

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 18 January 2013

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Wells, Jim (South Down)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 18 January 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Older People's Commissioner: Annual Budget

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the annual budget of the Older People's Commissioner.

(AQW 17735/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): Within the terms of the current Comprehensive Spending Review settlement, for 2012/13, the budget is £988k, for 2013/14 it is £959k and for 2014/15 it is £930k.

Should the Commissioner require additional resources, she does have the option of submitting bids for them to OFMDFM.

One Plan

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 14294/11-15, in relation to the job creation targets contained in One Plan, why 1175 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors is the only milestone contained within their Department's Programme for Government key commitments that is not included as a target or action in their 2012/13 business plan.

(AQW 18050/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Programme for Government commitment to develop the One Plan is reflected in the OFMDFM Business Plan. The One Plan is a comprehensive document addressing the full range of regeneration issues. The key targets associated with the One Plan, including employment, are reported on through the usual Programme for Government delivery plans.

Assets Management Unit

Mr D Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the £87.7 million of receipts that have been identified by the Assets Management Unit.

(AQW 18136/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer the member to AQW 17631/11-15 which was answered on 19 December 2012.

Delivering Social Change Signature Project

Mr Humphrey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the six Signature Projects announced in October 2012 under Delivering Social Change.

(AQO 3117/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Since our announcement on 10 October 2012, the lead departments responsible for each of the Signature Programmes have appointed Senior Responsible Owners and developed initial Programme Delivery Plans.

Work on the implementation of these plans is ongoing and officials from OFMDFM are in the process of meeting Senior Responsible Officers from other departments to review progress and expedite delivery.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Late Payment Directive

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the late payment directive currently going through Westminster will affect her Department.

(AQW 17908/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Following consultation, the Late Payment Directive 2011/7/EU is due to be adopted in March 2013. The Directive highlights that public authorities are required to pay suppliers within 30 calendar days of receipt of an undisputed invoice.

For those payments made directly by my Department, the current terms are within 30 calendar days of receipt of an undisputed invoice.

For this current financial year to October 2012, 30 day prompt payment performance for all non-disputed invoices is 98%. Therefore it is expected that the late payment directive will have a minimal affect on my Department.

Northern Irish Cheese

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail, for each of the last three years, the quantity of Northern Irish cheese (i) produced; (ii) exported to (a) England; (b) Scotland; (c) Wales; and (d) the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) exported to other countries, listed by country.

(AQW 18110/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development does not collect data on the quantity of cheese produced and sold either domestically or elsewhere. Data collected on the utilisation of raw milk in the north of Ireland indicates that in 2012, 570 million litres was used in cheese production.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of fraud cases the Central Investigation Service has taken to prosecution stage in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 18249/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the current financial year to date two of the Central Investigation Service fraud investigations have resulted in prosecution.

During the previous 5 years the following number of cases has resulted in prosecutions.

Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	Total
Number of Fraud Cases Prosecuted	0	0	1	0	1	2

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Fishing Stands in Lakes in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there are any plans to increase the number of fishing stands in lakes in County Fermanagh.

(AQW 18125/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Department has provisional plans to increase the number of angling stands on the following Public Angling Estate waters in County Fermanagh over the next two financial years:

- Killyfole (Mill Lough) - three angling stands;
- Mill Lough (Bellanaleck) - two angling stands and one disabled access stand;
- Meenameen Lough - eleven angling stands and one disabled access stand.

The Department also commits resources to the maintenance and replacement of existing stands.

Olympic and Paralympic Games

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her legacy strategy for the Olympic and Paralympic games.

(AQW 18139/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Illegal Netting

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure pursuant to AQW 17137/11-15, to detail the penalty imposed following each conviction.

(AQW 18199/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Pursuant to AQW 17137/11-15 the table below detail the penalties imposed following each conviction:

2007	Fines imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 1	£400	£160	£560.00
Case 2	£400	£160	£560.00
Total	£800	£320	£1120

2008	Fines imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 1	£80	£85	£165.00
Case 2	£240.00	£85.00	£325.00
Total	£320.00	£170.00	£490.00

2009	Fine imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 1	0	£16.00	£16.00
Case 2	0	£16.00	£16.00
Case 3	£100	£85.00	£185.00
Case 4	£100	£85.00	£185.00
Case 5	£100	£85.00	£185.00
Case 6	£5.00	£91.00	£96.00
Total	£305	£378	£683

2010	Fine imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 1	£250	£145	£395

2010	Fine imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 2	£150	£109	£259
Case 3	£225	£109	£334
Case 4	£150	£94	£244
Case 5	£500	£109	£609
Case 6	£400	£85	£485
Case 7	£1200	£85	£1285
Case 8	£300	£91	£391
Case 9	£100	£91	£191
Total	£3275	£918	£4193

2011	Fine imposed	Court costs	Total
Case 1	£300	£85	£385
Case 2	£400	£85	£485
Case 3	£400	£85	£485
Case 4	£250	£85	£335
Total	£1350	£340	£1690

Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support her Department has provided to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association, in each of the last ten years, **(AQW 18205/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, which is an arms length body of DCAL, has provided the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association (NICSSA) with a range of support services on an ongoing basis over the past 10 years. This includes guidance for business planning and support with recruitment and selection procedures for sports development staff.

Furthermore, within the last 3 financial years, Sport NI has provided a total of £1,213,551 exchequer funding to NICSSA. This is broken down as follows: -

- 2009/10 - £1,209,391 capital funding for the construction of sports pitches, floodlighting, fencing and enabling works through the Building Sport programme.
- 2009/10 - £2,470 revenue funding for the Civil Service Cheetahs through the Awards for Sport programme.
- 2010/11 - £1,690, revenue funding for PlayBall Street Striker through the Awards for Sport programme.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 17332/11-15, to detail the number of cases the Central Investigation Service of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development have investigated at the request of her Department, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 18250/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table at Annex A details the number of cases the DARD Central Investigation Service have investigated at the request of DCAL, in each of the past five years.

ANNEX A

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
DCAL cases investigated by DARD CIS	0	1	4	3	0

World Police and Fire Games

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what sporting facilities in North Down will be used during the World Police and Fire Games.

(AQW 18262/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Bangor Aurora Aquatics and Leisure Complex, Bangor Sportsplex and Ballyholme Yacht Club are the sports facilities in North Down planned for use in the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

There are a number of sports events currently planned for these venues.

Confirmation that these events will take place will depend on the number of competitors that register for each sport.

Department of Education**Education Bill**

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail each area of saving within the Education Bill.

(AQW 18158/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Education Bill will lead to savings through the dissolution of 8 existing bodies and their replacement by the Education and Skills Authority. Beyond that, the regionalisation of services, and more efficient delivery of the education estate through area planning will lead to further savings over the longer term. More detailed information will be provided in the Full Business Case which will be submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel in the near future.

Board of Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education to outline the timescale for the appointment of departmental representatives to schools' Boards of Governors; and when these representatives will be appointed to the Board of Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena.[R]

(AQW 18191/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: DE governor appointments to voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools are classified as public appointments and are made by me as Minister for Education.

DE also 'nominates' governors to a number of controlled and maintained schools, including Cambridge House Grammar School. These governors are appointed by the relevant Education and Library Board or the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

I am committed to making DE governor appointments in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Public Appointments. It is my preference to have a choice of candidates for each DE governor post. In some cases, despite several promotional campaigns and recruitment efforts the department does not yet have enough prospective candidates to allow for the appointments to be processed. The department is continuing to make efforts to expand the pool of applicants so that the remaining vacancies can be filled as soon as possible.

Cambridge House Grammar school's has 4 DE nominated governors. The Department is continuing to seek new nominees to provide to the NEELB to fill the 2 vacancies that have arisen due to resignations.

Education and Library Board

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education, in each of the last five years, (i) how many disputes in each Education and Library Board have been settled through the Labour Relations Agency; (ii) how many staff have taken each Education and Library Board to court; and (iii) on how many occasions has each Education and Library Board settled out of court.[R]

(AQW 18192/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not possible to provide the information requested broken down by both year and by Education and Library Board (ELB) area as the small numbers involved would require a high level of suppression to prevent identification of an individual, in line with the confidentiality principle of the Statistics Authority's Code of Practice on Official Statistics.

The information set out in the tables below provides a breakdown in each of the last five years (Table A) and a breakdown by ELB area (Table B).

TABLE A: NUMBER OF CASES IN ALL ELBS IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

	(i) Cases settled through Labour Relations Agency	(ii) Tribunal & Court Employment Cases	(iii) Tribunal & Court Employment Cases Settled
2008	6	19	8
2009	9	34	19
2010	7	39	16
2011	6	23	8
2012	7	18	28
Total	35	133	79

TABLE B: NUMBER OF CASES IN LAST FIVE YEARS BY ELB AREA

	(i) Cases settled through Labour Relations Agency	(ii) Tribunal & Court Employment Cases	(iii) Tribunal & Court Employment Cases Settled
BELB	4	18	9
NEELB	6	27	11
SEELB	8	41	24
SELB	10	11	8
WELB	7	36	27
Total	35	133	79

Pupils: Healthy Eating

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education what are his Department's initiatives to encourage healthy eating amongst pupils.

(AQW 18197/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education (DE) recognises that a healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being and has proactively worked to improve the quality of food in schools here.

A comprehensive range of initiatives are in place to encourage healthy eating amongst pupils. This includes compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches which are now in place in all our schools. Standards for other food and drinks provided in schools (breakfast clubs, tuck shops, vending machines) have also been drawn up to which schools are expected to adhere. I have allocated funding of over £3 million in 2012/13 to support the implementation of the standards to ensure that pupils are presented with healthy options and encouraged to eat healthily. DE also provides joint funding for a regional Food in Schools Coordinator to provide specialist support in all aspects of healthy eating.

The “Personal Development and Mutual Understanding” (primary) and “Learning for Life and Work” (post-primary) strands of the curriculum allow pupils to explore the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, the consequences of poor dietary choices on their physical and emotional health, ways of achieving a healthy diet and ways of developing their self-esteem. In addition, the curriculum requires all children to undertake Home Economics at Key Stage 3 which provides opportunities for young people to develop their understanding of a healthy diet and the hygienic and healthy use of foods in the preparation of meals.

DE is currently working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to finalise a joint Food in Schools policy which advocates a whole school approach to all food and drinks provided in schools to ensure that all children should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices now and in later life. I intend, along with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to seek Executive agreement on the policy as soon as possible. Subject to that agreement, it is intended to publish the policy later in this school year.

South Belfast Pupils

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education (i) how many; and (ii) what percentage of (a) primary; and (b) post-primary pupils in South Belfast have a first language other than English; and whether the continuing growth in the numbers of such pupils is taken into account by his Department when assessing the capacity of schools in South Belfast.

(AQW 18198/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The enrolment capacity of a school is determined by the Department having regard to the actual teaching accommodation which is available. The number of pupils within an area whose first language is other than English is not a factor in this calculation.

The most recent data available is from the 2011/12 annual school census; data from the 2012/13 census will be available at the end of February. The information requested is contained in the table below.

PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY PUPILS WHO HAVE A FIRST LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AND WHO ATTEND A SCHOOL LOCATED IN THE SOUTH BELFAST CONSTITUENCY – 2011/12

School type	Pupils with a first language other than English	Total enrolment	%
Primary	1,029	9,219	11.2
Post primary	552	9,673	5.7
Total	1,581	18,892	8.4

Source: school census

Note:

- 1 Figures for primary include nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

Belfast Royal Academy

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Education what funding has been allocated for the refurbishment and development of Belfast Royal Academy.

(AQW 18291/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A total of £405,000.00 has been approved in the 2012-13 financial year for minor capital works for refurbishment and development at Belfast Royal Academy.

Romanian Language: GCSE or A-Level

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has considered any requests by parents for their children to study the Romanian language to a GCSE or A-Level standard.

(AQW 18327/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not received any requests, from any source, regarding study of the Romanian language, at any level.

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has also confirmed that it has received no requests. Therefore no qualification has been developed by any Awarding Organisation.

Where there is evidence of sufficient demand for a GCSE or GCE language qualification that is likely to have a relatively small candidature, it will be developed and awarded by one of the five GCSE/GCE Awarding Organisations. This process has been agreed with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Sixth Form Students Travel Expenses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether he will consider changing the rules relating to the payment of travel expenses to sixth form students when they transfer to a school that is not their nearest school but because it is offering their preferred subjects.

(AQW 18338/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The existing Home to School Transport policy is set out in DE Circular 1996/41, which can be found on the Department's website. Within that policy, assistance with school transport is based on only two criteria, that is, (i) distance, and (ii) suitable school, and not subject choice.

I have no plans at present to change this policy. However, following the outcome of the current area-based planning proposals, it would be my intention to conduct a review of school transport in which the issue you have raised will be examined.

Class Sizes

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the research carried out by the Institute of Education, University of London on the effect of class size when teaching children age 7-11 years; and whether his Department will take cognisance of the findings.

(AQW 18341/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department is aware of this research, which concentrates on the results of class size on teaching, especially the interactive aspects. What the study does not cover is the educational outcomes of teaching different sizes of classes.

It concludes teachers should think about the best ways of teaching different sizes of class. The researchers found that individualisation of teaching still constituted a small part of each pupil's experience and for the most part teaching took place on a whole class basis, whether in a small or large class.

There has been considerable research carried out on the effect of class sizes on the teaching and learning of pupils. While evidence suggests that smaller class sizes in early years can have a positive impact on outcomes, it has also consistently highlighted that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in determining educational outcomes, a key factor which is reflected in core

Departmental policies. In view of the evidence surrounding the early years, it is the Department's policy to keep classes for our youngest pupils, (Years 1-4), to a maximum of 30 pupils.

There is no evidence to demonstrate that smaller class sizes positively affect outcomes for pupils in Years 5-7. Indeed the report concludes that it is the flexibility to teach in different ways that seems important. Furthermore, it states that this might account for why the effects of class size on teaching are not obviously affecting pupil attainment (Blatchford et al, 2004).

Ultimately, what is essential for good quality provision is high quality teaching, a curriculum that is matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils and a relentless focus on improvement and raising standards.

I note the research was conducted in England and you will know that in the north of Ireland the Revised Curriculum has been in place since 2009/10. This allows our teachers to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils and to adapt their teaching. Furthermore, the effective use of data to track pupil progress allows teachers to identify those pupils at risk of not achieving their full potential and enabling them to adapt the strategies they use in their delivery of the curriculum, customising it to best effect. The recent findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMMS) studies of Year 6 pupils shows that our Key Stage 2 outcomes show high attainment at primary level education.

School Buses for Rural Schools

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education what are the criteria for the provision of school buses for rural schools.

(AQW 18344/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The existing Home to School Transport policy is set out in DE Circular 1996/41, which can be found on the Department's website. Within that policy, assistance with school transport is based on only two criteria, that is, (i) distance, and (ii) suitable school, and does not include criteria specific to either rural or urban settings.

However, given the dispersed nature of the school population in rural areas, it is more likely that pupils in such areas will be eligible for assistance with transport, unlike in urban areas. Boards will decide, based on an analysis of the number and distribution of eligible pupils and the journey time of routes, whether a bus is the appropriate, and cost effective, means of meeting their legal obligation to provide eligible pupils with transport assistance.

Sure Start Programme in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how much will be spent on the Sure Start programme in Bangor over the next three financial years.

(AQW 18363/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The business plan for the Bangor Sure Start project is currently being prepared. Following assessment by the Eastern Childcare Partnership it will be submitted to DE for consideration. Funding decisions will be made on the basis of the business plan and taking account of the budget available.

Collegiate System

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail any historical investigations which his Department has carried out on the Collegiate system.

(AQW 18374/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not carried out any historical investigations of the "Collegiate system", but two independent working groups established by but working independently of my Department did consider this issue some years ago.

In 2000 the then Education Minister, Martin McGuinness, established an independent working group, chaired by Gerry Burns, to examine the selective system of education here. This group's report, known as the Burns report, recommended the establishment of Collegiates – a formal structure of groups of schools that would co-operate on matters of common interest.

Following the publication of the Burns Report there was extensive consultation, including a household survey conducted in April 2002. The proposal on Collegiates was rejected by the majority of respondents, including the majority of schools consulted.

In 2003 the then direct rule Minister with responsibility for Education, Jane Kennedy, established another independent working group, chaired by Steve Costello. The remit of that group was “to take account of the responses to the consultation on the Burns report and provide advice on options for future arrangements for post-primary education.” The Costello group did not accept the Burns proposal on Collegiates.

Split-Site Funding for Schools

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's policy on split-site funding for schools.

(AQW 18375/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools, sets out the details of the Department's policy on split-site funding in section 4.22. Copies of this document are held at the library at Stormont.

Eligibility for funding as a Dual site school will be determined by the relevant funding authority using the three criteria set out in the above guidance - there must be two distinct campuses, class teaching and learning must take place on both sites and a minimum of 15% of the total pupil enrolment must be based on each of the sites. If these criteria are met, funding will be provided from the funding authority's centre budget.

Irish Language Examinations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils sat examinations for Irish at (i) GCSE; and (ii) A-Level in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18393/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Answer is contained in the tables below.

	GCSE Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Gaeilge	99	126	107	133	118
Irish	2383	2055	1731	1680	1669
Total	2482	2181	1838	1813	1787

Source: RM data solutions

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Irish	254	238	328	334	319

Source: RM data solutions

Language Examinations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils sat examinations for languages, other than English and Irish, at (i) GCSE; and (ii) A-Level in each of the last five years, broken down by language studied.

(AQW 18395/11-15)

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

	GCSE Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Dutch	0	1	1	0	3
French	10588	9141	7716	7194	6603
German	1222	1271	1229	1265	1059
Italian	80	47	54	51	33
Modern Greek	0	0	2	0	0
Portuguese	27	20	24	13	17
Spanish	3119	3319	3118	3197	3382
Arabic	4	1	10	9	3
Bengali	0	0	1	0	1
Chinese	37	44	64	20	26
Japanese	0	0	0	0	2
Polish	29	81	95	80	101
Russian	22	14	14	18	34
Turkish	0	0	1	0	0
Urdu	1	0	1	4	2
Persian	1	0	1	0	1
Total	15130	13939	12331	11851	11267

Source: RM data solutions

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Dutch	0	0	0	1	0
French	662	694	657	707	562
German	145	159	137	153	113
Italian	7	0	2	0	1
Portuguese	1	0	1	1	3
Spanish	458	415	407	443	461
Bengali	0	0	0	0	1
Chinese	16	30	37	26	30

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Polish	0	3	4	12	21
Russian	4	4	9	2	6
Turkish	0	0	0	0	1
Urdu	1	0	0	0	0
Total	1294	1305	1254	1345	1199

Source: RM data solutions

Primary 1 Places

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many Primary 1 places will be available at each school in the North Down area for the new term in September 2013.

(AQW 18475/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of P1 places available is defined by a primary school's admissions number. Across the North Down constituency there are 1,121 places available at the start of the 2012/13 primary admissions process in the following schools:

School Name	Admissions Number
Ballyvester Primary School	16
Hollywood Primary School	75
Crawfordsburn Primary School	32
Ballyholme Primary School	90
Donaghadee Primary School	60
Clandeboyne Primary School	78
Millisle Primary School	30
Bloomfield Primary School	58
Grange Park Primary School	57
Kilcooley Primary School	81
Rathmore Primary School	79
Towerview Primary School	46
Kilmaine Primary School	87
Ballymagee Primary School	58
St Patrick's Primary School	45
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	11
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	41
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	60
Bangor Central Primary School	87
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	30

School Name	Admissions Number
Total	1,121

Details of school admissions numbers are available in booklets published by Education and Library Boards on their websites. For schools in North Down these can be viewed at:

http://www.seelb.org.uk/schools/Procedures_12_13/PDFs/Primary/2012/ArdsN.Down.pdf

Department for Employment and Learning

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of individuals claiming Education Maintenance Allowance at schools and Further Education Colleges in each of the last two years.

(AQW 18277/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): I can confirm that a total of 25,170 students received Education Maintenance Allowance in academic year 2011/2012 and 24,930 in academic year 2010/2011.

Department of the Environment

Environmental Impact Assessments

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment what targets are in place in the Planning Service when determining the need for an environmental impact assessment on a planning application; and how long on average does this process take.

(AQW 18153/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 govern the procedures and timescales of the EIA process.

Regulations 7 and 10 state that the Department shall make a determination of whether a particular development is EIA development within 4 weeks from the date of receipt of the application or such longer period as may be agreed in writing with the applicant.

It was established in the case of *British Telecommunications plc and Another v. Gloucester City Council* [2002] JPL 2007 that this 4 week statutory time period is directory and that a planning authority can put right a failure to make a determination within this statutory time period when it properly considers the matter.

Wind Farm Applications

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment what procedures are in place to assist planning service staff in Millennium House, who are assessing wind farm applications, to keep track of all private single wind turbine applications which are assessed at local level but which may effect wind farm applications; and how these procedures work to assist planning service staff at local office level.

(AQW 18154/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are many and varied material considerations that may be relevant in the determination of a wind farm planning application one of which is an assessment of the planning history of the site and the surrounding area.

As part of the planning application process, DOE Planning staff utilise the information available on the Planning Portal as the main tool in identifying relevant planning histories within a particular area. This would also be the case when assessing wind farm applications, whereby planning staff at Planning HQ can determine the location and status of applications for single wind turbines in the vicinity of the proposal by carrying out a spatial search on the Planning Portal of the area of interest.

Any relevant planning history would then be fully assessed in the determination of the planning application and would be an important material consideration.

Similarly, within the local area offices, planning staff would also use the Planning Portal to carry out spatial searches in order to identify the location and status of any wind farms or single turbines in the area when assessing single wind turbine proposals.

It is important to note that the planning history of a site and surrounding area is one of a number of factors to be considered in reaching a balanced decision in any wind farm or wind turbine planning application.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Employment

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many (i) foreign EU nationals; and (ii) people from non-EU countries are employed in Northern Ireland, broken down by gender.

(AQW 18129/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The closest approximation to the information requested comes from the July - September 2012 Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS estimates¹ are detailed in the table 1 below:

TABLE 1: EMPLOYMENT BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH FOR JULY – SEPTEMBER 2012

	Male	Female	Total
United Kingdom	384,000	349,000	732,000
Republic of Ireland	8,000	10,000	18,000
Rest of EU	22,000	14,000	36,000
Total EU*	30,000	25,000	54,000
Non EU	11,000	8,000	19,000
Total*	424,000	381,000	805,000

* Data rounded to nearest 1,000 therefore totals may not sum

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

Family Spending Survey

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number and proportion of local residents in 2010, who responded to the Family Spending Survey.

(AQW 18170/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my response given in AQW 18234/11-15

Income Tax

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of income tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18171/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 17701/11-15 and AQW 17994/11-15 respectively.

Capital Gains Tax

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of capital gains tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18173/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 17995/11-15 and AQW 17871/11-15 respectively.

Capital Gains Tax

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of stamp duty generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18174/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 17995/11-15 and AQW 17871/11-15 respectively.

Family Spending Survey

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number and proportion of local residents in 2010, who responded to the Family Spending Survey.

(AQW 18234/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The report 'Family Spending' is published annually by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is based on results from the Living Costs & Food Survey (LCF), formerly known as the Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS). In 2010, from a representative eligible sample of 250 households in Northern Ireland, 147 households (59%) responded to the LCF.

Income Tax

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of income tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18235/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 17701/11-15.

Corporation Tax

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of corporation tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18236/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 17994/11-15.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of capital gains tax generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18237/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 17995/11-15.

Stamp Duty

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of stamp duty generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18238/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my response to AQW 17871/11-15.

National Insurance Contributions

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of National Insurance contributions generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18239/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, Northern Ireland (NI) National Insurance Contributions (NICs) are based on an analysis of a sample of National Insurance Recording System data – supplied by HMRC – which is aggregated to represent the population using Government Actuary's Department (GAD) estimates of total NIC (employee and employer) accruals for each year. NI's share of employer and employee contributions in this sample is applied to the UK NICs figure to estimate NICs in NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

VAT

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of VAT generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18240/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, NI's share of UK VAT revenues is estimated based on average weekly household expenditure data in the ONS 'Family Spending Survey' publication. The appropriate VAT rating is applied to each expenditure item to estimate average household VAT revenues in NI and the UK. These average VAT revenues per household are then scaled by the number of households to estimate total VAT revenues in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total VAT revenues is then applied to apportion UK VAT receipts (as given in the PSAT2 databank) to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Fuel Duty

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of Fuel Duty generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18241/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, UK fuel duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) according to its share of UK fuel consumption. NI's share of fuel consumption is estimated using regional road traffic fuel consumption data published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). The estimated NI/UK ratio of fuel consumption is then applied to apportion UK fuel duties.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Tobacco Duty

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of Tobacco Duty generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18242/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, UK tobacco duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) based on regional household expenditure data in the ONS 'Family Spending Survey' publication. Average weekly household expenditure is scaled by the number of households to estimate total weekly expenditure on tobacco in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total weekly expenditure on tobacco is used to apportion UK tobacco duty revenue to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Alcohol Duty

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the calculation used by his officials to estimate the amount of Alcohol Duty generated locally, which was published in the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(AQW 18243/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11, UK alcohol duty revenue is apportioned to Northern Ireland (NI) based on regional household expenditure data in the ONS 'Family Spending Survey' publication. Average weekly household expenditure is scaled by the number of households to estimate total weekly expenditure on beer/cider, wines and spirits in NI and the UK. The NI/UK ratio of total weekly expenditure on each type of alcohol is used to apportion UK revenue to NI.

Alcohol consumed 'away from home' is also recorded at the UK level for beer/cider, wine and spirits in the ONS 'Family Spending Survey' publication. The distribution of alcohol consumed away from home is assumed to be the same in NI as in the UK. Purchases away from home are then added to purchases brought home to estimate total weekly expenditure on alcohol in NI and the UK. The estimated NI/UK ratio of alcohol consumption is used to apportion UK alcohol duty revenue to NI.

I must re-emphasise that this report has been developed applying the methodology originally designed to produce the GERS publication and is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items. The report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 17793/11-15, to detail the financial value of each level of small business rate relief, in each of the council areas shown.

(AQW 18263/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The financial values of each level of small business rate relief, in each Council Area (Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle) are shown in the table below.

Council Area	Value of Small Business Rate Relief since April 2010		
	SBRR – 50%	SBRR – 25%	SBRR – 20%
Ballymena	£28,557	£237,044	£115,744
Ballymoney	£23,267	£92,829	£46,737
Moyle	£44,262	£91,312	£24,670

Shop Window Display Rate Relief

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of landlords or shop owners who have availed of Shop Window Display rate relief, broken down by council area; and the value of this relief.

(AQW 18264/11-15)

Mr Wilson: To date no-one has availed of the Shop Window Display Rate Relief, although a couple of applications are under consideration.

Emigrated in Search of Employment

Mr McElduff asked (i) the number of people, in each District Council area in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh, who have emigrated in search of employment, broken down by age; and (ii) the countries to which these people have emigrated.

(AQW 18276/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf shows the estimates of out migration between mid-2010 and mid-2011 to (a) Great Britain and (b) to all other countries, for Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane Local Government Districts, broken down by broad age bands. There is no information available on the reason for out migration. It is only possible to distinguish between out migration to Great Britain and to all other countries.

(A) OUT MIGRATION TO GREAT BRITAIN

Age	Cookstown	Dungannon	Fermanagh	Omagh	Strabane	Northern Ireland
0-15	11	23	54	27	23	1,189
16-39	119	213	446	259	188	8,580
40-64	14	16	54	34	26	1,124
65+	3	2	12	3	11	228

(B) OUT MIGRATION TO ALL OTHER COUNTRIES

Age	Cookstown	Dungannon	Fermanagh	Omagh	Strabane	Northern Ireland
0-15	37	110	77	18	40	1,813
16-39	89	410	210	138	92	9,869
40-64	37	100	84	26	44	1,860
65+	8	8	16	4	2	282

Commuting by Ferry or Air

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people who commute by ferry or air to work in England, Scotland or Wales; and the employment sectors in which these people work.

(AQW 18278/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information is available from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) on respondent's place of work. However, the LFS is a sample survey and it is not possible to provide a reliable estimate of the number of people who live in Northern Ireland and work in England, Scotland and Wales by employment sector, because of the small numbers of persons in such groups in the LFS sample.

Capital Valuation List: Empty Domestic Properties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of empty domestic properties in each constituency that are currently on the Capital Valuation List.

(AQW 18310/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of empty domestic properties in each constituency that are currently on the Capital Valuation List is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only.

There is no requirement for ratepayers to inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant. The table overleaf gives the number of domestic properties in each District Council Area that are currently (as at 31st December 2012) recorded as being vacant. Rate liability is assessed at 100% for vacant properties, subject to any exemptions.

NUMBER OF VACANT AND OCCUPIED DOMESTIC PROPERTIES BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2012

District Council	Number of domestic properties recorded as vacant	Number of domestic properties recorded as occupied	Total number of domestic properties
Antrim	625	20,394	21,019
Ards	1,223	33,438	34,661
Armagh	1,118	22,175	23,293
Ballymena	811	25,585	26,396
Ballymoney	481	11,655	12,136
Banbridge	890	18,773	19,663
Belfast	6,417	126,818	133,235
Carrickfergus	483	16,889	17,372

District Council	Number of domestic properties recorded as vacant	Number of domestic properties recorded as occupied	Total number of domestic properties
Castlereagh	770	29,133	29,903
Coleraine	1,551	27,117	28,668
Cookstown	850	13,111	13,961
Craigavon	1,514	37,949	39,463
Derry	1,246	42,307	43,553
Down	1,439	27,319	28,758
Dungannon & S.Tyrone	1,676	20,432	22,108
Fermanagh	2,495	24,484	26,979
Larne	553	14,257	14,810
Limavady	701	12,376	13,077
Lisburn	1,693	47,363	49,056
Magherafelt	726	15,110	15,836
Moyle	528	7,822	8,350
Newry & Mourne	2,195	35,355	37,550
Newtownabbey	811	35,652	36,463
North Down	1,031	34,575	35,606
Omagh	1,744	18,907	20,651
Strabane	906	15,359	16,265
All District Councils	34,477	734,355	768,832

Welfare Reform

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much he has set aside in his budget to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform in each year of the next Comprehensive Spending Review period. **(AQW 18314/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The current Northern Ireland Executive budget period extends to 2014/15. No budgets have been set for the period thereafter however the latest HM Treasury and Office of Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) forecasts indicate that public expenditure will be significantly constrained in the next Spending Review period – falling in real terms. It is in this context that the Executive will have to construct a local budget that embraces the additional pressures of the Welfare Reform initiative.

The Executive has already had to address budgetary pressures associated with Welfare Reform.

In November 2012 the Executive agreed to set aside £13 million in 2013-14 and £15 million in 2014-15 to address the rates relief funding shortfall within Housing Benefit that will occur as a result of Welfare Reform.

Northern Ireland Civil Service: Pensions

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on Northern Ireland Civil Service pensions.

(AQO 3127/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Northern Ireland Civil Service pensions are being reformed. There are two main strands to the reform programme.

Firstly, my Department is presently consulting on a preferred approach to increases in employee contributions for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) from April 2013. The proposed increases represent tranche two of a programme to increase employee contribution rates to public service pension schemes by an average 3.2 percentage points over three years by April 2015. This policy was agreed by the Executive on 22 September 2011.

Secondly, I announced on 26 November 2012 that I propose to introduce a Public Service Pensions Bill in the Assembly. The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) will fall within the remit of the provisions for pension reform contained in this Bill and the scheme will move from a final salary model of pension saving to a career average model, with the normal pension age linked to State Pension Age from April 2015.

Land and Property Services: Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether Land and Property Services has changed any of its practices following the implementation of the Insolvency (NI) Order 2005.

(AQO 3128/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The introduction of the Insolvency (NI) Order 2005 further decreased the categories of preferential debt. Crown preference was abolished by Article 4 of this Order which came into operation on 27th April 2006. Rates had already been removed from the list of preferential creditors by the Insolvency (NI) Order 1989 which came into force in October 1991.

However, the implementation of the Insolvency (NI) Order 2005 has not required Land & Property Services to change its practices. Insolvency claims continue to be submitted by LPS in relevant cases.

Rates: Private Tenancies

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration has been given to ensuring that tenants who live in private rented properties know the exact amount of rates they should pay to their landlord.

(AQO 3129/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The amount of rates due is usually not the issue here as this will be detailed on a rate demand that will be sent to whoever is liable for payment. The issue is more about who is liable.

My Department is in the process of drafting a consultation paper on this very issue, for publication in the next few weeks. I have written to the Minister for Social Development about the matter and already my Department has corresponded with the Landlords Association. My intention is to make some sensible changes that will make it clearer exactly who are responsible for paying rates in private rented accommodation. This will require an amendment to primary legislation and therefore any change cannot occur until April 2014.

I should also point out in relation to the question posed that under DSD legislation rent and rates must be stated in a tenants rent book.

Civil Service: Pay and Grading Review

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the implementation of the pay and grading review in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

(AQO 3131/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Implementation of the pay-related elements of reform for non-industrial staff, agreed as part of the pay and grading review, is underway. These changes were incorporated into a two year pay settlement for 2012/13 and 2013/14 the first year of which was implemented in November 2012 with the second year planned for implementation in August 2013. A focussed grading exercise is planned for 2013. Work has also begun on the review of industrial pay and grading arrangements.

Government Contracts: Bank Accounts

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to introduce project bank accounts for public sector construction contracts.

(AQO 3132/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Project Bank Accounts will be introduced this month for all new construction contracts tendered by Central Procurement Directorate that have an estimated value of over £1million and a significant subcontracting element.

Special Advisors

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether all special advisers appointed since he brought in the new appointment processes have been appointed in accordance with those processes.

(AQO 3133/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since the introduction of the new arrangements for appointing Special Advisors in September 2011 arrangements have been or are being made in respect of the appointment of 5 Special Advisors. 3 appointments have been made fully in accordance with the new arrangements and 2 appointments have not yet been completed.

Devolved Legislatures: Funding

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the process of consultation undertaken on the "Treasury Statement of Funding: Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly".

(AQO 3134/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Statement of Funding Policy states:

In line with the principle of mutual respect, the terms of this Statement have been agreed between the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, following consultation with the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The latest Statement of Funding Policy (SFP) drafting process occurred between July and October 2010.

HMT officials circulated a draft SFP to the Devolved Administrations seeking their views on potential revisions in early summer. My officials wrote to each NI department to seek their views on the proposed changes and the comparability factors contained within the document. My officials then communicated our proposed revisions and amendments to HMT. This was an iterative process and a final draft document was then passed to the Secretaries of State for their agreement. The document was formally released at the announcement of the 2010 Spending Review Outcome on 20th October 2010.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Criminal Justice Inspectorate

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 15895-11/15, for his assessment of the latest Criminal Justice Inspectorate report into Maghaberry Prison, where partnership arrangements are described as not working effectively.

(AQW 18107/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate into HMP Maghaberry took place in March 2012. Whilst the Inspectorate's report was not published until December 2012, feedback was provided to the South Eastern HSC Trust at the time of inspection. Following this the Trust introduced changes to improve in-possession medication protocols, committal processes and lines of reporting and accountability.

Since the inspection, the South Eastern HSC Trust has established a number of strategic and operational fora where it can engage with the NI Prison Service and other key stakeholders to ensure that issues relating to interface working or partnership arrangements for the delivery of prison healthcare services are discussed and actions agreed.

Locum Staff in Enniskillen Hospital

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been spent paying locum staff in the new hospital in Enniskillen in each month since it opened, broken down by clinical department.

(AQW 18124/11-15)

Mr Poots: The cost of paying locum staff at the South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen since it opened on 21 June 2012, broken down by clinical department, is set out in the table below. At this time, data is only available up to 30 November 2012.

Speciality	July 2012 £	August 2012 £	Sept 2012 £	Oct 2012 £	Nov 2012 £	Total £
Theatres	£106,322	£66,426	£55,346	£68,482	£52,564	£349,140
Surgery	£33,184	£33,287	£45,202	£29,257	£38,862	£179,791
Emergency Care	£87,991	£64,730	£61,107	£48,994	£62,216	£325,037
Medicine	£11,527	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,528
Geriatric	£4,531	£16,362	£39,319	£53,643	£31,904	£145,759
Paediatrics	£19,501	£63,532	£40,081	£49,512	£41,646	£214,273
Gynae	£13,088	£19,348	£20,785	£18,495	£40,079	£111,795
Overall Total	£276,145	£263,685	£261,841	£268,383	£267,270	£1,337,323

Norovirus

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the number of confirmed cases of Norovirus this winter; (ii) the estimated occurrences, including those which have gone unreported; and (iii) what steps he has taken to combat the spread of Norovirus.

(AQW 18127/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information provided by the Public Health Agency (PHA) indicates that in December 2012 there were a total of 55 laboratory-confirmed cases of Norovirus in Northern Ireland.
- (ii) There is no official estimate of occurrences of Norovirus cases as it is very difficult to estimate the number of unreported cases. However the PHA have indicated that the Health Protection Agency (HPA) have used Infectious Intestinal Disease (IID) data to estimate that the number of laboratory confirmed cases represents a small fraction of actual Norovirus activity and it is estimated that for each confirmed case, there are a further 288 unreported cases, as the vast majority of those affected do not seek healthcare services in response to their illness.

To reduce the spread of norovirus, also known as the winter vomiting bug, the Public Health Agency (PHA) publishes seasonal advice and reminders to the public on how to minimise the risk of infection. PHA issued press releases on 12 October, 8 November and 19 December 2012. The PHA has also produced an information leaflet explaining what norovirus is and how to prevent the spread of infection. The leaflet is available on the PHA website at <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/norovirus>.

- (iii) [//www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/norovirus](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/norovirus).

The message to the public is that norovirus is a frequent hazard to health that causes unpleasant and brief illness for many people. The most commonly reported symptoms are nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, which can begin suddenly. In some people, these are also accompanied by a raised temperature, headache and sore limbs. The illness can last as little as 12 hours or up to three days. Treatment is to stay at home, rest, take plenty of fluids, and reduce contact with others, both in the home and at work. It is very important that people who have symptoms do not visit hospitals or their GP surgery. The key advice to the public, to reduce the risk of infection, is as follows.

- Always maintain good personal hygiene, in particular wash your hands after going to the toilet, and before preparing or eating food.
- If you are vomiting or have diarrhoea, don't visit friends or relatives in hospital or residential and nursing homes, and avoid visiting your GP's surgery; it is much better to phone in for advice first.
- Stay off school or work until at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust: Early Retirement Packages

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many personnel across all grades within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust have been given early retirement packages in each of the last three years; and how many retirement packages are expected to be awarded in 2013. **(AQW 18128/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has approved early retirement for 60 staff in the 2010/11 financial year; 7 staff in the 2011/12 year and 24 staff in the 2012/13 year. There is currently one staff member that has been given approval for early retirement in the 2013/14 financial year; and a further 30 applications from staff are also under consideration.

Valuable Items being stolen from Hospitals

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to prevent valuable items of equipment from being stolen from hospitals. **(AQW 18150/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The Department requires all HSC organisations to have procedures in place including Standing Orders, Standing Financial Instructions, Codes of Conduct and Accountability, documented financial policies and procedures and a system of internal control which promote an anti-fraud culture and reduce the likelihood of fraud occurring.

The Department also issues guidance on "Managing the risk of fraud" which sets out the principles of sound risk management, governance and control and how they are applied to fraud. This guidance

clearly sets out the procedures and controls in place to prevent and detect fraud and includes details of controls for the prevention of theft of assets.

Health and Social Care Trust: Stolen Equipment

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the value of equipment stolen from hospitals in each of the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 18151/11-15)

Mr Poots: The value of equipment stolen from hospitals in each of the last three years by Trust is set out in the following table.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Belfast HSC Trust*	£200	£3,460	£246
South Eastern HSC Trust	-	£8,599	-
Southern HSC Trust	-	-	-
Western HSC Trust	£349	-	£2,250
Northern HSC Trust	£50	£650	£4,933

* missing / lost / possibly stolen

Prescription Charges

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to reintroduce prescription charges; and whether there will be any exemptions to the charges.

(AQW 18152/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the context of the current economic climate, I have been considering a number of different options aimed at ensuring the efficient use of resources and looking at areas where money can be saved and used to protect front line services and improve access to certain specialist drugs. I can confirm that one of the options I have been giving consideration to is the possible introduction of prescription charges or some form of administrative or other fee relating to the receipt of prescriptions.

Any such proposals, including proposals to introduce exemption categories, would be subject to a full public consultation.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Antenatal Classes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the operating hours of the antenatal clinics at the Royal Victoria Hospital; and the times when doctors are available at the clinics.

(AQW 18177/11-15)

Mr Poots: The antenatal clinics at the Royal Victoria Hospital are in operation from Monday to Friday of each week. Opening hours of the antenatal clinics are as follows:

8.00 – 9.00 am - Community Booking review appointments

8.30 – 12.30 am - Viability scans and booking appointments

8.30 – 12.30 am - Antenatal reviews - attended by Doctors

1.30 – 4.30 pm - Viability scans and booking appointments and antenatal reviews - attended by Doctors

4pm – 5pm - Community Booking review appointments

Midwives are in attendance at all clinics.

Waiting List for Orthopaedic Surgery

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust; and what is the average waiting time in each Trust.

(AQW 18178/11-15)

Mr Poots: Inpatient surgery, in the Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) Surgery specialty, is provided at each of the HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, with the exception of the Northern HSC Trust.

The number of people waiting for inpatient surgery in the T & O Surgery specialty in each Health and Social Care Trust, and the average waiting time in weeks, at 30th September 2012, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, is outlined in the table below.

HSC Trust	Total Waiting	Average Waiting Time (Weeks Waiting)
Belfast	5,970	18.8
South Eastern	29	4.8
Southern	614	17.1
Western	1,476	17.3
Northern Ireland	8,089	18.3

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Healthy Eating

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what are his Department's initiatives to encourage healthy eating.

(AQW 18195/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department recognises the importance of good nutrition and our role in promoting and supporting healthy eating for all age groups. I launched the Obesity Prevention Framework A Fitter Future for All on 09 March 2012 and it contains numerous outcomes regarding the promotion of healthy food and nutrition.

As part of the implementation of A Fitter Future for All, the Public Health Agency (PHA) has undertaken a number of projects and initiatives to encourage healthy eating in collaboration with the community and voluntary sector, local government, health, education and food sectors. Examples include:

- Community Allotments programmes;
- Cook It! - a community based nutrition education programme;
- Nutrition Matters for the early years, a resource and training programme; and
- A range of programmes to encourage breastfeeding and appropriate weaning.

In addition, on 3 January 2013 the PHA launched a public information campaign which focuses on raising awareness of obesity and encouraging appropriate changes to eating and physical activity patterns to improve or maintain good health.

My Department also continues to work with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in relation to provision of clear information on food through labelling, calorie information on food menus, and working with the food industry on reformulation. Recent public consultation has resulted in the UK Government agreeing the hybrid food labelling approach which is a combination of guideline daily amounts (GDA), colour coding and high/medium/low text. This will ensure customers are fully informed about the nutritional content of pre-packaged foods. It is anticipated that details of the scheme and the new labelling will be agreed by Ministers across the UK in Spring 2013.

In relation to specific work with children and young people, my Department and the PHA have been working with the Department of Education and Education & Library Boards to support the implementation of nutritional standards for school meals, and other food in schools in all nursery, primary and post-primary schools. A draft Food in Schools Policy, developed by DE, in collaboration with DHSSPS, is expected to be finalised and launched in the Spring of 2013.

Healthy Eating

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what are his Department's initiatives to encourage healthy eating amongst children.

(AQW 18196/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department recognises the importance of good nutrition and our role in promoting and supporting healthy eating for all age groups. I launched the Obesity Prevention Framework A Fitter Future for All on 09 March 2012 and it contains numerous outcomes regarding the promotion of healthy food and nutrition.

As part of the implementation of A Fitter Future for All, the Public Health Agency (PHA) has undertaken a number of projects and initiatives to encourage healthy eating in collaboration with the community and voluntary sector, local government, health, education and food sectors. Examples include:

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National Procurement, NHS National Services, Scotland

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what unit price will be paid for each lot of surgical gloves under the current tender (NP569/11) awarded through the tri-nations procurement, which was led by the National Procurement, NHS National Services, Scotland.

(AQW 18200/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Tri-nations contract comprises four lots of different types of glove with a total of 32 brands of glove on offer. Prices range from 30p to £1.49 per pair but the actual price to be paid will depend on which gloves are actually purchased. The table below sets the range of costs for each of the four lots.

Glove type/lot	Unit Price Range £
General Surgical Gloves – Latex	£0.30 - £0.52
General Surgical Gloves – Latex Free	£0.747 - £1.49
Enhanced Grip – Latex	£0.45 - £0.54
Enhanced Grip – Latex Free	£0.80 - £1.25

Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQW 18206/11-15)

Mr Poots: Enabling works for this project commenced on site in June 2012. All enabling works are planned for completion by late 2013.

The design team commenced work with the Western Health and Social Care Trust (Trust) on Stage 1 Design of the new building in January 2012. This design stage was completed and signed off by the Trust in October 2012 and the planning application for the new unit was submitted to the Planning Service in mid December 2012. Stage 2 detailed design work has commenced and is expected to be completed by mid 2013.

The Stage 2 Outline Business Case (OBC 2) was approved in August 2012. Departmental and ROI officials are currently working together to agree the formal arrangements for the provision of radiotherapy services to ROI patients.

With regard to workforce planning, the Trust is working in close liaison with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)/Public Health Agency (PHA) to agree workforce requirements in the key staffing disciplines.

The completion and operational date for the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin remains mid 2016.

Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently diagnosed as having Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 18211/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information relating to the number of people diagnosed with Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum in Northern Ireland is not available.

Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients diagnosed with Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum are being treated for eye related disorders at the Regional Ophthalmology Department in the Mater Hospital, Belfast; and how many are being offered treatment with Lucentis Intraocular injections.

(AQW 18213/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information relating to the number of people diagnosed with Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum in Northern Ireland is not available.

Mefipristone (RU 486)

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 17928/11-15, in what circumstances can Mefipristone (RU 486) be used in private clinics.

(AQW 18225/11-15)

Mr Poots: In my response to AQW 17928/11-15 I set out the circumstances in which Mifepristone can be used. These also apply to private clinics.

Ordering a supply of Mifepristone for use in a private clinic, as with other Prescription Only Medicines, must be in accordance with the Human Medicines Regulations which apply to both NHS/HSC and private health care facilities.

Available Childcare Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of childcare places available in each constituency.

(AQW 18270/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures are not available in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Figures for the number of available childcare places for children aged 12 or under broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area are available centrally and are detailed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: AVAILABLE CHILDCARE PLACES FOR CHILDREN AGED 12 OR UNDER BY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AREA AT 31ST MARCH 2012

Health and Social Care Trust	Available Childcare Places
Belfast	10,798
Northern	16,136
South Eastern	11,725
Southern	9,233
Western	8,022
Total	55,914

Source: HSCB Delegated Statutory Functions Corporate Parenting Returns

Note: Childcare includes Day Nurseries, Crèches, Playgroups, Out of School Clubs, Childminders, Summer Schemes and Two Year Old Programmes.

Respite Care

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in making the formal carer's assessment a mandatory step in the provision of respite care.

(AQW 18317/11-15)

Mr Poots: An assessment of an individual's needs, which may identify a need for respite, will also identify a carer, where one exists. The Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 imposed a duty on Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts to inform carers of their right to an assessment of their own needs. This holistic assessment identifies what information, training or services are required to support the carer in their caring role.

As part of the Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool (NISAT) a "Carers Support and Needs Assessment" component was produced. In December 2009, my Department identified this component as the regional "stand alone" carer's assessment tool of choice for all adult programmes of care.

The aim was to bring a consistent structure to assessment and outcomes as Trusts discharge their statutory responsibility with regard to carers' assessments.

Primary Care Centres in Rural Communities

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's efforts to secure finance for the development of new primary care centres in rural communities; and when funding will be available for new capital builds in Fintona and Carrickmore.

(AQW 18331/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department prioritises capital projects within existing budgetary constraints and reviews these priorities on an on-going basis, including planning for a range of health and care centres. My capital budget averages some £240m per annum and my Department ensures that this is used to full advantage as well as taking every opportunity to make a strong case for additional funding from the Executive as any additional money becomes available.

In light of current budgetary constraints, I am actively looking at alternative funding options to allow for the delivery of a modern health care model across the province. A programme of work is being developed which will explore the use of private finance in addition to public capital for new facilities, subject to value for money considerations.

The proposed "hub and spoke" model for primary care across the region is currently being consulted on as part of the "Vision to Action" consultation. At this point I have not identified funding for capital builds in either Fintona or Carrickmore.

Enhanced Local Hospital in Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the timeline for the building of the Enhanced Local Hospital in Omagh.

(AQW 18333/11-15)

Mr Poots: Enabling works to facilitate the building of Omagh Local Hospital (Phase 1) are well progressed. These include demolitions, road widening, sewage and drainage infrastructure and the construction of a new outer link road.

Work on construction of the hospital (including the health and care centre) will begin later this year (2013) and be completed in late 2015. Following a period of commissioning, the hospital will become operational in early 2016.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 17844/11-15, whether the suppliers of the cars, from which parts were stolen, were compensated for those parts.

(AQW 18397/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been informed by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) that the supplier of the cars, from which parts were stolen, has been compensated.

I have asked NIFRS to provide me with further details.

Type 1 Diabetes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will introduce a strategy for Type 1 Diabetes.

(AQO 3142/11-15)

Mr Poots: In January 2012, I initiated a review of diabetes care in Northern Ireland. The aim of this project is to review the 2003 Diabetes UK/CREST Joint Taskforce Report in order to assess progress

against the original report objectives and identify current gaps in diabetes service provision. It will assess current standards of care, new developments in managing diabetes, and assist in diabetes services being commissioned most effectively. The review will also include an assessment of diabetes care for children in relation to the aspirations of the CREST/Diabetes UK framework.

The review, which is being led by the Chief Medical Officer and covers both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, has brought together clinicians and health professionals from a range of disciplines, as well as representatives from Diabetes UK. Progress is well underway and I anticipate that the Review Group will report its findings to me early this year. The outcome of the review will build on my Department's current investment in tackling this important health issue and strengthen the strategic direction for progressing diabetes care into the future.

Autism

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to support people with autism and their families.

(AQO 3145/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Six Steps of Autism Care and Autism: A guide for Families were launched in late 2011. This Children's Care Pathway is currently being implemented by all HSC Trusts. I launched the Autism Adult Care Pathway in June 2012, which Trusts have also started to implement. Both pathways provide guidance on the identification and diagnosis of autism, ongoing assessment and access to interventions for people with an autism spectrum condition.

My department is leading on the development of a cross-departmental Autism Strategy, which is currently out for public consultation. As required by the Autism Act (NI) 2011, the Strategy will set out how the needs of people with autism and their families and carers will be addressed, throughout their lives.

Transforming Your Care

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the anticipated reduction in residential homes through Transforming Your Care includes children's homes.

(AQO 3147/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no explicit policy to reduce the number of children's homes. However, there is a strategy across Health and Social Care to reduce the number of children in residential care on the basis that early intervention and supporting families will lead to better outcomes for children in key areas of their lives. In keeping with the aims of the strategy, the number of children in residential care has reduced from 12.9% in 2006 to 8.7% in 2012. It is acknowledged that children are best cared for within their family of origin, or where that is not possible, within kinship settings or suitable alternative placements such as foster care, where appropriate.

Transforming Your Care recommended the completion of a review of children's residential care to reduce reliance on it. I can advise members that the review, undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board, has now concluded and a draft review report has been produced. The draft report has been shared with all five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs), which were fully engaged in the review process. The draft report sets the general direction of travel for the future provision of children's residential care services in Northern Ireland. The report is clear that there is a definitive and continuing need for residential care provision and that the residential care estate must be part of a whole systems approach to better meet the needs of young people both within the care system and on the edge of care. Work is ongoing between the HSCB and the HSCTs to determine and agree the future configuration of children's residential care to meet the needs of those children and young people for whom it is the preferred option.

Department of Justice

Criminal Cases Returned to the Crown Court

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice how many criminal cases were returned to the Crown Court as of 31 October 2011, compared to 2008.

(AQW 18114/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The table below sets out the total number of criminal cases returned for trial in the Crown Court broken down by County Court Division in the period from 1 January - 31 October 2011 and compared to the same date in 2008.

County Court Division	1 January to 31 October 2008	1 January to 31 October 2011
Belfast	430	469
Londonderry	121	101
Armagh and South Down	101	119
Ards	122	168
Craigavon	110	161
Fermanagh and Tyrone	151	174
Antrim	149	98
Total	1,184	1,290

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

The table below sets out the number of outstanding Crown Court cases in each County Court Division as at 31 October 2011, compared to the same date in 2008.

County Court Division	31 October 2008	31 October 2011
Belfast	275	480
Londonderry	51	55
Armagh and South Down	40	82
Ards	55	110
Craigavon	68	112
Fermanagh and Tyrone	64	89
Antrim	82	77
Total	635	1,005

Source: Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)

Criminal Cases Returned to the Crown Court

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice how many criminal cases were returned for trial in (i) Belfast; (ii) Derry; (iii) Armagh and South Down; (iv) Ards; (v) Craigavon; (vi) Fermanagh and Tyrone; and (vii) Antrim as of 31 October 2011, compared to 2008.

(AQW 18115/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the total number of criminal cases returned for trial in the Crown Court broken down by County Court Division in the period from 1 January - 31 October 2011 and compared to the same date in 2008.

County Court Division	1 January to 31 October 2008	1 January to 31 October 2011
Belfast	430	469
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Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Justice how many outstanding criminal cases there were in (i) Belfast; (ii) Derry; (iii) Armagh and South Down; (iv) Ards; (v) Craigavon; (vi) Fermanagh and Tyrone; and (vii) Antrim as of 31 October 2011, compared to 2008.

(AQW 18116/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the total number of criminal cases returned for trial in the Crown Court broken down by County Court Division in the period from 1 January - 31 October 2011 and compared to the same date in 2008.

County Court Division	1 January to 31 October 2008	1 January to 31 October 2011
Belfast	430	469
Londonderry	121	101
Armagh and South Down	101	119

County Court Division	1 January to 31 October 2008	1 January to 31 October 2011
Ards	122	168
Craigavon	110	161
Fermanagh and Tyrone	151	174
Antrim	149	98
Total	1,184	1,290

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Fermanagh and Tyrone	64	89
Antrim	82	77
Total	635	1,005

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Public Money Spent by the Public Prosecution Service; and the Legal Services Commission

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Justice how much public money has been spent by (i) the Public Prosecution Service; and (ii) the Legal Services Commission in prosecuting the application in the Magistrate's Court to have the goods, in case reference numbers 0717289 and 0717355, condemned and forfeited, and in resisting the cost of funding the defence to the condemnation and forfeiture application.

(AQW 18126/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Public Prosecution Service have had no involvement in case reference numbers 0717289 and 0717355 and therefore have incurred no costs. The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has no record of legal aid being granted to defend proceedings in relation to case reference numbers 0717289 and 0717355.

Bangor Courthouse Building

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Justice what plans his Department has for the future of the Bangor Courthouse building.

(AQW 18292/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW/17482/11-15 on 7 December 2012. There is no further update at this time.

Prison Scanning Pilots

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the scanning pilots in Magilligan and Hydebank Wood prisons.

(AQO 3152/11-15)

Mr Ford: As I have reported previously, Northern Ireland Prison Service officials continue to take forward work in conjunction with the implementation of Recommendation 8 of the Prison Review Team's final report.

Central to this work has been two pilots of Millimetre Wave technology in NIPS establishments and the development of our own Justification Application for the use of Transmission X-ray scanners in Northern Ireland prisons.

The Millimetre Wave body scanning technology pilots currently underway in Magilligan Prison and Hydebank Wood Young Offender Centre will be completed by the end of January. Prior to the completion of these pilots, I plan to invite any interested members of the Justice Committee to view the technology in operation at Hydebank Wood.

Evaluation of the results will commence once the pilots have been completed, and will focus on the effectiveness and appropriateness of this technology, measured against existing search procedures.

The evaluation process should be swift. However, until such times as it has been completed it is not possible to provide an assessment of the suitability of this technology for use in the prison environment.

Flying of Flags at City Hall, Belfast: Policing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice to outline the cost of the policing operation as a result of the protests over Belfast City Council's decision on the flying of flags at City Hall.

(AQO 3153/11-15)

Mr Ford: The police have informed me that the total cost for the period 3 December to 17 December has been calculated as £3.8m. While some of that cost involved redirecting officers from otherwise important work to deal with the disorder, a significant part of it was from the need for additional police resource. The figures from 17 December have yet to be verified. Not only is there a financial cost to the PSNI when dealing with incidents of this nature, there is also a human cost in terms of injuries to officers and the wider cost to the community.

In relation to the number of people charged with public order offences, the PSNI have confirmed that as of 15 January 115 individuals has been arrested and of those 85 have been charged.

Over the weekend of 5 – 6 January the Chief Constable requested Special Court Sitings to be established; as a result 18 people were remanded in custody. I believe that this sends a clear message to the perpetrators that those who choose to become involved in such situations can and will be made to face the consequences of their actions. Furthermore the police investigation into incidents of disorder remains ongoing and we can expect to see more arrests and charges over the coming weeks and months ahead.

I would also like to pay tribute to the police officers for the courage and bravery which they have displayed often in dangerous, difficult and challenging circumstances. There is now a challenge for us all to work together to find a solution to the underlying issues and ensure that the scenes of disorder which have taken place since 3 December are never repeated.

Magherafelt Court House

Mr I McCreia asked the Minister of Justice to outline the reasoning behind the decision to close Magherafelt Court House.

(AQO 3159/11-15)

Mr Ford: My decision to close Magherafelt Courthouse was predicated on the need to deliver efficiencies within a more challenging economic environment and respond effectively to the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland report on the Court Estate and the Justice Committee report on Victims and Witnesses which emphasised the importance of providing better services and facilities to victims and witnesses.

I listened carefully to the points made by consultees and I recognise the convenience of having local court facilities. However, it remains the case that Magherafelt is one of the smallest and least well equipped venues within the court estate.

The closure of Magherafelt, together with the Hearing Centres at Bangor, Larne and Limavady, and the transfer of that business to larger court centres will deliver some modest running cost savings, improve utilisation of the remaining court estate and provide a higher standard of accommodation and facilities to court users, including victims and witnesses.

Police Service of Northern Ireland: Threat of Attack

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the resources which the Police Service of Northern Ireland has directed towards protecting elected representatives under threat of attack.

(AQO 3160/11-15)

Mr Ford: Regrettably we have witnessed intimidation, threats and violence directed at elected representatives, whether from those involved in terrorist activity or those involved in the recent violence and disorder.

As Minister of Justice naturally I am concerned about this fact and I am sure all members will join me in condemning, without reservation, such behaviour, which is an attack on democracy itself and an attempt to undermine the political process.

The level of police resources directed to address such matters are of course, a matter for the Chief Constable. I am committed to assisting in any way I can to ensure that all possible steps are taken to protect elected representatives. I know a range of steps have been taken by the police to enhance personal security in individual cases, ranging from both advice to other operational steps. It would not, however be appropriate to discuss specific arrangements.

Elected representatives can also apply to the Home Protection Scheme which is administered by the NIO and is the responsibility of the Secretary of State.

Vehicle Immobilisation

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice for an update on vehicle immobilisation on private land.

(AQO 3161/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department is currently conducting an impact assessment of the options for vehicle immobilisation on private land. This will entail further engagement with key stakeholders, including DHSSPS, Roads Service, PSNI and consumer organisations, to explore the options available for controlling parking on private land.

I will consider this information, together with the outcomes of research and consultation in deciding on the way ahead.

Public Order Offences: Flying of Flags at City Hall, Belfast

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Justice to outline how many people have been charged with public order offences in relation to the decision taken by Belfast City Council on the flying of flags at City Hall.

(AQO 3162/11-15)

Mr Ford: The police have informed me that the total cost for the period 3 December to 17 December has been calculated as £3.8m. While some of that cost involved redirecting officers from otherwise important work to deal with the disorder, a significant part of it was from the need for additional police resource. The figures from 17 December have yet to be verified. Not only is there a financial cost to the PSNI when dealing with incidents of this nature, there is also a human cost in terms of injuries to officers and the wider cost to the community.

In relation to the number of people charged with public order offences, the PSNI have confirmed that as of 15 January 115 individuals has been arrested and of those 85 have been charged.

Over the weekend of 5 – 6 January the Chief Constable requested Special Court Sitings to be established; as a result 18 people were remanded in custody. I believe that this sends a clear message to the perpetrators that those who choose to become involved in such situations can and will be made to face the consequences of their actions. Furthermore the police investigation into incidents of disorder remains ongoing and we can expect to see more arrests and charges over the coming weeks and months ahead.

I would also like to pay tribute to the police officers for the courage and bravery which they have displayed often in dangerous, difficult and challenging circumstances. There is now a challenge for us all to work together to find a solution to the underlying issues and ensure that the scenes of disorder which have taken place since 3 December are never repeated.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice to outline the discussions he has had with the Treasury over increased funding for the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

(AQO 3163/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice does not discuss funding of the PSNI with HM Treasury. As is the process in all other Northern Ireland departments, my Department discusses funding with DFP

The Department of Justice funding allocation was agreed by the Executive for the years 2011-15. This included £45m of additional security funding from the Executive for the PSNI.

In addition, working with DFP, access to a further £199.5m was secured from the HM Treasury to meet PSNI security pressures.

Any additional requests for funding by the PSNI are addressed in the context of the ring-fenced funding of the Department of Justice in the first instance. In the event of unforeseen pressures arising which are not capable of being met through that route, I will discuss the issues with DFP

Any future discussions with the HM Treasury about additional funding for policing in the next spending review period would be led by DFP on behalf of the Executive.

Department for Regional Development

Ballynahinch By-Pass Project

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the Ballynahinch By-Pass Project.

(AQW 18117/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Work to progress development of this scheme is ongoing following confirmation of a preferred line for the Ballynahinch Bypass proposal. Planning and completion of surveys, which will include a detailed environmental survey that is necessary to facilitate the preparation of an Environmental Statement, is also proceeding in advance of completion of the Direction Order and Vesting Order statutory procedures.

Subsequent progression to construction remains subject to the bypass proposal clearing the statutory procedures, having a satisfactory economic appraisal and, given other competing priorities, is dependent on funding made available in future budget settlements.

Water Order Enforcement Notice

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 13020/11-15, for an update on fulfilling these requirements.

(AQW 18118/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that planning approval has been obtained for the proposed new screen works at Ballyhornan and negotiations continue for the purchase of a plot of land to house the new facilities and on the access permissions to the site across a private road.

Funding for the project has been approved and a contractor has been appointed to commence construction work when the negotiations mentioned above have been completed. The current target date to begin construction work remains mid-March 2013.

Water Bills: Estimated Readings

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development what percentage of water bills issued over the last two years used estimated readings.

(AQW 18134/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that of the 296,000 water bills that issued during the last two calendar years around 11% were based on estimated readings.

Water Bills: Estimated Readings

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development how the estimated readings used for water bills are calculated.

(AQW 18135/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that an estimated bill is based on the average daily consumption, calculated from each meter reading since the customer occupied the property, multiplied by the number of days in the billing period.

Revenue Generating Assets

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to identify the four revenue generating assets that were sold; and what receipts each asset generated.

(AQW 18137/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department sold only one revenue generating asset in the 2011/12 financial year and none in the current financial year.

The Department completed the sale of a car park at Kent Street in Belfast in March 2012. The car park at Kent Street was sold to the Department for Social Development to facilitate a regeneration scheme in the area. The Department received £300,000 for the sale and will continue to receive revenue from the car park until the regeneration scheme is completed.

Alan Lennon Case

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the total cost in legal fees arising from the Alan Lennon case.

(AQW 18140/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer to the answer I gave to AQW 17158/11-15 on 10 December 2012.

Metro Passengers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of Metro passengers on the last Saturday before Christmas and the first Saturday after Christmas in 2012; and how this compares with the same days in 2011.

(AQW 18307/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The attached table provides the information requested.

	Saturday	Saturday		Saturday	Saturday	
	22/12/2012	24/12/2011	% Inc/Dec	29/12/2012	31/12/2011	% Inc/Dec
	Journeys	Journeys	Journeys	Journeys	Journeys	Journeys
Total	64,035	40,538	58.0%	54,263	44,056	23.2%

Sewage Treatment Plant on Drumlough Road, Rathfriland

Mr Rogers asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline (i) the cause of the foul odour that appears to be sourced at the sewage treatment plant on Drumlough Road, Rathfriland; (ii) what measures have been taken to address the problem; and (iii) will these measures prevent a recurrence of the problem.

(AQW 18343/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it is not aware of an odour problem at Rathfriland Wastewater Treatment Works or at the two pumping stations on Drumlough Road and no complaints have been received in relation to this issue. In response to your question, NIW undertook an inspection of the area surrounding the treatment works and the pumping stations, and no odour problem was evident. If any further instances of malodours are experienced in the area, NIW would be happy to investigate and should be contacted via the Waterline on 08457 440088.

Leaked Legal Advice

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline whether any investigations have been conducted into the leaking of legal advice tendered to his Department, but circulated to the Executive, in relation to the outcome in case of Lennon v DRD; and for his assessment of whether the leaking of legal advice complies with the obligations (i) under the ministerial code; and (ii) of civil servants.

(AQW 18422/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My response to AQW 17885/11-15 refers.

I am not aware of any investigations having been conducted and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on whether or not an Executive colleague has complied with the obligations under the Ministerial Code. Similarly, I cannot comment on the actions of civil servants in other departments.

Department for Social Development

Unoccupied Houses in the Tiger's Bay area of Belfast

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) privately owned houses; and (ii) houses owned by social housing providers in the Tiger's Bay area of Belfast are currently unoccupied.

(AQW 17922/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): In relation to (i) Land and Property Services of the Department of Finance and Personnel has advised that the number of privately owned houses in the Tiger's Bay area of Belfast that are currently unoccupied is not available in the format requested as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. There is also no requirement for ratepayers to

inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant. In relation to (ii), the Housing Executive currently has 18 voids in the Upper and Lower Duncairn Common Landlord Area of North Belfast which includes the Tiger's Bay area. Nine of these properties are due to be demolished and the remaining nine are awaiting relet. Only one Housing Association has properties in the Tiger's Bay area, none of which are unoccupied.

Housing Executive Maintenance Costs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to the Housing Executive of maintenance of properties in (i) Bangor; and (ii) Holywood in each of the last three financial years. **(AQW 18119/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive can only provide the cost of Response Maintenance by District Office area. Therefore, the cost of Response Maintenance of Housing Executive properties in the Bangor District Office area in each of the last three years was as follows:-

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	£1.646m	£1.306m	£1.409m

The cost of Planned Maintenance for Housing Executive properties in (i) Bangor* and (ii) Holywood in each of the last three financial years was as follows:-

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Bangor Town	£202,000	£1,607,000	Nil
Holywood	Nil	£77,000	£791,000

* refers to Bangor Town

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Cost of Grass Cutting in Bangor and Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to the Housing Executive of grass cutting in (i) Bangor; and (ii) Holywood in each of the last three financial years. **(AQW 18120/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The cost to the Housing Executive of grass cutting in (i) Bangor* and (ii) Holywood in each of the last three financial years was as follows:-

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Bangor Town	£47,123.83	£45,818.76	£44,383.76
Holywood	£6,040.67	£5,695.67	£5,276.10

* refers to Bangor Town

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Housing Executive Office in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his future plans for the Housing Executive office and staff based in Bangor. **(AQW 18121/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is currently in the process of a restructuring programme and the Newtownards and Bangor offices will form one management unit. Their aim is to retain both Newtownards and Bangor offices to sustain local customer services but to locate management and administrative resources in the Newtownards office to maximise efficiency.

While the management team will largely be based in Newtownards, managers will be available to meet tenants and elected representatives in Bangor as required. Furthermore, there will still be a management presence in the Bangor office, and the majority of staff delivering local services will continue to work locally from the Bangor office.

This programme has just been initiated, with the appointment of a Housing Manager who will be responsible for both offices. Further consideration is being given to the composition of the management team and the number of staff to be redeployed. Once the restructuring is complete the new arrangements will be communicated. In the interim, service to the public and elected representatives will continue as normal.

Housing Executive

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in (i) Holywood; and (ii) Bangor are waiting to be housed by the Housing Executive.

(AQW 18122/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of people on the waiting list for (i) Holywood and (ii) Bangor* at the 1 January 2013 was as follows:-

Holywood	Bangor Town
357	1,816

* refers to Bangor Town

Both the Housing Executive and Housing Associations draw allocations from this waiting list.

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Pensioners' Bungalows in the Bloomfield Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the pensioners' bungalows proposals for Bloomfield Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18123/11-15)

Mr McCausland: An economic appraisal for this proposal is currently being finalised for consideration by the Department of Finance & Personnel. Once agreed, this will allow the formal consultation exercise to commence.

Subject to a positive tenant vote, it is envisaged that work will commence in May 2013. This is a challenging timeframe and remains predicated on no major issues arising during the formal consultation period.

Social Security Office in Ballyclare

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his future plans for the Social Security office in Ballyclare; and why this office cannot be used as a signing on office.

(AQW 18130/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In addition to its regional network of 35 Jobs and Benefit Offices/Social Security Offices, the Social Security Agency also has three Community Benefit Offices located in Ballyclare, Crossmaglen and Londonderry. The Social Security Agency has recently completed a strategic review of the processing arrangements for social security benefits delivered through the Jobs and Benefits

network and is currently implementing the recommendations through the Customer First project. The Community Benefit Offices currently do not provide a full range of social security benefit services and the Social Security Agency is in the process of reviewing these offices in the context of delivering a modernised welfare system to all claimants.

In the Ballyclare area, responsibility for 'signing' is carried out under a service level agreement by the Department for Employment and Learning on behalf of the Social Security Agency. Staff from the Department for Employment and Learning are not located in the Ballyclare Community Benefit Office and it is not therefore possible to provide 'signing only' services at this office.

Social Fund

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what protections he can put in place to allow the work of the Social Fund to continue, should the Welfare Reform Bill not become law.

(AQW 18162/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Bill is the legislative vehicle for the repeal of the legal provisions which enable payment of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for general living expenses elements of Social Fund to be made under social security legislation. Other Social Fund services, such as Budgeting Loans and regulated provision, will not be impacted but will be reformed and incorporated within the Universal Credit benefit.

In the event that the Welfare Reform Bill does not become law, the existing legislative powers to deliver Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans will remain in place. However, there remain significant operational and financial issues to be resolved to facilitate any continued administration of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. To this end, officials in my Department will be seeking discussion with the Northern Ireland Executive and Whitehall departments as to the consequences arising from the break in parity in relation to Social Fund and the implications arising from the Statement of Funding Policy. Similarly, officials will be seeking discussion with the Department of Work and Pensions as to the continued use in Northern Ireland of the Social Fund Computer System for the delivery of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans.

Asbestos Surveying Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Housing Executive's tendering process for the provision of asbestos surveying services, why only 10 percent of the points allocated are for quality and 90 percent are for pricing.

(AQW 18183/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that all surveys are carried out to a specified Health & Safety Standard and that only competent contractors are selected.

As part of the procurement process, all tenderers had to complete and submit a Pre Qualification Questionnaire Pack (PQQP) and achieve a pass in all sections to proceed to the next stage. The evaluation of the PQQP included (without limitation) the following: -

- (a) Completeness and Compliance check - this is a check to ensure that all required information requested in the PQQP has been submitted. Failure to provide the required information, complete a satisfactory response to any question, or supply documentation that is requested within the specified timescales, may result in the PQQP being disqualified.
- (b) Criteria for the rejection of Economic Operators - this is an evaluation that the tenderer must comply with Regulation 23 of the Regulations;
- (c) Information as to economic and financial standing - this is an analysis and evaluation of the financial information provided by the tenderer, to verify that the Housing Executive's financial, economic and insurance requirements are satisfied. A tenderer must be in a sound financial position to participate in a procurement of this size as set out in Regulation 24 of the Regulations; and

- (d) Information as to technical or professional ability – this is an evaluation of the information provided by the tenderer that it has the levels of technical and/or professional ability required by the Housing Executive in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 25 of the Regulations

By evaluating these documents, and in particular the technical or professional ability section on a pass/fail basis, the Housing Executive ensured only competent contractors could qualify for this Tender. In light of this, the Housing Executive deemed a quality score of 10% was sufficient for the assessment of this tender.

Asbestos Surveying Services

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister for Social Development why, between 16 November 2012 and 6 December 2012, the quality score of companies tendering to provide asbestos surveying services to the Housing Executive altered by, in some cases, over 50 percent.

(AQW 18184/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that it was not assured that the integrity of the original evaluation process for the quality submissions was as robust as it would have expected. Therefore they decided to discontinue the award at that stage and to reassess.

Each tender quality submission was reassessed in an open, consistent and transparent manner for evidence of the tenderers ability to meet the stated requirements and new scores awarded accordingly. The uplifts to the quality scoring were as a result of the new panel's evaluation.

In accordance with the procurement process each tenderer was advised of the result.

WCA or ESA Assessments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether Work Capability Assessments or Employment and Support Allowance assessments can be carried out in the applicants home; (ii) under what circumstances a home assessment can be refused; (iii) who makes the decision to refuse a home visit; and (iv) whether this decision can be reviewed.

(AQW 18194/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I can confirm that:

- (i) Work Capability Assessments may be carried out in the claimant's home;
- (ii) Claimants requesting a home assessment are required to provide medical evidence to support their request. A request for a home assessment may be refused if medical evidence is not provided or the customer's medical condition does not support the request.
- (iii) The medical evidence is considered by an Atos Doctor Healthcare Professional who will decide whether or not a home assessment should be carried out.
- (iv) If it is decided that a home assessment is not appropriate and the claimant subsequently provides further medical evidence the decision can be reviewed.

Child Benefit Changes

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact of the changes to child benefit on local families.

(AQW 18204/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Child Benefit matters are dealt with by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and consequently my Department does not have access to the data in order to provide an answer to the Members question.

Medical Evidence for ESA and DLA Applications

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department has taken to encourage Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance claimants to provide medical evidence with their applications, in order to give a full picture of the claimant's case.

(AQW 18207/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Security Agency has in place a number of processes to ensure that supporting evidence is provided at the earliest opportunity when an individual is making an application for Employment and Support Allowance or Disability Living Allowance.

Employment and Support Allowance claimants are advised, either by an Employment and Support Allowance agent on the phone or in writing, of the importance of supplying all relevant medical evidence at a number of stages throughout the claim process: at the initial claim stage; when completing a limited capability for work questionnaire; when attending a medical examination; when contacted prior to a disallowance decision being made; and upon receipt of an appeal.

Disability Living Allowance claim forms, and the accompanying notes which help the claimant fill in the claim forms, contain specific information and advice regarding the importance of providing any relevant medical evidence. Claimants are encouraged to forward any existing reports about their illness and disability that might assist in determining the claim. A reminder to this effect is also included where the claimant signs the Disability Living Allowance claim form.

Benefit Claimants

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of benefit claimants who have had their benefit (i) reduced; and (ii) increased in each (a) council area; and (b) constituency, in the last six months.

(AQW 18254/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is not possible to provide the information in the format requested. However, the analysis below has been based on claims that were live in June/July 2012 and were still active in December 2012.

A claimant can claim more than one benefit and therefore the figures below may include multiple separate claims for one claimant. Also some benefits are linked to each other such as Income Support and Carer's Allowance. The entitlement in one of these benefits could decrease but is offset by an increase in the other.

Of the 898,370 claims that remained active during the period set out above:

- (i) 22,750 benefit claims were reduced.
- (ii) 26,480 benefit claims were increased.
- (a) Table 1 below shows the number of benefit claims that were reduced or increased in each Local Government District.

TABLE 1

Local Government District	Number of claims that were reduced	Number of claims that were increased
Antrim	560	670
Ards	840	1,090
Armagh	650	710
Ballymena	670	810
Ballymoney	370	420

Local Government District	Number of claims that were reduced	Number of claims that were increased
Banbridge	520	610
Belfast	4,380	5,090
Carrickfergus	390	500
Castlereagh	590	840
Coleraine	650	840
Cookstown	480	530
Craigavon	1,180	1,320
Derry	1,770	1,950
Down	890	1,070
Dungannon	800	810
Fermanagh	700	910
Larne	320	470
Limavady	470	520
Lisburn	1,350	1,510
Magherafelt	470	530
Moyle	200	250
Newry and Mourne	1,410	1,400
Newtownabbey	830	1,040
North Down	710	940
Omagh	720	850
Strabane	720	660
Unknown	140	160
Total	22,750	26,480

(b) Table 2 below shows the number of benefit claims that were increased in each Parliamentary Constituency.

TABLE 2

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of claims that were reduced	Number of claims that were increased
Belfast East	1,000	1,270
Belfast North	1,700	2,040
Belfast South	1,000	1,380
Belfast West	2,110	2,080
East Antrim	870	1,140
East Londonderry	1,220	1,450

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of claims that were reduced	Number of claims that were increased
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,200	1,420
Foyle	1,680	1,850
Lagan Valley	930	1,190
Mid Ulster	1,240	1,370
Newry and Armagh	1,520	1,520
North Antrim	1,180	1,430
North Down	830	1,120
South Antrim	950	1,150
South Down	1,350	1,540
Strangford	910	1,210
Upper Bann	1,480	1,660
West Tyrone	1,440	1,510
Unknown	140	160
Total	22,750	26,480

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People's Gallery in Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what support his Department can offer to the Bogside Artists for maintaining the People's Gallery in Derry.

(AQW 18260/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While my Department has funded the creation of public art where it can make a positive contribution to the regeneration of an area or assist with community development, the Department does not provide funding for the maintenance or protection of artworks. Therefore, my Department does not have a funding programme which could provide support for the maintenance of these murals. If financial assistance is required to maintain the murals, the relevant Department is the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

North Down Alternative Offices in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what can be done to improve the heating system at the North Down Alternative offices in the Kilcooley estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18322/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that the offices of North Down Alternative are in a commercial property at 2 Kilcooley Square, Bangor. It is not the Housing Executive's policy to supply any form of heating to commercial premises. The Housing Executive is not aware of any form of heating having been in place when this group was granted a lease at a peppercorn rent. It is the commercial tenant's responsibility to install heating, should they wish to do so.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether all regulations implemented as part of the Welfare Reform Bill will be subject to full equality impact assessment.

(AQW 18334/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department completed an equality impact assessment on the Welfare Reform Bill which was published in May 2012, and work to update this document is ongoing.

As regards regulations flowing from the Welfare Reform Bill and in line with statutory obligations, I can confirm that all the regulations will be subject to equality screening and a full equality impact assessment in their own right where appropriate.

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