley	Bangor
Ballysally	Coleraine
Good Shepherd	Belfast
St Kieran's	Belfast
St Colmcille's	Downpatrick
Tullycarnet	Belfast

Following an announcement by the Education Minister, John O'Dowd, on 14 February 2013 that nurture unit provision in these seven schools would continue until at least the 2014/15 school year, the provision of financial support to four of the Nurture Units has since transferred to DE (Rathcoole, Ballysally, Good Shepherd and St Kieran's). DSD currently continues to fund the remaining three Nurture Units. Nurture Unit provision was also extended under the Education Minister's announcement

to an additional three Primary Schools, making a total of thirty Nurture Units operating in schools. The three additional Primary Schools are:

St Luke's	Belfast
St Brigid's	Derry~Londonderry
Holy Family	Derry~Londonderry

The aim under the Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes is to have interventions across all Social Investment Zones.

City of Culture: Legacy Plan

Mr Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 24074/11-15, which projects their Department intends to fund in order to continue the legacy of the City of Culture; and whether they have considered assisting with the continuation of the Venue pavilion as part of any commitment made by their Department after 2013.

(AQW 24897/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The purpose of the Venue's temporary pavilion, duration of operation and removal remains the responsibility of DSD as stated in AQW 24074/11-15. Continuance or otherwise of the Venue is not part of any commitment made by our Department. An announcement was made by the Minister for Social Development on 24 October 2013, advising that due to the lack of public sector interest in retaining the Venue, the structure would be dismantled, as planned in early January 2014.

The Council is in the process of developing the North West Regional Sports Campus in St Columb's Park which will have a capacity of 2,000 people depending on layout, and will have performance capability.

In supporting the development of the One Plan, our Department is providing support through Ilex the Urban Regeneration Company to develop out the Ebrington site to house creative industry organisations and provide an open air performance venue. In addition, Ilex will monitor and report on the economic and social impact of the City of Culture programme and events to stimulate an increase in tourism, growth in the economy of the region and deliver a lasting legacy to the city.

Together: Building a United Community: Urban Villages

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the process and criteria for identifying the four urban villages identified for action within Together: Building a United Community.

(AQW 27771/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The process and criteria for identifying the four urban villages will consider a number of options. These could include, but would by no means be limited to, community readiness; area need; geographical spread; and overall cost considerations.

We are currently considering areas that could potentially become sites for the urban villages and will make decisions and announcements on those in the near future.

Shackleton Barracks

Mr G Robinson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the potential uses for the former Shackleton Ministry of Defence base at Ballykelly.

(AQO 5012/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM is planning to carry out a 'soft market testing' exercise for the Shackleton Barracks site. Preparatory work is underway; the exercise started on 18 November and is due to be completed by the end of January.

When the exercise is completed and the level of interest is determined, a decision will be taken as to the potential suitability to go forward with development plans and to invite and assess applications for the future development of these areas of the Shackleton site.

Sale of the Former Army Barracks at Ballykelly

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps will be taken to ensure all interested parties, including adjacent landowners, local residents and community groups are kept fully informed of any potential sale of the former army barracks at Ballykelly.

(AQW 28443/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On Monday 11 November each of the MLAs from the East Londonderry constituency and Limavady councillors were sent a letter notifying them of the 'expressions of interest' process.

All parties who have expressed an interest in the Shackleton Barracks site to OFMDFM or BTW Shiells, including local farmers and residents groups, were sent details of the 'expressions of interest' process on Thursday 14 November. In addition, local residents living adjacent to the site received a hand delivered letter, also on 14 November.

Officials have, on an ongoing, basis, met with local landowners, the local council and community groups to inform them of the position in relation to the site and to listen to their views. It would be our intention to continue with this dialogue as we move forward.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given that £41.5m of the funding allocated for the Social Investment Fund has been returned to the centre, whether the Fund still has a budget of £80m.

(AQW 28470/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Whilst funding has been re-profiled, £80 million remains ring fenced for the Social Investment Fund and delivery of strategic area plans.

Record of Victims and Survivors

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they aim to achieve a full record of victims and survivors and a comprehensive audit of their needs.

(AQW 28636/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our aim is to provide the best service possible to victims and survivors. To help achieve that aim there must be a way to assess how effective the assistance is and how well the system is working. The monitoring and evaluation system is currently being reviewed to ensure that it meets the requirements necessary to achieve this goal.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Attwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the necessity for the allocation of Social Investment Fund monies to be governed, in law and in practice, by the principle of need.

(AQO 5103/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have now agreed the allocations for the nine Social Investment Fund Zones. In coming to this decision we considered both the scale of need and identification of need in each zone, under the objectives of the Fund using the original set of criteria below as a guide:

- Areas within the top 10% most deprived Super Output Areas on the multiple Deprivation Measure 2010.

- Areas within the top 20% most deprived Super Output Areas on the key domains of income, employment, education and health.
- Areas which can provide independently verified and robust evidence of objective need linked to the 4 strategic objectives of SIF.

The approach we have set out will focus the funds we have available to meet the objectives of this Programme and clearly target the major areas of deprivation that exist in each of the zones, as well as ensuring that funding is disbursed across all areas of deprivation, regardless of scale and not just those with concentrated urban problems. This approach means that we will tackle deprivation in the areas of high and durable need but also allows us to reach into smaller, less publicised areas of smaller numerical significance but of equal importance to the people who live there.

Steering Groups have now been informed of allocation decisions.

Minority Ethnic Development Fund

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a timetable for the implementation and delivery of the proposed crisis fund element of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund.

(AQW 28714/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Options are currently being considered with a view to having the crisis fund up and running in the 2014-15 financial year.

Victims and Survivors

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to victims and survivors, for their assessment of the importance of truth and justice in bringing a sense of closure for each person involved.

(AQO 5107/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is important that all Victims and Survivors feel that their need for truth and justice surrounding past events are being met and we all have a role in ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to help them find closure.

We look forward to the outcome of the current work of the Panel of Parties.

Over the coming months a working group, drawn from the Victims and Survivors Forum, will discuss their shared experience of dealing with and acknowledging the past. The group will also look at ways of building for the future and have already liaised with people who work directly and indirectly with victims to address complex issues. The group will ultimately provide the Commission for Victims and Survivors with an advice paper on its findings.

The process to gain closure will be different for each person but our overarching aim is to help everyone achieve this and move forward to a positive future.

Good Relations Fund: North Belfast

Mr G Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on Good Relations funding for North Belfast.

(AQO 5111/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In this financial year 2013-14, £770,000 has been allocated through the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations programme to twelve contract holders for the delivery of a range of Good Relations programmes across North Belfast.

The aim of the programme is to tackle issues that hinder the development of good community relations across adjoining interfaces. The programme is based on three core themes: citizenship, leadership and good relations. Programme delivery is through clusters of organisations and partnerships but with sufficient flexibility to take account of the needs of individual areas within the community.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Development Programme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the areas open for funding grants from applicants for farm diversification under the current Rural Development Programme.
(AQW 28393/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): I interpret your question to relate to currently open calls for applications under measure 3.1. At this point in time no calls are open.

Observatree Initiative

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether Forest Service will work in partnership with the Woodland Trust in support of the 'Observatree' initiative.
(AQW 28406/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is committed to tackling tree disease through a collaborative approach with a wide range of interests including the general public, farmers, landowners, environmental organisations and the industry in identifying and reporting possible tree disease symptoms.

The ObservaTREE partnership includes British government bodies (Fera, Forestry Commission) the Woodland Trust and National Trust and aims to develop a Britain and north of Ireland integrated tree health warning system as a web based tree reporting tool. This is a welcome initiative and, as my priority is to address tree and plant health issues on an all-Ireland basis, DARD officials will continue to work co-operatively with the Woodland Trust and other partners, and with colleagues in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, to explore a range of web based tree health reporting mechanisms which have application on an all-Ireland basis.

Advice and Support for Farmers in Advance of Extreme Weather

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what advice and support she is offering farmers in advance of any extreme weather.
(AQW 28407/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The extremes of weather experienced over the last two years and the extended period of unfavourable growing and grazing weather last spring caused considerable difficulties for our farmers.

In order to address any potential difficulties facing livestock farmers in the forthcoming winter I established the Fodder Taskforce. This Taskforce, made up of representatives of farmers and associated industries along with DARD and AFBI, identified a wide range of issues and produced an action plan to mitigate their effects. A major concern of the industry was the availability and quality of fodder available. CAFRE and AFBI launched a comprehensive programme of training, open days, technical bulletins and press articles to help farmers ensure that they would have sufficient fodder for the winter period. The support focussed on grassland management, forage assessment, feeding efficiency and budgeting. Along with the improvement in weather over the summer, fodder stocks on most farms have recovered to levels which are in balance with projected requirements with some showing a surplus, and our assessment is that farmers are now well prepared for the winter.

There are a number of other steps farmers can take in preparation for extreme winter weather. Many of these steps are normal management practice for the vast majority of farmers but I am encouraging all farmers to reassess them now before the winter sets in. I welcome the NI Water "Beat the Freeze Campaign" and the specific advice for farmers on the NI Water website. I fully endorse their advice on preventing problems from occurring or minimising their impact if they do happen.

Farmers should also keep a close check on weather forecasts and make appropriate adjustments where severe weather is expected. Measures such as moving stock to less exposed fields and securing vulnerable buildings are basic steps that would help lessen the effects of severe weather. Farmers are also advised to check and consider the insurance cover they have for livestock and farm buildings.

CAFRE will reinforce advice to farmers on preparing for winter in the coming weeks through press articles and face to face contact.

Consumers: Local Produce

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what work her Department is doing to encourage consumers to buy local produce.

(AQW 28408/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's Regional Food Programme enables organisations to promote quality local products produced by our farmers and processors. This allows them to send out a strong message to consumers that local food is good quality and wholesome. The 2013/14 programme offered a total of £230k supporting a variety of sectors throughout the North.

Financial support is provided in the following four key areas – regional fairs and shows, information programmes, award ceremonies, seminars and workshops.

My Department also administers the EU's Protected Food Name Scheme on behalf of applicants. This provides a system for the protection of food names on a geographical or traditional basis and can be used as a valuable promotional tool to take advantage of increased consumer interest in regional food. The quality mark symbol increases consumer awareness of the product provenance. To date three local products have achieved this status and work is on-going to attract more products to this scheme.

The Agri-Food Strategy Board identified high quality traceability systems as a major marketing tool for local produce on export markets. My Department's Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) system for recording cattle movements, disease and post mortem data provides consumers with assurance of the integrity of locally produced products through extensive traceability controls

My Department also works closely with Invest NI, which has the lead responsibility for marketing our food to export markets, through a range of supply chain and market intelligence initiatives to support local producers.

Equality Impact Assessments and Consultations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has spent on Equality Impact Assessments and consultations over the last three years.

(AQW 28493/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Section 75 statutory duties make equality and good relations central to the whole range of public policy decision-making. Therefore the cost of carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and consultations are not maintained separately and cannot readily be disaggregated.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what provision is made within her departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28512/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are arrangements in place throughout the buildings occupied by my Department to treat visitors with courtesy and respect and provide assistance to those who may have specific requirements. Visitors with specific needs, such as autism, can notify staff of any additional help or support they may require, either in advance or on arrival, and every effort will be made to ensure that this is provided.

Staff involved in Reception/Customer service duties have been trained to deal with disability issues and my Department has also contributed to the development of the cross Departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan, which contains proposals for autism awareness training for frontline staff in the NICS.

Single Farm Payment: Felling of Trees

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the steps being taken to encourage farmers to preserve trees on their land in response to the incentive which exists for farmers to enhance their single farm payment by felling trees and increasing the amount of grazable land; and (ii) what action can be taken to encourage farmers to fence off rivers from grazing cattle, as this could lead to a reduction in their single farm payments.

(AQW 28524/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) My Department does not offer an incentive to farmers to enhance their Single Farm Payment (SFP) by felling trees. Trees are an important landscape feature and are protected by the Department's Cross-Compliance requirements. All farmers claiming direct payments such as SFP must meet the cross-compliance requirements, which protect hedgerow trees and broadleaf woodland in semi-natural habitats by limiting their removal and destruction. For example, a farmer must not cut hedgerow trees inside the hedge cutting closed period (1 March to 31 August) and if hedgerow trees are removed on rotation for timber, young saplings must be left to grow as replacements. A breach of these requirements may result in a penalty being applied to the farmer's SFP and any other area-based subsidy claims made in that year. There are exceptions to these requirements which allows for tree cutting where health and safety is an issue, for example at a roadside, unless a Tree Preservation Order is in place. Trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order must not be damaged.
- (ii) DARD encourages farmers to fence off rivers from grazing cattle through the delivery of Agri-environment (AE) Schemes. These are voluntary schemes which offer funding in return for positive habitat management such as riparian zones, which are the marginal areas along a waterway. These may be planted with native trees and when managed appropriately on farmland, riparian zones can act as a buffer, reducing pollution of water bodies by fertilisers and pesticides. Currently there are approximately 200 hectares of land under riparian zone management in Agri-environment Schemes.

DARD's rules on land eligibility for SFP do not include permanently fenced narrow strips (less than 0.1ha) along a riparian zone. However, if the fenced strip of grassland is greater than 0.1 ha in size and clear evidence exists of active management through 'eligible agricultural activity' for the full calendar year, it may still qualify for SFP. Agricultural activity is defined as the production, rearing or growing of agricultural products including harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animals for farming purposes, or maintaining the land in good agricultural and environmental condition.

There is also an exception to the SFP eligibility rules, where land that was eligible and on which SFP was paid in the 2008 scheme year, may be planted in trees under an EU Agri-environment Scheme or an EU Forestry Scheme after 2008 remain and still eligible for SFP.

Bovine Animals: Changes in Ownership

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the average number of times a bovine animal changes ownership.

(AQW 28541/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) does not record who owns a bovine animal. It does record who is the keeper of a bovine animal and in the vast majority of cases the keeper of a bovine animal is also likely to be the owner. APHIS records the movement history between keepers of individually identified cattle.

My Department has calculated that the number of changes of keepership over the average lifetime of a bovine animal is 2.3.

Lough Neagh Working Group

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the report produced by the Lough Neagh Working Group.

(AQW 28618/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In December last year, I shared the Inter-Departmental Working Group report with Ministerial colleagues whose officials had contributed to the report through membership of the Working Group.

Since then, the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure has been considering the value of additional research to complement the findings in the report. I intend to meet Minister Ní Chuilín shortly to discuss the findings of this work and how they might add value to the Inter Departmental Working Group Report. I will then assess next steps, including putting recommendations to the Executive as soon as possible, probably in the early part of next year.

Lough Neagh Working Group

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any additional consultancy work is being carried out following the production of the report by the Lough Neagh Working Group to further consider the issue of future ownership; and if so, to detail the (i) rationale; (ii) cost; (iii) who is carrying out this additional work; and (iv) when work will conclude.

(AQW 28619/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In December last year I shared the Inter-Departmental Working Group report with Ministerial colleagues and since then the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure has been considering the value of additional research commissioned by her Department to complement the findings in the report. (There has been no further consultancy work commissioned by my Department)

I intend to meet Minister Ní Chuilín shortly to discuss the findings of this work and how they might add value to the Inter Departmental Working Group Report. I will then assess next steps, including putting recommendations to the Executive as soon as possible probably in the early part of next year.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Closure of Exploris

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, following the decision by Ards Borough Council to defer the closure of Exploris for two months, to outline her Department's plans to assist in securing the facilities.

(AQW 26534/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): I recognise that Exploris is an important tourism, educational and environmental resource Centre.

While my Department has no remit for aquariums or the marine I have asked the Council for a copy of its business plan on the future management and funding of Exploris.

I hope that a sustainable future can be secured for the Centre.

Lough Neagh Working Group

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the findings of the Lough Neagh Working Group; (ii) when she received the findings; and (ii) what action has been taken in relation to these findings.

(AQW 27885/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL was a member of the Interdepartmental Lough Neagh Working Group led by DARD and contributed to the fact finding and analysis undertaken by group members.

A draft report was received on 11 December 2012.

DCAL Officials will shortly meet with the DARD Minister to take matters forward.

Kevin Lynch Hurling Club, Dungiven

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the grants, or other assistance, that have been offered to the Kevin Lynch Hurling Club, Dungiven in the last two years.

(AQW 27890/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has not offered any grants or other assistance to Kevin Lynch Hurling Club in the last two years.

Equality Impact Assessments and Consultations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent on Equality Impact Assessments and consultations over the last three years.

(AQW 28495/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have provided at Annex A the details of spend on Equality Impact Assessments and consultations over the last three years.

In relation to the cost of each consultation it is not possible to disaggregate staff costs from the overall policy development process.

ANNEX A

DCAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS & CONSULTATIONS APRIL 2010 TO DATE

Date of consultation (i.e. month)	Name of consultation	Cost
June 2010	Museums Policy for Northern Ireland	£1209.62
June 2010	DCAL Disability Action Plan 2010-2013	£1612.98
December 2010	DCAL Draft Budget Consultation 2011-2015	Nil
January 2011	Cultural Awareness Strategy	£1970
February 2011	Revised Equality Scheme	£1636.84
May 2012	Salmon Conservation Measures in DCAL Jurisdiction.	£1,143.40
July 2012	Draft Strategy for Protecting and Enhancing the Development of the Irish Language	£18,910
July 2012	Draft Strategy for Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture	£1,694
November 2012	Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) – Ulster Scots Academy development and research strategy and associated grant scheme	£1,595
August 2013	Consultation on DCAL Draft Disability Action Plan 2013-15 & Five year Review	£1840.08
Aug/Sept 2013	Salmon Conservation Regulations Consultation	£1,931.53

Commercial Fishing in Lough Neagh and the River Bann

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether an assessment has been carried out to ascertain whether commercial fishing in Lough Neagh and the River Bann has had a detrimental impact on fish stock.

(AQW 28521/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The long term sustainability of the Lough Neagh fishery is a key priority for my Department and to that end I have commissioned the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to undertake research throughout the catchment. AFBI's work provides an important scientific basis to my Department's role in the conservation and protection of the fishery and will inform the development of the Lough Neagh Fishery Management Plan.

Conservation measures are in place in respect of eels and further measures are proposed in respect of salmon.

There is currently no scientific evidence on other fish stocks that would confirm that any factors, including commercial fishing, are having a detrimental effect on stocks.

AFBI is currently carrying out a research project on Lough Neagh that will provide information on the location and population levels of all fish species in the Lough. AFBI is also undertaking genetic studies on brown trout stocks in the Lough Neagh catchment. These reports will be completed by the end of this year.

In addition, AFBI is undertaking important research on stock status of salmon and brown trout across the DCAL area, which includes the Lough Neagh catchment.

The habitat in and around Lough Neagh is important and DCAL is undertaking habitat survey work on the tributaries flowing into Lough Neagh. This will identify areas where poor habitat is limiting fish stock levels and where further remedial work is required. DCAL officials will meet with stakeholders in considering how best to progress this work.

With the exception of the eel weirs at Toome and Portna, commercial fishing is not permitted in the River Bann.

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of staff employed by Foras na Gaeilge, broken down by religion.

(AQW 28566/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The total number of staff employed by Foras na Gaeilge is 57 of which 8 are based in the North.

There is no legal requirement to monitor the religion of the 49 staff working in the South.

There are only 8 staff based in the North and as this is less than 10 staff it would not be appropriate to provide a breakdown by religion in this case.

Ministerial Advisory Group: Ulster-Scots Academy

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the linguistic qualifications of the people advising the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Ulster-Scots Academy.

(AQW 28584/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) – Ulster Scots Academy has appointed a panel of expert language advisors on 1 November 2013 following a public appointment process. This panel, called the Advisory Panel on Ulster-Scots Orthography, will assist the (MAG) – Ulster Scots Academy and DCAL by advising on the next steps of the implementation and development of an orthography for Ulster-Scots, considering the responses to the Ulster-Scots "Spelling and Pronunciation Guide"

and “Word Glossary”, collaborating with key stakeholders in the development of knowledge and skills concerning Ulster-Scots orthography and helping to give effect to Ulster-Scots policy objectives in the public interest.

Applicants were required to meet the following criteria;

Essential Criteria

- The applicant must be professionally qualified in a relevant discipline or have made an outstanding contribution to research or practice in one or more of the required subject areas. The subject areas are linguistics, orthography, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicology and editorial expertise.
- Demonstrable interests in orthography including;
 - Practical interests/experience in issues of orthography such as devising or drawing up an orthography for a language and/or editorial work on dictionaries;

OR

- Theoretical interests in issues of orthography such as a linguistic background of orthographic systems, an interest in phonology, morphology, syntax and/or an interest in lexicology.
- Evidence of working in the arena of publications, including evidence of publications in relevant areas of lexicography, dialectology and linguistics.

Desirable Criteria

- Evidence of academic contributions, including publications, conference contributions and editorial work relating to Ulster Scots.

The selection panel recommended the appointment of three members to the Advisory Panel on Ulster-Scots Orthography based on a structured assessment against the selection criteria. However as the selection criteria did not require applicants to list their formal linguistic qualifications, DCAL does not hold complete lists of this information for the successful applicants.

North South Language Body

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the discussions she has held with her counterpart in the Republic of Ireland in relation to the publication of the accounts of the North South Language body within one year from when they are agreed.

(AQW 28585/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The North South Language Body is made up of the Ulster Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge. It is a statutory requirement that the annual reports and accounts of both the Ulster Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge are consolidated and published together as the North South Language Body annual reports and accounts.

As the original accounts for 2000 were not signed off and laid in the respective Houses until 2005, this created a backlog in clearing and approving the subsequent annual accounts, as both the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Comptroller and Auditor General will only audit accounts in chronological order.

At each NSMC language meeting, Ministers have emphasised the need to clear the outstanding accounts as soon as practicable and have instructed both Agencies to make this one of their strategic priorities. This was reiterated by Ministers at the NSMC Language Body meetings held on 6 March, 19 June and 20 November 2013.

To date the accounts for the Language Body have been laid and published up to 2010. It is anticipated that the 2011 accounts will be laid by the end of 2013 and the 2012 accounts will be laid by Spring 2014. From then on, the Language Body will be up to date and in a position to meet its annual statutory requirement. NSMC Ministers will continue to monitor the situation at each meeting.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism; and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28631/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All visitors to DCAL offices are treated with courtesy and respect by staff. Where possible, visitor details are notified to building reception staff in advance of their arrival. For visitors with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum conditions, every effort is made to ensure help and support is provided to them during their visit. DCAL staff especially those who are responsible for front-line services are encouraged to avail of Disability Awareness training, which includes information on autism.

Sports Studies at University Level: Coaching Courses

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding opportunities that are available to students studying Sports related subjects at university level that need to complete coaching courses in areas such as athletics, gymnastics, swimming and games.

(AQW 28677/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for third level education, including funding opportunities, rests with the Department of Employment and Learning.

However, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has advised that a number of district councils offer grant assistance to individuals or local clubs to support the completion of coach education courses. Therefore, any student wishing to complete a coach education course may wish to contact their local councils' Sports Development Unit for further information on what grant assistance that may be available to them.

City of Culture 2013: Legacy Plan

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the consultations that have been held, and with whom, in advance of the announcement of the three year legacy plan for Londonderry following the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 28717/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have been working closely with stakeholders in the North West to prepare outline plans which I announced on 20th November.

My officials will continue to work with these stakeholders as these plans are finalised.

City of Culture 2013: Legacy Plan

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the estimated salary and other overhead costs associated with the company she announced would take forward the three year legacy plan for Londonderry following the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 28718/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials are currently preparing detailed plans and costings for the establishment of the City of Culture Legacy body and DCAL North West Office during this financial year. Further details will be released in due course.

Strategic Review of Angling

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the outcomes of the strategic review of angling.

(AQW 28785/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A strategic review of angling has been taken forward by Sport NI and advised by a Steering Group comprising the Loughs Agency, NITB, DCAL, Ulster Angling Federation, Irish Federation of Sea Anglers Ulster Provincial Council and the Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation.

The review provides information on the scale and characteristics of angling and the potential that exists to promote the development of the sport, to contribute to the economy through angling tourism and to promote equality, tackle poverty and social exclusion.

The review looks at the current challenges and opportunities and the role that the various Departments, agencies and angling interests can play in realising these benefits.

I welcome the completion of the review and the Steering Group's work in informing the development of a new angling strategy for the North of Ireland.

It is proposed that the review will be published in early 2014.

Department: Language Diversity Unit

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many fluent Irish speakers are employed in her Department's Language Diversity Unit.
(AQW 28929/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Within Languages and Waterways Ireland Branch there are two fluent Irish speakers who work on the DCAL Líofa Campaign.

Department of Education

New School Building for St Columbanus' College, Bangor

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education for an update on the timescale and issues inhibiting the delivery of a new school building for St Columbanus' College, Bangor.
(AQW 27816/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): No timescale has been set for the delivery of a new school building for St Columbanus' College, Bangor. My officials have been in liaison with the Trustees, CCMS and representatives from the school to discuss the current accommodation needs at the school. Full clarity is required on the final pattern of Maintained provision for the Bangor and Ards Peninsula area, including how St Columbanus' College would contribute to a pattern of viable and sustainable education provision in the area going forward, before any decision on a new build could be made.

I will continue to examine the case for capital investment across the estate and, subject to the structure of maintained provision in the area being clear, any proposal for St Columbanus will be considered alongside other priorities as part of any future capital announcement.

Education Bill: School Ethos

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how the Education Bill will make it easier for a school to transform its ethos.[R]
(AQW 27878/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The ethos of a school is not something that is prescribed in law. However, in developing the Education Bill, the representatives of many schools expressed a strong desire to reflect the ethos of their schools formally in the governance and employment arrangements. The Education Bill will provide a means to do so in the form of Schemes of Management and Employment Schemes. These will be prepared by schools, and submitted to the Education and Skills Authority for approval. A school wishing to change its ethos is free to do so at any time, and can have this recognised formally by submitting revised schemes.

Flu: Standardised Vaccinations for Teachers

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education, in the event of a flu pandemic, (i) what provisions are in place to help school teachers avoid the flu; (ii) what consideration has been given to providing standardised vaccinations for teachers to mitigate the disproportionate cost of providing substitute staff to cover periods of illness, and the resultant disruption to pupils; and (iii) what level of consultation he has had with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding these issues.

(AQW 28197/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has no specific role in the avoidance of illness (including pandemic or seasonal flu) for teachers as a group. These are considerations for the employing authorities, i.e. the Education and Library Boards and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. These organisations are represented on the Flu Vaccine Co-ordinating Group, which meets annually.

In the event of a flu pandemic, the department would work closely with colleagues in DHSSPS to ensure any and all measures are put in place subject to advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance.

Football Pitches Owned by the Department: Bloomfield Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to outline any plans he has for the football pitches, owned by the Department, on the Bloomfield Road, Bangor.

(AQW 28425/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The football pitches on the Bloomfield Road, Bangor are the responsibility of the South Eastern Education and Library Board. At present the SEELB lease the pitches to North Down Borough Council. This lease has recently expired and the Council has asked the Board to enter into a new 5 year lease. The SEELB is currently progressing this request, with the terms being set by Land and Property Services.

Educational Needs in the Kilcooley Housing Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to address educational needs in the Kilcooley Housing Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 28430/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since coming to office I have continued to implement policies to raise standards and tackle underachievement. These policies are realising improvements at Key Stage 2, GCSE and A Level. However, we still have room for improvement, in particular to close the gap in achievement that exists between our most and least disadvantaged young people.

Alongside the implementation of these policies, additional funding is being made available to specific programmes to target educational underachievement in areas of social deprivation such as the Kilcooley housing estate.

These programmes include the Delivering Social Change (DSC) literacy and numeracy project to employ additional teachers, a community education initiatives programme and a literacy and numeracy Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Key stage 2/3 project. Kilcooley Primary School (PS) is entitled to an additional 0.2 of a full-time equivalent teacher under the DE expansion of the DSC literacy and numeracy and all the non-selective post-primary schools in the North Down area are entitled to additional teaching support through the DSC project. The SEELB Curriculum and Advisory Support Service (CASS) works with Kilcooley PS to support the development, implementation and evaluation of the school's post-inspection action plan including support for numeracy linked to the DSC project.

Kilcooley PS currently qualifies for the funding through the Department's Extended Schools programme and has been allocated funding totalling £23,237 in 2013/14.

The SEELB's Education Welfare Service (EWS), which has a satellite office based in Kilcooley PS, will continue to provide a support service to children, families and schools in Kilcooley and across North

Down. This includes working with local schools to improve levels of attendance. In addition, the SEELB Youth Service works with a range of youth providers in the area to provide educational services for the young people.

Kilcooley PS also provides a nurture room to support a child's social, emotional and behavioural development and to help the child become more receptive to learning and be reintegrated with their mainstream class. DSD currently funds this resource however this funding is due to end in March 2015. DE has committed to sustain the nurture provision to June 2015 to enable Kilcooley and other primary schools with established nurture units to be involved in research which will inform DE's future policy position on this form of intervention.

A SEELB CASS officer works with the local community on Neighbourhood Renewal projects. Recent projects in Kilcooley PS include the provision of additional IT equipment for the school and the provision of additional support to pupils transferring from the primary school into Year 8 at local post-primary schools.

Parents have an important role to play in supporting their child's education. I launched the Education Works campaign in September 2012. The campaign is intended to impact upon attitudes within the home by providing parents with consistent, authoritative information on the importance of education and the steps they can take to support their child in achieving good educational outcomes. Year 2 of the campaign launched on 1 October continues the focus of Year 1 on children in Early Years, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with a widening of the target audience to those with an influence on parents, for example grandparent, the wider family circle and those with influence in local communities.

As regards area planning for primary schools, the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) draft Area Plan for Primary Schools (March 2013) states that a local area solution is to be explored for Kilcooley PS and that a number of issues in the school and/or local area have been identified and need to be addressed.

- Pattern of increasing enrolment
- Number of unfilled places in the local area

The SEELB published a Development Proposal (DP) on 12 September 2013 proposing the decrease of Kilcooley Primary School's approved enrolment number from 567 to 205 and admissions number from 81 to 29 pupils with effect from 31 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter. The consultation period for the DP ended on 12 November 2013. Officials are currently considering the proposal.

Common Funding Formula: Revision

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in the light of the concern over the proposals for the revision of the Common Funding Formula, whether he will consult on any revised proposals.

(AQW 28478/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The consultation exercise on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme which ran for nearly four months ended on 25 October 2013 and received almost 15,000 responses.

A full analysis of all responses is currently underway and until this process has been completed I will not be making any decisions on the way forward.

3G Sports Facility at Towerview Primary School, Bangor

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education what support his Department will provide towards a proposed new 3G sports facility at Towerview Primary School, Bangor.

(AQW 28551/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As Towerview Primary School is a controlled primary school in Bangor, the South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB) is responsible for capital works at the school. There is no provision in the Department of Education (DE) Building Handbook for any pitches (including 3G pitches) at primary schools. The school is, however, welcome to make a minor works application to the SEELB for a 3G sports facility.

I understand that the minor works application process is currently open for 2014/15, with a closing date for applications of 13 December 2013. The SEELB has advised that all applications received by the closing date will be assessed and prioritised using the published criteria in the 'General Guidelines on Applications for Minor Capital Projects' document.

Common Funding Formula

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education how changing the Common Funding Formula will improve overall educational outcomes.

(AQW 28589/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since coming to office I have continued to implement policies to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement. These policies are realising improvements for all our young people as evidenced by improved outcomes at Key Stage 2, GCSE and A Level. However, despite these improvements, there still remains too large a gap in performance between pupils from socially disadvantaged areas and those from more affluent areas. We need to tackle this inequality.

Local and international studies show that socio-economic background is the single greatest determining factor on a child's educational outcome. Our GCSE outcomes show that pupils entitled to free school meals are twice as likely to leave school not having achieved at least five GCSEs A*-C (inc equivalents) including GCSEs in English and mathematics.

The PAC report on Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools stated that the large gap in attainment between pupils who receive Free School Meals and those who don't cannot continue. As a result, they strongly recommended that DE undertake a full review of the current Common Funding Scheme (CFS). I couldn't agree more which is why I commissioned an independent review of the CFS in June 2012, the findings of which I received in a report in January 2013.

The review of the CFS is designed to tackle this inequality and to ensure that the pupils who stand to benefit most from education receive the support they need. My proposed change to direct additional funding towards targeting social need is fully supportive of the Programme for Government's target to focus on growing the economy and tackling disadvantage.

It should be remembered that investment in schools is on the way up rather than on the way down. The aggregated schools' budget is set to increase by £15.8m next year, and I have already announced my intention to inject an additional £30m into it over the next two years, targeted at social deprivation.

City of Culture 2013: Tenders and Funding

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) tenders awarded; and (ii) funding provided to organisations in Derry to deliver the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 28673/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not awarded any tenders or provided any funding to organisations in Derry to deliver the City of Culture 2013.

Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: University Open Days Outside Northern Ireland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education whether any grants are available for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend university open days outside Northern Ireland.

(AQW 28684/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not make grants available to pupils to attend university open days outside or inside the north of Ireland. Under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, every grant-aided school receives a fully delegated budget. It is for the Board of Governors of each school to determine expenditure priorities incurred in the delivery of the curriculum for all pupils enrolled in their school.

Free Pre-School Funded Places in South Antrim

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education how many free pre-school funded places there are in South Antrim.

(AQW 28710/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the 2011-15 Programme for Government my Department is committed to ensuring that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

For admission to pre-school in September 2013, 99.8% of children, whose parents engaged with the pre-school admissions process to the end, obtained a funded pre-school place. This included all of the parents in the South Antrim constituency .

In the 2013/14 school year there are 1198 funded pre-school places in the South Antrim constituency, broken down as follows:

Statutory nursery school / nursery unit	(full time)	260
Statutory nursery school / nursery unit	(part time)	468
Voluntary / Private Pre-School Settings		470

There are still a number of places available in voluntary/private settings if additional children in their final pre-school year apply.

Officials will continue to work with colleagues in the North Eastern Education and Library Board to maintain sufficient provision in the area.

Education and Library Board: Failure to Send Children to School

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many cases of parents or guardians failing to send children to school in the 2012/13 academic year were prosecuted in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 28720/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that the number of cases of parents or guardians failing to send children to school in the 2012/13 academic year that were prosecuted in each ELB is as set out below.

ELB	Number of Prosecutions
Belfast ELB	*
Western ELB	33
North-Eastern ELB	68
South-Eastern ELB	*
Southern ELB	67

* denotes fewer than 5 cases, figure suppressed to avoid possible identification of individuals

Youth Club and After School Club Activities: Spend

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's spend on (i) youth club; and (ii) after school club activities in (a) Kilrea; and (b) Garvagh, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28741/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: During the last three years the Department of Education, via the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), has supported one controlled youth club and five voluntary youth clubs in Garvagh and two voluntary youth clubs in Kilrea.

In 2011/2012 NEELB allocated a total of £1,380 to youth clubs in Kilrea and £20,700 to youth clubs in Garvagh. In 2012/2013 the total figure for Kilrea was £3,292 and for Garvagh was £20,365. So far in 2013/2014 £1,080 and £4,463 has been provided to clubs in Kilrea and Garvagh respectively.

DE does not have responsibility for funding after school activities which operate outside the Extended Schools (ES) programme. Information is therefore only held on after school activities which are funded through the ES programme.

Schools qualify for ES funding if they have 51% or more pupils drawn from an area of social disadvantage or 37% or more of pupils with a Free School Meal Entitlement. During the past 3 years no school located in either the Kilrea or Garvagh Ward areas have met the ES eligibility criteria.

Funding for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education whether he is considering ring fencing funding for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in schools.

(AQW 28753/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I consider high quality, timely Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to be essential for all our young people, particularly in the fast changing world in which we live and work.

That is why it is part of the statutory curriculum, with an explicit minimum content at Key Stage 3 and 4. That is why I welcome both the planned review of my department's joint strategy with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) "Preparing for Success", and the DEL Committee's Inquiry on the structure and effectiveness of CEIAG here.

Under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, every grant-aided school receives a fully delegated budget. It is for the Board of Governors of each school to determine expenditure priorities, including staffing and other day-to-day running costs, incurred in the delivery of the curriculum for all pupils enrolled in their school. Ring fenced funding is time bound and, in the challenging context of restricted budgets, not necessarily realistic. This is the context in which future resources must be considered and this will be done as part of the Preparing for Success review process.

Teaching about the Holocaust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what plans there are to increase teaching about the Holocaust.

(AQW 28776/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has no plans to increase teaching about the Holocaust. There are opportunities for schools to explore the Holocaust and related issues through a number of Areas of Learning within the revised curriculum.

The revised curriculum provides teachers with greater flexibility over how they deliver the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. The minimum content to be taught in each Area of Learning is set out in legislation. In line with the flexibility provided by the revised curriculum, the specifics of what is taught, and how it is taught under each Area of Learning, is a matter for each teacher and school.

Shared Education Funding

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail the level of Shared Education funding in (i) 2009; (ii) 2010; (iii) 2011; (iv) 2012; and (v) 2013; and to list the recipient organisations. [R]

(AQW 28806/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Recent surveys indicate that over 70 % of respondents reported that they had been involved in shared education with another school during the last academic year. Survey results indicate that this work has been funded through department funding streams (such as CRED and Entitlement Framework funding), external funding sources or from within their own school budget.

In addition, the Extended School policy encourages schools to partner or cluster with one or more other schools for the delivery of extended services.

Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 27877/11-15, whether he intends to update the Department's Transformation – An Information Pack for Schools document. [R]
(AQW 28807/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current version of the "Transformation- An Information Pack for Schools" document continues to provide accurate and relevant information and advice, and sets out the necessary procedures and requirements for schools to achieve successful transformation to integrated status.

The Department is keen to ensure that the information provided, in terms of details of the integrated schools, reflects the current position and I have asked the appropriate Team within my Department to ensure that the details are fully up-to-date.

People Charged and Convicted of Serious Sexual Offences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what steps his Department can take to help ensure that people charged and convicted of serious sexual offences are not housed in close proximity to schools.
(AQW 28817/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The management of the risk to children and young people presented by a person convicted of a serious sexual offence is dealt with under the Public Protection Arrangements for NI (PPANI). I am advised that risk management plans are individually tailored to address the specific risks identified on a case by case basis. All relevant factors, including location, are taken into consideration in the approval of suitable accommodation. Where it is assessed that the accommodation best suited to managing the risk presented by an individual happens to be in the vicinity of a school, the school authorities are advised by the local Public Protection Unit and given advice on how pupils, parents and staff might be informed about keeping safe.

After-Schools Clubs

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education what funding is available for after-schools clubs.
(AQW 28858/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department (DE) does not have responsibility for funding after school clubs which operate outside the Extended Schools (ES) programme.

The ES programme provides additional funding, £12m in 2013/14, for those schools serving the most disadvantaged areas to provide for a wide range of services and activities outside of the normal school day. Where assessed as needed by schools, this may include after school clubs.

School Ethos Transformation

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education how the Education Bill will facilitate school transformation from one ethos type to another.
(AQW 28874/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 27878/11-15 tabled by Steven Agnew and published in the Official Report on 2 December 2013.

Holocaust Educational Trust

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether he received any requests to meet with the Holocaust Educational Trust; and if so, to provide further details.

(AQW 28928/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have not received any direct requests to meet with the Holocaust Education Trust (HET).

In January 2013, Sammy Wilson MP MLA asked me to consider a funding request for the "Lessons from Auschwitz" Project, and at that time suggested a meeting with the Holocaust Educational Trust's Head of Public Affairs. My reply to him explained that the Department of Education no longer receives an allocation from the Treasury to fund participation in the project by schools in the north of Ireland. In view of the lack of funding for the project I did not consider it appropriate to engage in a meeting with the Trust.

The curriculum in place in all schools in the north of Ireland provides opportunities to explore the Holocaust and related issues. In line with the flexibility provided by the revised curriculum, it is a matter for individual schools to decide on their involvement with outside organisations, such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, to assist in their delivery of the curriculum.

Schools: Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what funding is provided to schools for careers education information, advice and guidance.

(AQW 28938/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, the Board of Governors of every school receives a delegated budget to enable them to deliver all aspects of the curriculum including careers provision. It is a matter for each school to determine how best to utilise their delegated funding in delivering their statutory requirements, which includes careers. Careers teachers also work in partnership with the Department for Employment and Learning's careers advisers to offer advice to young people.

In addition to funding under LMS, the Department provides funding to the Education & Library Boards for specific programmes that are a priority for the economy such as the STEM Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programme. The focus of this programme is to promote and raise pupils' awareness and aspirations in STEM-related careers through focused projects, activities and resources, capacity development, and embedding STEM CEIAG within the school curriculum.

Boards of Governors

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when the re-constituted Boards of Governors will be brought into operation.

(AQW 28967/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I expect the reconstituted Boards of Governors to be in operation in the 2014/15 school year.

Mentoring or Coaching of New Head Teachers

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education what opportunities exist for the mentoring or coaching of new head teachers by current head teachers, or those who have recently retired.

(AQW 28980/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As a key element of Every School a Good School, the Regional Training Unit (RTU) has revised its induction programme for newly appointed head teachers to include mentoring for each of them by a high quality serving head teacher, ie one of RTU's Leadership Development Partners (LDPs). All LDPs will within the last three years have received an inspection grade in relation to their leadership of either outstanding or very good and, they are trained and accredited by RTU as formal mentor/coaches using the European Charter on Coaching Competences framework.

LDPs undertake a number of roles for the RTU including mentoring of newly appointed head teachers and trainee head teachers, (ie those undertaking the Professional Qualification for Headship), and mentoring of head teachers working in challenging circumstances, as part of the RTU's support for schools in formal intervention.

Recently retired teachers are not used by the RTU in the delivery of its induction programme for newly appointed head teachers.

Omagh High School

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education to give an indication of a time frame when Omagh High School will receive its new build on the Lisanelly campus site.

(AQO 5135/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Based on the latest procurement timetable for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus Phase 2 of construction, which includes Omagh High School, is due to commence in the summer of 2016 and complete in 2019.

There are five schools and a number of shared education centres included in Phase 2 of the project and at this stage of planning no decision has yet been taken on the order in which they will be constructed.

I am meeting with Omagh High School in the coming weeks and will discuss the plans for Lisanelly with the School's representatives at that time.

Common Funding Formula

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education whether he has included the £15.8 million rise in school budgets, and the premises factor, into any new revised Common Funding Formula Scheme.

(AQO 5136/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My proposals on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme have been the subject of a widespread consultation. I will not be making any final decisions until a full analysis of all consultation responses has been carried out.

Indeed I would be criticised if I made these decisions in advance of considering the nearly 15,000 responses my Department received.

I cannot therefore say what the actual detail of the revised Common Funding Scheme and Formula will be but, as I have already stated on several occasions, they will reflect the increased £15.8m added to the ASB for next year.

Actual allocations for the 2014/15 financial year will be notified to schools early in 2014.

Exams: Proposed Changes

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the proposed changes to the English proposals to measure schools' examination results by awarding each grade achieved an individual score, rather than assessments based on the number of pupils achieving A*-C grades.

(AQO 5137/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are fundamental differences between the approach taken here and the approach taken in England given that we do not use league tables.

The Department for Education in England is at liberty to take forward changes to its performance measures and there may be lessons that we can draw upon from its research.

The English proposals will continue to be based on exam results and we have a number of questions about the impact the proposed measures may have on decisions relating to pupils' subject choices and examination entries.

I agree that the range and nature of accountability measures should be under continual review.

My Department is currently considering a number of options in this area and it is likely that I will wish to consult on these in due course.

Common Funding Formula

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Education when he will announce his final decision on changes to the Common Funding Formula.

(AQO 5138/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The changes to the Common Funding Scheme (CFS) for schools remain on track for delivery for the new financial year.

The consultation generated huge interest, with nearly 15,000 responses received by the closing date.

It has always been my intention to implement the changes in time for next year and I want to ensure that everyone's views are taken into account before I make my final decisions on the way forward.

Indeed the Education Committee has asked for an assurance that the outcome of the CFS review is not pre-determined and that I will take account of the views of all those who responded to the consultation before coming to my final decisions.

I can give an assurance today that I intend to do just that.

I intend to announce my final decisions and advise schools early in 2014. Crucially, I want to ensure there is no unnecessary delay in reforming the CFS and in directing additional support to those schools that need it most.

A Levels: National Standards

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to ensure local students seeking places in English universities are not disadvantaged by his decision not to conform to national standards in A-level specifications.

(AQO 5139/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Education is a devolved matter and this Assembly expects me to take decisions that are in the best interests of pupils here. I am determined to ensure that our A level standards are maintained through challenging content and robust assessment.

In terms of the steps I am taking, Michael Gove announced a number of changes to A levels in England. In advance of making any changes here, I wanted to consult widely with stakeholders, particularly with school leaders.

Following consultation, I concluded that it is appropriate that A levels should continue to include both an AS and A2 element.

It came through strongly in consultation that the AS level has an important role in providing a bridge between GCSE and A level.

I also decided that the number of assessment opportunities should be reduced. This was again supported in consultation because schools indicated that mid-year assessments disrupted teaching and learning.

These decisions will ensure that our A Level qualifications remain fit for purpose and are equitable, robust and portable, and, most importantly, credible in the eyes of Higher Education Institutions and employers.

Following the current consultation on the Fundamental Review of GCSEs and A levels, I will make further decisions on the way forward in the New Year.

Schools: Health and Well-being

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education, in light of the pilot of the Regional Training Unit's Emotional Health and Well Being project last year, whether his Department has any plans to make this available to all schools.

(AQO 5140/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has no immediate plans to make the 'Optimising Achievement' materials developed by Barnardo's and the Regional Training Unit available to all schools.

The report on the evaluation of a pilot training course about the 'Optimising Achievement' materials has only recently been forwarded to my Department. The report reflects the feedback from staff from 15 schools immediately following the 3 days of training completed in early March. Until I have had an opportunity to consider the evaluation report and its wider implications, there will be no decision on the place which the 'Optimising Achievement' approach to pupils' emotional health and wellbeing has within the Department's overall 'iMatter' Programme.

The priority at this time within the 'iMatter' Programme is the development and piloting of an audit tool for use by schools to assess their current approach to promoting pupils' emotional health and wellbeing and how that might be improved.

Youth Service

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education to outline the steps he has taken to invest in local Youth Services in the last 12 months.

(AQO 5141/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: During 2013-2014, I invested £33 million in frontline youth services to support a wide range of generic and targeted youth activities. This included an additional £4million to support those within disadvantaged areas who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation because they experience a combination of barriers to learning.

Capital budget allocations for 2013-14 were £6.4 million across the youth sector, which included commencement of a new £1.4 million stand alone controlled youth facility in Belvoir.

As you will be aware, I recently announced a further £12 million capital investment in the voluntary youth sector for 53 projects.

Rathfriland High School

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has any plans for a new build for Rathfriland High School.

(AQO 5142/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At present, there are no specific plans for a new build project for Rathfriland High School.

The Southern Education & Library Board remains committed to supporting Rathfriland High School, as confirmed in the SELB Post Primary Area Plan, however the school is not its highest priority for new capital build at this time.

While the school will be disappointed that it has not been included in my capital investment announcements, this in no way implies that it will not be considered for funding at a later stage within the on-going area planning process. The reality is that many schools are in need of investment and competing for limited capital funding.

I will continue to examine the case for capital investment across the estate and any proposals for Rathfriland High School will be considered with other priorities as part of any future capital announcement.

Education: North and West Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education what support his Department provides to the North and West Full Service Community Network approach to education provision.

(AQO 5143/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2013-14, my Department provided funding of £376k to support both the Full Service Schools programme operating in North Belfast and the Full Service Community Network in West Belfast.

Youth Sector: Funding

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education what criteria were used when determining the projects that received funding in the recently announced £12 million voluntary youth sector investment.

(AQO 5144/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under the Youth Service (NI) Order 1989 the Department may pay grants to voluntary youth organisations towards approved expenses in providing facilities for the Youth Service.

To be eligible to apply for funding an organisation must be registered with the local Education and Library Board or receive funding from the Youth Council for NI and must also be able to demonstrate the operation of Youth Service Programmes for at least 9 hours per week for a minimum of 30 weeks per annum.

All eligible applications which met the above criteria were then scored and weighted against: creating access and facilities for the disabled; carrying out essential Health & Safety work; fire safety; child protection; meeting the needs of young people within section 75; collaboration, partnership, sharing facilities/resources; existing use by youth; and cost effectiveness/value for money.

All schemes scored met the pass mark and are being taken forward by the Department.

Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many entries his Special Adviser has made in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality since they were appointed; and what is the total value of such entries.

(AQW 29009/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Special Advisor has made no entries in the Department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Department for Employment and Learning

Further Education Colleges: Definitions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 26916/11-15, whether these definitions are adopted by Further Education Colleges; and if not, will he ensure this is actioned at the earliest possible opportunity.

(AQW 28188/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The definitions identified in answer AQW 26916/11-15 are legal definitions (from the Mental Health Order 1986) and may be used by clinical and social care practitioners. However, they will always be used on occasions when compulsory admission to hospital for assessment and/or treatment is being considered for an individual patient. In such circumstances, the individual is more likely than not, to have a significant and possibly severe clinical condition which warrants detention in hospital for further investigation and/or treatment. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) has advised that the provision of clinical and social care is not based on definitions, but rather on the assessed needs of the individual, their family and carer.

As I have mentioned in previous answers, further education (FE) colleges are bound by the definitions stipulated within the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and more particularly, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO). This Order makes it unlawful for institutions of further and higher education to treat students with disabilities less favourably, without justification, for a reason which relates to their disability. It also places a duty on institutions to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people who have a disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage (compared to people who do not have a disability) in accessing further and higher education.

In doing so, these institutions adhere to a pan disability approach, which ensures that support for students is based on need, rather than category of disability. This is in alignment with the approach taken by DHSSPS, in their provision of clinical and social care, as outlined above. I remain confident that this approach, operated by colleges, is the most fair and equitable way of meeting the additional educational support needs of all students, irrespective of the category of their disability. Therefore I do not consider it appropriate to make any changes.

University of Ulster Campuses

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether there are plans in place to relocate any schools from Magee to any other University of Ulster campuses.

(AQW 28279/11-15)

Dr Farry: This is not information that my Department would normally hold. However, the University of Ulster has informed me that in the academic session 2010/11 the University conducted a restructuring exercise the principal aims of which were to: achieve efficiency savings following a reduction in the core teaching and research grants received from DEL; increase full-time undergraduate places at the Magee campus whilst maintaining full-time undergraduate places at the University's other campuses (this net increase in places was made possible by the additional MaSN places allocated to the University by DEL); and, increase full-time undergraduate places in the STEM areas.

In the context of the Magee campus this entailed: an increase in student places in computing; an increase in student places in creative technology; the transfer of pre-registration nursing places from Coleraine to Magee; the transfer of Irish from Coleraine to Magee; the transfer of History from Magee to Coleraine; and, the establishment of a new Centre for Engineering and Renewable Energy at Magee.

This has resulted in a net transfer of staff to Magee and the establishment of new academic posts at Magee. Staff transfers associated with the above transfer of student places are being phased as courses are phased out on one campus and established/increased at another campus.

Further to the above, the University has no plans to relocate any schools from Magee to any other University of Ulster campus.

Education Maintenance Allowance Claims

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail in each of the last five years (i) the number of prosecutions there have been for fraudulent Education Maintenance Allowance claims; and (ii) the amount overpaid.

(AQW 28358/11-15)

Dr Farry: There have been no fraud prosecutions in relation to the means tested Education Maintenance Allowance in the last five years and therefore no associated overpayments.

Fully Funded QCF/NVQ Diplomas in Health and Social Care

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the rationale in only providing fully funded QCF/NVQ Diplomas in Health and Social Care to those up to the age of 25 and restricting access to qualifications that will produce care workers, particularly in light of Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 28527/11-15)

Dr Farry: Apprenticeships

In September 2011 and August 2012 I initiated changes to the provision and funding arrangements for adult apprenticeships. This was to ensure resources were targeted more effectively on the priority skill needs of the local economy, the specific needs of adults, and that a proportionate balance was achieved in contributions to adult training by Government, employers and the individual.

My priorities are clear. Funding for apprenticeships must be focused primarily on our young people to enable them to acquire the new knowledge and skills needed to make a difference to their lives and to the NI economy. This position is supported by research conducted by IFF Research on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills in 2012. The research shows that younger apprentices are more likely to report positive impacts on their skills levels than their adult counterparts. Unfortunately, the previous funding of adult apprenticeships was not sustainable.

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Further Education Provision

My Department's further education curriculum policy has been developed to ensure that colleges have a strong focus on provision that supports the economy, strengthens workforce development and advances an individual's skills and learning.

Individual colleges design and deliver a curriculum offering that meets the needs of learners and employers in their areas. Colleges do not restrict access to qualifications that produce care workers and they do not impose age restrictions other than the school leaving age requirement.

The specific needs of adult health and social care workers will continue to be met through the Department's programmes and services ensuring they have the right skills to support our journey in transforming the health and social care service.

Working Group

As a result of the "Task and Finish" Group's recommendations, my Department has joined a group exploring the skills development needs of the domiciliary social care sector. This group includes representatives from DHSSPS, Invest NI, Health and Social Care Council and Belfast Metropolitan College as well as representatives from my Department's Skills and Industry Division. Its first meeting was on 5 October when it established a sub group to examine the detail and devise recommendations.

Research Excellence Framework

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 27940/11-15, given his Department's responsibility overseeing the Research Excellence Framework and should Prof Gallagher be included, what action does he intend to take.

(AQW 28528/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is up to each institution to determine which research they put forward as part of their submission to the Research Excellence Framework.

South West Regional College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 27225/11-15, AQW 26532/11-15, AQW 26467/11-15 and AQW 26381/11-15, to clarify in what format and the date each question was referred to the Director of South West Regional College; and if confirmation of each correspondence was received.

(AQW 28530/11-15)

Dr Farry: AQW 27225/11-15

My Department issued a letter, via email, to the Director of South West College (SWC) on 31 October 2013. This letter provided details of the question tabled and asked the Director of the College to respond to the Member, directly. My Department received a copy of the response, from SWC to the Member, on 6 November 2013.

AQW 26532/11-15, AQW 26467/11-15, and AQW 26381/11-15

My Department issued a letter, via email, to the Director of SWC on 11 October 2013. This letter provided details of all three questions tabled and asked that the Director of the College respond to the Member, directly, with the information sought in the three questions. The College received the e-mail on 11 October 2013.

My Department has contacted SWC to ascertain if a reply has been issued by the College. SWC have advised that the request had been overlooked due to a misunderstanding. However, the College has now issued a response to the Member and my Department has received a copy of this reply.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.
(AQW 28544/11-15)

Dr Farry: Staff who regularly meet the public such as Employment Service staff, Careers Officers and Tribunal staff have received specific training about autism to enable them to communicate appropriately and positively with customers and visitors. If having previously made officials aware that they have been diagnosed with autism, customers attending the Department's Jobcentres and Careers Resource Centres can have arrangements made to be accompanied by an advocate or request access to private interview room facilities where their specific environmental needs can be addressed. The pace of the interview and journey towards employment will be tailored to individual customer needs where possible. Customers with autism who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance are contacted by Departmental staff in advance of their first work focused interview in order to discuss accommodation needs and to ensure that the engagement with Employment Service staff is appropriate and effective.

For the purposes of tribunal proceedings at Killymeal House, a party with autism will be afforded any reasonable adjustment required to facilitate participation. Customer Service training and equality training is available to reception staff in Adelaide House and Gloucester House which focuses on meeting the needs of the customer including those with a disability.

Queen's University and the University of Ulster: Protestant Students

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail what his Department is doing to ensure Queen's University and the University of Ulster are welcoming protestant students.
(AQW 28554/11-15)

Dr Farry: As I advised in my responses to both your Oral Assembly question and subsequent Written Assembly question in May.

The research evidence presented on participation in Higher Education by Northern Ireland students indicates that there were very few negative perceptions of Northern Ireland institutions among school leavers. In fact, most respondents reported that Northern Ireland institutions were very welcoming to all groups in terms of religion, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

I continue to be delighted that our Universities offer a genuine option for integrated education.

Number of Law Graduates

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of law graduates, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 28572/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of law graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions, in each of the last three academic years is detailed in the table below:

Year	Total
2011-12	814
2010-11	729
2009-10	755

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 1) The latest available data on Higher Education qualifications are for 2011/12.

Number of Law Graduates Unable to Find Employment

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of law graduates that are unable to find employment.

(AQW 28573/11-15)

Dr Farry: In 2011/12, of the law graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions whose destinations were known, 42 indicated they were unemployed.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 2) The latest available data on graduate destinations are for 2011/12.
- 3) This information comes from the Destination of Leavers Survey. It provides details of the destinations of leavers from HE who obtained qualifications in HEIs during the 2011/12 academic year. The survey was carried out approximately six months after graduation and had a 78% response rate.

Regional College in Armagh: Equality Policies

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any investigation being conducted into a direction from staff in the Regional College in Armagh that students should remove their poppies and whether the Department is satisfied that equality policies are being properly applied in the college.

(AQW 28598/11-15)

Dr Farry: Southern Regional College has confirmed that it has received a number of enquiries regarding the alleged direction given to students at its Armagh Campus that it was not permissible to wear the poppy.

Southern Regional College permits the wearing of non-political marks of remembrance, celebration or commemoration such as poppies or shamrocks during specified periods in the year. In response to these enquiries, it requested the names of students who had allegedly received such an instruction and the details of any staff members who issued such an instruction. No such information has been received in relation to complaints pertaining to the Armagh campus. Without this information Southern Regional College cannot proceed to investigate further.

Southern Regional College, like all colleges in the further education sector, is required to promote good relations between members of categories set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and it is monitored by the Equality Commission in its discharging of this duty.

Education Maintenance Allowance Payments

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 28158/11-15, what scale of fraud has been detected.

(AQW 28599/11-15)

Dr Farry: No fraud has been detected in relation to the means tested Education Maintenance Allowance.

Strengthening the All-Island Research Base Programme

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide an update on “Strengthening The All-Island Research Base” programme; and to detail the areas of research taking place currently under this programme.

(AQW 28676/11-15)

Dr Farry: With a strategic investment of £17.2 million from late 2008 / early 2009 to March 2011, the Strengthening the all-Island Research Base programme enabled the two universities to establish twelve major projects to build additional and sustainable research capacity and capability that would contribute to the development of the “All Island Research Infrastructure”.

The twelve projects were supported to the end of Financial Year 2010/11 after which they aimed to become self-sustaining, per the requirement in the Department’s “Call for Proposals”.

An independent evaluation of the Programme has recently been published, and it concluded that all twelve projects have been able to secure funding to pursue further research as a direct result of work funded through, and building on the outcomes of, the DEL-funded programme.

The areas of research continuing to be pursued as a result of this programme are mobile wireless systems, transport sustainability, agri-food, cancer research, diet and obesity, novel therapeutics for infections and chronic diseases, biomedical informatics, energy storage, sensors and nanotechnology, functional biomaterials, computational neuroscience, and nutrition and bone health.

Sports Studies at University Level: Coaching Courses

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the funding opportunities available to students studying Sports Studies at University level that need to undertake coaching courses in fields such as athletics, gymnastics, swimming and games.

(AQW 28678/11-15)

Dr Farry: The eligibility of higher education students for financial support in terms of tuition fees, grants and loans is determined under the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2009 (as amended). I can advise that students studying higher education courses in Sports Studies are determined for financial support in the same way as other undergraduate students under the Regulations.

There is no additional higher education funding specifically aimed at students undertaking coaching courses.

Skills Areas of all Apprentices

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the skills areas of all apprentices currently under training in all establishments funded by his Department.

(AQW 28722/11-15)

Dr Farry: The most recent edition of my Department’s ApprenticeshipsNI Statistical Bulletin provides key information on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme and contains data to July 2013. The Bulletin is published on a quarterly basis with the statistics presented covering a range of topics including starts, occupancy, leavers and outcomes for participants on ApprenticeshipsNI.

An extract from the bulletin, detailing programme participation, aligned to apprenticeships frameworks, has been placed in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website on [http:// www.delni.gov.uk/](http://www.delni.gov.uk/). A full copy of the Statistical Bulletin can be viewed by following the link below.

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/r-and-s-stats/apprenticeshipsni-statistical-bulletins.htm>

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Numbers in Apprentice Training

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail by skills area, the basis on which the numbers in apprentice training are allocated.

(AQW 28724/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is an employer-led provision, with employers creating apprenticeship positions in line with their future business needs. It is therefore individual businesses in each "skills area" who determine the number of apprentices in that business sector.

My Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Number of Apprentices in Employment

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail by skills area, how many apprentices, have progressed into employment in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28726/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is an employer-led provision, with employers creating apprenticeship positions in line with their future business needs. Apprentices are employed "from day one".

My Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

Over 23,000 individuals have started ApprenticeshipsNI funded training over the past three years. A full breakdown of starts, aligned to Apprenticeship Frameworks, has been placed in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website on <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Small Firms: Insurance Costs of Taking on Apprentices

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any assistance his Department gives small firms in relation to the insurance costs of taking on apprentices.

(AQW 28781/11-15)

Dr Farry: Responsibility for the payment of insurance costs for apprentices lies with the employer in line with the employer's obligations to all of their employees.

My Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. An apprentice should be covered by both the employer's and training supplier's public liability insurance when availing of directed training.

Female Apprentice Trainees

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail how many female apprentice trainees are currently on apprenticeship courses, broken down by skills area.

(AQW 28786/11-15)

Dr Farry: As of July 2013 (the most recent published data) female occupancy on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme stood at 3,377. A full breakdown of gender occupancy, aligned to apprenticeship frameworks has been placed in the Assembly Library and on the DEL website on <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Food Engineering Apprenticeship Program

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Food Engineering Apprenticeship program.

(AQW 28847/11-15)

Dr Farry: I launched the Food Engineering Apprenticeship Pilot Programme in September 2013 in response to concerns raised by local food manufacturing and processing businesses that they were finding it difficult to recruit engineers to work in this sector.

Officials in my Department have worked closely with industry and their counterparts in Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Southern Regional College to develop a flexible programme in line with industry requirements.

Eight local food manufacturing and processing employers are committed to the pilot offering a maximum of 21 apprenticeships. These companies are geographically spread out, thereby offering the opportunities presented to young people from across Northern Ireland. The employers involved have developed the content of the qualification and made key decisions affecting how it will be delivered.

Applicants completed two psychometric tests to assess their capability to achieve an engineering qualification. At present, the participating companies are interviewing the applicants who have successfully completed both tests and those recruited will begin the initiative on 6th January 2014 with an intensive orientation programme at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

Number of Apprenticeships in the Past 3 Years

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have entered apprenticeships in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 28848/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department funds the 'off-the-job' training element of an apprenticeship through the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

Over the past three academic years, the numbers of individuals entering ApprenticeshipsNI provision are:

- 2010/11 - 8,948;
- 2011/12 - 7,884; and
- 2012/13 - 6,345 (up to July 2013).

My Department's ApprenticeshipsNI Statistical Bulletin provides key information on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme and contains data to July 2013. The Bulletin is published on a quarterly basis with the statistics presented covering a range of topics including starts, occupancy, leavers and outcomes for participants on ApprenticeshipsNI.

A full copy of the Statistical Bulletin can be viewed by following the link below.

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/r-and-s-stats/apprenticeshipsni-statistical-bulletins.htm>

As the member will be aware, back in February I announced a major review of my Department's apprenticeship policy. This review, which is all-encompassing in nature, is progressing as planned, and I will be reporting its findings shortly.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Britain's Gross Domestic Product: Local Economy

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) how she plans to ensure that the local economy benefits from the recent increase in Britain's Gross Domestic Product ; (ii) how she plans to ensure that the local economy benefits from recent improvements in the southern economy; (iii) how the impact of the increase in Britain's Gross Domestic Product on the local economy is measured; and (iv) how the impact of the increase in the economy of Ireland on the local economy is measured.

(AQW 27983/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):

(i) & (ii) I welcome the recent improvements in UK Gross Domestic Product and the improvements in the economy of the Republic of Ireland, both of which are key markets for external sales and tourism.

The Executive's Economic Strategy is outward-looking, with a focus on export-led economic growth, and one of the key themes relates to competing in the global economy. The improvements in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland will therefore be captured through the continued implementation of the Strategy.

The Economic Strategy identifies a range of commitments, expected to deliver job creation and growing employment levels in Northern Ireland. The Executive has made considerable progress towards delivery of commitments made for this budget period. An update on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy Action Plan was published on 25 October and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy website at:

www.northernireland.gov.uk/economic-strategy.

The delivery of these actions is establishing the foundations for future economic growth.

(iii) & (iv) The published GDP figures for the UK include Northern Ireland. We do not specifically measure the impact of growth in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland on the Northern Ireland economy, as this would be extremely difficult to quantify.

There are four main areas which contribute to growth in the economy, these are: consumer spending; investment; net trade; and, government spending. As the Republic of Ireland receives over a third of our exports it has a significant impact on our net trade. Given the way Northern Ireland is funded, changes to government spending in Whitehall has a significant impact on level of government spending locally. Other factors from both economies have influence on all of these areas.

However, it is important that the Northern Ireland economy diversifies, so that it is not as reliant upon growth in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, given that growth in these regions is forecast to be lower than in other economies, such as emerging economies. This is another important aspect of the Executive's Economic Strategy.

Craigavon Borough Council and Banbridge District Council and Armagh City Council

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the work between her Department and (i) Craigavon Borough Council; (ii) Banbridge District Council; and (iii) Armagh City Council, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28298/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information requested is set out in the attached table:

Year	Council	Detail
2011	Craigavon Borough Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ Local Authority (LA) initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 interactions in total comprising 5 site inspections, 4 complaint investigations and 4 advisory contacts. <p>GCCNI</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Transport Matters - Young Peoples Experiences, Attitudes and Ideas for Improving Public Transport (January 2011) - In partnership with Youth Action. http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=612</p> <p>ENERGY</p> <p>The Department has continued to work with Craigavon Borough Council in the last three years to recoup outstanding monies in respect of an Interreg IIIA project on biomass boilers.</p> <p>NITB</p> <p>One Tourism Development Scheme (TDS) application was received from the Craigavon Borough Council area, application was placed on the reserve list.</p>
	Banbridge District Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 4 interactions in total comprising 2 site inspections and 1 advisory contact. <p>NITB</p> <p>Banbridge Tourist Information Centre Relocation and Fit-out under the 2011-2013 Signature Projects Programme.</p> <p>2007-13 ERDF Sustainable Competitiveness Programme - Local Economic Development Measure £27,392.61.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Armagh City Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 complaint investigation. <p>GCCNI</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Ferry Travel - Perceptions and Experiences of ferry passengers in Northern Ireland (December 2011). http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=802</p> <p>Project</p> <p>“Left High and Dry” (February 2011) - Consumers’ stories and experiences of the water crisis. http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=633</p> <p>Tourism Ireland Limited (TIL)</p> <p>TIL attended a meeting with local tourism industry partners in Armagh which was facilitated by the Tourism Development Officer in Armagh City Council during a TIL market staff familiarisation trip to Armagh in summer 2011. TIL shared recommendations on promoting Armagh City overseas with the industry partners.</p> <p>TIL’s overseas Publicity team also met with the Tourism Development Officer in Armagh City Council as part of ongoing collaboration between Tourism Ireland and the Council.</p>
2012	Craigavon Borough Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 9 interactions in total comprising 5 site inspections and 4 complaint investigations. <p>GCCNI</p> <p>Project</p> <p>The Financial Capability Partnership led by Consumer Council held Money Week 2012 in conjunction with Craigavon Borough Council.</p> <p>ENERGY</p> <p>The Department has continued to work with Craigavon Borough Council in the last three years to recoup outstanding monies in respect of an Interreg IIIA project on biomass boilers.</p> <p>NITB</p> <p>Craigavon Borough Council submitted a TDS application in 2011, which progressed to the shortlist following a successful bid to the Northern Ireland Executive’s Economy and Jobs Initiative.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
2012	Craigavon Borough Council	<p>Offers of assistance were made to Craigavon Borough Council to install 3 Interpretation panels at Craigavon Museum, Seagoe Parish Church (Portadown) and St Patrick's Stone, Coney Island. This offer of assistance was subsequently withdrawn.</p> <p>EUROPEAN SUPPORT UNIT</p> <p>2007-13 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Sustainable Competitiveness Programme - Local Economic Development Measure £27,392.61.</p> <p>INVEST NI</p> <p>Craigavon Council is included within the South East Economic Development (SEED) group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 8 projects with total investment of £1.7 million and assistance of £1.2 million in 2012.</p>
	Banbridge District Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. ■ Gas Safety Regulators group – Banbridge Council staff member attended quarterly Gas safety meetings. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2 interactions in total comprising 1 complaint investigation and 1 accident investigation. <p>NITB</p> <p>Work has progressed with Banbridge District Council to deliver the St. Patrick's/Christian Heritage Signature Project and the Mourne Signature Project. More recently, Banbridge District Council has been working with Down and Newry & Mourne District Councils to develop a Tourism Destination Plan for the Mourne Mountains. The Plan is now in place and supported by a Tourism Forum comprising local public and private sector tourism bodies and businesses. NITB has facilitated, advised and supported the development and delivery of this Plan.</p> <p>EUROPEAN SUPPORT UNIT</p> <p>2007-13 ERDF Sustainable Competitiveness Programme - Local Economic Development Measure £16,829.77.</p> <p>INVEST NI</p> <p>Banbridge Council is included within the SEED group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 9 projects with total investment of £1.8 million and assistance of £1.3 million in 2012.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Armagh City Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 4 interactions comprising 1 site inspection, 1 complaint investigation and 2 accident investigations. <p>NITB</p> <p>Armagh City & District Council received £15,000 for Georgian Day 2012 and £30,000 for St Patricks Festival Armagh 2013. Both events were funded through the NITB National Tourism Events Fund.</p> <p>Offers were made to 3 projects submitted by Armagh City Council under the Tourism Development Scheme 2011-13 in 2012, two of these projects were subsequently withdrawn. The remaining project, Navan Centre and Fort – Ecology for Families, is under implementation, this project received an offer of financial assistance of £36,700 against total project costs of £73,400.</p> <p>Offers were made to 4 projects submitted by Armagh City Council under the 2011-2013 Signature Projects Programme. One project, Armagh St Patrick’s Trail 2 Interpretation was subsequently withdrawn.</p> <p>The remaining 3 projects, St Patrick’s Trail Abbey Street Link, Palace Demesne Armagh Christian Heritage Project and St Patrick’s Way – The Pilgrim’s Walk received a total amount of £269,264.</p> <p>TOURISM IRELAND</p> <p>Has partnered with Armagh City Council to promote Armagh and Northern Ireland at Celtic Connections, the largest winter music festival in Glasgow.</p> <p>Discussions have also taken place with the Council’s Tourism Development Officer to discuss Tourism Ireland’s global Saint Patrick’s campaign.</p> <p>INVEST NI</p> <p>Armagh Council is included within the SEED group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 8 projects with total investment of £1.7 million and assistance of £1.2 million in 2012.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
2013	Craigavon Borough Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. ■ Workplace Transport initiative – Council carrying out targeted workplace transport inspections as part of joint HSENI local authority initiative. ■ Legionella seminar – Council representatives attended Legionella seminar with HSENI and Council staff. ■ Specialist skills register – Council environmental health staff submitted specialism to appear on joint HSENI/ Local Authority register. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5 interactions in total comprising 3 site inspections, 1 complaint investigation and 1 advisory contact. <p>GCCNI</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Transport Issues in Accessing Health and Social Care Services (March 13) - In partnership with the Patient Client Council. http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=1009</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Door to Door and Community Transport Research (July 13). http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=1039</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Consumers' priorities for NI Water's third Price Control, PC15, for 2015-2021.</p> <p>ENERGY</p> <p>The Department has continued to work with Craigavon Borough Council in the last three years to recoup outstanding monies in respect of an Interreg IIIA project on biomass boilers.</p> <p>NITB</p> <p>Craigavon Borough Council is one of the seven councils leading on the development of the Lough Neagh & Its Waterways. NITB has provided on-going facilitation including workshops and an envisioning day to support destination development.</p> <p>One TDS project within the Craigavon Borough Council area is currently under assessment.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Craigavon Borough Council	<p data-bbox="544 219 874 248">EUROPEAN SUPPORT UNIT</p> <p data-bbox="544 271 1394 577">The role of local government across the suite of 2014-20 EU Programmes is currently being considered. This exercise is being led by DFP and commenced with a workshop back in February 2013. Since the summer, a number of government departments and local authority organisations have continued to work together to identify potential areas of funding which might be delivered by reformed local government under Community Plans. This has included the initial consideration of proposals put forward by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon through the SEED council cluster.</p> <p data-bbox="544 600 671 629">INVEST NI</p> <p data-bbox="544 651 1394 745">Craigavon Council is included within the SEED group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 5 projects with total investment of £1.0 million and assistance of £0.7 million in 2013.</p> <p data-bbox="544 768 1294 833">Also they have obtained approval for 2 LED projects with total investment of £312,000 and assistance of £234,000 in 2013.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Banbridge District Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. ■ Gas Safety Regulators group – Banbridge Council staff member attended quarterly Gas safety meetings. ■ Workplace Transport initiative – Council carrying out targeted workplace transport inspections as part of joint HSENI local authority initiative. ■ Specialist skills register – Council environmental health staff submitted specialism to appear on joint HSENI Local Authority register. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nil to date. <p>NITB</p> <p>Work has progressed with Banbridge District Council to deliver the St. Patrick's/Christian Heritage Signature Project and the Mourne Signature Project.</p> <p>More recently, Banbridge District Council has been working with Down and Newry & Mourne District Councils to develop a Tourism Destination Plan for the Mourne Mountains.</p> <p>The Plan is now in place and supported by a Tourism Forum comprising local public and private sector tourism bodies and businesses. NITB has facilitated, advised and supported the development and delivery of the Plan.</p> <p>EUROPEAN SUPPORT UNIT</p> <p>The role of local government across the suite of 2014-20 EU Programmes is currently being considered. This exercise is being led by DFP and commenced with a workshop back in February 2013. Since the summer, a number of government departments and local authority organisations have continued to work together to identify potential areas of funding which might be delivered by reformed local government under Community Plans. This has included the initial consideration of proposals put forward by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon through the SEED council cluster.</p> <p>INVEST NI</p> <p>Banbridge Council is included within the SEED group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 5 projects with total investment of £1.0 million and assistance of £0.7 million in 2013.</p> <p>Also they have obtained approval for 1 LED projects with total investment of £19,000 and assistance of £14,000 in 2013.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Armagh City Council	<p>HSENI</p> <p>Joint Working with District Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe Maintenance initiative – Joint HSENI/ LA initiative. 50% of all health and safety inspections to look at Safe maintenance. ■ Workplace Transport initiative – Council carrying out targeted workplace transport inspections as part of joint HSENI local authority initiative. ■ Specialist skills register – Council environmental health staff submitted specialism to appear on joint HSENI Local Authority register. <p>Public Sector Inspection/ Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2 interactions comprising 1 site inspection and 1 advisory contact. <p>GCCNI</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Transport Issues in Accessing Health and Social Care Services (March 13) - In partnership with the Patient Client Council (AS ABOVE). http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=1009</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Passenger Information and Modal Shift (August 2013). http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/?id=1048</p> <p>Throughout 2013 CCNI has been working with all Councils through the Regional Community Resilience Group.</p> <p>It should also be noted that during the period 2011-2013 GCCNI have conducted various research activities such as omnibus surveys that will have sought the views of consumers across Northern Ireland which will have included the three specified areas.</p> <p>NITB</p> <p>Armagh City Council has accepted Letters of Offer for Georgian Day 2013 - £10,000 and St Patricks Festival Armagh 2014 - £20,000. Offers were awarded through the NITB National Tourism Events Fund.</p> <p>Work has progressed with Armagh City Council to deliver St. Patrick's/ Christian Heritage Signature Project.</p> <p>More recently, NITB has facilitated, advised and supported the development and delivery of a Tourism Destination Plan for Armagh. A draft Plan is now in place which will be supported by a Tourism Forum comprising local public and private sector tourism bodies and businesses.</p> <p>TOURISM IRELAND</p> <p>TIL's overseas publicity team met with the Tourism Development Officer in Armagh City Council during a familiarisation trip for Tourism Ireland's Publicity Officers overseas in November 2013.</p> <p>In February, July and November of this year, Tourism Ireland met with representatives of Armagh City Council to discuss Battle of Clontarf celebrations in 2014.</p>

Year	Council	Detail
	Armagh City Council	<p>TOURISM POLICY</p> <p>Met with the CEO and Tourism Officer of Armagh City Council on 13 November to discuss the progress made in developing Armagh as a tourism destination.</p> <p>EUROPEAN SUPPORT UNIT</p> <p>The role of local government across the suite of 2014-20 EU Programmes is currently being considered. This exercise is being led by DFP and commenced with a workshop back in February 2013. Since the summer, a number of government departments and local authority organisations have continued to work together to identify potential areas of funding which might be delivered by reformed local government under Community Plans. This has included the initial consideration of proposals put forward by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon through the SEED council cluster.</p> <p>INVEST NI</p> <p>Armagh Council is included within the SEED group and collaboratively have been involved with the approval of 5 projects with total investment of £1.0 million and assistance of £0.7 million in 2013.</p> <p>Also they have obtained approval for 1 LED projects with total investment of £184,000 and assistance of £92,000 in 2013.</p>

Shopper Numbers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what work her Department is doing to encourage shopper numbers.

(AQW 28409/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In 2012, NISRA carried out the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey which surveys outbound passengers through the Northern Ireland airports and ports. Of the spend by these GB and overseas passengers (£346 million), an estimated 15% was on shopping. In addition, domestic overnight shopping trips contributed a further £2 million to the local economy.

My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland, continues to explore and develop opportunities to encourage visitors to Northern Ireland with shopping identified as a potential activity of interest.

NITB has undertaken a series of annual marketing campaigns in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; to increase the number of short breaks taken; with the NITB Autumn/Christmas 2013 campaign specifically promoting shopping at the Christmas market.

Tourism Ireland's Autumn 2013 campaign is further targeting late season bookings to Northern Ireland. The campaign is well underway in Great Britain, United States of America, mainland Europe, Australia and other key emerging markets; focussing on attracting visitors to Northern Ireland where they can enjoy a variety of short breaks.

InvestNI in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses have been assisted by InvestNI in the North Down constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28413/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 below shows the number of businesses which have been assisted by Invest NI in the North Down Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the years between 2010-11 and 2012-13.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF BUSINESSES OFFERED SUPPORT IN NORTH DOWN PCA (2010-11 TO 2012-13)

Year	Number
2010-11	65
2011-12	101
2012-13	100

In addition, Invest NI offered support and guidance to individuals wishing to start a business through the Regional Start Initiative (RSI), formerly known as the Enterprise Development Programme, delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Northern Ireland. These are detailed in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN NORTH DOWN PCA OFFERED SUPPORT THROUGH RSI (2010-11 TO 2012-13)

Year	Number
2010-11	111
2011-12	80
2012-13	38

Note: A number of individuals receiving RSI offers went on to avail of further Invest NI support. These individuals are removed from Table 1 and counted in Table 2 above.

In addition, Invest NI launched its Boosting Business initiative on 14th November 2011. This initiative identifies the range of support and advice available to local businesses and provides accessible contact points, via telephone, email and social media. Invest NI now has a dedicated full time Business Support Team in place to deal with enquiries from businesses across Northern Ireland. Since its inception there have been 538 additional enquiries from the North Down area.

Female Entrepreneurship

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the action that her Department has taken to encourage women in business and female entrepreneurship to realise the potential for the economy.

(AQW 28434/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Women remain the largest under-represented group when it comes to enterprise in Northern Ireland and represent a huge pool of untapped potential.

Invest NI currently supports female entrepreneurship through a variety of targeted marketing initiatives, sponsorship of business networks and business awards. Through this activity Invest NI aims to support more women to set up and run their own business successfully and to promote opportunities for business growth in export markets.

Alongside sponsorship support to Women's business networks, Invest NI is a sponsor of the International Women's Business Conference scheduled for May 2014. With the theme of "Creating a New Economy", the conference presents an opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland's business potential as well as celebrate and promote the potential of business women on a local and global scale.

Glassworks Ireland Ltd

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the actions the Health and Safety Executive has taken to protect people in the workplace regarding the claim that Glassworks Ireland Ltd was installing fire-rated glass, which was not recognised, approved or certified as fire-rated.
(AQW 28456/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Other than in Crown Premises, enforcement of issues relating to workplace fire safety falls under the jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

In relation to Crown Premises, HSENI is in discussion with the Department of Finance and Personnel in relation to this matter.

InterTradelreland: Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of staff employed by InterTradelreland, broken down by religion.
(AQW 28529/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As at 22 November, 2013, the number of staff employed by InterTradelreland broken down by religion is:-

Protestants	8
Roman Catholics	31
Non-Determined	1

National Dairy Council

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and whether she is aware of any local agri-food company that has lost a contract in the Republic of Ireland due to the stance taken by the National Dairy Council.
(AQW 28540/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am well aware that a number of local dairy companies have been affected by the National Dairy Council campaign.

I have brought the campaign to the attention of the North South Ministerial Council, the European Commission and retailers based in the Republic of Ireland. I will continue to work in an effort to minimise any potential losses to our local economy.

Security of Electricity Supply

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the surplus electricity that is required to ensure security of supply.
(AQW 28558/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has been liaising with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and the electricity system operator SONI to consider the post 2015 security of electricity supply margin for Northern Ireland, including if there is likely to be a requirement for any additional conventional generation, and these discussions remain ongoing.

Moyle Interconnector

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Mutual Energy require permission from (i) the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation or (ii) her Department before carrying out extensive repair or replacement works to the Moyle Interconnector.
(AQW 28560/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Mutual Energy proposals for interim and permanent repairs to the Moyle Interconnector have been endorsed by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and discussed with my Department.

As work to restore the Moyle to full capacity is advanced by Mutual Energy, their further engagement with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and my Department may be necessary in relation to particular aspects of the proposed works.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the advice on which she based her claims during her evidence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade Investment on 9 May 2013 when she stated that the licence will state what type of exploration is foreseen in the Lough Neagh basin area. I am not an expert in geology and I do not pretend to be, but I am told by my officials from the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland that the geology does not lend itself to hydraulic fracturing, and, therefore, it will be conventional exploration.

(AQW 28561/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My comments were in relation to Petroleum Licence Application PLA1/13 by CHx LLC. The advice was based on the applicants proposed exploration work programme which is directed towards identifying conventional oil or gas targets.

A work programme forms an integral part of any Petroleum Licence and significant changes to the programme cannot be made without my Department's consent.

The Geological Survey Northern Ireland has also advised that, from a geological perspective, the presence of significant unconventional oil or gas resources in the Lough Neagh and Larne sedimentary basins remains hypothetical at best.

E-Synergy

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the work of E-Synergy.
(AQW 28586/11-15)

Mrs Foster: E-Synergy has been managing the NISPO suite of Funds since April 2009 and the active investment period will end on 31 March 2014. The Funds have a ten year life and E-Synergy will continue to manage the Funds until 2019; this will enable follow on investments to be made and investments to be realized. All of the money invested through the Funds has been provided by Invest NI, and over the life of the Funds this will amount to £14million.

Circa £8.8million of Invest NI money has been invested to date as follows:

Fund	Amount invested (£'000)	SMEs supported
Invest Growth Fund	3,500	26
University Funds	1,300	7
Proof of Concept Grant Fund	4,000	175
Total	8,800	208

All figures above are provisional.

The Investment Readiness Programme, a training and support programme, continues to provide a broad range of events to help young companies to become investment ready. The workshops, including the most recent CEO Leadership programme, are aimed at management teams in high growth potential companies. This programme is well received in the market place.

Press Releases Drafted or Photographs Taken by Departmental Officials

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of press releases drafted, or photographs taken, by departmental officials that have subsequently been published on the Democratic Unionist Party website or social media sites; (ii) the estimated time it took departmental staff to do this; and (iii) the total cost to her Department.

(AQW 28587/11-15)

- I. Mrs Foster: Press releases are drafted by DETI officials to communicate departmental key messages and achievements. Once issued by the Executive Information Service, press releases and photographs are free and available to use by print and online outlets, including social media sites.
- II. None.
- III. Zero.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, with regards to point 5 (iii) of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) minutes of the meeting on 14 March 2013, (i) whether a reply has been provided by her Department to the NITB; and (ii) whether Down District Council can add the Irish language to signage for St. Patrick's Trail at their own expense.

(AQW 28592/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) A reply was provided by My Department to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on 17th April 2013.
- (ii) That is a matter for Down District Council.

City of Culture 2013

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) tenders awarded; and (ii) funding provided to organisations in Derry to deliver the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 28675/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board did not award any tenders to organisations in Londonderry to deliver the UK City of Culture 2013. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) was responsible for the delivery of the UK City of Culture 2013 and hence was the main funder and responsible for any tenders.
- (ii) The Northern Ireland Tourist Board provided £750,000 of funding to The Culture Company 2013 in Londonderry to deliver five UK City of Culture 2013 tourism events, namely:

The Return of Colmcille	£166,500
Fleadh Cheoil 2013	£167,000
The Walled City Tattoo	£ 50,000
The Turner Prize	£166,500
Lumiere	£200,000
Total	£750,000

In addition, The Northern Ireland Tourist Board provided £60,000 of funding to 5 other organisations in Londonderry who applied for support under the NITB Tourism Event Funding Programme 2013/14 towards tourism events taking place during the UK City of Culture year 2013.

Power NI Energy Ltd

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the current value per annum being derived by the consumer from the remaining contracts in place between Power NI Energy Ltd and electricity generators.

(AQW 28757/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This is a matter that falls under the remit of the Utility Regulator. The Regulator has advised that for the tariff year 2013-14 these contracts are estimated to be worth £2.6 million to consumers. The figure is calculated each year.

Northern Ireland Utility Regulator

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she is taking, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Utility Regulator, to ensure that the remaining contracts in place between Power NI Energy Ltd and electricity generators continue to deliver best value for money for energy consumers.

(AQW 28758/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This is a matter that falls under the remit of the Utility Regulator. The Regulator carries out a regular review of the forecast value of these contracts to consumers. If these contracts are forecast to become a cost to consumers at some stage in the future, they can be cancelled. As part of any cancellation process the Utility Regulator will issue a public consultation on the matter.

Renewable Heat Incentive

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why people in receipt of a Carbon Trust loan are unable to access the Renewable Heat Incentive.

(AQW 28803/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The issue of whether the Carbon Trust Loan Scheme is compatible with the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive is currently being considered by my Department under the RHI dispute resolution procedures. The outcome of the review will be published on the DETI website in due course.

Renewable Heat Incentive

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that regulations published for the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive prohibits grant aid but not loans, why applications are being refused from people who have taken out loans.

(AQW 28863/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer the Member to the answer previously given to AQW 28127/11-15.

In addition, Regulation 23 of the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 states that systems cannot be accredited under the scheme where a grant from public funds has been paid (or will be paid) or other public support has been provided. Under the regulation "public support" is defined as a financial advantage provided by a public authority.

Moyle Interconnector

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the current status of the Moyle Interconnector.

(AQO 5157/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As a result of a cable fault, the Moyle Interconnector is currently operating at 250 Mega Watts, providing 50% of its normal transfer capacity.

Mutual Energy, owners of the Moyle, are taking forward interim and permanent repair options for the interconnector, and these will be subject to consideration of environmental impacts and other consenting requirements.

It is expected that the Moyle will be restored to full transfer capacity through completion of the interim repair during 2014, with the permanent repair to be completed in 2017.

Fuel Pricing

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to confirm whether she had any engagements with the Groceries Code Adjudicator regarding the issue of supermarket fuel pricing, including how it impacts customers locally.

(AQO 5153/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Groceries Code Adjudicator's remit extends to Northern Ireland, however, petrol is one of the products excluded from the provisions of the Groceries Code.

I have written to the Groceries Code Adjudicator seeking a meeting but have not yet had a reply.

Energy Prices

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she will take to help mitigate the effects of the recently announced increase in energy prices on vulnerable households.

(AQO 5154/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am, of course, concerned about any increases in energy tariffs and particularly the impact these have on our business, domestic and vulnerable consumers. Hence my Department works with the Regulator and the energy sector to improve competition and provide options for consumers to reduce bills by, for example, switching supplier.

There are now a number of active suppliers in the domestic electricity market in Northern Ireland, and there is competition in the domestic gas market within Greater Belfast. From April 2015, the domestic gas market outside Greater Belfast will also be open to competition.

It is also my intention to give consumers additional energy choice by extending the availability of natural gas to towns in the West and North-West, and to other areas where gas extension is economically viable.

Furthermore, I am working to extend the Renewable Heat Incentive to the domestic sector before Spring of next year and already have a premium payment scheme in place to assist with the capital cost of the transition to renewable forms of heat.

Tourism: European Visitors

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the steps her Department is taking to attract more European visitors.

(AQO 5155/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Mainland Europe is a key market for us.

In order to grow our visitor revenue we need to increase the focus on key European markets and maximize promotion around events and emerging stories in 2014 such as the Giro d'Italia, the Game of Thrones and the Clipper Yacht race as well as our iconic products such as Titanic Belfast and the Giant's Causeway.

In addition we continue to lobby for increased air access from Europe, fund co-operative marketing campaigns with carriers and have agreed a new programme with Tourism Ireland for 2014-2016 to encourage more tour operators to include Northern Ireland in their itineraries.

Going for Growth

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on how her Department plans to implement the Food Strategy Board Report: Going for Growth.

(AQO 5156/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Going for Growth contains over one hundred recommendations with responsibility falling to many Executive Departments and associated Agencies, as well as the industry itself.

A draft response to Going for Growth has been prepared for consideration by the Executive. The draft response sets out the actions required by Government to deliver the aims and objectives of Going for Growth, timescales for delivery and potential funding sources.

Subject to Executive endorsement, the actions in the draft response will become fully integrated within the relevant Departments' Strategic and Business Plans. In addition, it is envisaged that the Agri-Food Strategy Board will remain in place until at least early 2015 to advise on implementation of Going for Growth.

DARD and DETI will monitor progress and ensure that the Agri-Food Strategy Board receives regular reports on progress against actions and targets to assist the Board in its oversight role.

Tourism Strategy

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the final Tourism Strategy will be published.

(AQO 5158/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and wider tourism structures is underway to ensure we have the right structures in place to deliver on my and the industry's aspiration to grow tourism into a £1 billion industry by 2020. I await the outcome of the review to inform future plans.

My focus to date has been on action. 2012 and 2013 have been crucial years for Northern Ireland tourism and my priority has been to deliver on the tourism product, key events and global marketing campaigns to ensure success and bring maximum economic benefit to the local economy.

Green Investment Bank

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the funding her Department has assisted in drawing down from the Green Investment Bank.

(AQO 5159/11-15)

Mrs Foster: To date the Green Investment Bank (GIB) has committed £20 million funding towards Evermore Renewable Energy to develop a combined heat and power plant in the Port of Londonderry.

Invest NI has been working with the Green Investment Bank to raise awareness and earlier this year held an information session and round table discussion between Green Investment Bank and Northern Ireland companies which may seek to access Green Investment Bank funds.

Any company seeking funding should approach the Green Investment Bank directly.

In addition it has been highlighted that the funding threshold being used by Green Investment Bank may be too high for some of the emerging projects in Northern Ireland. This issue has been raised with senior officials of Green Investment Bank and they have committed to review this situation and to revert to us with possible solutions which may include aggregation and local management of smaller projects to enable them to be funded by Green Investment Bank.

Department of the Environment

Areas of Special Advertising Control: Implementation

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether he would consider implementing 'areas of special advertising control' in locations such as the University area of Belfast, to curtail the widespread misuse of 'to let' signage, whereby letting agents would be required to erect signage that is sympathetic to the character of the area.

(AQW 27967/11-15)

Mr Durkan (The Minister of the Environment): Implementation of 'Areas of Special Advertising Control' is something I have asked my Department to look at.

While areas of this nature have yet to be introduced in Northern Ireland, the Department currently possesses powers to restrict the display of estate agents' advertisements which otherwise would be granted "deemed consent" by the Regulations. However, before exercising these powers, I would need to be satisfied that removing the "deemed consent" currently available for estate agent signage would not inhibit legitimate commercial activity and would not place unnecessary costs and bureaucratic burdens on businesses and householders.

I am fully aware that there is a proliferation of this type of signage in the University Area and acknowledge that this can have a detrimental impact on amenity. However, in the current economic climate, I wish to be cautious and not unduly undermine support for the business community.

In the Department's experience the majority of estate agents display "for sale" and "to let" boards within the parameters set out in the Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. However, difficulties arise, particularly in areas where properties are in multiple occupation or in flats. In these situations signage can remain in place for a considerable period of time, as boards do not have to be removed until 14 days after all units/rooms are let.

In relation to enforcement, the Planning Office undertook a survey of signage in the Stranmillis Area in April 2013, with follow up action by enforcement staff who wrote to almost 40 estate agents and property owners in April 2013, reminding them of the Regulations and advising them of their responsibilities to remove all signs which were in breach of the regulations. This resulted in the removal of a number of signs.

An extended survey, covering the wider University Area, as defined in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan is currently underway and letters have already been issued to estate agents and property owners.

I have asked my officials to update me at regular intervals and also to explore the possibility of co-operative working on this matter with Belfast City Council, ahead of the transfer of planning functions (including the control of advertising) to local authorities.

I will however continue to pursue appropriate enforcement action to reduce the amount of signage and will monitor the situation closely.

Activity Centre, Fair Road, Greencastle, Kilkeel, Co.Down

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on a planning application for an Activity Centre at Fair Road, Greencastle, Kilkeel.

(AQW 28242/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have had the opportunity to visit the site in the company of planning officials. I have taken the time to ensure that all of the issues have been fully considered. and I have concluded that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. Planning permission has now issued.

Councils: Carbon Reduction Measures

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what funding options are available for councils wishing to invest in carbon reduction measures.

(AQW 28305/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I, like my predecessor, am fully committed to ensuring that Northern Ireland plays its full part in minimising greenhouse gas emissions and will explore all options which will help us to achieve that aim. However, my Department alone cannot deliver these aims, and I am looking to Executive colleagues and other stakeholders, including local government, to contribute to these objectives.

My Department currently offers a number of funding streams to councils to provide assistance in meeting sustainability and carbon reduction obligations.

Two Rethink Waste funds were launched in May 2010, providing funding to Councils, amongst others, for initiatives which boost waste prevention and recycling in order to meet EU targets. The Rethink Waste (Capital) Fund assists councils to increase levels of recycling by providing funding to cover the capital costs of improving or extending their existing waste collection, re-use and recycling infrastructure. Only Councils and Waste Management Groups can apply for the capital element of the Fund. In the last 4 years nearly £8.9 million has been allocated to capital projects. The Post Project Evaluation (PPE) for 2010/11 shows 6,900 tonnes of carbon savings achieved. PPEs are not available for other years as yet. The Fund will run to 31 March 2015.

Councils may also apply for funding under the Rethink Waste (Revenue) Fund. Applicants can apply for revenue funding for initiatives which will improve resource efficiency and boost waste prevention, recycling and re-use activity. In the last 4 years nearly £1.5 million has been allocated to revenue projects. PPEs are not available yet. The Fund will run to 31 March 2015.

My Department also provides access to a range of EU funding options available to councils wishing to invest in carbon reduction measures through the Barroso Team. Structural funds such as the INTERREG 4A programme are currently being used by a significant number of Northern Ireland councils to support projects such as: Smart Eco Hub, a cross border cluster organisation for the sustainable energy sector; the STEM Project, supporting businesses wishing to implement environmental management systems; and East Border Region, which promotes innovative, cross border economic development in the areas of agriculture, industry, commerce and tourism. Although full details are not yet available, the INTERREG 5A programme is due to commence in 2014 and is expected to continue in the same vein.

Councils may also access a number of EU competitive funding streams which provide grants or loans to eligible projects. An example of this type of funding is the RENEW project, funded through the INTERREG 4B North West Europe programme, whose aim is to deliver innovations for the waste supply chain by promoting the recovery of valuable materials from waste. Belfast City Council and DOE are full partners in this project.

I have been advised by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment that Councils can reduce overall energy costs and carbon emissions by generating their own power and heat from renewable sources. Renewable electricity is incentivised through the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) which provides a revenue stream for electricity generated by a range of technologies in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs). In addition to receiving support under the NIRO for all the electricity generated, generators can also sell any unused electricity to the grid.

The Renewable Heat Incentive is a scheme that provides financial incentives for non-domestic generators of renewable heat. Payments are for the lifetime of the technology (to a maximum of 20 years) and are dependent on the amount of heat generated and the size and type of technology. Technologies supported include solar thermal, biomass boilers and ground source heat pumps.

Both incentive mechanisms are designed to cover the additional costs involved in renewable energy technologies as well as providing a rate of return on the investment.

Planning Appeals Commission: South Antrim

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years, (i) how many planning applications within South Antrim have had to be reviewed after going to the Planning Appeals Commission; (ii) the total cost; and (iii) the outcome of these decisions.

(AQW 28373/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department routinely reviews all decisions made by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).

The Department is currently judicially reviewing the PAC decision on the Easi Park enforcement appeal at Crooked Stone Road, Antrim. This case is currently ongoing and therefore the total cost and outcome are not yet known although it is estimated these will not exceed £10,000.

No other decisions made by the PAC on planning applications or enforcement notices within South Antrim have been judicially reviewed in the last five years.

Easi Park, Crooked Stone Road, Antrim

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how much public money has been spent defending the planning application for Easi Park, Crooked Stone Road, Antrim.

(AQW 28374/11-15)

Mr Durkan: There are no planning applications at this site. The legal costs associated with defending a recent appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) against the Department's Enforcement Notice at Crooked Stone Road (Easi Park), were approximately £7,000.

The other cost to the Department would be in relation to staff costs. However, it is not possible to gauge the number of man hours that can be attributed to an individual case such as this.

Easi Park, Crooked Stone Road, Antrim

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the estimated cost to his Department of taking a judicial review case against the Planning Appeals Commission's decision on a planning application for the Easi Park, Crooked Stone Road, Antrim.

(AQW 28375/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Department is currently judicially reviewing the decision of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) on an enforcement notice at Easi Park, Crooked Stone Road, Antrim, not on a decision associated with a planning application.

It is estimated that the legal costs associated with the action of the Department to judicially review the decision of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) in this case should not exceed £10,000.

Taxi Act Team and Private Hire Taxi Companies

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) number of meetings held between the Taxi Act Team and Private Hire Taxi companies, excluding the two largest companies; (ii) dates and times of same; (iii) agenda for each meeting; (iv) attendees, either individually or as representatives; and to place the minutes of the meetings in the Assembly library.

(AQW 28379/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Taxi Act Team has attended 24 meetings with Private Hire Taxi companies, excluding the two largest companies (denoted by number of drivers on respective operator licences) since March 2009. These meetings are in addition to ongoing engagement with taxi operators and other industry stakeholders via phone calls, emails and a number of formal public consultations, as well as supporting the Minister in engagement with industry representatives who asked to meet him.

The table below shows the dates and times of the meetings along with attendees. For data protection reasons it is not possible to list the names of individual industry attendees. In the main, these

meetings did not have formal agendas, nor were minutes taken. However, where possible, I have outlined the nature of the topic to be discussed as contained in the industry request to meet. There are two meetings which have formal minutes and these will be placed, as requested, in the Assembly Library.

(ii) Dates and Times	(iii) Attendees	(iii) Agenda	(iv) Formal Minutes
10 March 2009 11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Eagle Taxis ■ Departmental Officials 	Meeting requested to discuss a number of issues including roof signs	No
28 April 2009 1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three representatives from North West Taxi Proprietors Association ■ Departmental Officials ■ Martina Anderson MLA 	Enforcement issues / problems, recruitment of staff, and enforcement team for the North West	No
26 March 2010 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Coleraine Taxi Industry (unknown if public or private hire) ■ Departmental Officials ■ Mr McClarty MLA 	None	No
29 July 2010 11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Departmental Officials 	Implementation timeline for Taxis Act	No
24 November 2010 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Alex Boyle ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire McMillen ■ Richard Lee ■ Stephen Spratt ■ Ken Ramsey 	Update on timeline for Taxis Act and enforcement proposals	Yes
16 December 2010 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two representatives from Swift Taxis ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Alex Boyle ■ Helen McIlwaine 	To discuss taximeters, non-company taxis picking up outside their depot premises	No

(ii) Dates and Times	(iii) Attendees	(iii) Agenda	(iv) Formal Minutes
20 January 2011 4pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Armagh taxi industry (unknown if public or private hire) ■ Armagh Councillors (organisers of meeting) – nine invited to meeting ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Alex Boyle ■ Helen McIlwaine 		No
25 January 2011 3pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Taxi firms across East Belfast ■ Alex Boyle ■ Sharon Clement ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Helen McIlwaine ■ Philip Robinson MLA 	Issue of recent consultation	No
3 March 2011 9am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two Representatives from the American Stretched Limousine Industry ■ One Representative from the Wedding Car industry ■ Stephen Spratt ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Helen McIlwaine ■ Elaine Colgan 	Wedding car regulation within new regime	No
7 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three representatives from the National Association of Funeral Directors ■ Officials 	Funeral Cars regulation within new regime.	No
9 March 2011 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two representatives from Belfast Taxis CIC ■ Trevor McCullough ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Sharon Clements ■ Alex Boyle ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Helen McIlwaine 		No

(ii) Dates and Times	(iii) Attendees	(iii) Agenda	(iv) Formal Minutes
23 March 2011 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Newry Taxi Industry (unknown if public or private hire, but given the issues discussed it is most likely to have been public hire) ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Alex Boyle ■ Elaine Colgan 	Taxi issues in Newry including rank issues	No
14 April 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from the Wedding Car Industry ■ Alex Boyle 		No
21 April 2011 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Swift Taxis ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Alex Boyle ■ Helen McIlwaine 	Fee structure for Taxi Operator Licensing	No
22 June 2011 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nine representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Three representatives from PSNI ■ Stephen Spratt ■ Richard Lee ■ Gerald Devine ■ Alex Boyle ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Helen McIlwaine ■ Jim Dumigan ■ Elaine Colgan 	To voice frustration with delays in legislation, and to discuss enforcement issues	No
23 June 2011 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Committee MLAs ■ Representatives from public and private hire taxi industries from across Northern Ireland ■ Claire Aldridge ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Helen McIlwaine ■ Sharon Clements ■ Deirdre Kenny 	To discuss Taxis Act implementation	See Hansard

(ii) Dates and Times	(iii) Attendees	(iii) Agenda	(iv) Formal Minutes
29 June 2011 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representative from the Chauffeur Industry ■ Alex Boyle ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Sharon Clements ■ Claire Aldridge 	Chauffeur Industry regulation within new regime.	No
1 Feb 2012 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nine representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Sharon Clements ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Brenda McGilligan 	To discuss delay to Taxi Operator Licensing and associated fees and taximeters.	No
6 February 2012 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two representatives from Swift Taxis ■ Sharon Clements ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Richard Lee 	To discuss proposals for taximeters and maximum fares	No
28 February 2012 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Representatives from Shankill Taxis (unknown if public or private hire) ■ Sharon Clements ■ Alex Boyle ■ Kyle Crutchley DRD ■ Trevor McCullough ■ Grace Hull 		No
27 March 2012 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One representative from the North West Taxi Association ■ Sharon Clements ■ Brenda McGilligan ■ Elaine Colgan 	To discuss taxi industry issues relating to Derry and City of Culture	No
8 May 2012 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three representatives from Eagle Taxis ■ Brenda McGilligan ■ Elaine Colgan ■ Sharon Clements ■ Alex Boyle 	To discuss implications of taxi operator regulations and fee calculations	No

(ii) Dates and Times	(iii) Attendees	(iii) Agenda	(iv) Formal Minutes
21 August 2012 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Four representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Iain Greenway ■ Trevor Evans ■ Alex Boyle ■ Sharon Clements ■ Jeremy Logan ■ Richard Lee ■ Gerald Devine ■ Nigel McCandless 	None	Yes
21 May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Four representatives from National Funeral Directors Association ■ Alex Boyle ■ Susan Stewart ■ Mark Allison ■ Elaine Colgan 	To discuss recent Special Occasion and Novelty Vehicle consultation and how the proposals would affect funeral industry	No
20 June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two representatives from Belfast CIC ■ Susan Stewart ■ Mark Allison ■ Elaine Colgan 	To discuss assistance being provided to Belfast Public Hire drivers	No
9 July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Four representatives from Belfast Taxi Association ■ Alex Boyle ■ Mark Allison ■ Elaine Colgan 	To discuss postponement of single tier, enforcement and taximeter regulations	No
17 July 2013 10.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three representatives from the Wedding Car Industry ■ Alex Boyle ■ Susan Stewart ■ Mark Allison 	To discuss an exemption for Wedding Cars	No

Judicial Reviews

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) number of Judicial Reviews applied for by each council, in each of the last two years; (ii) number granted; and (iii) costs per council to date. **(AQW 28380/11-15)**

Mr Durkan: The information requested is not held by the Department, and was obtained from individual councils.

The information received from 23 of the 26 councils indicates that there have not been any judicial reviews applied for by any council in each of the last two years. No response was received from North Down Borough Council, Newry and Mourne District Council or Armagh City and District Council.

Taxi Depots and Depot Licence Operators

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27815/11-15, how many individual taxi depots or depot licence operators these figures represent in each year.

(AQW 28414/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Taxi Operator Licensing was introduced in September 2012. Transitional arrangements provided for the issue of Temporary Licences initially to enable taxi companies to continue to operate their business while the influx of applications for taxi operator licences was processed. Under these transitional arrangements, temporary licences did not include the affiliation of drivers or taxis. Full licences issued subsequently and included these affiliation details.

Therefore, it is not possible to associate revoked taxi driver licences with operators before March 2013.

Observatree Initiative

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department's Environment Agency will work in partnership with the Woodland Trust in support of their 'Observatree' initiative.

(AQW 28415/11-15)

Mr Durkan: NIEA works closely with the Woodland Trust to deliver woodland nature conservation across Northern Ireland and regards the Observatree initiative as an important means to engage the public with emerging plant health issues through the mechanism of citizen science.

NIEA will continue to support the Woodland Trust in order that it can deliver the Observatree initiative. In this regard Mr Patrick Cregg, the Woodland Trust Director for Northern Ireland, gave a presentation to Agency staff on 30th September 2013 in which he described the Observatree initiative as a key future priority for his organisation.

A meeting took place between Government Officials and the Woodland Trust on 9th October 2013 at which the Observatree initiative was discussed. An official from the Woodland Trust briefed those present on how they intended to implement the initiative in Northern Ireland and asked for the support of all present.

NIEA will continue to work with DARD Forest Service, DARD Plant Health, The Woodland Trust and other NGOs involved in the initiative to further all aspects of tree health in Northern Ireland.

Dangers of Mobile Phone use whilst Driving

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what his Department is doing to highlight the dangers of mobile phone use whilst driving.

(AQW 28417/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My Department has a statutory duty to promote road safety, and within the context of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy, does this through a wide range of road safety education activities, including road safety public information campaigns and education programmes.

My Department has a number of on-going activities to highlight the dangers of using a mobile phone whilst driving. Action Measure 104 in the Road Safety Strategy sets out: "We will educate and inform people about the dangers of using any mobile phone while driving, including hands free kits."

DOE's hard-hitting campaign addressing driver carelessness and inattention, entitled "Moment", dramatises several circumstances where the driver is distracted; with the final scenario showing a driver checking his text, with fatal consequences. The core message is "One Lapse Can Last a

Lifetime” and is underpinned by the law: “If you kill someone through careless driving, you could go to prison for up to five years.” This campaign runs regularly and was recently aired in September.

This “Moment” campaign was recently re-edited to concentrate solely on the dangers of using a mobile phone whilst driving; with the added warning “You are one call away from being a killer.” This first ran during the summer and has been incorporated into my Department’s portfolio of road safety campaigns.

My Department has a suite of messages that make up its ‘Crashed Lives’ campaign. These consist of real-life accounts and include the story of ‘Shannan’ as told by her bereaved parents. Shannan died just a few months after passing her driving test and her story refers to speeding and mobile phone use. Shannan’s story will run on television again during December, alongside other real-life accounts in the ‘Crashed Lives’ suite of ads.

Shannan’s story has also recently been developed into an education pack, part of a ‘Crashed Futures’ package, for post-primary schools and youth organisations. This education pack focuses heavily on the consequences of using a mobile phone and speeding while driving, and is both poignant and hard-hitting. This pack is also aimed at pre-drivers or those who have recently past their test.

My Department has also developed the “Moment” campaign into an education pack which focuses on the dangers and consequences of using a mobile phone whilst driving. The message here highlights the real danger of killing someone whilst distracted by a mobile phone, and explains the vigorous police investigation which follows a serious collision. Subsequently, the audience is also provided with a glimpse of life in a Young Offenders Centre, where young drivers would end up should they be found guilty of causing death by careless driving through the use of a mobile phone. This education pack is currently being piloted and will be ready to roll out to schools Northern Ireland wide in the coming months.

In DOE’s recent advertisement, ‘Excuses’, launched last year, the need for wider road user responsibility is highlighted. The key message is that over 95% of crashes where someone is killed or seriously injured are due to human error. The ad depicts several tragic scenarios along with common excuses used by drivers and riders. In one scene the danger of using a mobile phone is referenced when the seriously injured victim recalls the driver’s excuse as “The driver said he thought the text was important.” This campaign is underpinned by the strap line “Kill the Excuses. It’s no Accident!”

In early November, a new leaflet was completed which explains the dangers of using a mobile phone whilst driving and the consequences. The messages contained in the advertisements are supported by the advice in the Highway Code and clearly explain the dangers of such a distraction. The leaflet is available on request from DOE and to download online from NI Direct.

DOE also continues to support Allstate NI’s ‘X the Txt’ programme which is delivered in over 30 schools across Northern Ireland each year. Supported by DOE and PSNI, ‘X the Txt’ is one of Allstate’s Corporate Responsibility initiatives and the messages delivered are consistent DOE’s messaging.

Advice on the use of mobile phones and in-vehicle technology is provided in the Highway Code under rule 149.

Research shows that driver carelessness and inattention is the biggest cause of road casualties in Northern Ireland; this includes using a mobile phone whilst driving. With this in mind, these activities play a part in our ambition of working towards zero road deaths in Northern Ireland.

This aspiration means that we do not accept that anyone should ever die on our roads; and the above initiatives support this by encouraging the community to adopt safer behaviours on the roads by not using a mobile phone whilst driving. All road users can sign up to a pledge supporting this at www.sharetheroadtozero.com

I recognise the continuing challenges of mobile phone use whilst driving and as such my Department will continue to address the issue through various activities.

New Councils: Minority Groups

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will make local councils aware, prior to the new councils becoming operational, of the need to take account of minority groups when taking controversial or sensitive decisions which will be subject to a minority threshold vote in the new councils.

(AQW 28418/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Local Government Bill contains provisions for the protection of minority interests. It introduces a call-in procedure whereby 15% of the members of a council can request the reconsideration of a decision, or committee recommendation, either on the grounds of alleged procedural deficiencies, or that it would have a disproportionate adverse impact on a section of the community in the local government district. The Bill also introduces qualified majority voting whereby certain council decisions, to be specified in subordinate legislation, will have to be passed by 80% of the members present and voting – this will include where the adverse impact call-in has been used.

I intend, subject to the agreement of the Assembly, to apply these provisions to the incoming councils, during the shadow period. I am also ensuring that training on the operation of the new governance arrangements, including the call-in procedures, is provided to elected members, council officers and staff transferring from Executive departments and all other organisations, is provided to during the shadow period prior to the councils taking up their full range of responsibilities on 1 April 2015.

This will ensure that the ability to request the reconsideration of a decision, on the grounds of adverse impact on a minority community, and the qualified majority vote mechanism will be available to the new councils in advance of them becoming fully operational on 1 April 2015.

Private Hire Taxis: Touting for Trade

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27856/11-15, how many test cases took place in this particular instance, including any issues of touting or plying for trade by private hire taxis.

(AQW 28436/11-15)

Mr Durkan: On 23 August, four¹ private hire taxis were used by Driver and Vehicle Agency staff in order to gain a better understanding of the issues raised by Belfast public hire taxi representatives in respect of the provision of taxi services at Ravenhill rugby ground.

The purpose of the test purchases was to assess the manner in which taxi services were being delivered to inform the Department's consideration as to whether the services provided were compliant with the current taxi legislation. The issue of touting or plying for trade was considered and legal clarification and advice sought from the Departmental Solicitors' Office. It was determined that the arrangements at that time at Ravenhill rugby ground did not constitute touting or plying for trade.

Private Hire Taxis Operators: Wheelchair Access

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27214/11-15, and in respect of service users with a disability and their representative organisations, (i) what concerns were expressed regarding Private Hire taxi operators charging enhanced fares for wheelchair access passengers compared to non-wheelchair access passengers; and (ii) whether this practice is a breach the Disability Discrimination Act.

(AQW 28439/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since the outset of the review of the Northern Ireland taxi industry in 2005 representative groups for wheelchair users have raised the issue of the over-charging of the people they represent. This has also been an issue that the Equality Commission has raised with the Department and addressed with taxi operators.

¹ Please note these figures are not part of official statistics and have not been subject to data validation

The Equality Commission has advised that DDA legislation makes it unlawful for organisations such as transport service providers, including taxi operators, to discriminate against disabled people in the way in which they provide or do not provide their services. For instance, a taxi operator is not permitted to charge a wheelchair user more than a non-wheelchair user for the use of an accessible 7-seat taxi. However, if the operator charges more for the use of a 7-seat taxi regardless of whether the person is a wheelchair user, then this would not be deemed as less favourable treatment and is, therefore, not discriminatory.

You will wish to note that, upon the introduction of Regulations around the maximum taxi fare and taximeters in Northern Ireland, this position will improve. Firstly, the Regulations will make it an offence to charge more than the maximum fare, irrespective of what type of vehicle is being used. Secondly, given the requirement for all taxis in Northern Ireland to provide the customer with a printed receipt, all wheelchair users will be in a much better position to challenge instances of over-charging as they will have first hand evidence of the total price being levied.

It is intended that these measures will help reduce the likelihood of the overcharging of all users and allow action to be taken against the driver and their operator if this were to occur.

Applications for Wind Turbines and Wind Farms

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 22405/11-15, (i) how many of the applications in North Antrim have been approved; (ii) how this compares with the percentage passed in Northern Ireland; and (iii) to explain the rationale for any differential in these approval rates.

(AQW 28445/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Table 1 below provides figures for the number of approved applications between 2008/09 and 31 August 2013 in the North Antrim parliamentary constituency and for Northern Ireland as a whole, broken down to single wind turbines and wind farms.

While approval rates between the two areas are broadly similar, percentages based on a small number of cases, as in the case of North Antrim approval rates, are prone to significant random fluctuations. This makes it difficult to reach any firm conclusions when comparing with other more robust rates, such as at the approval rates at Northern Ireland level.

THE NUMBER OF SINGLE WIND TURBINE AND WIND FARM APPLICATIONS APPROVED¹ BETWEEN 2008/09 AND 31ST AUGUST 2013, ON AGRICULTURAL LAND², IN NORTH ANTRIM AND THE WHOLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

	2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014 (to 31/08/2013)	
	Approved applications	Approval Rate	Approved applications	Approval Rate								
North Antrim	11	79%	5	100%	11	100%	38	86%	47	94%	26	96%
	1	100%	1	100%	0	-	1	100%	3	100%	0	-
	12	80%	6	100%	11	100%	39	87%	50	94%	26	96%
Northern Ireland	150	93%	52	80%	93	81%	238	80%	476	87%	157	91%
	8	89%	10	83%	10	100%	10	91%	10	67%	2	100%
Total	158	92%	62	81%	103	82%	248	81%	486	86%	159	91%

Notes:

- Decided applications may not have been received in the same time period. Therefore direct comparisons between these figures can not be made. Applications decided do not include withdrawn applications.
- The dataset was arrived at by taking the relevant applications from the Renewable energy database and then selecting those which intersect DARD farm polygons. British Oxygen Company: Waste

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the news of the dumping of toxic waste from the British Oxygen Company around Lettershandoney village, County Londonderry, whether (i) any such sites exist in the (a) Mobuoy Road; (b) Fincairn Road; or (c) Rosstowney Road areas; (ii) whether the mineral extraction and dumping which has taken place at Mobuoy Road has impacted on, or disturbed, any such sites; and (iii) whether he intends to order an assessment of the health risks to local residents and the wider population of Derry whose water supply is abstracted downstream of this area.

(AQW 28461/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In 1996, a very detailed survey and assessment was carried out on behalf of the Department by an environmental consultancy group, ENTEC, on all known and potential BOC (British Oxygen Company) tarry waste disposal sites, comprising 29 sites in total. Of these 29 suspected sites, the presence of waste was confirmed at ten sites. This included two confirmed sites at Mobuoy Road and one confirmed site at Rosstowney Road. There is one unconfirmed site at Fincairn Road (referred to as Fincairn Glen in the report). These sites are at the specific locations highlighted in the question.

Two tarry waste disposal sites are confirmed to be present on the Mobuoy Road, one is located at a waste management facility (closed landfill) and the other at a sandpit area. This material will have been disposed at these locations during the period of 1967 – 1973 when acetylene was produced by BOC at its Maydown plant.

My Department has no evidence to suggest that the mineral extraction and waste disposal activities have impacted or disturbed either of the Mobuoy Road tarry waste sites.

On the third point in this question, I have asked Derry City Council, as the statutory body for Environmental Health to undertake a review of the tarry waste disposal sites within its jurisdiction including site inspections to detect any statutory nuisances prejudicial to health.

This review will take account of the risk assessments and recommendations for each site in the 1996 ENTEC report and provide information regarding potential risks and the risk management actions taken and/or required. It will consider the water supplies for the area taking into account any potential contaminant pathways from the tarry waste pits. My Department, through NIEA, is committed to working with the Council, the Public Health Agency and others to determine if there any current risks to health and the wider environment.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27976/11-15, whether subsequent enforcement proceedings initiated against the site affected by withdrawn retrospective planning application A/2009/0400/F, included an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening, as required by Regulation 22 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999; and whether that EIA screening was positive or negative.

(AQW 28462/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Subsequent enforcement proceedings initiated against the site affected by A/2009/0400/F, in accordance with Regulation 22 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 were subject to an EIA determination before an Enforcement Notice was issued and it was determined that the unauthorised development was EIA Development (Positive).

Pursuant to Regulation 22(2) the Enforcement Notice was accompanied by a Notice, referred to as a Regulation 22 Notice.

Extraction and Processing of Minerals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to define, in regard to the extraction and processing of minerals, what his Department considers an extant planning permission.

(AQW 28465/11-15)

Mr Durkan: An extant planning permission is any planning permission which is still in existence ie has not expired.

Provision of Taxis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27856/11-15, and in view of his Department's legal position on the provision of taxis prior and subsequent to the specified date and location deeming it compliant, to provide (i) the dates and times of all meetings, correspondence and communication with legal advisors; and (ii) copies of all legal advice requested and received.

(AQW 28485/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As a result of Departmental operational activity, officials sought and received legal advice on the operation of taxi services around Ravenhill Rugby Ground. As a result, it was determined that those services fell within the relevant legislation and therefore no offences were being committed.

The concept of legal professional privilege safeguards the rights of a person or organisation, including the Department, to obtain legal advice on a confidential basis and not to disclose such information in the interests of the wider administration of justice. It has been the settled view that in this context, legal advice is not disclosed and that privilege applies to the information sought in parts (i) and (ii) of the questions. The Department is, therefore, unwilling to waive the legal professional privilege vested in it, and provide the information sought.

Fixed Penalty Notices: Taxis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27263/11-15, whether there is a cap on the number of Fixed Penalty Notices any one Private Hire Taxi driver or operative can receive before enhanced penalties are imposed, or court action instigated.

(AQW 28486/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Driver and Vehicle Agency's operational policy and guidance determines that a maximum of three Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued to a driver per encounter but only one of those can be for an endorsable offence. However, there is no cap on the number of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any one driver based on multiple encounters with enforcement staff. Prosecution files are generally reserved for more serious offences which cannot be dealt with by means of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A holder of a taxi driver licence is required to be a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. While this requirement is not defined in law, the Department can review a taxi driver's conduct at any time and does so when a first application or application to renew a taxi driver licence is received. The imposition of an excessive number of fixed penalties would be one factor that could be taken into account when assessing fitness to hold a licence.

Driver and Vehicle Agency: Taxi Operators

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27716/11-15, to provide a copy of the relevant training module in respect of Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement staff carrying out duties to detect illegal activities of taxi operators.

(AQW 28487/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The accredited `Advanced Certificate in Investigative Practice` is designed to give staff, with an investigative role, the necessary knowledge and skills to competently carrying out their duties.

The certificate is modular based and the modules entitled `Law, Evidence, Procedure and Best Practice` and `Advanced Statement/Report writing` provide formal training to enforcement officers in gathering and submitting evidence to support investigations.

A copy of the brochure detailing the 'Advanced Certificate in Investigative Practice' has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Staggered Implementation of the Taxis Act

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment on what evidence he based his decision to bring forward a staggered implementation of the Taxis Act.

(AQW 28499/11-15)

Mr Durkan: In June 2013 the Environment Committee indicated that they shared my predecessor's desire to implement in September 2014 the remaining elements of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, with the suite of changes coming into operation together, as a cohesive and coordinated package.

I asked for a series of meetings with industry representatives and consumer organisations in October, during which I was able to explore the issues surrounding implementation of the legislation on the various elements of the taxi industry.

Whilst keenly aware of the concerns of the industry, I am also conscious of the need to modernise and streamline the Northern Ireland taxi industry and the Environment Committee's expressed desire to see the new legislation operative as soon as possible.

Having listened to key stakeholders and taken the views of the Committee, I decided that a partially phased approach strikes the correct balance, being mindful of the benefits the changes will bring, alongside the additional costs being placed on taxi operators. This decision will effectively stagger the cost impacts over an 18 month period whilst still creating the overarching legislative framework on time.

Taxi Bill: Cost Implications

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department has taken to inform the taxi industry of the cost implications of the Taxis Act, since work began on the legislation.

(AQW 28500/11-15)

Mr Durkan: My officials have undertaken extensive engagement with taxi industry stakeholders since the initial review in 2005, including hosting roadshows around Northern Ireland, as it was recognised that the proposed changes would result in significant changes for the industry. Each consultation on the various aspects of the taxi reform programme contained, and sought comments on, a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment of the impact of the policy options in terms of the costs, benefits and risks of the proposals. Each of the consultations has been publicised widely in the taxi industry.

As the detailed outworkings of the new suite of Regulations have become clearer in the last 12 months, the Department has been working to mitigate the impact of these costs to the industry.

I acknowledge the importance of continued effective communication within the industry around all aspects of the implementation of the Act. The communication group which the Department has established as part of the implementation of the Taxis Act programme has been charged with planning the key messages required to be delivered to both the taxi industry and to the general public. The timing of all communication will be determined to ensure all stakeholders have the information they need in time to prepare for the changes.

Staggered Implementation of the Taxis Act

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment what assurances he can give that Single Tier Licensing will not be included in the staggered implementation of the Taxis Act and that it will come into effect in September 2014.

(AQW 28501/11-15)

Mr Durkan: Since taking office, I have met with a range of taxi industry stakeholders and from those discussions, and engagement with the Environment Committee, decided on the staggered implementation of a number of specific elements in the taxi reform programme with the aim of spreading the financial impact of the measures on the taxi industry in the prevailing economic climate.

The key change from a system with two regulatory frameworks, private hire and public hire, to a system with a single regulatory framework in which all taxis will be included, and which allows all taxis to ply for hire, is a core strand of the programme and, as such, the timing of its introduction will not be affected.

My Department is working to ensure that the necessary legislation will be made and operative in September 2014 as planned.

Staggered Implementation of the Taxis Act

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment, given that the full implementation of the Taxis Act seeks to provide a safe, fair and fit for purpose taxi industry, what investigations have been undertaken to discover the detrimental impact on consumers of further delays due to staggered implementation of the Act.

(AQW 28502/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I fully acknowledge that prompt implementation of the remainder of the provisions of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 will help provide a safe, fair and fit for purpose taxi industry and that is why I have continued with my predecessor's commitment to have the legislation in place in September 2014.

However, having listened to stakeholders since taking office, I have decided that a partially phased approach strikes the correct balance, being mindful of the benefits the changes will bring, alongside the additional costs being placed on taxi operators. I have listened carefully to representatives of consumer and disability groups in determining how to bring forward a timetable that strikes an appropriate balance; the representatives indicated to me that they understand the need for a balance, and are content with the proposals I have brought forward.

Implementation of the Taxis Act

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department will take to inform the public when sections of the Taxis Act will be implemented, in order to avoid confusion among consumers.

(AQW 28503/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I acknowledge the importance of continued effective communication within the industry and to the public around all aspects of the implementation of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

As part of the implementation of the Taxis Act programme, a communication group has been established within my Department. This group has been charged with planning the key messages required to be delivered to both the taxi industry and to the general public. The timing of all communications will be determined so as to ensure all stakeholders have the information they need in time to prepare for the changes and to avoid confusion.

Single Tier Taxi System

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with the Minister for Regional Development on the (i) implementation of Single Tier Licensing; and (ii) necessity of an 'all in or all out' policy for taxis in bus lanes to ensure the avoidance of confusion among consumers.

(AQW 28504/11-15)

Mr Durkan: I have not yet had the opportunity to discuss issues around taxis and bus lanes with Minister Kennedy since taking office. I have, however, requested a meeting and expect it to take place within the next few weeks, and the issues you have raised are likely to be on the agenda.

Self-Employed Taxi Drivers

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment why some self-employed taxi drivers who have a valid operator licence, but sub-contract to larger firms, cannot operate unless they remove the illuminated roof signs of the sub-contracted company.

(AQW 28548/11-15)

Mr Durkan: The Public Service Vehicles (Conditions and Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1995, Regulation 51, prescribes the requirements for Taxi Roof Signs.

The licensee or driver of every taxi used in standing or plying for hire or carrying passengers for hire must display a compliant roof sign on the roof of the taxi.

One of the aims of Taxi Operator Licensing is to make the link between the consumer's experience and the responsible operator stronger and more visible. To ensure that this link is realised it is important that we do not expect consumers to travel in a taxi with a roof-sign that does not reflect the operator with whom the journey is being taken.

It could be construed as misleading if a self-employed taxi driver carries a passenger under their own operator's licence whilst displaying the roof-sign of a different operator.

Therefore, where a person is trading under their own Taxi Operators Licence they must display their own trading name or the word taxi on the front of the sign and a phone number or the word taxi on the rear of the sign.

Where DVA Enforcement detect a taxi with a non compliant roof sign a number of sanctions are available ranging from advice and warning for a first minor non compliance to issuing a defect notice or a fixed penalty for repeated or blatant non compliance.

Retrospective Planning Application

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 27976/11-15, whether his Department acted lawfully in issuing formal letters of withdrawal on retrospective planning application A/2009/0400/F on 28 June 2010.

(AQW 28600/11-15)

Mr Durkan: As I confirmed in my previous answer the legal status of the application is that it is deemed refused. The withdrawal letters issued in June 2010 have no effect on that status.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service Posts in the Department

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many Civil Service posts existed in his Department on 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 at (i) Administrative Assistant; (ii) Administrative Officer; (iii) Executive Officer 2; (iv) Executive Officer 1; (v) Staff Officer; (vi) Deputy Principal; (vii) Grade 7; and (viii) Grade 6 levels, broken down by local council area.

(AQW 27954/11-15)

Mr Hamilton (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The table below details the information as at 1 January 2012 and excludes staff on a career break.

		Analogous Grade							
		(viii) Grade 6	(vii) Grade 7	(vi) Deputy Principal	(v) Staff Officer	(iv) Executive Officer 1	(iii) Executive Officer 2	(ii) Admin Officer	(i) Admin Assistant
1 January 2012									
Local council area	Ballymena	2	2	5	6	8	5	33	2
	Ballymoney	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Belfast	68	182	385	421	428	367	656	188
	Carrickfergus	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
	Craigavon	0	2	6	10	12	7	33	2
	Derry	1	6	13	12	22	27	85	11
	Down	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
	Lisburn	0	1	5	9	6	1	8	4
	North Down	1	30	55	41	18	32	33	9
	Omagh	0	1	7	8	27	6	25	2
Total		72	224	476	510	525	445	874	218

The table below details the information as at 1 January 2013 and excludes staff on a career break.

		Analogous Grade							
		(viii) Grade 6	(vii) Grade 7	(vi) Deputy Principal	(v) Staff Officer	(iv) Executive Officer 1	(iii) Executive Officer 2	(ii) Admin Officer	(i) Admin Assistant
1 January 2013									
Local Council Area	Ballymena	0	2	4	6	8	6	34	5
	Belfast	66	182	397	435	394	351	658	201
	Carrickfergus	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Coleraine	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Craigavon	0	2	7	9	17	7	36	5
	Derry	1	7	14	14	22	25	76	17
	Down	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
	Lisburn	0	1	5	8	7	1	8	4
	North Down	1	29	58	46	16	32	31	8
	Omagh	0	1	7	9	26	7	25	4
Total		68	225	492	527	497	431	868	244

PEACE III Pettigo Tullyhommon Termon Project

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the PEACE III Pettigo Tullyhommon Termon Project, to detail (i) the total amount spent on the project; (ii) whether any of the work commissioned remains unfinished; and to provide (iii) an itemised breakdown of how the funds were allocated.

(AQW 28054/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The total PEACE III funding allocated to the Pettigo Tullyhommon Termon project is €8,123,841, as broken down in the following table:

Budget Item	Total Grant (€)
Capital costs	7,066,813
Salaries and Wages	338,633
Goods and Services	76,538
Programme Costs	641,857

The total amount spent on the project to 31 October 2013 is €4,122,610. A number of elements supported in the allocated funding are yet to be completed.

Secretary to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal: Complaints

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who has authority to investigate a complaint made against the Secretary to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

(AQW 28179/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not have a direct role in complaints made against any member of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. The Law Society of Northern Ireland has authority to consider a complaint against the Secretary if the complaint relates to conduct which as a solicitor is alleged to bring the solicitors' profession into disrepute. The Department also understands that a complaint in relation to how the Secretary discharges his or her duties can be made to the President of the Tribunal.

Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society: Complaints

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who has authority to investigate a formal complaint made by a solicitor and member of the Law Society against the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society,

(AQW 28180/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department understands that the Chief Executive of the Law Society has the authority to determine a formal complaint made by a solicitor and member of the Law Society about a member of the senior management team, including the Deputy Chief Executive.

In relation to a complaint made against the Chief Executive, the Department also understands that the Law Society has in place a process under which the President of the Society investigates and determines any complaint made against the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society: Complaints

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of whether the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society as well as the Secretariat to the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal not being accountable to investigation, following formal complaints identified by

their membership, undermines transparency and is not in the interest of continued self-regulation of the legal profession.

(AQW 28181/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department understands that both the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society are accountable to investigation by the Law Society by way of internal processes governed ultimately by the Law Society Council.

The Department further understands that the Secretary to the Tribunal is accountable to that Tribunal and may also be accountable to the Law Society as a member of the solicitors' branch of the legal profession in relation to his or her conduct.

In relation to the broader question of self-regulation of the legal profession, the Department is now consulting on a draft Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill with a view to bringing legislation for consideration by the Assembly. The Department will consider carefully all submissions regarding the regulatory framework for the legal profession.

Zero-Hour Contracts

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of employees that are on zero hour contracts arising from public contracts and public expenditure.

(AQW 28192/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am unable to answer this question as DFP does not hold the information.

Economic Inactivity Rate

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 28245/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Estimates of the numbers of economically inactive by Northern Ireland (NI) Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) Local Area Database, with the most recent data available for January – December 2012. These estimates are based on the residency of an individual.

Please note that LFS estimates at PCA level are based on relatively small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability than for NI level results.

The requested breakdown of economic inactivity by PCA is shown in Table 1 overleaf.

TABLE 1: ECONOMIC INACTIVITY RATE BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA, JANUARY – DECEMBER 2012

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Economic Inactivity Rate % of 16-64 Population
Belfast East	26.3%
Belfast North	30.0%
Belfast South	30.9%
Belfast West	37.3%
East Antrim	21.2%
East Londonderry	33.0%
Fermanagh South Tyrone	27.6%
Foyle	28.9%

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Economic Inactivity Rate % of 16-64 Population
Lagan Valley	23.2%
Mid Ulster	28.2%
Newry & Armagh	27.7%
North Antrim	26.5%
North Down	21.6%
South Antrim	19.3%
South Down	29.3%
Strangford	30.1%
Upper Bann	29.5%
West Tyrone	28.4%
Total (Northern Ireland)	27.6%

Source: Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database 2012

Business Premises Currently Vacant: Ballymena; Ballymoney; Ballycastle

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many business premises are currently vacant in (a) Ballymena; (b) Ballymoney; and (c) Ballycastle; and (ii) how many premises in each of these towns are occupied by charities with rates exemption.

(AQW 28281/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information is collated at district council and ward area level.

The numbers of vacant non-domestic properties in (a) Ballymena, (b) Ballymoney and (c) Moyle District Council areas at 31st October 2013 are (a) 495, (b) 212 and (c) 109 respectively.

Information for part (ii) is not available in the form requested. The numbers of non-domestic properties granted some element of rate exemption in (a) Ballymena, (b) Ballymoney and (c) Moyle District Council areas at 31st October 2013 are (a) 380, (b) 190, and (c) 176 respectively. These include

churches, halls and some local authority properties which are for public use.

Vacant Domestic Properties

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of vacant domestic properties, based on rating records, in the (i) Ballymena Borough Council; (ii) Ballymoney Borough Council; and (iii) Moyle District Council areas.

(AQW 28283/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: At 30th September 2013 a total of (i) 708, (ii) 396 and (iii) 460 domestic dwellings in the respective council areas of Ballymena Borough, Ballymoney Borough and Moyle District were recorded as vacant.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of public sector jobs broken down by constituency.

(AQW 28286/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The table attached details the total number of employee jobs in the public sector, broken down by each Parliamentary Constituency. The figures refer to the number of employee jobs at the 3rd September 2012.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND EMPLOYEE JOBS BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA

Parliamentary Constituency	Public Sector Employee Jobs
Belfast East	17,153
Belfast North	14,759
Belfast South	35,662
Belfast West	15,272
East Antrim	5,029
East Londonderry	8,877
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	9,335
Foyle	15,357
Lagan Valley	8,265
Mid Ulster	6,159
Newry And Armagh	12,899
North Antrim	9,585
North Down	5,623
South Antrim	13,294
South Down	6,989
Strangford	5,449
Upper Bann	13,525
West Tyrone	8,568
Total	211,800

Source: NI Business Register and Employment Survey, September 2012

Energy Performance Operational Ratings: Government Properties

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of properties within the government estate that fall within each category of the Energy Performance Operational Rating from A-G; and (ii) the properties that are rated (a) G, (b) F and (c) E.

(AQW 28308/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department of Finance and Personnel manages 88 office accommodation properties which have Energy Performance Operational Rating.

Other NICS Departments manage their own specialised accommodation. I would advise the Member to contact each Department for relevant energy ratings.

In response to (i), the number of properties within each category is given in brackets after each rating: B(3), C(22), D(46), E(13), F(4) and G(0).

In response to (ii), the properties rated in categories E, F and G are named below:

E rating

- Banbridge Crown Building;
- Boaz House, Omagh;
- Castle Court (SSA), Belfast;
- Clare House, Belfast;
- Coleraine County Hall;
- Dungannon Crown Buildings;
- Falls Road SSA;
- Goodwood House, Belfast;
- Kilkeel Crown Building;
- Omagh County Hall;
- Omagh Crown Building;
- Rosepark House; and
- Strabane Crown Building.

F rating

- Craigantlet Buildings, Belfast;
- Marlborough House, Craigavon;
- Road Transport Licensing Division, Belfast; and
- Roads Service Office (Enniskillen at Castle Barracks)

Small Businesses

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of businesses that have an annual turnover of less than £500,000 and/or employ fewer than fifty people; and (ii) the location of the sales and exports of these businesses, including the value and proportion of trade. **(AQW 28312/11-15)**

Mr Hamilton: At March 2012 there were 69,275 Northern Ireland businesses which were either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme, with an annual turnover of less than £500,000 and/or employed fewer than fifty people.

Comprehensive information relating to the location of the sales and exports of these businesses is not available. However, information relating to the estimated value and location of sales for such businesses in the manufacturing sector only is provided in Table 1.

Information on the total value of tradable services exports from such companies in (i) Construction (ii) Manufacturing and (iii) a “High Export Potential” group is provided in Table 2. Broad destination data is available for the latter group only.

TABLE 1: BROAD DESTINATION SALES AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES FROM NORTHERN IRELAND MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES WITH FEWER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES OR WITH TURNOVER LESS THAN £500,000 IN 2011/12

	Value of Sales (£m)	% of sales
Total Sales	2,841	100.0
NI Sales	1,500	52.8
GB Sales	576	20.3
Export Sales	765	26.9
ROI Sales	444	15.6
Rest of Europe Sales	139	4.9
Rest of World Sales	182	6.4

Source: Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey 2011/12, Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch, NISRA

Footnotes:

- 1 Total sales includes all sales regardless of destination.
- 2 Exports include all sales outside the United Kingdom.

TABLE 2: 2011 NI TRADABLE SERVICES EXPORTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS AND HIGH EXPORT POTENTIAL BUSINESSES FOR COMPANIES WITH FEWER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES AND/OR WITH TURNOVER LESS THAN £500,000

	Value of Sales (£m)	% of sales
Construction	118.3	100.0
Manufacturing	13.8	100.0
High Export Potential Group:		
Export Sales	80.7	100.0
ROI Sales	32.1	39.8
Rest of Europe Sales	8.2	10.2
Rest of World Sales	40.4	50.1

Source: Exporting Northern Ireland Services 2011 (NISRA)

Employed EU Nationals

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people currently employed are EU Nationals, excluding British Nationals.

(AQW 28335/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There were an estimated 1 39,000 EU nationals (excluding British Nationals) aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland, based on respondents' reported nationality in the July - September 2013 Labour Force Survey (LFS), conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

- 1 Since the LFS is a sample survey, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.

Forensic Service Northern Ireland

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the requirements placed on Forensic Service Northern Ireland for open and competitive tendering for external service provision, post-devolution of Policing and Justice powers.

(AQW 28383/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Forensic Science Northern Ireland is subject to the Executive's Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy. It is required to carry out all procurement in line with this policy which is based on twelve guiding principles. These include Competitive Supply, which provides that procurement should be carried out by competition unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary, and Transparency which requires public bodies to ensure openness and clarity on procurement policy and its delivery.

The policy also requires departments and their sponsored bodies to carry out their procurement activities by means of a documented service level agreement (SLA) with a Centre of Procurement Expertise. The Department of Justice has an SLA with Central Procurement Directorate.

Vacancy Rates in Business Premises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the vacancy rates in business premises in each of the largest thirty towns, broken down by percentage.

(AQW 28424/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The information requested is not available.

Employed EU Nationals

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQO 4979/11-15, how many of the European Union Nationals in employment were born outside the United Kingdom.

(AQW 28427/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: In Northern Ireland there were an estimated¹ 57,000 EU nationals aged 16 and over in employment that were born outside of the UK, based on respondents' reported nationality and country of birth in the July - September 2013 Labour Force Survey (LFS), conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

1 Since the LFS is a sample survey, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.

Gender Breakdown of Senior Civil Servants

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide a gender breakdown of senior civil servants.

(AQW 28429/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There are 215 substantive senior civil servants, of whom 136 are male and 79 are female.

Vacant Properties at Sunset Park, Portstewart

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any rating payments that have been made in respect of the vacant properties at Sunset Park, Portstewart since the rating of empty homes became operational in October 2011.

(AQW 28437/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: There have been no rating payments made in respect of the vacant properties at Sunset Park, Portstewart, since the Rating of Empty Homes policy became operational in October 2011.

Average Salary for Company Directors

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the average salary for company directors; and (ii) comparable information for Britain and the Republic of Ireland, for the most recent five years for which data is available.

(AQW 28441/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Information on average salary for Corporate Managers and Directors in the private sector in Northern Ireland and the UK is provided in the attached table, from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The information provided uses the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for all Corporate Managers and Directors. It is not possible to disaggregate this information further to provide separate estimates for company directors due to sample size constraints in the ASHE.

Comparable information is not available for the Republic of Ireland.

TABLE: MEDIAN1 ANNUAL GROSS PAY FOR ALL2 PRIVATE SECTOR CORPORATE MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS3 - 2008-2012

Year	Northern Ireland (£)	United Kingdom (£)
2008	28,010	37,056
2009	28,795	37,443
2010	27,544	37,583
2011	28,434	37,000
2012	28,921	38,242

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)⁴

- 1 The median is the value of earnings below which 50% of employees fall.
- 2 Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.
- 3 Job description is based on Standard Occupational Classification code 11. This definition changed from 'Corporate Managers' for 2008-2010 to 'Corporate Managers and Directors' for 2011-2012.
- 4 The ASHE is based on a 1% sample of employee jobs taken from HM Revenue and Customs pay as you earn (PAYE) records and the reported estimates therefore have an associated degree of sampling error.

Note: The heavy black line in the table indicates discontinuities arising from methodological changes and care should be taken when making comparisons between such periods (see background notes in http://www.detini.gov.uk/northern_ireland_ashe_2012_bulletin-revised_22-11-12.pdf).

Cars Available to Senior Civil Servants

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number and make of the cars available for use by senior civil servants; (ii) the annual cost; and (iii) the conditions upon which the cars are made available.

(AQW 28442/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Each department is responsible for the management of their own cars for official use.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has two Skoda Superb cars for official use. When not required for Ministerial business, cars are available for other Departmental use including the transport of officials. It is not possible to disaggregate these costs from normal Ministerial use.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28513/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department has not made any specific provision within DFP buildings in regard to receiving visitors diagnosed with autism.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of meetings; and (ii) attendees at the meetings to discuss funding for the Narrow Water Bridge project.

(AQW 28531/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I have not had any meetings with either Ministers, or officials, to discuss funding for the Narrow Water Bridge project.

Expenditure Incurred as a Result of the G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide a full breakdown on all expenditure incurred as a result of the G8 Summit taking place in Fermanagh, broken down by (i) department; (ii) arm's length body; and the purpose of the spend.

(AQW 28559/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: My Department does not hold information on all expenditure incurred in respect of the G8 event. Detail on actual spend incurred by the NI Executive should be requested from the relevant departments involved with delivering the G8 Summit.

Special EU Programmes Body

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of staff employed by the Special EU Programmes Body, broken down by religion.

(AQW 28563/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The religious background of staff currently employed by the Special EU Programmes body is:

Protestant	19
Roman Catholic	33
Other	3

These figures apply only to staff employed in the SEUPB's Belfast and Omagh offices. The SEUPB is not legislatively required to monitor the community background of staff employed in its Monaghan office.

Number of Grocery Shops

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of grocery shops broken down by council area in each of the last fifteen years.

(AQW 28621/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The number of grocery stores for Northern Ireland and each Local Government District, in September of each year from 2006 to 2013, is the attached table.

This data has been sourced from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). The IDBR contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme.

IDBR data is only available by Local Government District for the last 8 years.

TABLE: NUMBER OF GROCERY STORES IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT, SEPTEMBER 2006 –SEPTEMBER 2013

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Northern Ireland	1525	1540	1520	1435	1420	1440	1375	1385
Antrim	35	35	30	30	30	35	30	30
Ards	55	50	55	45	50	50	45	45
Armagh	45	45	45	40	40	40	40	40
Ballymena	55	60	55	60	55	60	55	50
Ballymoney	25	25	30	25	20	20	20	20
Banbridge	30	30	30	30	30	35	30	35
Belfast	310	320	285	275	275	275	260	270
Carrickfergus	30	25	30	35	30	30	25	30
Castlereagh	40	45	45	40	35	35	35	35
Coleraine	50	45	50	45	45	45	45	45
Cookstown	35	35	40	35	30	30	30	30
Craigavon	70	70	65	60	60	65	65	60
Derry	85	95	85	95	90	95	95	95
Down	60	60	60	55	60	55	60	60
Dungannon	55	55	65	55	55	60	55	55
Fermanagh	75	70	60	65	65	65	65	65
Larne	25	25	35	30	25	25	25	25
Limavady	30	30	25	20	25	30	25	25
Lisburn	65	65	70	60	60	60	55	55
Magherafelt	35	35	35	30	35	35	35	35
Moyle	25	25	25	25	25	20	20	20
Newry & Mourne	75	80	85	80	80	75	75	75
Newtownabbey	50	55	55	60	60	60	55	60
North Down	45	50	45	35	40	45	45	40
Omagh	60	55	55	55	50	50	45	45
Strabane	55	55	50	50	50	55	45	45

Source: Inter-Departmental Business Register, September 2006-2013

Notes:

- 1 Grocery Stores have been defined using the UK Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (UK SIC 07) code: 47110 for 2008-2013. For 2006-2007 the equivalent UK SIC 2003 codes: 52111, 52112 and 52113 have been used.
- 2 In these tables each local site belonging to a business has been counted independently and only sites with the relevant SIC code have been included. Local sites have been assigned to districts based on their postcode.
- 3 Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

Salary of Administrative Officers in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the salary of Administrative Officers in the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and (ii) the salary of the equivalent Officers in the Home Civil Service in Great Britain, working outside Greater London.

(AQW 28778/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: This information is available in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's statistical bulletin entitled: Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2012: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/Pay_Statistics_for_the_NICS_2012.pdf.

The next pay bulletin is expected in December.

Salary of Principals in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the salary of Principals in the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and (ii) the salary of the equivalent grade in the Home Civil Service in Great Britain, working outside Greater London.

(AQW 28779/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: This information is available in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's statistical bulletin entitled: Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2012: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/Pay_Statistics_for_the_NICS_2012.pdf

The next pay bulletin is expected in December.

Cash Reserve for the Northern Ireland Executive

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any discussions he has held with his UK and Welsh counterparts concerning the idea of a "cash reserve" for the Northern Ireland Executive, similar to that announced for the Welsh Assembly Government by the UK Government on 18 November 2013.

(AQW 28780/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The concept of the Welsh cash reserve is to provide a mechanism to manage the volatility of any new devolved tax revenue streams. The flexibility for the NI Executive to save surplus revenues in a cash reserve is, therefore, one of the options that will need to be considered should responsibility for corporation tax be devolved.

Although the impact on the Block Grant of a devolved and reduced rate of corporation tax was examined at a high level by the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the NI Economy, I have not yet had any detailed discussions on specific mechanisms to manage volatility. Detailed discussions will only take place once there is a greater clarity on the expected design of a devolved corporation tax regime and the UK Government has made its decision on whether to transfer responsibility for the tax.

Welfare Reform Legislation

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the financial position in January 2014, following comments by the Minister of State, Mike Penning MP, regarding imminent reductions of £5 million per month from the block grant while welfare reform legislation remains unresolved.

(AQW 28846/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I am increasingly alarmed by the ongoing delay in moving forward the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill. Indeed, I met with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 18th November where he reinforced his intention to impose penalties should the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly not progress the Welfare Reform Bill.

It is now critical that the Welfare Reform Bill is progressed. Failure to do so will have grave financial consequences for the Northern Ireland Executive both in this financial year and beyond. Without progress in the Welfare Reform Bill in this financial year, the Executive would be faced with a £15 million pressure

in its January Monitoring Round. This would be to the detriment of public services here.

Lessons from Auschwitz Programme: Barnett Consequentials

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the Barnett consequentials which follow as a result of the spending by the UK Department of Education in England on the Lessons from Auschwitz programme.

(AQW 28927/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Barnett Formula ensures the Northern Ireland Executive receives a population-based proportion of changes in planned spending on comparable Government services in England, England and Wales or Great Britain as appropriate.

This means that the Northern Ireland administration would have received Barnett consequentials associated with allocations to the Department of Education in England in past UK Spending Reviews. Importantly, funding allocated through the Barnett Formula is unhypothecated, meaning it is for allocation locally in line with the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

Fiscal Powers

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update of the review of Fiscal Powers.
(AQO 5177/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: DFP continues to undertake a scoping exercise to examine the Scottish Calman and Welsh Silk Commission reports, and the positions taken in respect of the possible devolution of each individual tax or duty in those.

Since this question was last asked, the UK Government have published their full response to the Silk Commission. It confirms the devolution of Landfill Tax and Stamp Duty Land Tax. The UK Government made it clear that they will not agree to all requests for tax devolution by refusing the devolution of direct long haul Air Passenger Duty to the Welsh Government.

North/South Ministerial Council

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his recent engagement with his counterpart at the North South Ministerial Council.

(AQO 5175/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The deputy First Minister gave a statement in the Assembly on the 12th November updating members on the last North South Ministerial Council meeting which I attended on 8th November.

The main plenary session, which was also attended by both Michael Noonan (Minister for Finance) and Brendan Howlin (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform), focused on our shared economic challenges.

I also met separately with Brendan Howlin. We had no formal agenda for that and discussions focused mainly on the economy, the recent Irish budget, the public expenditure outlook and opportunities for new approaches to public sector reform.

Financial Transaction Capital

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures he will take to prevent the Executive's 2013-14 allocation of Financial Transaction Capital being surrendered back to Her Majesty's Treasury should the allocation not be spent.

(AQO 5182/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Over recent months I have, along with my Scottish and Welsh colleagues, been lobbying the Chief Secretary to the Treasury for End Year Flexibility in respect of Financial Transactions Capital. I am pleased to confirm that such a scheme has now been agreed amongst Treasury and the Devolved Administrations.

This scheme will allow the Northern Ireland Executive flexibility to carry forward unspent Financial Transactions Capital funding across each of the next two financial years. This flexibility amounts to 20% carry forward of unused Financial Transactions Capital funding into 2014-15 and 10% into 2015-16. This will ensure that we have more time to

develop suitable schemes and will significantly reduce the risk of any funding being surrendered to Her Majesty's Treasury.

A5: Funding

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the current position on the A5 monies.

(AQO 5183/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Executive took swift action to address the ongoing delay to the A5 road project. In my Statement to the Assembly on 21 October I detailed a significant reallocation of funding which had become available as a result of, amongst other things, the delay to the A5 project.

An easement of £115 million in relation to the A5 project contributed to resources available, which enabled allocations of some £177 million to be announced for 2014-15. These allocations will enhance our long term economic growth prospects and will also provide an immediate boost for our construction sector.

Vacant Premises: South Down

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many business premises are vacant in each council area in South Down.

(AQO 5184/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: At 31st October 2013, the numbers of vacant non-domestic properties in Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Council were (i) 373, (ii) 549 and (iii) 909 respectively.

European Investment Bank

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the role that the European Investment Bank has in local investment.

(AQO 5185/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I believe that there are opportunities within Northern Ireland to avail of funding from the European Investment Bank and I am keen to explore how this may help finance regional infrastructure improvements.

Living Wage

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given the gap between static wage levels and rising household overheads, what consideration he has given to making the use of a living wage a requirement of public sector contracts.

(AQO 5186/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: The Department has looked in detail at whether the payment of a living wage could be made a condition of public contracts. While the payment of a living wage can be encouraged the introduction of such a requirement within public sector contracts would present a significant legal risk.

This was confirmed by the European Commission in responding to a request for clarification from the Scottish Government. The Commission stated that any requirement to pay a living wage is unlikely to be compatible with European legislation.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the study on the impact of a change in Air Passenger Duty Rates.

(AQO 5187/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Firstly, I would point out to the Member that this study is much broader than he suggests and is considering what more can be done by the Executive to improve our air connectivity including both APD and non-APD measures.

The first scoping study stage is now complete. It examined what research has already been undertaken in this area, and in particular, in relation to the factors that influence airlines in route planning decision making, and the opportunities and barriers that might exist in this regard. It also identified the information available on Northern Ireland's relative connectivity.

Welfare Reform: Financial Penalty

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he is taking to manage any reduction in the £5 million a month penalty, starting January 2014 should the Executive fail to agree a welfare reform package.

(AQO 5188/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: I met with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 18th November where he reinforced his intention to impose penalties should the Northern Ireland Executive and this Assembly not progress the Welfare Reform Bill. I cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of now moving the Welfare Reform Bill forward.

The January Monitoring Round will provide an opportunity for the Executive to strategically assess all of the pressures and easements in the current financial year, including the potential impact of any penalties applied by Her Majesty's Treasury for delay to welfare reforms locally.

Capital Projects: CAL Management

Mr McKinney asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he has taken in response to the Public Accounts Committee Report on Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Management of Major Capital Projects.

(AQO 5189/11-15)

Mr Hamilton: Both I, and separately the Minister for the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL), together with our officials are in the process of considering the Committee's report, and in line with accepted practice a response, in the form of a Memorandum of Reply, will be presented to the Assembly in the New Year.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Offenders: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Learning Difficulties

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what supervised facilities are available to support offenders with complex needs such as alcoholism, substance abuse and learning difficulties once they leave prison.

(AQW 28055/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Once prisoners leave custody, the responsibility for their health and social care transfers from prison healthcare staff in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SET) to the various HSC professional teams in the community across all five HSC Trusts. Prison healthcare staff in the SET liaise fully with their community colleagues to share all appropriate health and social care information prior to discharge.

In addition to the transfer arrangements between the HSC Trusts, the Department of Justice (DoJ) and a range of other organisations and agencies, work together to support offenders with complex needs such as alcoholism, substance abuse and learning difficulties, prior to and on their release from prison.

The DoJ and other criminal justice organisations are major contributors to the outcomes defined in my Department's New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2011-16. These outcomes include the development of a care pathway for prisoners leaving prison to return to the community and discharge procedures, involving both in-prison health services and voluntary and community sector agencies, to ensure that on release, prisoners have access to services and support across Northern Ireland.

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) currently delivers substance misuse interventions for those under its supervision. PBNI also funds a number of organisations across Northern Ireland which provide support services for addiction problems. If deemed appropriate, offenders will be referred to these services on release from prison.

Tendering for Domestic Stairlifts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Northern Health and Social Care Trust is stipulating that those tendering to supply domestic stairlifts must have a notation figure of £500,000.

(AQW 28369/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy requires that Departments and their arms length bodies undertake a financial check as part of the supplier evaluation process. For construction contracts this financial check is carried out using Constructionline, the UK's register of construction related contractors and consultants prequalified to work for public sector clients.

In order to be eligible to tender for a project an Economic Operator's Constructionline Category Value (notation for a particular category of work) must be at least equal to the projected annual spend under the contract. This will be assessed on a pass/fail basis (e.g. a £10m project over 24 months would require a Category Value of £5m).

The number and value of stair lift installations is driven by service demand within the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHST) which is not known at the outset of the contract period. The NHST calculated the cost based on spend over the two years of the previous contract and added a 5% uplift to reflect the potential increase in stair lift installations as a result of the introduction of the "Transforming Your Care" Initiative which has an aim of treating more people in domestic settings (see table on next page).

NHSCT STAIR LIFT CONTRACT SPEND CALCULATION

July 2011 – June 2012	£551,753.89
July 2012 – June 2013	£401,764.50
Sub - Total	£953,518.39
5% Uplift due to TYC Initiative (Assumed)	£47,675.92
Projected Total Spend Over Two Years of Contract	£1,001,194.31
Projected Annual Spend	£500,597.16
Constructionline Financial Notation	£500,000.00

Inpatients Diagnosed with Anorexia

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the number of inpatients diagnosed with anorexia in each year since 2007; (ii) to detail the treatment plan for inpatients; and (iii) whether there are any specific facilities and specially trained medical and support staff. **(AQW 28381/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Inpatients diagnosed with anorexia

The number of inpatient admissions by HSC Trust in Northern Ireland with a diagnosis of anorexic nervosa in each of the last six years is detailed in the table below. This is based on the number of admissions, not the number of patients.

HSC Trust	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast	11	21	15	14	18	18
South Eastern	10	15	12	20	19	19
Northern	12	12	9	15	13	9
Southern	2	6	3	5	13	19
Western	15	7	10	18	7	11
NI Total	50	61	49	72	70	76

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Treatment Plan for inpatients

Depending on the patient's clinical presentation individualised care plans are developed. The following interventions are available:

- A comprehensive bio psychosocial assessment.
- Containment and reduction of any compensatory behaviours.
- Management of any co-existing psychiatric or medical problems.
- Specialist Dietetic and medical input overseeing the re-establishment of a normal diet and weight regain (re-feeding).
- Psychological input from nursing staff.
- Special nursing observations.
- Specific input from a ward based Occupational Therapist
- Assessment and advice from Physiotherapy when deemed appropriate will be requested.

- On-going weekly therapy with the dedicated Eating Disorder Practitioner from the eating disorder service.
- Weekly discussion with Eating Disorder Team in attendance at ward based Multidisciplinary Meeting. The ward team are also invited to the Eating Disorder team meeting to discuss care planning.

Facilities and specially trained medical and support staff

Eating Disorder Services are provided by specialist community-based teams in each Health & Social Care Trust area. The Belfast Trust provides these services for the South Eastern Trust. In addition to the Health Service provision a number of voluntary and community groups also provide valuable support services.

The Eating Disorder teams include Consultant Psychiatrists, Eating Therapists and Dieticians.

There are no specialised inpatient facilities for the treatment of Anorexia Nervosa in Northern Ireland. Adult inpatient treatment for eating disorders is provided in each Trust area in beds managed by specially trained medical/psychiatric staff, supported on an in-reach basis by staff from community based eating disorder teams.

If a patient requires intense specialist treatment for anorexia Trusts can access beds in England, Scotland and Ireland through the Extra Contractual Referral (ECR) process. Developments in local Eating Disorder Services in recent years have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of ECRs for eating disorders.

Inpatient care for children and adolescents with eating disorders is provided at Beechcroft, the Regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit, which has a consultant who specialises in the treatment of eating disorders.

Staff, including ward based mental health nursing staff, have received a range of training including Queens University Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), CBT for eating disorders (CBT-E), the University of Ulster certificate in Eating Disorders, the Beeches Unit of Management Introduction to Eating Disorders.

Dementia Strategy

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline each Health and Social Care Trust's programme for dementia diagnosis; and how each programme is in line with the Dementia Strategy.

(AQW 28421/11-15)

Mr Poots: The regional dementia strategy, which I published in November 2011, addresses the importance of early diagnosis, and includes an action for the HSC Board in collaboration with the Public Health Agency and HSC Trusts to draw up criteria and clear protocols for referral from GP practices to memory services. This will assist in the assessment and diagnosis of dementia. Work is underway to complete this action, as part of the wider implementation of the strategy.

A multi-disciplinary / agency working group has been established by the HSC Board to carry forward this work. It should also be noted that the additional funding that was secured last September was directed towards service enhancement / development in memory services. This group expects to complete the first phase of its work in relation to care pathways and service standards by the end of this year. Phase 2 will address issues related to training, information and support.

Prostate Cancer: East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will carry out an investigation into the reasons why East Antrim is high risk area for prostate cancer; and to publish the findings.

(AQW 28422/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry at Queen's University Belfast has provided a report that determines that the incidence of prostate cancer in the East Antrim Coastal area is within the range which could be attributed to natural variation, and would therefore not meet the criteria to be considered a cancer cluster.

However, the incidence rate is at the upper end of the range and further examination will take place when more up to date data becomes available. The data used for the report mentioned above was based on figures for 2007 – 2011.

The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry report is attached for reference.

Royal Hospital, Belfast: X-Ray Results

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are awaiting x-ray results from the Royal Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 28484/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been informed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust that the information is not available in the format requested.

The Belfast Trust has provided the number of x-ray examinations awaiting a report, which they advise is the same as the number of reports for which people are awaiting x-ray results. The reporting turnaround time is the interval between the completion of the diagnostic test and the results of that test being verified or dispatched to the referring clinician.

The number of x-ray examinations awaiting a report within the Royal Victoria Hospital radiology department, as at week commencing Monday 18th November 2013, was 1,771.

Specialist Mental Health Provision

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he will take to ensure there is not a gap in specialist mental health provision between the closure of facilities in Downpatrick and the commencement of specialist provision at the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 28516/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Trust is not yet at the stage of developing detailed plans, but in doing so, they will ensure that the process is as inclusive as possible to make the transition as seamless as practicable. This will include service users and carers; community and hospital clinicians and managers.

The proposed development at the Ulster Hospital will comprise 72 acute inpatient beds and 4 psychiatric intensive care beds, which matches current bed capacity. Given that the remodelling of beds has been achieved, the Trust does not anticipate any difficulties in this regard and does not envisage the closure of beds in the lead up to this transition.

The South Eastern Trust's previous successful management of the relocation of acute mental health services from Ards Hospital to the Ulster Hospital, and from the Downshire Hospital to the new Downe Hospital will be brought to bear with this future transition.

Health Service Allergy Service Provision

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to providing financial support from his departmental budget to Allergy NI; and what improvements he is making in Health Service allergy service provision.

(AQW 28522/11-15)

Mr Poots: Allergy NI is a registered local charity and receives no financial support from my Department. My Department has no plans at present to provide core funding to voluntary organisations in respect of new applications for funding.

The Health and Social Care Board, which commissions services on behalf of the Health Service in Northern Ireland, has just completed an in-depth assessment of need for paediatric asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis services as part of the local implementation of recent NICE guidance which has been issued on food allergy (CG116) and anaphylaxis (CG134).

The Board has allocated over £400k recurrently to these services. Much of this funding will meet the needs of children with allergy specifically. This funding has already been allocated to the Health and Social Care Trusts for them to start addressing waiting lists.

Decentralising Functions to Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to 27955/11-15, to detail (i) why there are only 2 civil servants from his Department based in Derry and (ii) whether he intends to decentralise any functions to Derry to aid economic growth in the North West region.

(AQW 28538/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Under the Review of Public Administration, 31 DHSSPS posts based in the Derry City Council area (Waterside House) were permanently transferred to the Health and Social Care (HSC) Business Services Organisation on 1 April 2009.

In accordance with the DHSSPS RPA Staff Transfer Scheme, civil servants working in these posts were transferred to the employment of the HSC under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006, while remaining in the same location. Two posts were not TUPE transferred and remain DHSSPS posts.

- (ii) My Department has no plans to relocate any posts to the North West region.

Allergy NI

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what improvements are planned for patients who suffer from allergies and whether extra funding will be provided to Allergy NI.

(AQW 28567/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board, which commissions services on behalf of the Health Service in Northern Ireland, has just completed an in-depth assessment of need for paediatric asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis services as part of the local implementation of recent NICE guidance which has been issued on food allergy (CG116) and anaphylaxis (CG134).

The Board has allocated over £400k recurrently to these services. Much of this funding will meet the needs of children with allergy specifically. This funding has already been allocated to the Health and Social Care Trusts for them to start addressing waiting lists.

Allergy NI is a registered local charity and receives no financial support from my Department. My Department has no plans at present to provide core funding to Allergy NI.

Primary Care Facilities in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any proposed capital improvements to primary care facilities in County Fermanagh.

(AQW 28582/11-15)

Mr Poots: The consultation document on 'Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action' included an illustrative model of 'hub and spoke' Health and Care Centres. These are proposed primary care facilities across the region, including County Fermanagh.

The Health and Social Care Board, through its Local Commissioning Groups and in association with the HSC Trusts, has been undertaking detailed analysis to determine the most appropriate locations for the various hubs and spokes and identify priorities for the associated primary care infrastructure requirements. This work is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Following that process, an exercise will be undertaken to develop business cases and prioritise within the available funding which will determine how work on individual hubs and spokes will progress.
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Smear Tests Results

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average time taken to receive the results of a smear test in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 28591/11-15)

Mr Poots: Smears from women resident in the South Eastern Trust area are sent to the Cytology Laboratory in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for analysis. It is not possible to provide the information solely for women in the South Eastern Trust Health and Social Care Trust and the table below details the turnaround time for all smear tests sent to the Belfast Cytology Laboratory in September 2013.

Turnaround Time	Number Of Samples	%
0-2 Weeks	3053	90%
3-4 Weeks	309	9%
5-6 Weeks	12	0%
7-8 Weeks	1	0%
9 Weeks or more	0	0%

The nationally agreed guidelines for cervical smear tests is 80% of samples reported within 4 weeks from time sample is taken. The latest statistics for the month of September 2013 for all smear tests sent to the Belfast City Laboratory reflects 99% samples reported within 4 weeks, and 90% of results are generated within 2 weeks.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Operations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many operations have been cancelled in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last four years.
(AQW 28593/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of operations cancelled in the South Eastern Trust is presented in the table below. South Eastern Trust have advised that it has not been possible to provide 2009/10 data as the data were collected from August 2009 only.

CANCELLED OPERATIONS BY REASON OF CANCELLATION, 2010/11 – 2012/13

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Cancellations for non-clinical reasons	549	490	666
Cancellations for clinical reasons	715	798	928
Patient cancellation	2,604	2,755	2,812
Total cancellations	3,868	4,043	4,406
Total scheduled operations	29,462	32,297	33,054

Source: South Eastern Trust

Bangor Minor Injuries Unit

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why, and for how long, the Bangor Minor Injuries Unit will be closed at weekends.
(AQW 28594/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that this is a temporary measure due to a staff shortage. The Trust is exploring a number of options to address this. In the meantime, the minor injuries unit will be open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. The Trust has advised that the temporary arrangement will remain in place until staff numbers return to a level where the service can be delivered over seven days.

Number of Consultants with a Dentistry Speciality

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 28148/11-15, to detail the number of consultants with a dentistry speciality based at (i) Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children; (ii) School of Dentistry; (iii) Antrim Area Hospital; (iv) Braid Valley Hospital; (v) Causeway Hospital; (vi) Mid-Ulster Hospital; (vii) Ulster Hospital; (viii) Craigavon Area Hospital; (ix) Daisy Hill Hospital; (x) Altnagelvin Hospital; and (xi) the South West Acute Hospital.

(AQW 28610/11-15)

Mr Poots: Headcount and whole-time equivalent numbers for consultants with a dental specialty based in the specified hospitals are shown in the table below. These figures include only consultants with a defined whole-time equivalent at the relevant hospital; other services are detailed in the notes below.

Hospital	Headcount	Whole-time Equivalent
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children ¹	3	1.5
School of Dentistry ¹	19	12.2
Antrim Area Hospital ²	1 (trust-wide in NSCHT, including Causeway) Excludes visiting consultants see note below.	1.0
Braid Valley Hospital ²		
Mid-Ulster Hospital ²		
Causeway Hospital	1 (visiting consultant)	0.2
Ulster Hospital	4	4.0
Craigavon Area Hospital ^{3,4}	1 (excludes visiting consultant see note below)	1.0
Daisy Hill Hospital ³	0 (excludes visiting consultant see note below)	0.0
Altnagelvin Hospital	5	3.8
South West Acute Hospital	2 (including 1 visiting consultant)	0.4 (including 0.2 visiting consultant)

Source: Health & Social Care Trusts

Notes

- 1 RBHSC and School of Dentistry figures include joint appointments with Queens University Belfast, hence the reduced whole-time equivalent.
- 2 Not included in the Northern Trust figures are visiting Consultants within the Oral Surgery specialty from South Eastern HSC Trust covering Antrim, Braid Valley and Mid Ulster Hospitals.
- 3 Daisy Hill and Craigavon Hospitals are also served by two visiting Consultant Oral-Maxillofacial Surgeons from the South Eastern Trust, both providing a full day each week.
- 4 A visiting Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry from the Belfast Trust also works at Craigavon Area Hospital for one day every second week.

Housing Executive Applications: Patients

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a medical professional may charge a patient a fee to provide medical records in connection with the patient's Housing Executive application.

(AQW 28611/11-15)

Mr Poots: Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 a fee of between £10 and £50 may be charged for providing medical records.

A charge of £10 may be made if the information is held exclusively in electronic format. If the information is held partially or wholly by any other means a charge of up to £50 may be made.

Bangor Minor Injuries Unit: Staff on Sick Leave

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff are currently on leave or sick leave at Bangor Minor Injuries Unit.

(AQW 28630/11-15)

Mr Poots: Due to the small numbers of staff working in the Bangor Minor Injuries Unit it is not possible to release details of those on sick leave as this could result in personal identification.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Nursing Vacancies

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current level of nursing vacancies in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 28632/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vacancies in HSC organisations are collected in the biannual Northern Ireland HSC Vacancy Survey. The most recent report (vacancies as at 31st March 2013) is available at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_march_2013_web-2.pdf.

At 31st March 2013, there were 37 (28.8 whole-time equivalent) nursing & midwifery vacancies and 2 (1.7 whole-time equivalent) consultant vacancies in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The Report as at 30th September 2013 is currently underway, and will be published early in 2014.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Nursing Vacancies

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current level of consultant vacancies in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 28633/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vacancies in HSC organisations are collected in the biannual Northern Ireland HSC Vacancy Survey. The most recent report (vacancies as at 31st March 2013) is available at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_march_2013_web-2.pdf.

At 31st March 2013, there were 37 (28.8 whole-time equivalent) nursing & midwifery vacancies and 2 (1.7 whole-time equivalent) consultant vacancies in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The Report as at 30th September 2013 is currently underway, and will be published early in 2014.

Organ Donor Register

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken in the last twelve months to increase the number of people on the organ donor register.

(AQW 28641/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 11 July 2013 I formally launched the NHSBT UK-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy, Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 – a UK Strategy. The Strategy, which my Department

was involved in developing in conjunction with NHSBT and the other UK Health Administrations, aims to ensure a continued focus on increasing organ donation.

At my request, the Public Health Agency (PHA) is currently developing a public information campaign to enhance awareness and understanding of organ donation, to encourage everyone to sign the organ donor register and to tell their loved ones their wishes. This campaign will be launched in 2014 and follows a major survey of public opinion by the PHA to establish attitudes towards organ donation in Northern Ireland

Accident and Emergency Admittance as a Result of Alcohol Abuse

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children under 16 years old have attended Accident and Emergency Departments on multiple occasions suffering from alcohol intoxication, over the last three years.

(AQW 28644/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not routinely collected by the Department and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Accident and Emergency Admittance as a Result of Alcohol Abuse

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in each of the last three years, how many children under 16 years old, who attended Accident and Emergency suffering from alcohol intoxication, have subsequently been found to have engaged in substance abuse.

(AQW 28645/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not routinely collected by the Department and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Accident and Emergency Admittance as a Result of Alcohol Abuse

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in each of the last three years, how many children under 16 years old have attended Accident and Emergency with physical injuries were also under the influence of alcohol.

(AQW 28646/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not routinely collected by the Department and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Health and Social Care Campus for Cityside in Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made on the Health and Social Care campus for cityside in Derry.

(AQW 28650/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board, through its Local Commissioning Groups and in association with the HSC Trusts, has been undertaking detailed analysis to determine the most appropriate locations for the various hubs and spokes which will form the basis of the health and care centre network. This work will provide an evidence base for the locations and will replace the illustrative model in the "Vision to Action" consultation document. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end of this year.

Following that process, an exercise will be undertaken to develop business cases and prioritise within the available funding, which will determine how work on individual hubs and spokes will progress.

Downe Hospital: Fire Service

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how many occasions, since the opening of the Downe Hospital in June 2010, the Fire Service has been called out to the hospital; and how much these incidents have cost.

(AQW 28658/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) have attended 86 incidents at Downe Hospital since June 2010, at an estimated total cost of £108,478.

GP Unit: Downe Hospital

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the 1st Floor location of the GP Unit in the centre of the Downe Hospital, (i) to outline the risks of having a GP Unit in the middle of a hospital; (ii) how many hospitals have a GP Unit located in the middle of their facility; and (iii) what procedures have been put in place to mitigate the impact of cross-infection and other related health risks.

(AQW 28660/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) All hospitals, whether they include a GP unit or not, are subject to the risk of external infection being brought in by visiting members of the public and other patients. This risk is slightly increased when a GP unit is sited within a hospital as more people than usual are being brought into the hospital environment. This risk was assessed when the decision was made to include the GP unit within the Downe Hospital, and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's infection prevention and control managers were consulted on and approved the transfer from Pound Lane to Downe Hospital.
- (ii) There are no other local enhanced hospitals with an integrated GP practice, although I understand there are some in England.
- (iii) The GP unit has been carefully designed to minimise the risk of cross-infection, and so operates on the basis of procedures similar to those for the outpatients department, which also has the potential for patients and public to attend with various medical complaints. The closest in-patient ward to the GP practice is cardiology; entry to this ward is restricted and controlled by electronic access control systems reducing chance of cross-infection. The remaining wards are located a considerable distance away from the GP unit, and operate an established access/egress protocol. Each clinical department, including the GP unit, is self-contained within its own zone, which means that the only integration of hospital and GP patients is in the community spaces (corridors/stairs/coffee shop etc). Clear way-finding to the GP unit further minimises the chances of GP and hospital patient integration.

'Changing the Culture 2010' is the strategic regional action plan for the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) in Northern Ireland. This provides the strategic context, principles and objectives that inform the Trust's HCAI action plan, this plan is updated regularly and as necessary. The Trust's approach to tackling HCAIs includes measures such as promoting good hand hygiene on the part of staff, visitors and patients; good clinical practice including the use of high-impact interventions – also known as care bundles – to prevent surgical site infections, ventilator-associated pneumonias and other infections; implementation of the regional dress code including the use of personal protective equipment; improving environmental cleanliness and hygiene, and using the regional healthcare hygiene and cleanliness audit tool to assess environmental cleanliness and hygiene within the Trust; prudent prescribing of antibiotics, to reduce the risk of *Clostridium difficile* infection and to address the global problem of antimicrobial resistance; diarrhoea risk assessment and the isolation of patients where necessary; water management plans, to reduce the risk of infection by water-borne organisms such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Legionella*; the use of HCAI surveillance; training and continuous professional development in respect of IPC, including the use of the online regional infection prevention and control manual; restrictions on visiting; the targeted

use of MRSA screening and the isolation of patients; the use of escalation procedures for a potential or identified outbreak, including cohort nursing and the isolation of patients; improving communications with patients and carers; and board-to-ward assurance processes for ensuring compliance with and implementation of the Trust's IPC policies.

Using these and other measures Trusts have achieved significant reduction in HCAIs. In particular the South Eastern Trust, since 2006/07, cases of MRSA bloodstream infection in in-patients have been reduced by 73.5%, and cases of Clostridium difficile infection (CDI) in in-patients aged 65 and over have been reduced by 80.5%. Since 2008/09 CDI cases in in-patients aged two years and over have been reduced by 63.5%.

Inpatient Addiction Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the level of inpatient addiction services.

(AQW 28682/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) recently launched its consultation on Inpatient Based Addiction Treatment Services, which outlines proposals for a re-configuration of all the Tier 4 addiction services currently available. The Consultation highlights that the present service configuration is characterised by variation in structure, role and function. It therefore sets out proposals for a more standardised, and evidence-based, regional model.

This consultation, which is available at: http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/consult/Consultation-Tier_4_Addiction_Services/index.html#P-1_0, closes on 10 January 2014. No decisions have been made about the future of any addiction services across Northern Ireland. I would therefore encourage as many people as possible to feed into the consultation process. The HSCB will take all comments and views into consideration before finalising proposals.

Posthumous Organ Donations

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many posthumous organ donations have taken place in the last twelve months.

(AQW 28704/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is collated by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is the organ donation and transplantation organisation for the UK, and is available on its website at:

http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/statistics/downloads/northern_ireland_sep13.pdf

Posthumous Organ Donations

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) registered organ donors; and (ii) organ donations, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28705/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is collated by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is the organ donation and transplantation organisation for the UK, and is available on its website at:

http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/statistics/downloads/northern_ireland_sep13.pdf

Care Homes: Complaints

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are in place to monitor, record and investigate complaints against care homes.

(AQW 28730/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Complaints Procedure applies equally to statutory residential care and nursing homes and independent residential care and nursing homes where the placement is paid for by an HSC

Trust. All providers must operate a complaints procedure that meets the requirements of applicable Regulations, relevant Minimum Standards and the HSC Complaints Procedure.

All regulated establishments and agencies are required to provide RQIA, on request, with a statement containing a summary of complaints made during the preceding 12 months and the action that was taken in response.

The RQIA has a duty to assess and report on how the HSC and the regulated sector handle complaints in light of the standards and regulations laid down by the DHSSPS. RQIA will assess the effectiveness of local procedures and will use information from complaints to identify wider issues for the purposes of raising standards.

Causeway Hospital: Planned Routine Operations

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many planned routine operations have been cancelled in November 2013 at the Causeway Hospital; and for what reasons. **(AQW 28731/11-15)**

Mr Poots: For the purpose of answering this question, it is assumed that 'planned routine operations' means elective operations. The number of operations cancelled in the Causeway Hospital from 1st to 27th November 2013 (inclusive) is presented below.

CANCELLED OPERATIONS BY REASON OF CANCELLATION, 1ST – 27TH NOVEMBER 2013

Reason	Number
Patient did not attend	41
Patient could not attend	20
Patient unfit for procedure	15
To be seen by anaes / operator to assess if fit for surgery	8
Date unsuitable	5
Operator unavailable	5
Theatre list incorrect / late	5
Consent not completed / incorrect	3
Previous list overrun	3
Not fasted as instructed	2
Bed availability – ICU / HDU	1
Emergency patient took priority	1
Late / no transport home	1
Other unplanned event	1
Patient notes/test results unavailable	1
Total	112

Source: Northern Trust

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the start of Lung Cancer Awareness Month, whether his Department is aware of any health action zones that has radon as a specific issue to address.

(AQW 28737/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health Action Zones are no longer in existence. The last of the Health Action Zones was amalgamated into the Belfast Strategic Partnership in 2009, when the Public Health Agency was established. Regarding lung cancer, the single most important factor is smoking tobacco. The Public Health Agency commissions smoking cessation services in localities across Northern Ireland from a range of providers as part of the Tobacco Control Strategy (2012-22) and an Action Plan with a range of targets is currently being implemented.

Since 1988, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has carried out a number of radon campaigns across Northern Ireland in conjunction with Public Health England (formerly the Health Protection Agency). Results from these campaigns have been used to prepare radon risk maps of Northern Ireland and identify Radon Affected Areas. Any householder found to have a radon level above the action level is sent information by Public Health England along with their test results giving advice on any actions necessary to reduce radon levels.

Health and Care Centre in Lisburn

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services will be provided at the new health and care centre in Lisburn; and how this new centre will enhance the patient experience for users.

(AQW 28740/11-15)

Mr Poots: I propose to answer these two questions together.

Transforming Your Care (TYC) set out a proposed “hub and spoke” model to support the delivery of high quality integrated primary and community care services. This is in line with the vision of TYC to deliver more care closer to people’s homes, thereby reducing reliance on hospitals except where absolutely necessary and supporting an increasing number of people to live independently. Under this model, primary care professionals from a range of disciplines, including GPs, will work together in health and care centres employing modern equipment and advanced technologies to provide enhanced services that are accessible and responsive to client and patient needs.

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has developed a model of care to be provided from the new Health and Care Centre in Lisburn. Services to be provided from the new facility will include:

- GP Practices;
- Nursing Services - District Nursing/Specialist Nursing/Treatment Room/Health Visiting;
- Community Mental Health Services;
- Psychology Services;
- Family Planning Services (include Sexual Health);
- Children’s Centre (including Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Social Care for Older People;
- Diagnostics;
- Imaging;
- Cancer Supportive and Chemotherapy Services;
- Complementary Therapies;
- Allied Health Profession Services (Dietetics, Dental, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy);

- Integrated Clinical Assessment & Treatment Services (ICATS);
- One Stop Assessment;
- Rehabilitation; and
- Marie Curie.

The services in this community based facility are expected to enhance the patient experience by supporting an increasing number of people to live independently, preferably in their own homes, for longer; promoting good health and well-being; enabling early diagnosis and treatment; improving support for people who have a long term condition; and reducing the number of avoidable admissions to hospital.

Health and Care Centre in Lisburn

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how a new health and care centre in Lisburn can contribute to the implementation of Transforming Your Care.

(AQW 28747/11-15)

Mr Poots: I propose to answer these two questions together.

Transforming Your Care (TYC) set out a proposed “hub and spoke” model to support the delivery of high quality integrated primary and community care services. This is in line with the vision of TYC to deliver more care closer to people’s homes, thereby reducing reliance on hospitals except where absolutely necessary and supporting an increasing number of people to live independently. Under this model, primary care professionals from a range of disciplines, including GPs, will work together in health and care centres employing modern equipment and advanced technologies to provide enhanced services that are accessible and responsive to client and patient needs.

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- Social Care for Older People;
- Diagnostics;
- Imaging;
- Cancer Supportive and Chemotherapy Services;
- Complementary Therapies;
- Allied Health Profession Services (Dietetics, Dental, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy);
- Integrated Clinical Assessment & Treatment Services (ICATS);
- One Stop Assessment;
- Rehabilitation; and
- Marie Curie.

The services in this community based facility are expected to enhance the patient experience by supporting an increasing number of people to live independently, preferably in their own homes, for

longer; promoting good health and well-being; enabling early diagnosis and treatment; improving support for people who have a long term condition; and reducing the number of avoidable admissions to hospital.

Health and Care Centre in Lisburn

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the key challenges to opening the new health and care centre in Lisburn at the earliest opportunity.

(AQW 28759/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has fully engaged with the 3PD Pathfinder Project to create a new Primary and Community Care Centre for Lisburn and will continue to engage with all key stakeholders to pursue the provision of a new, fit for purpose, health and care centre at the earliest opportunity.

The key challenges to opening a new health and care centre include the innovative use of a third party developer model (3PD) as a procurement method; issues relating to site selection and planning; ensuring value for money and ensuring the involvement of General Practitioners in the new centre.

Revised Abortion Guidance

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will bring revised abortion guidance to the Executive.

(AQW 28783/11-15)

Mr Poots: While I remain committed to producing guidance, a range of complex issues were raised by respondents to the public consultation on the latest draft. The implications of the responses must be fully considered before I can bring a revised document to the Executive.

A summary of the issues raised to the consultation is currently available on my Department's website.

It must also be remembered that the guidance will not, and cannot, change the law in Northern Ireland on termination of pregnancy.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when his Department will complete its review of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines on fertility and publish its findings and recommendations.

(AQW 28784/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has completed its review of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline on fertility and the guideline was endorsed as applicable in Northern Ireland on 12 November 2013. The information is available on my Department's website at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-guidance/sqsd-guidance-nice-guidance/clinical_guidelines.htm

Lasting Power of Attorney

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the timescale under which he proposes to switch the current law concerning Lasting Power of Attorney to match that now in use in England and Wales.

(AQW 28829/11-15)

Mr Poots: The member will be aware that the Mental Capacity Bill (the Bill), which is currently being drafted by my Department along with colleagues from the Department of Justice, provides for a new scheme of Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA) which will replace the existing Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA) scheme in Northern Ireland.

It remains my intention that the Bill will be enacted within the current mandate of the Assembly.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Children's Mental Health Beds

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children's mental health beds in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 28844/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no mental health inpatient beds specifically for children in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in the South Eastern area are managed by the Belfast HSC Trust.

Cherry Tree House Nursing Home

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the recent whistle blower case regarding Cherry Tree House Nursing Home, whether he will widen the Desk Top Review which he has commissioned, to permit staff, relatives and elected representatives, an opportunity to give oral evidence to the Review Team.

(AQW 28949/11-15)

Mr Poots: The objective of the review currently being undertaken by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is to examine the evidence held by, among others, the HSC Board, Trusts and the Department regarding all the concerns raised about the quality of care in Cherry Tree House during the period 1 January 2005 – 31 March 2013.

RQIA has now compiled a volume of evidence which will include concerns raised to relevant organisations by staff, relatives and elected representatives during the period of time covered by the review. At this point I am content that RQIA continues with this already significant exercise and, to that end, I have agreed an extension until the end of January 2014 to allow full consideration of evidence gathered.

Parking: Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to improve car parking facilities at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

(AQO 5162/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Trust is in the process of developing a business case to provide a long term, sustainable, affordable and accessible car parking solution for patients, staff and visitors for the Royal Victoria Hospital site. This will be subject to business case approval and availability of funding.

The Belfast Trust has introduced a number of interim measures in order to alleviate the current pressures on car parking spaces on the RVH site, including an additional temporary 300 space car park at Broadway Towers, the release of an additional 60 spaces in the main visitor's car park and a number of other initiatives to help reduce demand for parking spaces.

A&E: BHSCT

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his response to a recently published report from the College of Emergency Medicine regarding the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQO 5167/11-15)

Mr Poots: I welcome the Belfast Trust's initiative in inviting the College of Emergency Medicine to visit the Trust to undertake a review of the provision of emergency medicine. HSC Trusts are always seeking to improve how they deliver services and one of the ways in which they can do this is by seeking views from external experts. The Belfast Trust has welcomed the report's recommendations, which have enhanced and informed the improvement plans already in progress within the Trust. The Trust has an action plan in place to implement the recommendations. I look to the Health and Social Care Board to work with all Trusts to ensure the continuous delivery of high quality, safe and effective services.

A&E: Winter Emergencies

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures his Department is putting in place to cope with winter emergencies.

(AQO 5169/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has been working with the Trusts to ensure that effective escalation plans are in place to respond appropriately to any surge in hospital activity over the winter. This includes being ready to expand hospital bed capacity and increase community care packages to support people at home. In addition, plans are being put in place to enhance GP Out of Hours arrangements. My Department is also liaising with the HSC to ensure emergency plans are in place to manage the response to any severe weather this winter. This includes public health messaging about being prepared and encouraging people to be proactive about helping themselves, their neighbours and vulnerable people during a prolonged spell of severe weather.

Blood Bags

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the impact that the new EU Medical Devices Regulations will have on Blood Bags.

(AQO 5170/11-15)

Mr Poots: The changes to the proposed Regulations on Medical Devices include provisions that would ban the use of certain materials in some categories of medical devices. This would include the use of phthalates in blood bags. If these provisions are agreed, to continue to use phthalates in blood bags, manufacturers shall be required to apply for authorisation to do so demonstrating that any possible risks in their use are outweighed by benefits to patient care.

Typhoon Haiyan

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support has been offered to local healthcare workers directly affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

(AQO 5171/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following that tragic event, I urged everyone in the Health and Social Care and independent health care sectors to proactively support co-workers with families directly affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Counselling and support services have been made available and flexible rotas and annual leave arrangements offered. HSC Trusts will continue to work with the staff involved to ensure assistance is provided, as necessary.

Hospitals: Cancelled Appointments

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what strategy is in place to address cancelled appointments.

(AQO 5172/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts have taken action to minimise the number of cancelled appointments by requiring clinical staff to give at least six weeks notice of their planned annual or study leave. In some Trusts patients are given the opportunity to choose a suitable time and date for their appointment which should be offered to them no more than six weeks ahead.

The total number of hospital cancelled outpatients appointments has been steadily falling in recent years; down from 216,800 in 2008/09 to 167,172 in 2012/13, however I want to see further improvement. To achieve this, I intend to introduce a specific target to reduce the number of hospital cancelled consultant-led outpatient appointments by 17% in 2014/15. If achieved this will result in a further reduction of some 28,000 cancelled appointments next year. Progress on this will be monitored by the Health and Social Care Board.

Flu Vaccine

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have received the seasonal flu vaccine to date.

(AQO 5173/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest available uptake figures cover the period up to the 31 October 2013. By that stage 301,011 people in Northern Ireland had received the seasonal flu vaccine. The programme remains ongoing and I would urge anyone who is eligible to receive the flu vaccine to take up the offer as soon as possible before flu viruses are widely circulating in the community.

Prostate Surgery

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the availability of advanced keyhole prostate surgery.

(AQO 5174/11-15)

Mr Poots: Prostate surgery techniques include radical prostatectomy, which is open surgery through an incision in the abdomen, and laparoscopic (keyhole) radical prostatectomy and laparoscopic robotic prostatectomy which are minimally invasive and utilise technologies such as fibre optics and miniaturization.

The Health and Social Care Board advises that keyhole prostatectomy is commissioned from the Belfast HSC Trust for the treatment of localised prostate cancer, however since December 2012 the procedure has not been provided due to consultant vacancies. However a robotic laparoscopic surgeon has been recruited and it is planned that a robotic laparoscopic prostatectomy service will commence as soon as is practical. In the meantime radical prostatectomy is available with an open surgery technique and there has been no adverse impact on patients.

Department of Justice

Civil and Criminal Legal Aid: Cuts

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to detail any assessment made on the number of job losses that may result from proposals to cut civil and criminal legal aid.

(AQW 28348/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Through the access to justice reform programme the Department aims to create an effective, sustainable, affordable and accessible legal aid system. The Department believes the reform proposals are proportionate to bring legal aid expenditure within budget.

The Department has conducted impact assessments as proposals have been developed and the findings included within public consultation documents. The Department has not, however, conducted an assessment on the number of job losses that may result from the proposals.

It has not been possible for the Department to quantify the impact in terms of jobs to individual solicitor firms or Counsel as this could vary greatly depending on the business model operated within each firm, the extent to which firms rely on legal aid work and type of work undertaken in respect of counsel.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the arrangements that Forensic Science Northern Ireland have had in place for outsourcing forensic toxicology services; (ii) which companies received outsourced work; (iii) the value of the work; and (iv) whether outsourcing was subject to an open and competitive tendering process, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28382/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Since April 2010, Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) has had a range of mechanisms in place for the provision of toxicological services, all of which were procured in line with Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policies. These included a competitive framework in place for the outsourcing of forensic services. Those services not included on this framework were procured through an open and competitive tendering process. Where only one specialist service provider existed, a Direct Award Contract was used.
- (ii) and (iii) During the period April 2010 to date, toxicological work was outsourced by FSNI to the following companies:

Company	2010/11 (£)	2011/12 (£)	2012/13 (£)	2013/14 (to date) (£)
LGC	0.00	288,000.00	0.00	0.00
ROAR	0.00	0.00	0.00	480.00
ChemTox/Eurofins	900.63	2764.00	728.00	3500.70
CT Labs Cardiff	70.34	70.34	0.00	0.00
Totals	970.97	290834.34	728.00	3980.70

- (iv) The Framework in place for routine toxicology services was subject to open and competitive tendering process and in line with NI Public Procurement Policies.

Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Justice to detail the minimum tariff imposed for murder under the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001; and for his assessment of how this compares with (i) England and Wales; and (ii) Scotland.

(AQW 28453/11-15)

Mr Ford: Departmental databases indicate that, between January 2002 and October 2013, the minimum tariff handed down for murder under the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 was five years. In this case, the conviction was changed to manslaughter on appeal. The next lowest tariff handed down in the courts was eight years.*

As the setting of each tariff takes into account the factors pertaining in the individual case, no case will be directly comparable to another. However, the consultation on the review of the legislation governing the determination of tariffs will consider arrangements in other jurisdictions and the potential for their applicability to the Northern Ireland context.

*Convictions datasets are currently available until 2009. Prisons and courts datasets were interrogated for information for 2010 onwards and to obtain and validate tariff details.

Prison Service: Health Care Spend

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the amount spent on healthcare within the Prison Service; and the proportion devoted to mental health issues in each of the last five years.

(AQW 28474/11-15)

Mr Ford: The amount spent on healthcare provision for staff of the Northern Ireland Prison Service in each of the last five years is detailed in the table below.

It is not possible to state what proportion of these costs relate specifically to mental health issues as due to the confidential nature of staff engagement with Carecall, NIPS Employee Assistance Provider, this information is not disclosed.

COST OF HEALTHCARE PROVISION TO NIPS STAFF

	Carecall £	Occupational Support costs £	Hepatitis Vaccinations £	Total £
2009/10 (pre Devolution)	45,269	73,563	Not available	118,832
2010/11	31,851	108,352	8,778	148,981
2011/12	25,175	106,326	2,858	134,359
2012/13	24,478	101,157	3,059	128,694
2013/14 (31 October)	19,299	128,377	8249 *	155,925
Total	146,072	517,775	22,944	(686,791)

* This figure includes the cost of vaccinations for all new recruits during 12/13 and 13/14.

The Minister of Health Social Services & Public Safety is responsible for healthcare for prisoners.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28049/11-15, to detail the total number of alleged breaches per defendant, broken down by court division.

(AQW 28534/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the total number of charges that relate to an alleged breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) per defendant, broken down by court division, as at 11 November 2013.

Division	Number of Defendants	Number of SOPO Breach Charges	Number of Breaches Per defendant
Antrim	1	31	31
Ards	2	2	Defendant 1 – 1 Defendant 2 – 1
Armagh and South Down	1	1	1
Belfast	4	7	Defendant 1 – 1 Defendant 2 – 1 Defendant 3 – 3 Defendant 4 – 2
Craigavon	2	2	Defendant 1 – 1 Defendant 2 – 1
Fermanagh and Tyrone	3	4	Defendant 1 – 1 Defendant 2 – 2 Defendant 3 – 1
Londonderry	2	7	Defendant 1 – 6 Defendant 2 – 1
Total	15	54	54

Source: Integrated Court Operations System

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28545/11-15)

Mr Ford: All visitors to government buildings are treated with courtesy and respect by staff. Where possible, details of visitors are notified to reception in advance of their arrival. Where visitors with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum conditions, advise of any need for additional help and support to cater for their needs, every effort will be made to ensure this is provided for them. In all our buildings visitors are met at reception and are accompanied throughout their visit.

As you will be aware Autism is a spectrum condition encompassing people with a wide range of needs. My Department is planning to take forward a number of actions under the forthcoming Cross-Departmental Autism Strategy and Action Plan, led by DHSSPS, to improve services and support for those with autism, working in partnership with the criminal justice agencies, our delivery partners in the voluntary sector and the autism charities. These actions include proposals for autism awareness training for frontline staff across the DOJ family. We have also, through our departmental diversity programme, been taking steps to support those within the workforce who have autism and those who have caring responsibilities for someone with autism.

Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28043/11-15, under Section 15 of the Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004, to detail the time period under which the Justification application would be assessed.

(AQW 28549/11-15)

Mr Ford: NIPS officials have submitted its Justification Application and have met with the Justification Liaison Group. The NIPS Application is under consideration and I await the outcome.

I cannot provide a timetable as to when these decisions will be made. However, I am aware that NIPS officials have been in contact with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to press for an outcome as soon as possible.

Legal Aid Budget

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Justice whether the Legal Aid budget of £75 million is sufficient to meet expenditure.

(AQW 28570/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department allocated an additional £15 million funding to the legal aid budget during the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) June monitoring round process.

Forecast shortfall for 2013/14 is currently estimated at £25.8 million. A review of spending plans and priorities is currently underway, via the ongoing January monitoring round process.

Overspend in Departmental Budget

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Justice to detail the overspend in his departmental budget and the reasons for it.

(AQW 28571/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice did not overspend in the 2012-13 financial year.

The Department faces a range of pressures in the current (2013-14) financial year, largely in relation to legal aid and the NI Prison Service. These pressures are currently being reviewed and considered as part of the January in-year monitoring round process.

Decentralise Functions to Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to 27956/11-15, to detail (i) why there are only 5 civil servants from his Department based in Derry and (ii) whether he intends to decentralise any functions to Derry to aid economic growth in the North West region.

(AQW 28609/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) As outlined in my answer to AQW/27956/11-15, the information provided did not include the number of civil service posts in the NI Courts and Tribunals Service. This information will follow as soon as possible. My answer also only included those staff at grades specified in the question. At 1 January 2013 and 1 January 2013 there were also 11 non-general service grades based in Derry.
- (ii) The Bain Review on the relocation of public sector posts outside Belfast predates the Department of Justice, which came into existence on 12 April 2010. The Department of Finance and Personnel has responsibility for taking forward the recommendations of the Bain Review. There are currently no strategic or active plans to move any posts to Derry.

Review of Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of former police officers, who are in receipt on an Injury on Duty award in bands 2, 3 and 4, have the designation permanent with no further review on their medical certificates.

(AQW 28665/11-15)

Mr Ford: The administration of the Injury Benefit Scheme is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Policing Board. You may therefore wish to direct your question to its Chief Executive.

Review of Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of former police officers, who are in receipt on an Injury on Duty award in bands 2, 3 and 4, and have the designation permanent with no further review on their medical certificates, are aged over 65.

(AQW 28666/11-15)

Mr Ford: The administration of the Injury Benefit Scheme is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the independence of the Policing Board. You may therefore wish to direct your question to its Chief Executive.

Attempted Bomb Attacks in Belfast and Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, given the number of attempted bomb attacks in Belfast and Londonderry in the last month, whether he has met with the Chief Constable regarding these attacks; and to detail the steps being taken to counter such attacks in the future.

(AQW 28670/11-15)

Mr Ford: Those who are responsible for these attacks have shown a total disregard for human life, particularly of the drivers who have been forced to transport devices.

Whilst issues relating to national security are primarily matters for the Secretary of State, I meet both the Chief Constable and the Secretary of State on a regular basis to discuss the security situation. We last met formally on 27 November, and I have also spoken to the Chief Constable on a number of occasions recently.

It is not for me to comment on specific operational steps being taken to counter such attacks. I can say, however, that the police and other agencies are working hard to protect the public and to bring the perpetrators and planners of such attacks to justice. I would also note the Chief Constable's public

reassurance that there will be a significantly increased policing presence on the streets over the next few weeks.

Prison Officers: Medically Retired

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prison officers have been medically retired in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28723/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of prison officers medically retired in the calendar years 2011, 2012 & 2013 is as follows:-

2011	22
2012	18
2013	27 (to date).

Swedish Government: Regulation of Prostitution and Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 28048/11-15, to detail the dates of the conversations and correspondence between departmental officials and their counterparts in the Swedish Department of Justice on the subject of (i) human trafficking; and (ii) prostitution, since August 2012.

(AQW 28725/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am not aware of any contact between my Department and the Swedish Department of Justice regarding human trafficking and prostitution. As I said in my reply to AQW/28048/11-15, there is widespread availability of published material on the regulation of prostitution in Sweden, and my Department is of course familiar with this material.

Department for Regional Development

Upgrade of the A26

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the further upgrade of the A26.
(AQW 26181/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I am pleased, having made the case for the A26 project, to have secured funding of around £8 million in 2014/15 for the A26 Frosses Road Dual Carriageway scheme, which will enable construction to commence in late 2014.

I have now considered the Inspector's Report into the Public Inquiry for the scheme and tasked Roads Service to progress the project, taking into account the Inspector's recommended amendments. This will enable the Statutory Orders to be made and the procurement process to be publicised. It is anticipated the scheme will take 24 months to complete at an estimated cost of £65 million.

Flooding: Lisheeghan Lane, Ballymoney

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development when measures to alleviate pooling and flooding will be introduced at Lisheeghan Lane, Ballymoney.

(AQW 27743/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: If the Member has identified particular flooding or pooling problems, I would be grateful if he could contact the local Roads Service, Area Maintenance Engineer, to discuss the matter.

Percentage of Children who Cycled and Walked to School

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what percentage of children (i) cycled; and (ii) walked to school, over each of the last five years.

(AQW 27881/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It would be difficult to collect information of this type for Northern Ireland as a whole. However, data on travel behaviours, including for children, is routinely collated through the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI). The figures shown in the tables below have been compiled from this survey. While the Survey is updated annually, due to small sample size the statistics are provided for a rolling three (calendar) year period, (e.g. the period 2010 – 2012 is based on data collected between January 2010 and December 2012), rather than on a year-by-year basis.

Percentage of journeys to or from school by walking/bicycling for 4-11 year olds: 2006-2008 to 2010-2012

Age group	Travel mode	2006-2008	2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011	2010-2012
4-11	Walk	34%	29%	26%	25%	26%
	Bicycle	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%
	All modes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentage of journeys to or from school by walking/bicycling for 12-18 year olds: 2006-2008 to 2010-2012

Age group	Travel mode	2006-2008	2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011	2010-2012
12-18	Walk	18%	18%	17%	17%	16%
	Bicycle	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%
	All modes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

I want to see an increased focus on the needs of cyclists and to encourage greater participation in this sustainable form of transport. To this end, I have established a new cycling unit in my Department. I have given it responsibility for coordinating all cycling issues and it will ensure that cycling interests are progressed in a more integrated manner, are given an increased focus and priority, and are measured more comprehensively.

Floating Bus Stops

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considered the introduction of a 'floating bus stop' similar to those in London.

(AQW 28082/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am aware the construction of floating bus stops is a relatively recent development being trialled in the United Kingdom.

I have asked my Department's recently formed Cycling Policy Unit to monitor this initiative.

NI Water: Renewable Energy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, in view of the cost of NI Water's electricity usage and the prospect that electricity prices will continue to rise, whether he will request that NI Water produce a cost benefit analysis of producing as much of their electricity as possible using renewable energy.

(AQW 28171/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Existing Ministerial guidance for water and sewerage services already includes a priority for NI Water to “Agree appropriate targets to plan and deliver a contribution to the Programme for Government greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (e.g. through increased use of green energy).”

NI Water has exceeded its targets for the use of renewable energy through generating renewable energy from water turbines and the incineration of sewage sludge. NI Water has considered the use of other sustainable sources for the generation of renewable energy and uses a cost benefit analysis as one of the processes to decide if it is economical to proceed with these projects.

My Department is currently consulting on draft Social and Environmental Guidance for Water and Sewerage Service (2015-21). This includes priorities on renewable energy including investigating opportunities for generating renewable energy from NI Water assets. The Draft Guidance also includes a number of other priorities that could contribute to managing future increases in NI Water’s energy demands and operating costs. The public consultation on Draft Social and Environmental Guidance closes on 31 January 2014.

Life Expectancy of Road Surfaces

Mrs Overend asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the factors that contribute towards the life expectancy of road surfaces.

(AQW 28307/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Road surfaces have finite lifespans and research and observations over many years has shown that road pavements generally do not deteriorate in a uniform way over their serviceable life. The rate and extent of this deterioration is influenced by several factors which include:

- natural ageing (oxidisation) of bitumen that makes the road surface less flexible and more susceptible to cracking, which allows the ingress of water;
- weather conditions, in particular the frequent freeze / thaw cycle experienced during the winter. A hard freeze / thaw cycle can break up a damaged or cracked surface leading to potholes and, in severe cases, cause total foundation failure. High summertime temperatures can also be very damaging as bitumen in the surface layers can melt;
- road openings by utilities – an increasingly frequent occurrence which leaves a structural weakness no matter how well the opening is reinstated;
- traffic volumes and in particular HGV’s;
- Initial design and construction – the design criteria for roads has evolved over the years and has become more sophisticated and in general the motorway and trunk road network has been built and upgraded to these standards. However, these roads represent only about 5% of the total road network. Most of Northern Ireland’s roads are old, had little formal design and construction and were not built to withstand modern traffic volumes. The rate of deterioration in such roads is much greater, once excavations or bad weather disturbs their foundations;
- periodic maintenance – roads should receive timely periodic resurfacing treatments to extend the life of the overall pavement construction and negate the need for patching, which is less cost effective. Unfortunately, due to historical funding shortfalls many roads do not receive the necessary periodic treatments when they should and resurfacing frequencies usually far exceed recommended best practise. This makes them more susceptible to the effects previously outlined.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in (i) Magherafelt; and (ii) Cookstown, broken down by street, in each of the last two years.
(AQW 28314/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A breakdown of all street locations where Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been issued in Magherafelt and Cookstown, in each of the last two years, is not readily available.

However, information in relation to PCNs issued in specific streets can be provided, upon request, from my Department's Road Service.

Cairnshill Park and Ride

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the trend in usage of Cairnshill Park and Ride over the last two years.

(AQW 28332/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Cairnshill Park and Ride site has seen a steady growth in its usage over the last two years.

On average, 216 cars used this site daily in 2012. From January 2013 to September 2013 a daily average of 230 cars used this site. However, since September 2013 there has been a marked increase in usage of this site, with a daily average of 353 cars over the last four weeks.

This demonstrates an extremely encouraging shift in travel behaviour on this corridor, away from the private car and on to public transport.

Park and Ride Facilities at Black's Road and Sprucefield

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average occupancy, expressed as a percentage, for the Park and Ride facilities at (i) Black's Road; and (ii) Sprucefield in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28333/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the average occupancy for the Park and Ride facilities at Black's Road and Sprucefield, based on weekly average figures, in each of the last three years are provided in the table below:

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY OF PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES

YEAR	Sprucefield (320 spaces)	Black's Road (220 spaces)
2011	67%	69%
2012	71%	80%
2013 (Up to end of October 2013)	78%	87%

Provision of Residents Parking Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the provision of residents parking schemes.

(AQW 28343/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is currently developing a scheme for the introduction of residents parking on the Lower Malone area of Belfast. The scheme is well advanced, both in terms of design and consultation, and officials hope to carry out the formal consultation on the proposed scheme in early 2014.

Informal consultations, to determine if residents parking proposals have broad local support in the Rugby Road/College Park Avenue, Donegall Pass and Sandy Row areas are also underway.

In association with scheme development, officials are currently drafting the necessary subordinate legislation to facilitate schemes and aims to have the above schemes delivered during 2014.

Officials are also drafting the necessary subordinate legislation for the provision of Residents Parking Schemes in Massereene Street and Clarke Court in Antrim and also the Bogside area of Londonderry, with the aim of introducing these schemes in 2014.

Introduction of Vertical Deflection Schemes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 27574/11-15, in the case of each area, whether accident and fatality rates have dropped in each example since the introduction of vertical deflection schemes, and if so, by how much.

(AQW 28367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of collision history, collision reduction and fatalities pursuant to AQW 27574/11-15 are provided in the table below. Schemes undertaken in 2008/09 and 2009/10 have 3 years' complete data; schemes undertaken in 2010/11 have 2 years' data; and schemes undertaken in 2011/12 have 1 year's complete data. A complete set of data for schemes completed in 2012/13 is unavailable:

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2008/09	Ballymagarry Lane, Belfast	0	0	0
	Clarawood Park area, Belfast	0	2	0
	Coolnasilla Park area, Belfast	1	0	0
	Earlswood Road / Belmont Church Road area, Belfast	0	2	0
	Euston Street area, Belfast	0	0	0
	Kensington Road area, Belfast	1	0	0
	Lepper Street / Spamount Street area, Belfast	6	4	0
	Maryville Park / Myrtlefield Park area, Belfast	2	0	0
	North Boundary Street area, Belfast	0	0	0
	Sydenham Avenue area, Belfast	2	1	0
	Tamar Street / Witham Street area, Belfast	2	0	0
	Lower Braniel Road area, Castlereagh	8	2	0
	Wynchurch Road area, Castlereagh	1	1	0
	Causeway End Road area, Lisburn	1	2	0
	Lagmore Avenue & Dale area, Lisburn	1	1	0
	Magheralave Road area, Lisburn	8	1	0
	Skyline Drive area, Lisburn	2	1	0
	Barn Road / Elizabeth Avenue area, Carrickfergus	0	3	0
	Bracken Drive area, Newtownabbey	0	0	0
	Hazelburn Road area, Newtownabbey	2	0	0
	Drumhirk Drive area, Bangor	3	1	0
	Grays Hill area, Bangor	3	1	0
	Woodburn area Derry/Londonderry	8	0	0
Bishop Street Area Derry/Londonderry	5	0	0	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2008/09	Benview Estate. Derry/Londonderry	1	0	0
	Stiles Estate, Antrim	3	1	0
	Randalstown	5	1	0
	Seacliff, Larne	2	0	0
	Eastermeade, Ballymoney	0	0	0
	Gortgore Road, Greysteel	1	0	0
	Shore Rd, Cushendall	1	0	0
	Strangford Heights, Newtownards	0	0	0
	Derrymore Rd, Bessbrook	0	0	0
	Clonallen Rd, Warrenpoint	1	1	0
	Laurelvale	2	1	0
	Drunbreda Walk, Armagh	0	0	0
	Commercial Road, Banbridge	0	1	0
	Diamond Road, Dromore	1	0	0
	Donard View, Loughbrickland	0	0	0
	Bachelors Walk, Portadown	3	0	0
	Cecil Street area, Portadown	0	1	0
	Derrychara Area, Enniskillen	3	2	0
	Fountain Street Area, Strabane	5	0	0
	Ardstraw Village, SDC	2	0	0
	Mourne Park, Newtownstewart, SDC	3	0	0
	Killiclogher area, ODC	4	8	0
	Lambrook Road, Omagh	0	1	0
	Ballyronan Village	1	0	0
	Ardboe Village	2	0	0
	Blackpark Road, Toome	6	0	0
Leckagh / Killowen, Magherafelt	3	0	0	
2009/10	Alexandra Gardens area, Belfast	0	0	0
	Ballysillan Park area, Belfast	3	4	0
	Bilston Road area, Belfast	0	2	0
	Cabin Hill Park area, Belfast	0	0	0
	Friendly Street, Belfast	2	0	0
	Jellicoe Avenue area, Belfast	1	0	0

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2009/10	Martinez Avenue area, Belfast	0	0	0
	Beechill Road area, Castlereagh	0	2	0
	Cairnshill Park / Burnside Park area, Castlereagh	0	0	0
	Merok Crescent area, Castlereagh	2	0	0
	Newtownbreda Road, Castlereagh	1	0	0
	Gregg Street area, Lisburn	0	0	0
	Hawthorne Way / Ollardale Park area, Ballyclare, Newtownabbey	2	0	0
	Castle Park Road area, Bangor	5	1	0
	Carnhill, Derry/Londonderry	1	0	0
	Knockwellan, Derry/Londonderry	0	0	0
	Rathenraw Antrim	0	0	0
	Toome Village	0	0	0
	Glynn	2	0	0
	Saul St/ Saul Rd Downpatrick	2	3	0
	Circular rd, Castlewellan	0	0	0
	Cumber RD Drumaness	0	0	0
	Victoria Ave Newtownards	0	1	0
	Dorans Hill Newry	2	0	0
	Scrogg Rd Kilkeel	1	1	0
	Cloughmore Rd Rostrevor	2	0	0
	Granemore Road, Keady	2	2	0
	Madden Row, Keady	0	0	0
	Newry Street, Rathfriland	3	1	0
	Seapatrick road, Banbridge	0	1	0
	North Circular Road, Lurgan	1	0	0
	Gortgonis Road & Plater's Hill, Coalisland	6	1	0
	Irvinestown	11	3	0
	Castletown Area, Strabane	4	0	0
	Mountfield Village, ODC	1	0	0
	Hospital Road North & Winters Lane, ODC	4	0	0
Fintona Village, ODC	3	2	0	

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2010/11	Cupar Way area, Belfast	2	2	0
	Laurelhill Road, Lisburn	1	1	0
	Ballybog Road / Seymour Hill area, Lisburn	1	1	0
	Carnmoney Road North area, Newtownabbey	2	2	0
	East St / West St Newtownards	6	4	0
	Forkhill Village	1	1	0
	Eastway, Derry/Londonderry	0	1	0
	Hawthorn Terrace, Derry/Londonderry	1	1	0
	Church Rd, Randalstown	1	0	0
	Ballytromery Road, Crumlin	0	0	0
	Bridge Rd, Dunloy	2	0	0
	Greystone Estate Antrim	2	0	0
	Ardmore, Armagh	1	0	0
	Acton	1	0	0
	Mill Hill, Waringstown	1	0	0
	Hillview & Kilmacormick Road, Enniskillen	0	0	0
	Victoria Bridge Village, SDC	1	2	0
	Lurganboy Rd, Castledearg, SDC	0	1	0
	Parkview Rd, Castledearg, SDC	0	0	0
	Seskinore Village, ODC	1	0	0
	Queens Avenue, Magherafelt	0	0	0
	Milburn / Princess Terrace	1	0	0
	Northland, Moneymore	0	0	0
	Gortalowry, Cookstown	0	0	0
	Coolnafranky, Cookstown	0	0	0
	2011/12	Bryson Street / Madrid Street area, Belfast	3	1
Cambrai Street, Belfast		3	0	0
Circular Road area, Belfast		3	0	0
Newington Avenue area, Belfast		1	0	0
Tudor area (Shankill), Belfast		2	1	0
Branial / Whincroft area, Castlereagh		0	1	0

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2011/12	Glen Road / Roddens Crescent area, Castlereagh	6	0	0
	Manse Road, Carryduff, Castlereagh	1	0	0
	Ravenswood Park, Castlereagh	2	0	0
	Alexander Road area, Carrickfergus	1	0	0
	Regent Avenue area, Carrickfergus	0	0	0
	Rashee Park area, Ballyclare	0	0	0
	Abbey Ring area, Holywood	2	0	0
	Ballymacconnell Road South area, Bangor	1	0	0
	Church View / Spencer Street area, Holywood	0	1	0
	Skipperstone Road / Whitehill Drive area, Bangor	2	0	0
	Rosstown Road, Derry/Londonderry	4	0	0
	Bards Hill, Derry/Londonderry	0	0	0
	Hillfort Road, Derry/Londonderry	0	1	0
	Springtown Road, Derry/Londonderry	1	0	0
	Parkhall Estate, Antrim	2	0	0
	Linn Rd Upper Carncastle Rd Larne (Phase One)	9	1	0
	Bayview Road, Ballycastle (traffic management scheme)	Data not available	Data not available	0
	Ballykinlar Village	2	0	0
	New Harbour Rd Portavogie	2	0	0
	Mourne Esplanade Kilkeel	2	1	0
	Forth rd/Dallan Rd Warrenpoint	4	0	0
	Ballygowan Road, Banbridge	0	0	0
	Huntly Road, Banbridge	4	1	0
	Annaclone	1	0	0
	Lower Toberhewny Rd, Lurgan	0	0	0
	Annagher Area, Coalisland	7	0	0
	Killen Village, SDC	1	0	0
	Drumquin Village, ODC	2	0	0
	Drumnakilly Rd, Carrickmore, ODC	0	0	0
	Sunningdale, Omagh	0	0	0

Year	Traffic Calming Scheme	3 Year Collision History	Collisions 3 Years After Completion	Fatalities
2011/12	Upperlands Village	2	1	0
	Tullagh Drive, Cookstown	2	0	0
	Fortview / Drumcree, Cookstown	0	0	0
	Grove Terrace / O'Hara Road	0	0	0

Number of Road Potholes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the number of potholes on roads; and to detail the average percentage of potholes that are repaired annually.

(AQW 28370/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not record statistics solely in relation to potholes either recorded or repaired.

As you may be aware, Article 8 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, places a duty on Roads Service to maintain all public roads in reasonable condition. In recognition of its duty of care, Roads Service has put in place a set of Maintenance Standards for Safety. These standards, which are designed to ensure a consistent service level and a safe highway while offering value for money, are based on best practice, research and consultation with both the public and other professional bodies and Industry.

The standards and procedures currently in operation establish frequencies for road inspections, dependent on traffic volumes and specify response times for the repair of defects. Inspection frequencies vary between daily cycles for motorways to four monthly cycles for carriageways carrying low volumes of traffic. Response times specified for the repair of defects are dependent on the severity of the defect and range from one calendar day, to simple inclusion in the next work programme for that particular route. If it becomes apparent that the relevant response time cannot be met then the Department has the option of installing signs to warn road users of a possible danger.

I should also explain that there is a direct linkage between the amount of Capital funding available for resurfacing and surface dressing and the numbers of defects which need repaired. As the level of Capital funding decreases, the numbers and cost of responsive patching increases and vice versa.

Mullaghcarron Road, Maghaberry: Road Repairs

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the repairs that have been completed on the Mullaghcarron Road, Maghaberry in the last twelve months; and whether further repairs are planned.

(AQW 28377/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Mullaghcarron Road is inspected on an eight week cyclical basis and any identified defect considered to be hazardous to the public is processed for repair on a prioritised basis with the more severe defects treated more urgently. During the period November 2012 to November 2013, approximately 100 recorded defects have been identified and repaired on the Mullaghcarron Road.

I am pleased to confirm that Roads Service plans to carry out a carriageway resurfacing scheme on Mullaghcarron Road at its junction with White Lane, as part of a minor improvement scheme.

In the meantime, Roads Service will continue to regularly inspect the area and carry out any safety related repairs that are considered necessary.

Grants Available from the Department

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the grants available from his Department.

(AQW 28385/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the grants that are available from my Department.

Grants	Purpose
Public Service Obligation	Funding required to allow NI Railways to operate passenger services within an agreed fare structure that otherwise would prove uneconomic to complete in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007.
Railway Capital	Capital Grant used for the purposes of maintaining and improving railway services in Northern Ireland, in accordance with Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
Bus Capital	Capital Grant to Translink for the acquisition of new buses and also maintaining and improving bus facilities in Northern Ireland, in accordance with Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
Rural Transport Fund	Support to Rural Community Transport Partnerships to provide transport options for rural people in Northern Ireland, to improve access to work, education, healthcare, shopping and recreational activities and in so doing reduce social isolation. This is done through the provision of Dial-a-Lift services for rural individuals throughout Northern Ireland. CTA – Community Transport Association provide the Department with advice, guidance and training in relation to voluntary and community organisations.
Transport Programme for People with Disabilities Funding	<p>Disability Action Transport Services are providing an interim service in urban areas across Northern Ireland for people with disabilities who are unable to use mainstream public transport.</p> <p>Shopmobility Schemes are providing services to their members who are either permanently or temporarily mobility impaired. They do this through the provision of scooters, wheelchairs and other ambulatory aids.</p> <p>IMTAC – Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee provide advice and guidance to the Department on issues around mobility for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Volunteer Now – provide a buddying scheme to assist people who have difficulties using public transport for various reasons to increase their confidence to enable them to regain their independence and travel on the public transport options available to them.</p>
ecar Home and Workplace Charge Point Grant	Electric car owners are able to apply for a 100% grant for the supply and installation of a smart home or workplace charging point up to a maximum of £1,500.

Easybus Service: Passengers

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of passengers who used the Easybus service in each of the last five years; and (ii) the average number of passengers who boarded the bus, per journey, on each route in the last year.

(AQW 28405/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink records the number of passenger journeys and estimates the average number of passengers. The tables below set out the information requested. No figures are available for Bangor and Londonderry beyond 2010/2011 as Easibus services in these areas were withdrawn in 2010 under the mandate of my predecessor the then Minister, Conor Murphy.

BELFAST EASIBUS FIGURES

Total Passenger Journeys for Financial Year				
2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
31,788	33,274	32,244	32,574	35,216

BANGOR EASIBUS FIGURES

Total Passenger Journeys for Financial Year				
2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
-	-	5,396	41,938	52,142

LONDONDERRY EASIBUS FIGURES

Total Passenger Journeys for Financial Year				
2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
-	-	13,697	57,030	112,894

Route No	Route	Belfast Easibus Average Passengers per journey per route 2012/13
EB1	Connswater - Cregagh	12.5
EB2	Connswater - Newtownards Road	3.3
EB3	Connswater - Gilnahirk	8.5
EB4	Connswater - Knocknagoney	4.0
EB5	Forestside - Belvoir	9.1
EB6	Forestside - St George's Market (Adelaide St via Ormeau Road)	3.9
EB7	Forestside - Annadale via Rosetta	6.3
EB13	Abbeycentre - Rathcoole	8.1
EB15	Abbeycentre - Downview	3.7
EB16	Abbeycentre - Cloughfern	10.4

Car Parking Charges in Coleraine

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider relaxing car parking charges in Coleraine during the Christmas Holiday period, in an effort to promote town centre shopping and put the town centre parking facilities on a par with out of town shopping outlets.

(AQW 28416/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware I have made a number of important decisions relating to parking charges including freezing the current off-street tariffs, rejection of the proposal to introduce on-street charging and the introduction of a cashless payment system for parking, Park Mobile. These decisions have been very beneficial to local businesses and were made against a backdrop of the requirement to recover costs and the need to effectively manage town centre parking, by promoting greater turnover of spaces and enhancing accessibility to businesses and services in our local towns and cities.

I have also recently announced the introduction of a new Christmas parking rate of five hours parking for just one pound in 95 of my Department's car parks including the Mall, Abbey Street and Long Commons car parks in Coleraine. The new tariff will be introduced from 2 December 2013 and will continue until 11 January 2014. Drivers will still be able pay the minimum tariff in each car park, if they so choose.

My Department's Roads Service is working in partnership with Coleraine Borough Council to provide a free 'Park & Ride' bus service to operate from Riverside Retail Park to the town centre every 15 minutes between 9.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. on each of the four Saturdays leading up to Christmas, commencing on 30 November.

I am confident these measures will provide a welcome boost for traders in Coleraine and would encourage the public to continue to support their local economy by shopping locally.

Cost of Compensation Claims

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost, including legal costs, to his Department of successful compensation claims for damage to (i) motor vehicles; and (ii) personal injury, arising over the last five years.

(AQW 28446/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the cost, including legal costs, to my Department associated with compensation claims for damage to (i) motor vehicles; and (ii) personal injury, arising over the last five years. The costs associated with both successful and unsuccessful claims are included as the Department does not disaggregate costs between successful and unsuccessful claims.

Year	Motor Vehicles (£000's)	Personal Injury (£000's)
2008/09	183	3,939
2009/10	246	3,982
2010/11	348	3,945
2011/12	392	3,965
2012/13	155	4,128

Belfast to Derry Railway Line

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of preparing tender documents for the passing loop on the Belfast to Derry railway line.

(AQW 28447/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have liaised with Translink officials who have stated that the preparation of tender documents is just one element of the project management process and staff timesheet allocations do not differentiate this work from other project management functions.

It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

Door-to-Door Transport Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the delivery of the Door-to-Door Scheme by the Rural Transport Scheme.

(AQW 28450/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Door-2-Door scheme ended on 31 March 2013.

Disability Action continues to provide Disability Action Transport Services, on an interim basis, in partnership with a number of other voluntary and community organisations which include some rural community transport partnerships in 29 urban areas across Northern Ireland. For the period 01 April 2013 to 31 October 2013, there have been in excess of 54,000 passenger trips delivered.

I understand from Disability Action, who has operational responsibility for the scheme that there is a good working relationship and understanding between it and the rural partnerships and that Disability Action Transport Services continue to be delivered effectively.

Door-to-Door Transport Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to review the current arrangements regarding the delivery of the Door-to-Door Transport Scheme.

(AQW 28451/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Disability Action Transport Service has only been in place since April 2013 and as such it would be too early to undertake any operational review.

My Department is undertaking an evaluation of the transport policies and schemes initiated by the Department to promote social inclusion. The outcome of the evaluation will assist my Department to better understand the barriers to the use of mainstream public transport, to identify what measures can be taken to overcome these barriers and to develop proposals to meet the transport needs of elderly and disabled people across Northern Ireland.

Department: EU Funding Surrendered

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the EU funding surrendered by his Department in each of the last two financial years.

(AQW 28492/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not surrendered any EU funding in the last two financial years.

Randalstown to Castledawson Dual Carriageway

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 27642/11-15, to detail the procurement process for the Randalstown to Castledawson dual carriageway.

(AQW 28507/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service proposes to use a no value "Framework Contract" to procure the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson Dual Carriageway. The contract will be based around the principles of the New Engineering and Construction 3 Framework Contract which facilitates Early Contractor Involvement. In using this type of contract, the Employer (the Department) invites tenders from contractors to carry out work on an 'as instructed basis' over a set term but only one contractor is appointed.

The Framework Contract would comprise two phases:

- Phase 1 – Completion of detailed design work. At the same time, Works Orders could be instructed for works, such as archaeological and geotechnical investigations, which can be carried out in advance of the main construction works.
- Phase 2 – Commencement of construction.

This form of contract allows the appointment of a contractor and progresses the scheme to a “shovel ready” position, allowing construction to commence immediately funding is confirmed.

Bids to Fund Construction on the A6

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 27642/11-15, to detail why bids to fund construction on the A6 were unsuccessful.

(AQW 28509/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following the court ruling in April of this year, which delayed the A5 Western Corridor dualling scheme, I wrote to the then Finance Minister in May, highlighting other schemes which could commence construction in 2014/15. The A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dual carriageway scheme was one of four schemes, for which bids were submitted as part of the October 2013 Monitoring Round and the 2014/15 Capital Budget Exercise.

Unfortunately, the bid to commence construction on the A6 in 2014/15 was not met by the Executive. However, sufficient funding was secured to establish a “no-value” contract that allows a contractor to be appointed to complete the detailed design work, and be ready to commence construction, when funding is confirmed.

The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme has been through a Public Inquiry. My officials have considered the Inspector’s recommendations and I expect to make a Departmental Statement on the way forward later this financial year. Although well advanced, this scheme is not in a position to commence construction in 2014/15 and was therefore not eligible for construction funding in this period.

I will continue to press the need for this scheme in future bids for funding.

Dualling of the A6 from Derry to Dungiven

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 27642/11-15, whether the only obstacle to dualling the A6 from Derry to Dungiven is funding.

(AQW 28511/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Delivering major roads schemes is a long process and can take up to six or seven years to develop, procure and commence construction. With our major projects two significant obstacles must be overcome: the securing of funding for procurement and construction and the successful completion of the statutory processes.

The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme is well advanced in terms of development; it has been through Public Inquiry, with publication of the Departmental Statement expected early in the new year. Progression of the project would, subject to final approval of the business case, be reliant upon funding being made available.

The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21 sets out plans to augment Executive funds by accessing alternative finance for some projects that are suitable to be funded in this way. This includes the progression of a package of high priority road schemes amounting to around £390 million, which would embrace improvements to the A6. However, a commitment to fund the revenue consequences of this roads package will be required and so the timing depends on future resource budgets. I will, however, continue to bid for conventional funding for the A6 dualling schemes.

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 27376/11-15, to detail (i) whether the A5 and A4 are now part of the TEN-T network; (ii) the funding implications for the A4 and the A5 Western Transport Corridor dual carriageway project; (iii) the discussions he has had with the National Roads Authority to ensure that there is a standardisation of quality and seamlessness at the (a) A5/N2; (b) A4/N16; and (c) A5/N14 connection points.

(AQW 28518/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) I can confirm that both the A5 and A4 have been included on the TEN-T Comprehensive Network.
- (ii) Regarding funding implications, it is anticipated that 5% of the total €13,174bn Connecting Europe Facility budget will be reserved for the Comprehensive Network. Funding applications for any project may only be submitted once the periodic call criteria have been announced by the Commission. My Department, as always, will seek to maximise EU income by submitting suitable projects that match the call criteria.
- (iii) My Department's Roads Service has had discussions with the National Roads Authority on many road projects and, while there are some slight differences in terms of road standards, standardisation of quality does not prove to be an issue for road users. This is evidenced by the highly successful A1/N1 cross border project.

In relation to the A5 Western Transport Corridor project, technical working groups are in place for both the A5/N2 and A5/N14 border interfaces with representation from Roads Service, the National Roads Authority, Monaghan County Council (for A5/N2) and Donegal County Council (for A5/N14). These working groups ensure coordination and consistency between jurisdictions on this particular project.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28546/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is standard practice for my Department's staff to treat all visitors to government buildings with courtesy and respect.

Where possible, details of visitors are provided to the Department in advance. In cases where the Department is notified of any visitors who may require additional help and support to cater for their needs, every effort is made to ensure that such assistance is provided. This applies to all visitors with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum conditions.

DRD officials have contributed to the cross-Departmental Autism Strategy 2013-2020 and initial Action Plan (2013-2016), which were recently approved by the NI Executive. The Action Plan contains proposals for autism awareness training for frontline staff across all Departments, including DRD.

Public Realm Scheme, Comber: Footpaths

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Public Realm Scheme that is planned for Comber and following the public petition regarding narrow footpaths, whether he is content that a footpath less than one metre wide is a reasonable provision to ensure adequate safety for pedestrians and people with a disability.

(AQW 28568/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has inherited many footpaths in towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland, which do not meet modern day standards. The Public Realm Scheme planned for Comber is an Ards Borough Council led project, mainly funded by the Department of Social Development (DSD), but with a contribution from the Council.

In general, Environmental Improvement Schemes are intended to enhance and revitalise towns, providing finishes which will help encourage new development, increase business potential and make them more commercially viable and attractive to visitors. My Department's Roads Service is one of a number of consultees to the planning process in this regard.

As you will appreciate, site constraints in some narrow streets, together with other contributory factors, can present considerable practical difficulties when seeking to achieve desired aims. However, Roads Service, in conjunction with Public Representatives, Ards Borough Council, DSD, Comber Regeneration Community Partnership, PSNI, Appointed Consultants and other interested parties, will continue to provide advice and guidance in relation to potential road safety improvements in the town where practicable, subject to the availability of resources.

Depth of Potholes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 28021/11-15, to detail the criteria used to allocate different depth of potholes into priorities for repair. [R]

(AQW 28742/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The level of priority attributed to the repair is determined by a number of factors including defect depth, volume of traffic, defect location in relation to carriageway width etc.

Department for Social Development

Home Repair Assistance Grant Scheme

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has received a proposal from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to reinstate the Home Repair Assistance grant scheme.

(AQW 27932/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive submitted a proposal to my Department earlier this year to have a more flexible approach to Home Repairs Assistance Grants (HRAG). However, the proposal related to a short term scheme which would only be available in a selected number of areas. It was therefore considered not to be a feasible option at this time

Having consulted on proposals to deregulate the statutory grants schemes, including the HRAG, my Department is currently examining options to make available alternative forms of assistance for repair and improvement in the private sector. I hope to make an announcement about this matter by Spring 2014.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Spend

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 27344/11-15, for a breakdown of how the money was spent by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballycastle; and (iii) Ballymoney, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28263/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has provided the following breakdown of expenditure for their Ballymena, Ballycastle and Ballymoney District Office areas in each of the last three years: -

	2010/11 £k	2011/12 £k	2012/13 £k
Ballymena			
Land & Property	0	1	1
Capital Improvements	94	247	182
*Private Sector Grants	61	18	0
Accommodation	1	0	146
Loan Repayments	0	0	0
Maintenance	4,809	6,716	6,485
Supervision & Mgt	58	58	72
SPED Acq	82	0	108
Misc Public & Private Exp	221	286	104
Total	5,326	7,326	7,098

Ballycastle	2010/11 £k	2011/12 £k	2012/13 £k
Land & Property	0	0	0
Capital Improvements	12	138	10
*Private Sector Grants	22	30	0
Accommodation	0	0	0
Loan Repayments	0	0	0
Maintenance	593	1,124	844
Supervision & Mgt	23	23	31
SPED Acq	0	0	0
Misc Public & Private Exp	61	45	59
Total	711	1,360	944

Ballymoney	2010/11 £k	2011/12 £k	2012/13 £k
Land & Property	0	0	0
Capital Improvements	167	84	133
*Private Sector Grants	87	29	0
Accommodation	0	0	0
Loan Repayments	0	0	0
Maintenance	1,505	2,855	2,301
Supervision & Mgt	58	68	85
SPED Acq	0	1	84
Misc Public & Private Exp	52	62	207
Total	1,869	3,099	2,810

Notes

- * Warm Homes spend is included in Private Sector Grants figures and Loan Charges are not available at district level

In addition the table below provides details of expenditure on the Social Housing Development in the District Council areas in question.

District Council	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Ballymena	£1,111,790	£3,209,776	£2,835,612
Ballymoney	-	£314,289	£177,902
Moyle	-	£840,629	£317,424

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 Benefit Fraud

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to prevent housing fraud.

(AQW 28341/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive recently developed a Tenancy Misuse / Fraud Strategy which sets out measures to allow staff to effectively prevent, detect and tackle misuse and fraud. The Tackling Fraud Strategy is being rolled out during 2013/14. The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations is also in the process of developing a model strategy for Housing Associations to adopt and use as appropriate. In conjunction with this, my Department has set up a working group incorporating the Department, the Housing Executive and Housing Associations to examine what actions can be taken to more effectively address housing tenancy fraud.

Bloomfield Housing Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses in the Bloomfield Housing Estate, Bangor, are owned by the Housing Executive.

(AQW 28386/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by individual estates. However, the information below provides details of the properties owned by the Housing Executive in the Bloomfield, Rathgill and Willowbrook estates, all of which have the same estate code: -

Bungalows	270
Flats	184
Houses	270

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Soft Services Function

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development why AQW 27641/11-15 remains unanswered.
(AQW 28410/11-15)

Mr McCausland: AQW 27641/11-15 was answered on 22 November 2013

Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings applications made in each of the last five years; and of these, how many were successful.

(AQW 28411/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table attached details the number of applications under the Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings in the last five years and those who were accepted.

Year	Applications received	Accepted
2008/09	100	46
2009/10	112	42
2010/11	69	26
2011/12	67	29
2012/13	64	28

Note: Applications received, does not include those security forces applicants who were not issued a Chief Constable's Certificate

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Housing Waiting List for East Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current housing waiting list for East Belfast, broken down by ward.

(AQW 28432/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Ward. However, the table below details the number of applicants on the waiting list at 1 November 2013 by Common Landlord Area in East Belfast:-

Common Landlord Area	Applicants on Waiting List
Albertbridge Rd	80
Ardcarn	41
Ashmount	14
Ballyhackamore	105
Bridge End/ Rotterdam Court	2
Bloomfield/Ravenscroft	215
Cherryvalley	7
Beersbridge Lwr-The Mount	73
Clarawood	72
Dundela	41
Edenvale	52
Garnerville	20
Inverary	32
Knocknagoney	31
Newtownards Rd	290
Orchard Court	2
Short Strand	94
Summerhill	14
Sydenham/Sandbrook/Lisavon	201
Wandsworth	26
Willowfield/Upper Castlereagh	227
Total	1639

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Housing Waiting List for South Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current housing waiting list for South Belfast, broken down by ward.

(AQW 28433/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Ward. However, the table below details the number of applicants on the waiting list at 1 November 2013 by Common Landlord Area in South Belfast: -

Common Landlord Area	Applicants on Waiting List
Annadale	67
Cromac	80
Donegall Pass	71
Donegall Rd	239
Finaghy	191
Flush Pk	45
Ormeau Upper	396
Ormeau Lower	280
Lisburn Rd	868
Sandy Row	70
Stranmillis	32
Taughmonagh	57
Woodstock/Ravenhill	359
Total	2755

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Social Housing Need Assessment 2012-17

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development why the Social Housing Need Assessment 2012-17, included in the Derry District Housing Plan 2013, projects five year need at 1540 when the current Common Waiting List stands at 3286.

(AQW 28468/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The 2013/14 Derry City District Housing Plan identified a need for 1560 additional units over the period 2012 to 2017.

The Housing Executive carries out an annual assessment of social housing need for local housing areas in Northern Ireland. Essentially, the assessment is a five year social housing need projection and is calculated by subtracting the number of applications in housing stress (demand) from the number of allocations and vacant properties (supply). The Housing Executive also considers additional factors such as demographic trends and regeneration issues (redevelopment) before determining the final figure.

The waiting list figures published in the report stem from December 2012 and state that 3,311 households were on the waiting list at this time, and that 2,203 were in housing need. Housing stress refers to applicants who have 30 points or more. 619 Allocations were made in the past year and of that, 23 properties were void.

The most recent waiting list data for the area is from 31 October 2013, with 3,425 on the waiting list, and 2,307 in housing stress.

Housing Executive Tenants: Arrears

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants, who were in arrears in each of the last five years, had enforcement action taken against them through the legal system.

(AQW 28483/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information below provides the number of enforcement actions taken by the Housing Executive against tenants in rent arrears at 31 March in each of the last five years: -

2009	105
2010	43
2011	58
2012	32
2013	52

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.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Historic Debt

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how much is the historic debt of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; and to what does this debt relate.

(AQW 28523/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As at 31 March 2013, the outstanding loan balance was £541,183,740.

The loans were generally taken out to finance new build housing activities by the Housing Executive and its predecessor organisations, including the Housing Trust and former local authorities.

Employment and Support Allowance: Fibromyalgia

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been awarded Employment and Support Allowance after being diagnosed with Fibromyalgia.

(AQW 28590/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The latest published statistical information for Employment and Support Allowance covers the period ending 31 May 2013.

At that date there were 1,070 Employment and Support Allowance claimants who had fibromyalgia registered as their primary medical condition.

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 the UK Statistics Authority

Charities and Voluntary Organisations: Pensions Deficit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department is supporting charities and voluntary organisations that are facing a substantial pensions deficit.

(AQW 28629/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have a specific role in supporting charities and voluntary organisations which are facing substantial pension deficits. Pension deficits are primarily a matter for the administrators of the individual schemes and for local voluntary organisations and charities as employers. Additionally, pensions are regulated by The Pensions Regulator who has a UK wide remit, on behalf of Government, to promote and improve understanding of the good administration of work-based

pensions to protect member benefits. Whilst the Pensions Regulator does not provide specific advice on scheme funding, guidance is provided on key issues such as valuations and deficit recovery plans.

The Pensions Regulator has indicated that, if advice around the funding of a particular scheme is required it should be sought from a professional source.

Departmental Buildings: Visitors Diagnosed with Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what provision is made within his departmental buildings to receive visitors diagnosed with autism and to cater for their needs.

(AQW 28651/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has not made any specific provision within DSD buildings in regard to receiving visitors diagnosed with autism.

Homelessness in Newry and Armagh

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Social Development i) how many people presented themselves as homeless in Newry and Armagh, in the last three years; and (ii) what action his Department is taking to support these people.

(AQW 28664/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

(i) The table below shows homeless presentations and acceptances in Newry & Armagh:

HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES NEWRY & ARMAGH 2010/2013

NEWRY

Year	Presenting as homeless	Accepted as homeless (Full duty Applicant)
2010/11	770	324
2011/12	805	322
2012/13	761	402

ARMAGH

Year	Presenting as homeless	Accepted as homeless (Full duty Applicant)
2010/11	278	122
2011/12	300	133
2012/13	259	126

(ii) In response to homelessness in Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive and its partners in the Promoting Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership have been developing and producing a range of homeless prevention measures under the auspices of the Homelessness Strategy 2012/2017.

The Housing Executive launched the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland on 1 May 2012. This followed an extensive consultation and redrafting process throughout 2011, to establish agreement among the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies who would be delivering the strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy 2012-17 sets out their strategy for tackling homelessness over the next five years and establishes the guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services. At this time of economic uncertainty and financial constraints it is more important than ever that homelessness services are appropriate, timely and effective.

The aim of this homelessness strategy is that long term homelessness and rough sleeping is eliminated across Northern Ireland by 2020 and has four Strategic Objectives:

- To place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery
- To reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing
- To remove the need to sleep rough
- To improve services to vulnerable homeless households and individuals

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.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) applications; and (ii) approvals for the Warm Homes Scheme in each constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 28668/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive administers the Warm Homes Scheme and uses 2 external Scheme Managers to deliver the programme. The Scheme Managers arrange to have the measures installed once it is established that an applicant is eligible for assistance. The information is not available at constituency level, but is shown at District Council level for the number of measures provided.

The Tables below show the number of enquiries received (Table 1); the number of those enquiries who are eligible for Warm Homes measures (Table 2) and the number who have had Warm Homes measures provided (Table 3).

TABLE 1 (ENQUIRIES RECEIVED)

Year 1 (From 01/07/09)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (to 31 Oct 13)	Total
38,636	35,820	36,111	33,641	13,423	157,631

TABLE 2 (ELIGIBLE REFERRALS)

Year 1 (From 01/07/09)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (to 31 Oct 13)	Total
11,270	16,803	17,189	14,413	7,102	66,777

TABLE 3 (MEASURES PROVIDED)

Council Area	Year 1 (From 01/07/09)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (to 31 Oct 13)	Total
Antrim	213	200	279	229	109	1,030
Ards	359	313	312	264	111	1,359

Council Area	Year 1 (From 01/07/09)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (to 31 Oct 13)	Total
Armagh	277	365	411	388	136	1,577
Ballymena	219	292	367	351	177	1,406
Ballymoney	136	131	149	173	110	699
Banbridge	189	252	270	283	81	1,075
Belfast	793	1,166	1,043	988	474	4,464
Carrickfergus	130	211	185	183	86	795
Castlereagh	283	264	247	163	65	1,022
Coleraine	187	319	339	324	162	1,331
Cookstown	273	430	287	279	98	1,367
Craigavon	377	586	702	546	201	2,412
Derry	260	819	918	1,127	438	3,562
Down	296	307	409	399	160	1,571
Dungannon	249	414	417	379	111	1,570
Fermanagh	371	477	608	536	185	2,177
Larne	104	194	131	181	100	710
Limavady	140	297	367	294	139	1,237
Lisburn	372	571	436	372	127	1,878
Magherafelt	141	303	261	248	139	1,092
Moyle	71	118	101	106	65	461
Newry & Mourne	491	595	682	559	215	2,542
Newtownabbey	300	419	434	332	175	1,660
North Down	306	319	329	260	116	1,330
Omagh	321	496	590	452	134	1,993
Strabane	217	511	377	339	145	1,589
Total	7,075	10,369	10,651	9,755	4,059	41,909

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.

Living Over the Shop Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to announce a grant programme to encourage town centre regeneration similar to the Living Over the Shop scheme, particularly for towns which have not been supported by such a scheme.

(AQW 28770/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's new Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework establishes town and city centre regeneration as a key policy priority and the Housing

Strategy sets out my intention to revitalise the Living over the Shops (LOTS) initiative and ensure synergy with our mainstream urban regeneration initiatives.

My officials are currently developing policy proposals to introduce an initiative to encourage people to return to town centre living, in recognition of the important role that housing can play in helping to diversify and re-energise our town and city centres. Proposals will be informed by a review of the previous LOTS scheme which was undertaken by the NIHE and by discussions with key stakeholders such as Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association.

Soft Services Functions

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development why AQW 27641/11-15 remains unanswered. **(AQW 28833/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: AQW 27641/11-15 was answered on 22 November 2013

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Zero-hour Contracts

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission to detail the number of employees that are on zero hour contracts within Parliament Buildings arising from Commission expenditure. **(AQW 28193/11-15)**

Mrs Cochrane (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission does not employ any members of staff on zero hour contracts.

Expenditure by the Assembly Commission includes a number of contracts with third party service providers covering services such as printing and publishing, broadcasting, maintenance and support services (catering, cleaning and retail). These contracts are managed by the third party suppliers.

Telephone Lines within Parliament Buildings

Mr McGlone asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) how many telephone lines within Parliament Buildings are restricted from making calls to '00353' numbers; and (ii) what consultation took place with Members, Assembly Management and Assembly staff prior to enforcing these restrictions. **(AQW 28396/11-15)**

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): During the comprehensive spending review, it was noted that the telephone system in Parliament Buildings had little or no access control employed and that international calls could be made from most landlines in the building.

In order to minimise any potential for misuse, senior management agreed to re-set the access level on all landlines to bar international calls. This was part of a range of cost saving measures introduced as part of the review that also included removing voicemail systems that had not been activated.

It should be noted, however, that the international bar does not prevent calls to GB mainland, the Republic of Ireland and to mobile networks.

It was agreed that Building Services Branch would, on request, re-set the access level on any telephone to permit international calls to be made and many have now been re-set. The number of telephones in the building currently restricted from making international calls is 159.

I can also confirm that your own landline currently has no restrictions in place.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 6 December 2013

(AQW 28312/11-15)

At March 2012 there were 69,275 Northern Ireland businesses which were either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme, with an annual turnover of less than £500,000 and/or employed fewer than fifty people.

Comprehensive information relating to the location of the sales and exports of these businesses is not available. However, information relating to the estimated value and location of sales for such businesses in the manufacturing sector is provided in Table 1.

Information on the total value of tradable services exports from such companies in (i) Construction (ii) Manufacturing and (iii) a “High Export Potential” group is provided in Table 2. Broad destination data is not available for the Construction group.

TABLE 1: BROAD DESTINATION SALES AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES FROM NORTHERN IRELAND MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES WITH FEWER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES OR WITH TURNOVER LESS THAN £500,000 IN 2011/12

	Value (£m)	% of sales
Total Sales	2,841	100.0
NI Sales	1,500	52.8
GB Sales	576	20.3
Export Sales	765	26.9
ROI Sales	444	15.6
Rest of Europe Sales	139	4.9
Rest of World Sales	182	6.4

Source: Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey 2011/12, Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch, NISRA

Footnotes:

- 1 Total sales includes all sales regardless of destination.
 - 2 Exports include all sales outside the United Kingdom.
-

TABLE 2: 2011 NI TRADABLE SERVICES EXPORTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS AND HIGH EXPORT POTENTIAL BUSINESSES FOR COMPANIES WITH FEWER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES AND/OR WITH TURNOVER LESS THAN £500,000

	Value (£m)	% of sales
Construction Export Sales ¹	118.3	100.0
Manufacturing (Services) Exports Sales:		
Export Sales	13.8	100.0
ROI Sales	9.1	66.3
Rest of Europe Sales	0.3	2.4
Rest of World Sales	4.3	31.3
High Export Potential Group:		
Export Sales	80.7	100.0
ROI Sales	32.1	39.8
Rest of Europe Sales	8.2	10.2
Rest of World Sales	40.4	50.1

1 Destination data not available for Construction exports

Source: Exporting Northern Ireland Services 2011 (NISRA)

(AQW 28609/11-15)

- (i) As outlined in my answer to AQW/27956/11-15, the information provided did not include the number of civil service posts in the NI Courts and Tribunals Service. This information will follow as soon as possible. My answer also only included those staff at grades specified in the question. At 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2013 there were also 11 non-general service grades based in Derry
- (ii) The Bain Review on the relocation of public sector posts outside Belfast predates the Department of Justice, which came into existence on 12 April 2010. The Department of Finance and Personnel has responsibility for taking forward the recommendations of the Bain Review. There are currently no strategic or active plans to move any posts to Derry.



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