

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 25 January 2013

Volume 81, No WA1

Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister WA 1

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development WA 5

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure WA 20

Department of Education WA 28

Department for Employment and Learning..... WA 46

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment WA 53

Department of Finance and Personnel WA 56

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety..... WA 63

Department of Justice WA 72

Department for Regional Development..... WA 82

Department for Social Development WA 89

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission..... WA 105

Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.
They should be sent to:

The Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX.
Tel: 028 9052 1135 · e-mail: simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk

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

Assembly Members

Agnew, Steven (North Down)
Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
Anderson, Sydney (Upper Bann)
Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Bell, Jonathan (Strangford)
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)
Boyle, Ms Michaela (West Tyrone)
Bradley, Dominic (Newry and Armagh)
Bradley, Ms Paula (North Belfast)
Brady, Mickey (Newry and Armagh)
Brown, Ms Pam (South Antrim)
Buchanan, Thomas (West Tyrone)
Byrne, Joe (West Tyrone)
Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)
Cochrane, Mrs Judith (East Belfast)
Copeland, Michael (East Belfast)
Craig, Jonathan (Lagan Valley)
Cree, Leslie (North Down)
Dallat, John (East Londonderry)
Dickson, Stewart (East Antrim)
Dobson, Mrs Jo-Anne (Upper Bann)
Douglas, Sammy (East Belfast)
Dunne, Gordon (North Down)
Durkan, Mark H (Foyle)
Easton, Alex (North Down)
Eastwood, Colum (Foyle)
Elliott, Tom (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Farry, Dr Stephen (North Down)
Fearon, Ms Megan (Newry and Armagh)
Flanagan, Phil (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Ford, David (South Antrim)
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Frew, Paul (North Antrim)
Gardiner, Samuel (Upper Bann)
Girvan, Paul (South Antrim)
Givan, Paul (Lagan Valley)
Hale, Mrs Brenda (Lagan Valley)
Hamilton, Simon (Strangford)
Hay, William (Speaker)
Hazzard, Christopher (South Down)
Hilditch, David (East Antrim)
Humphrey, William (North Belfast)
Hussey, Ross (West Tyrone)
Irwin, William (Newry and Armagh)
Kelly, Mrs Dolores (Upper Bann)
Kelly, Gerry (North Belfast)
Kennedy, Danny (Newry and Armagh)
Kinahan, Danny (South Antrim)
Lo, Ms Anna (South Belfast)
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)
Lynch, Seán (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Lyttle, Chris (East Belfast)
McAleer, Declan (West Tyrone)
McCallister, John (South Down)
McCann, Fra (West Belfast)
McCann, Ms Jennifer (West Belfast)
McCarthy, Kieran (Strangford)
McCartney, Raymond (Foyle)
McCausland, Nelson (North Belfast)
McClarty, David (East Londonderry)
McCorley, Ms Rosaleen (West Belfast)
McCrea, Basil (Lagan Valley)
McCrea, Ian (Mid Ulster)
McDevitt, Conall (South Belfast)
McDonnell, Dr Alasdair (South Belfast)
McElduff, Barry (West Tyrone)
McGahan, Ms Bronwyn (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
McGimpsey, Michael (South Belfast)
McGlone, Patsy (Mid Ulster)
McGuinness, Martin (Mid Ulster)
McIlveen, David (North Antrim)
McIlveen, Miss Michelle (Strangford)
McKay, Daithí (North Antrim)
McKevitt, Mrs Karen (South Down)
McLaughlin, Ms Maeve (Foyle)
McLaughlin, Mitchel (South Antrim)
McMullan, Oliver (East Antrim)
McNarry, David (Strangford)
McQuillan, Adrian (East Londonderry)
Maginness, Alban (North Belfast)
Maskey, Alex (South Belfast)
Molloy, Francie (Mid Ulster)
Morrow, The Lord (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Moutray, Stephen (Upper Bann)
Nesbitt, Mike (Strangford)
Newton, Robin (East Belfast)
Ní Chuilín, Ms Carál (North Belfast)
Ó hOisín, Cathal (East Londonderry)
O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)
O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)
Overend, Mrs Sandra (Mid Ulster)
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)
Ramsey, Pat (Foyle)
Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)
Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)
Rogers, Sean (South Down)
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)
Ruane, Ms Caitríona (South Down)
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 25 January 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Maritime Museum in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of a Maritime Museum in Derry, as detailed in the One Plan.

(AQW 17800/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The establishment of a Maritime Museum in Derry-Londonderry is a programme activity under the catalyst programme 'Accelerating the Growth of the Tourism and Cultural Economy'. Derry City Council has assumed lead responsibility in the One Plan for the delivery of this project.

Co-operative and Social Enterprise Hub

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of a Co-operative and Social Enterprise Hub, as detailed in the One Plan.

(AQW 17801/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The establishment of a Co-operative and Social Enterprise Hub is one of the catalyst programmes in the One Plan. A partnership has been formed with a range of knowledge and experience in this area and is co-ordinating the delivery of this catalyst programme. To date, the group has considered a number of models for the programme and has now agreed that a more detailed feasibility study is required. This is being considered by the Derry-Londonderry Steering Group as part of the Social Investment Fund process.

Historical Abuse Inquiry

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many people have reported abuse that occurred outside of the terms of reference of the Historical Abuse Inquiry.

(AQW 18159/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The issue raised is one for which the Inquiry Chairperson is responsible and should be addressed to him.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the recent civil unrest and the establishment of the Unionist Forum, whether there will be changes made to the way that the Social Investment Fund is allocated; and whether the information provided by the Unionist Forum will be processed by their officials in time for an allocation from the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 18230/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No allocations have been made yet to steering groups who are actively working in each of the nine social investment zones to develop local area plans to deliver the strategic objectives of the Social Investment Fund.

The Belfast East steering group is cognisant of the ongoing civil unrest. Final plans are due to be submitted to the Department by the end of February.

Racial Equality Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain the delay in the delivery of a revised Racial Equality Strategy; and when a consultation stage will be launched.

(AQW 18289/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are fully committed to tackling racial inequalities and promoting good race relations.

The Racial Equality Strategy is key to achieving these twin aims and officials have been working with minority ethnic representatives through the Racial Equality Panel to draft a new Strategy that will meet the needs and aspirations of minority ethnic people and wider society.

We want to make sure that the document is fit for purpose and we will continue to work in partnership with representatives of minority ethnic groups on the drafting of the Strategy.

We envisage that a 12-week public consultation will begin in spring of this year.

Minority Ethnic Development Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the delivery of a revised Minority Ethnic Development fund.

(AQW 18290/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials have been consulting with representatives of the minority ethnic sector in order to produce a revised funding scheme that takes full account of last year's evaluation of the Fund and that reflects our objectives for the Fund, the needs within the sector and the need for good governance.

Once finalised, the Fund will run from the beginning of the new financial year for two years. Calls for applications to the Fund are expected to be made in the near future.

Shackleton, Ballykelly

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an estimate of the annual maintenance, security and other associated costs to their Department for the remaining land at Shackleton, Ballykelly once the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has re-located there, should no other large scale user take up further accommodation on the site.

(AQW 18330/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM officials are currently working with DARD officials to identify what parts of the site it will require for its headquarters, including associated services such as car parking. Until a decision is made as to the part of the site DARD require and how that will be administered (for example whether there will be separate access and security) we are unable to estimate the costs for annual maintenance, security and other associated costs for the remaining land at Shackleton.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what guarantees they can give that the Childcare Strategy will be published and implemented ahead of the implementation of the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 18337/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We aim to publish and implement the Childcare Strategy before the proposals contained in the Welfare Reform Bill come into effect. Public consultation on the

Childcare Strategy opened on 5 December and will run until March 2013. All comments received will then be reviewed and a final Childcare Strategy published and implemented.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of a childcare strategy.

(AQW 18372/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 5 December 2012, our Department launched a public consultation on the Executive's proposed Childcare Strategy. The document, 'Towards a Childcare Strategy', sets out the vision and principles for a future Childcare Strategy and is intended to inform the consultation process. Consultation events are being arranged to allow people the opportunity to give their opinion and help shape the Childcare Strategy. Consultation will continue until 5 March 2013 after which all comments received will be considered and a Strategy developed.

The £12 million Childcare Fund assists the development of the Childcare Strategy. Towards the end of last year, we took decisions that will allow up to a further £4.5 million to be spent from this Fund.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 17253/11-15, to detail any investigations that were undertaken, including the cost, and whether the cases were successfully proven by the Central Investigation Service.

(AQW 18415/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Central Investigation Service has undertaken two investigations on behalf of the Department.

Whilst specific details of the cases cannot be provided, the first case in 2010 transpired to be an internal disciplinary matter and the second case is currently with the Public Prosecution Service for consideration.

The costs for each investigation were £297 and £3,633 respectively.

Victims and Survivors' Service

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 18007/11-15, where Ministerial responsibility lies for the Victims and Survivors' Service; and who can provide an answer to the initial question posed.

(AQW 18421/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are responsible for approving the Victims and Survivors Service's strategic objectives, policy and performance framework.

The Victims and Survivors Service is responsible for all operational decisions arising from the implementation of policy and strategic objectives. This includes the assessment of funding applications and any decision to award funding. We have no role in these operational decisions.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Wells asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many appeals are being dealt with by the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQO 3113/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent Tribunal which operates at arm's length from Government and exercises its functions independently of our Department.

While OFMDFM holds sponsorship responsibility for the Commission and provides the necessary resources to enable the Commission to meet its commitments, the Chief Commissioner is responsible for the day to day operation of the Commission and for deployment of its resources to meet the prevailing workload. Our Department has no locus in the Commission's workload scheduling or decision-making.

The work of the Planning Appeals Commission falls into two broad categories – appeals and referred work.

The appeals work involves making independent decisions on appeals against planning decisions made by departments. The number of appeals in hand at 9 January is 246, which is a major improvement on the backlog of over 3,000 cases at the end of December 2007.

Further, more detailed information is, of course, available from the Commission should you require it.

Referred work involves reporting to departments, following a public inquiry or hearing, on a wide range of matters referred to the Commission including development plans and major planning applications under Article 31 of the Planning Order. The Commission is currently dealing with three requests for public inquiries, including the Sprucefield retail development, and four requests for hearings.

We will continue to liaise closely with the Commission regarding the resources it requires to enable it to meet its prevailing workload.

Corporation Tax

Dr McDonnell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the devolution of Corporation Tax.

(AQO 3115/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 9 January the Westminster Government reiterated its commitment to consider the case for devolving Corporation Tax. As Members will know, the work of the Joint Ministerial Working Group is complete and the report of the main findings was sent to the Prime Minister for his consideration last November. The Government must now decide whether the Executive should be offered the opportunity of taking responsibility for Corporation Tax.

The continued challenges faced by the local business community, as the economy struggles out of recession, means that it is essential that the Government makes its decision as soon as possible. At our meeting with the Prime Minister during his visit in November, we discussed the general implications of devolving Corporation Tax and we agreed then we would have a further meeting in London.

Our officials are actively seeking to secure a date for this meeting as soon as possible.

Social Protection Fund

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister which Departments have submitted bids for funds from the Social Protection Fund for the 2012/13 financial year; and whether the Fund will be used to help mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on the most vulnerable.

(AQW 18548/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A number of departmental proposals were received in the latter part of 2012, none of which we considered as appropriate for progression under the Social Protection Fund during the 2012/2013 financial year.

Since then we have decided to subsume the Social Protection Fund into a consolidated and integrated Delivering Social Change Fund which affords us the opportunity to quickly respond in a flexible manner to urgent social needs as they arise, and address the specific needs of some of our most in need individuals and families.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Northern Irish Agri-Food Items

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is aware of any legal or illegal restrictions being placed on Northern Irish agri-food items that are entering other European market places.

(AQW 18109/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): In answering your question I assume that you are asking this in the context of your recent Press Release about The Irish Farmers Association call for consumers in the South of Ireland to buy only milk branded with the National Dairy Council's (NDC) mark.

As the NDC is an industry funded body any decision by processors in the South to use the NDC mark is a commercial matter which is beyond my remit. Also, whilst issues relating to labelling are the responsibility of the Food Standards Agency (Belfast) my position is that labelling should not be used in a manner that could be construed as market protectionism. The island of Ireland is a net exporter and so, in my opinion, efforts would be put to better use if we worked together to strengthen our export base rather than compete against each other in what is a very small domestic market.

I can also advise that the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Investment, Arlene Foster, has written to Commissioner Ciolos about this matter. She has asked the Commissioner to intervene to persuade the Irish Government to take action to prevent the perceived abuse of Country of Origin Labelling. I understand that she has not yet received a response from the Commissioner.

Minister Foster is also monitoring the promotional campaigns of the Irish National Dairy Council and Irish Farmers' Association which are seeking to reduce the sale of NI milk products to the South of Ireland in favour of local only produce.

I am also aware that Diane Dodds MEP wrote to Defra on this issue and they have informed her that they do not consider it appropriate to take any action while waiting for the Commission response to the DETI Minister. We too have raised the matter with our counterparts in Dublin and will continue to bring whatever influence we can to ensure a level playing field for everyone.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what support her Department is giving to landowners who planted ash trees in forestry schemes and have since been instructed to destroy their trees because of ash dieback.

(AQW 18111/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's Forest Service is supporting landowners to comply with Chalara ash dieback statutory plant health notices by making assistance available to them to remove and dispose of infected trees. This action makes it possible to clear sites quickly and reduce the risk of disease spread. I have also asked officials to prepare advice on what additional support may be made available to assist landowners to replant trees following compliance with a statutory plant health notice.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in respect of forestry schemes where ash was specified by her Department but has since been removed because of ash dieback what amendments, in relation to re-planting, are permissible to the conditions of the scheme agreement that specified ash.

(AQW 18112/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: If ash has been removed from a site following compliance with a Chalara ash dieback statutory plant health notice, scheme beneficiaries may, with approval from Forest Service, amend the agreement to substitute ash with another species. There are a range of suitable alternative species,

including other native broadleaves. Forest Service officials can provide specific advice to Woodland Grant Scheme beneficiaries taking account of their objectives and any environmental constraints. I have also asked officials to prepare advice on what additional support may be made available to assist landowners to replant trees following compliance with a statutory plant health notice.

Aerial Surveillance Equipment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development under what sections of her Department's operations she has considered using drone or unmanned aerial surveillance equipment. **(AQW 18113/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service has procured an unmanned aerial system (UAS) for use in the monitoring of areas of larch trees that may be affected by ramorum disease. Work on using near infrared aerial photography to improve early detection commenced late last year and will be resumed in spring as weather permits.

There is potential for the use of UAS in a range of forest management situations involving surveys, including, for example, the mapping of forest areas destroyed by forest fires, monitoring the extent of wind damage to plantations, monitoring the success of reforestation, and to assess the spread of invasive plant species on important unplanted habitats. These and other uses will be explored throughout 2013.

DARD is actively considering the procurement of UAS to use in two other areas of work, namely (i) to assist with work in the surveillance and statutory control of quarantine organisms harmful to plants; and (ii) to help with mapping of areas such as commons. Commons tend to be large inaccessible areas that are difficult to map because of their remoteness and terrain. UAS may offer an effective and efficient solution to the mapping of these areas which in turn could help improve compliance with EU Single Farm Payment rules.

Organic Farming

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what changes have been made in her Department in the last year in relation to personnel who would have been available to help and advise organic farmers; (ii) what advice and assistance for growing organic produce is now available from her Department; and (iii) for her assessment of the organic sector. **(AQW 18155/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) While there have been some changes in personnel, the overall staff resource in my Department to help and support the organic farming sector remains unchanged.
- (ii) My Department provides advice and assistance for growing organic produce in the following ways:
 - Technical advice and training through CAFRE's Development Advisers and Technologists;
 - Supply chain and marketing advice through Supply Chain Advisers;
 - Financial support through the Organic Farming Scheme to support conversion to organic farming; and
 - Financial support through the Organic Management Option under the NI Countryside Management Scheme.
- (iii) I recognise that higher commodity prices in recent years have resulted in limited premiums at the farm gate for organic produce. This has led to a reduction in the number of organic producers from 224 in 2006 to 139 in 2012. Overall, because of the weak market, there is limited opportunity to expand the sector and any further development will be into supplying niche markets. My Department will continue to work with the sector to listen to market signals and help the sector develop in areas where there are opportunities.

Farm Inspection

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in each of the last three years, how many times has her Department used an aeroplane to complete a farm inspection.

(AQW 18187/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has not used an aeroplane to complete a farm inspection in the last three years.

Routine use is made of aerial photography taken by a camera mounted in an aircraft to improve mapping accuracy and to assess land areas claimed for land based schemes such as the Single Farm Payment Scheme. This process is managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (Land and Property Services) and the resultant aerial photographs may be used by farm inspectors to assist in the completion of an inspection. It may also be used in conjunction with satellite photography in the completion of an inspection by control with remote sensing.

In 2010, 2011 and 2012 DARD used a helicopter to conduct aerial surveillance for suspect Ramorum disease in larch.

Criminal Justice Inspectorate

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to question AQW 17636/11-15, whether she considered asking the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland to complete an external audit of the Central Investigation Service.

(AQW 18188/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has previously requested that the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI) conduct an independent inspection of the Central Investigation Service. However, CJI were unable to do so and confirmed that DARD is not listed as one of the organisations that come under the CJI's statutory remit to inspect.

Deloitte Review

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 17636/11-15, whether the 10 recommendations made in the Deloitte review have been actioned.

(AQW 18190/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Further to the response to AQW 17636/11-15, which confirmed acceptance of the 10 recommendations included in the July 2010 report by Deloitte on the Department's Central Investigation Service, I can furthermore confirm that appropriate action has been taken in respect of each of the recommendations made.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 17636/11-15, why external scrutiny was only provided by the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the review of the policies and procedures in place in the Central Investigation Service, in the context of financial audit work undertaken on the Department's 2010/11 Resource Account.

(AQW 18193/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The scrutiny provided by the NIAO as part of the 2010/11 Resource Account's fieldwork was deemed to be sufficiently independent.

CIS has subsequently been subject to review by the Department's own Internal Audit unit.

My Department previously requested that the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI) conduct an independent inspection of the Central Investigation Service. However, it was confirmed that DARD is not listed as one of the organisations that come under the CJI's statutory remit to inspect.

Woodland Cover

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, how many hectares of land were planted with new trees, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18217/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: During 2007/2008, 552 hectares of new woodland were planted, comprising of 537 hectares of private planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme and 15 hectares planted by Forest Service. There has been no further Forest Service new planting. Under the Woodland Grant Scheme 289 hectares of new woodland were planted in 2008/2009, 213 hectares in 2009/2010, 252 hectares in 2010/2011 and 313 hectares in 2011/2012.

Woodland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what additional or enhanced measures are being put in place to increase the provision of woodland, in light of the effects of ash dieback disease.

(AQW 18218/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Where ash has been removed from Woodland Grant Schemes in compliance with a statutory plant health notice, scheme beneficiaries may, with Forest Service approval, amend the agreement and substitute ash with another tree species.

I have also asked officials to prepare advice on what additional support may be made available to assist landowners to replant another tree species following compliance with a statutory plant health notice.

Farm Inspections

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has target times for responding to queries that arise following farm inspections.

(AQW 18219/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department responds to queries that arise following farm inspections according to DARD's Customer Service Standards as follows:

- 90 % of customers seen within 10 minutes of arranged time;
- 85% of customers within 15 minutes;
- 90% of letters / faxes / emails acknowledged within 3 days of receipt;
- 90% of letters / faxes / emails responded to fully within 15 working; days of receipt; and
- Ensure all telephone calls are answered as quickly as possible and within 6 rings.

Specifically, with regard to queries arising from Single Farm Payment inspections, the claimant may use a Client Referral Form if they wish to query their initial farm inspection findings. Following an inspection, claimants receive this form, along with letter, field report and an updated map that outlines the initial findings of the inspection. My Department aims to action and complete these queries within 15 working days of receipt.

Woodland Cover

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what percentage of land in Northern Ireland is covered by woodland and how does this compare with (i) England; (ii) Scotland; (iii) Wales; and (iv) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 18220/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Woodland cover in the north of Ireland is 8% of land area. This compares with 11% in the south of Ireland, 10% in England, 15% in Wales and 18% in Scotland.

Woodland Grant Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much funding has been allocated to the Woodland Grant Scheme, in each of the last three years,
(AQW 18221/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Grant aid for forestry measures co-funded by the European Union under the Rural Development Programme totalled £1.4 million during 2009/2010, £1.6 million in 2010/2011 and £1.6 million in 2011/2012.

Farmers: Financial Assistance

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what more her Department can do to assist farmers who are struggling financially due to circumstances outside their control, such as Single Farm Payments being late because of inspections, bad weather, closed herds due to Bovine TB or the rising costs of fuel and feed.

(AQW 18222/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Let me assure you at the outset that I am very conscious of the current difficulties facing our farmers in the context of rising production costs and the impact of recent bad weather.

My Department has a number of initiatives aimed at helping farmers. Under the competitiveness strand of the Rural Development Programme, my Department has provided £45 million funding for a number of schemes, including:

- Farm Family Options, which includes both skills training and business mentoring;
- The Focus Farm Programme, which looks at sharing best practice, modern technology and innovative farm methods;
- Benchmarking, which is an important tool in monitoring input costs and livestock performance;
- The Supply Chain Development Programme, which supports farmers working together and with others to improve the rewards from their supply chain; and
- The Farm Modernisation Programme, which provides support for farms to modernise their holdings and improve production techniques.

In recent months the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) has delivered a training programme throughout the north of Ireland to assist farmers and growers in the run up to and during the winter period. This included a series of on-farm workshops attended by approximately 1500 farmers. These workshops helped farmers make informed decisions about feeding their livestock in response to the reduced quantity and quality of forage available during the bad summer weather. In addition, CAFRE has also produced forage bulletins and online management tools to help farmers. The Department has also commissioned research into additional measures that farmers can take to mitigate risk associated with extreme weather events.

In addition, I recently announced my decision not to apply a further year's voluntary modulation. This will have the effect of adding €19 million to the total funding available for the 2013 single farm payment and I hope that this measure will contribute in some way to alleviating the financial pressures facing many farmers.

As well as the short-term issues currently facing our farmers, the Agri-Food Strategy Board is developing a strategic action plan which will look at prospects for the entire agri-food industry and how we can support its success in the medium to long term.

I have to explain that there are certain limitations to the action I can take to assist farmers, in particular in relation to commercial issues, such as pricing structures, and compliance with EU rules. Unfortunately, these issues and other global market developments cannot be influenced either by producers or my Department and, therefore, the focus has to be on improving efficiency in order to keep production costs as low as possible.

My Department will continue to offer support and assistance where it can to the challenges facing the industry both in the short and longer-term.

I appreciate that Single Farm Payments are an important part of farm incomes. By mid- January over 86% of claims worth £204 million had been finalised. The claims that cannot be completed at this stage have queries that need to be resolved or require complex assessments that take longer to clear. We are working to complete all the remaining claims at the earliest practical date, but we must administer the scheme in a way that avoids further disallowance by the European Union and this means that payments cannot be released until the correct amount due has been calculated.

TB breakdown herd keepers who may face exceptional difficulties this winter, should discuss the issue with their local Divisional Veterinary Office staff to see if there are ways to alleviate the particular pressure while ensuring any disease risk is minimised. Contact details have issued to those industry stakeholder organisations that may be contacted for such advice by farmers.

Let me assure you that I will continue to do all I can to support our farming and rural communities at this difficult time.

Government Construction Clients

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 16796/11-15, for her assessment of the Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains, including the model fair payment charter; and what action her Department is taking to address the problem of supply chain payments to sub-contractors and suppliers.

(AQW 18223/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My department applies the Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains. The code sets out best practice for the relationships between clients, main contractors and their supply chains. This includes contractual conditions which, among other things, require Contractors to pay Sub-Contractors within a period of not exceeding 30 days of the Contractor being supplied with a valid invoice.

On behalf of my department, Central Procurement Directorate also applies a range of contractual and governance arrangements designed to achieve fair payment on all construction contracts managed by them.

Woodland Grant Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if there any plans to increase the level of funding available through the Woodland Grant Scheme.

(AQW 18224/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I remain committed to the policy of expanding tree cover from the current 8% to 12 % of land cover. To achieve this, my Department encourages tree planting by providing advice and financial support under the Rural Development Programme. To encourage an increase in the rate of tree planting, my Department, in consultation with stakeholders, is exploring ways to revise the nature of support for tree planting in the context of CAP reform and the development of a draft Rural Development Programme 2014-20.

Farm Business Identification Numbers

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many applications for a Farm Business Identification Number were received by her Department in each month since April 2009.

(AQW 18226/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Table 1 summarises the number of DARD Farm Business Identifier applications received each month. These are the business identifiers used by claimants of Common Agricultural Policy subsidies.

TABLE 1 – BUSINESS IDENTIFIER APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY MONTH.

FB1	2009	2010	2011	2012
JAN	16	42	51	58
FEB	19	71	66	47
MARCH	26	146	109	68
APRIL	49	60	73	57
MAY	44	63	58	38
JUNE	60	41	37	20
JULY	26	47	30	25
AUG	26	52	33	32
SEPT	41	63	33	17
OCT	51	46	34	30
NOV	45	60	37	40
DEC	33	31	25	36
Total	436	722	586	468

These figures do not include applications for Business Identification numbers to claim non-farming rural development grants and since June 2011 do not include applications to keep small numbers of animals (for example as pets).

Farm Business Identification Numbers

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Farm Business Identification Numbers were registered by her Department in each month since April 2009. **(AQW 18229/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Table 1 provides a breakdown by month.

TABLE 1 BUSINESS ID'S REGISTERED FROM AN APPLICATION BY MONTH

FB1	2009	2010	2011	2012
JAN	5	16	33	39
FEB	10	38	36	45
MARCH	12	91	99	59
APRIL	35	51	48	61
MAY	35	28	40	21
JUNE	24	31	18	19
JULY	14	22	25	18
AUG	19	32	30	14
SEPT	22	26	21	17
OCT	34	27	22	15
NOV	33	32	25	21

FB1	2009	2010	2011	2012
DEC	14	14	17	21
Total	257	408	414	350

During the same period the Department will also have created a number of DARD Business Identifiers which are not a direct result of an application being received, but may be necessary, for example, for a business whose members are now deceased but whose estate wishes to submit a Single Application Form.

Separate business identifiers are also issued to businesses wishing to claim non-farming rural development grants or, since June 2011, to individuals wishing to keep small numbers of animals, for example, as pets. These are also not included in the figures provided.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much she has set aside in her budget to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform in each year of the next Comprehensive Spending Review period.

(AQW 18315/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The current budget period extends to 2014/15. No budgets have been set for the period thereafter. 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. It is in this context that my department will address funding priorities within the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Gaelic Athletic Association Centre of Excellence

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether part of the funding for the Gaelic Athletic Association Centre of Excellence, to be built in Garvaghey, will be funded by 14 per cent of modulation Single Farm Payment funds.

(AQW 18371/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No modulation funds will contribute to the funding allocated by the Assisting Rural Communities (ARC) North West (NW) Joint Council Committee to the Tyrone GAA County Committee under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme (RDP). Modulation funds are currently confined within Axis 3 of the RDP to Measure 3.1, 'Diversification into non-agricultural activities'.

EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the consequences that may arise within the agriculture industry as a result of the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada.

(AQW 18411/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer you to the answer given to question AQW 18132/11-15.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from her Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to unrest; and (ii) the associated financial cost to her departmental budget.

(AQW 18457/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department has not put any arrangements in place to allow staff to leave work outside normal working hours because of the recent disruptive protests. As such, there is no associated financial cost to the departmental budget.

Hen Houses

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial assistance is available to assist in setting up hen houses?

(AQW 18523/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Whilst I very much appreciate the challenges facing the poultry industry at this time, there is currently no financial assistance for the setting up of hen houses. However, in 2012 my Department provided some financial assistance to the poultry sector through the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP). FMP Tranche 3 opened for applications in September 2012 until October 2012 and although this is a small grant scheme (maximum funding £4k) it included a range of plant machinery and equipment and other items that could contribute to the modernising of existing production systems for poultry producers.

Whilst it is still early days in the EU negotiations on rural development, and the final agreement could see significant changes being made to the proposals, DARD is currently considering all policy needs for the agricultural sector and the wider rural community, including possible support to larger capital grants schemes as part of a future Rural Development Programme.

My Department has also made funding in the region of £1 million available to the egg industry through the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme and two local egg packers have benefited through this Scheme.

You will also be aware that I, along with the DETI Minister, established an Agri Food Strategy Board led by Tony O'Neill from Moy Park. That Board is currently developing recommendations to support growth right across the agri food sector and includes a specific sub-group looking at the needs of the poultry and eggs sector. The Board's report, expected in the next few months, will help to shape the future priorities for the agri-food sector.

Horsemeat Investigation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will instigate an urgent investigation into how horsemeat entered the food chain, in order to retain public confidence in the local beef industry.

(AQW 18528/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Investigation is underway in the south, led by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and throughout Britain and the north of Ireland with the Food Standards Agency in the lead in this jurisdiction, in order to ascertain how or why horse meat came to be found in beef products. My officials are working closely with the Food Standards Agency here in the north to ensure that public confidence in beef born, raised and processed in the north is maintained.

Food Produce containing Horse Meat

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has received assurances from the Irish Minister of Food, Agriculture and the Marine that any food produce, that contained horse meat and originated in the Republic of Ireland, was not a threat to human health.

(AQW 18581/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In his statement to the Dáil, on the 16 January 2013, Minister Coveney repeated the assurances given to him by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland 'that while no food safety issues arise in this instance there are clearly issues to be addressed in respect of the confidence in the quality of the products concerned which are now being addressed in the full investigation I have initiated'.

Horse Passport System

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the discovery of horse DNA in meat plants elsewhere in the British Isles, how confident is she in the fitness for purpose of the horse passport system in operation in Northern Ireland; and what changes are anticipated.

(AQW 18592/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Horse passports are mandatory for all equidae across the EU. The Horse Passports Regulations (NI) 2010, on the identification of equidae, implement Commission Regulation (EC) No. 504/2008 in the north of Ireland.

The Horse Passport Regulations (NI) 2010, which are primarily to protect the human food chain, state that owners must obtain a passport for all horses. A horse must be accompanied by its passport when moved out of the north of Ireland or when moved to the premises of a new keeper. In addition, a person must not sell a horse unless it is accompanied by its passport.

Horse passports record a horse's identity and its veterinary history, and are intended to ensure that horses do not enter the human food chain if they have been treated with certain veterinary medicines harmful to human health.

In order to protect the food chain, my Department enforces these Regulations at point of slaughter and at import / export and I am confident in the operation of these procedures.

There are no plans at EU level to review or to change the horse passport system in the near future. However, my officials will be working with Defra on improving the quality of passports.

Horse DNA

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what investigations her Department has conducted in relation to the traces of horse DNA found in burger products marketed in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 18610/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No traces of horse DNA have been found in burger products marketed in the north of Ireland. However, in light of the findings in the south investigations are underway, led by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland in the south, and with the Food Standards Agency here. My officials are working closely with the Food Standards Agency here in the north to ensure that public confidence in beef born, raised and processed in the north is maintained.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the allocation of funding delivered through the Rural Development Programme over the last five years.

(AQW 18631/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The amount of rural development programme expenditure declared to the European Commission in each of the last five calendar years is as follows:

2008	£38.8m
2009	£43.1m
2010	£59.5m
2011	£71.4m
2012	£60.3m*

Spend under the Rural Development Programme can continue up to 2015.

* Relates to expenditure declared to the European Commission from 1st January 2012 to 15th October 2012.

Crime in Rural Areas

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the action her Department plans to take in the next year, in partnership with the PSNI and agencies, to address crime in rural areas. **(AQO 3193/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The PSNI has primary responsibility for tackling rural crime. Over the next year my Department will continue the excellent partnership developed with the Police and other enforcement agencies addressing the scourge of livestock theft. In 2012 I met twice with Chief Constable Matt Baggott and raised the issue of rural crime and we discussed a number of measures to tackle rural crime. Last year this partnership with the Police was evident in a number of joint initiatives, concerning livestock theft, including Farmwatch and the Freeze-branding initiative. Furthermore in December, I launched a Crimestoppers campaign with the Justice Minister David Ford encouraging the rural community to report suspicious activity anonymously. This campaign had the support of the Police, other government agencies, NFU Mutual Insurance and the UFU.

At the operational level the Department's Central Enforcement Team is actively working with the Police, for example conducting roadside vehicle inspections, undertaking joint criminal investigations and indeed training constables in identifying suspicious consignments of livestock. Cross-border smuggling of livestock, sometimes stolen, is a feature of rural crime and the Central Enforcement Team work closely with their DAFM counterparts in the south and the Gardai, and the relationships have been strengthened with joint training and enhanced communication channels.

In recent weeks the Department's Portal staff, while undertaking livestock vehicle biosecurity checks, were able to alert the Harbour Police who subsequently seized agriculture machinery believed to have been stolen.

Farm Regulatory Burden

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline how she has reduced the regulatory burden on farms since May 2011. **(AQO 3200/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has had a Better Regulation Action Plan in place since 2010 dealing with what are considered to be the most burdensome regulations that impact on the industry today. Since then it has been actively taking forward an extensive programme of work to give effect to the 63 accepted recommendations put forward by an Independent Panel.

An interim re-measurement exercise was carried out at 31 March 2011 which quantified improvements made against the total regulatory burden which was base-lined in December 2007. This clearly showed that there had been an overall 4.3% reduction in administrative burdens being placed on the industry and this work has been validated with industry representatives. Although our target was higher, it does show that my Department is making progress in this area. Indeed, there are improvements being made all the time within the Department, as technology allows us to do more, which are not being captured within the reduction figure as they were not part of the baseline. Tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Programme which closed for applications in October 2012 is an example. 90% of the 6,400 applications were received online which represents a further increase from Tranche 2 of the Programme and another real step forward in reducing the time and cost farmers are asked to spend on paperwork. This time saving is outside the scope of the current Action Plan.

The Action Plan has played its part however as it has been focused, for instance, on helping to provide the legislative support for a province wide service to allow cattle births and deaths to be registered by telephone thereby ensuring that all registrations can be done without the need for the herd keeper to spend valuable time visiting a DARD office. Indeed the uptake of the online facility for registrations has risen from 27.8% in 2009 to 48.5% at the end of December 2012.

Water Bore Hole Scheme

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the progress made on the water bore hole scheme to assist people who still have no access to mains water supply.

(AQO 3201/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Borewells Scheme is one of a wide range of initiatives developed under the 'Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework'. Working in partnership with the Department of Regional Development, my officials developed a grant scheme which offers financial assistance towards the cost of installing a private borewell, and associated treatment, for isolated rural households. The scheme aims to help these households obtain a wholesome water supply where it is currently not available and where it is not technically or financially possible to access the public water mains.

A call for applications to the Scheme took place last June which, following assessment and site survey stages, has resulted in the issue of 35 Letters of Offer to applicants. Site works are currently either underway or planned for most of these projects, with successful drilling having been completed at 1 property to date, while the procurement process for drilling contractors is nearing completion for the remainder. All existing projects are currently on schedule to be completed by the 31 March 2013 deadline. A further 19 projects are ready to proceed from April and, following a review of the first years' activity, it's anticipated that the Scheme will open again for applications in early summer 2013.

Single Farm Payment

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is processing the current round of the Single Farm Payment applications.

(AQO 3202/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In November, I announced that 80% of Single Farm Payments would be paid in December. We exceeded this target and at 31 December, 82.8% of claims were paid. The vast majority of these were paid into farmers' bank accounts before Christmas.

At 21 January 2013, 88.4 % of Single Farm Payment claims have now been finalised. These figures include 749 inspection cases, which is over three times more than at this stage last year.

This leaves under 12% cases still to be paid. Of these about a quarter are inspection cases. The remaining 9% of cases cannot be paid immediately for various reasons. For example, we have duplicate field cases, cases where we do not have bank account details, or where probate has not been completed. There are also cases where farmers have claimed significantly more than the visible eligible area shown on the maps they received last Spring. These cases are being carefully checked before payment is made.

As I explained during the debate on the Single Farm Payment scheme last week, we are working to clear the remaining cases as quickly as possible and we expect that the majority of inspection cases will be finalised by the end of May. Again, this is earlier than last year.

While it is not in our interests to delay payment to farmers, we have to ensure that these are made in line with EU rules.

Farming Community: Financial Problems

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will introduce a hardship fund for members of the farming community who experience financial problems due to circumstances outside their control.

(AQO 3203/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of and fully sympathise with the very difficult situation our farmers find themselves in at this time due to circumstances outside their control, not least in the context of the bad weather.

Unfortunately there are currently no financial support measures available for farmers 'losses' or towards additional feeding costs due to the bad weather. Any potential for hardship funding is further severely constrained by business case requirements and compliance with restrictive EU State Aid Rules.

However, I have as you know been able to provide some support by deciding not to apply a further year of voluntary modulation for the 2013 Single farm Payment Year. This will make an additional €19m, (some £15m at current exchange rates), available to farmers in their 2013 payments.

My officials are also monitoring the situation and have, and will continue to provide practical advice and help to farmers. CAFRE has also run a number of very successful local workshops to assist farmers with winter feeding decisions. In addition my Department has commissioned research into additional measures farmers can take to mitigate risk associated with extreme weather events, and the findings of this research will be made available to the industry in due course.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures her Department is taking to support the agri food sector
(AQO 3204/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has a number of initiatives aimed at supporting farmers and the agri-food sector. Under the competitiveness strand of the Rural Development Programme, my Department has provided £45m funding for a number of schemes, including:-

- Farm Family Options, which includes both skills training and business mentoring;
- The Focus Farm Programme, which looks at sharing best practice, modern technology and innovative farm methods;
- Benchmarking, which is an important tool in monitoring input costs and livestock performance;
- The Supply Chain Development Programme, which supports farmers working together and with others to improve the rewards from their supply chain; and
- The Farm Modernisation Programme, which provides support for farms to modernise their holdings and improve production techniques.
- Processing and Marketing Grants scheme, which provides support towards capital investment projects to those involved or wishing to become involved in the processing of agri-food products.

I recently announced my decision not to apply a further year's voluntary modulation. This will have the effect of adding €19m to the total funding available for the 2013 single farm payment and I hope that this measure will contribute in some way to alleviating the financial pressures facing many farmers.

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

My Department is funding and delivering a Regional Food Programme which offers financial support to assist eligible groups in the local agri-food industry to develop and expand profitable and sustainable markets. The programme is designed to encourage co-operation across the industry to provide a united front to retailers and consumers.

My Department also administers the EU's Protected Food Name Scheme on behalf of applicants. This provides a system for the protection of food names on a geographical or traditional basis and can be used as a valuable promotional tool.

CAFRE supports the agri-food sector by providing technical support and advice through the campus at Loughry and Greenmount. Whilst the Agri Food and Biosciences institute (AFBI) support the sector through its research programme.

As well as the short-term issues currently facing the sector, the Agri-Food Strategy Board is developing an export led strategic action plan which will look at prospects for the entire agri-food industry and how we can support its success in the medium to long term. I expect the Agri-Food strategy board to publish its final report in the coming months.

My Department will continue to offer support and assistance where it can to the challenges facing the sector both in the short and longer-term.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Common Agricultural Policy reform negotiations aimed at maximising the outcome for local farmers. **(AQO 3205/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Negotiations on CAP reform post 2013 have made only limited progress to date. This is due to the desire to secure an agreement on the EU Budget negotiations for the period 2014-2020 prior to making decisions on CAP and difficulty reaching a compromise on the issues of greening and moving towards flat rate payments. The positions of key players in the budget negotiations started off quite far apart and reaching agreement will not be easy. However I expect there will be a significant push to reach agreement on the budget over the next two months.

I remain steadfast in my view that there should be no further cuts to the CAP budget beyond what the EU Commission have proposed which is a freeze in nominal terms. It is likely that the overall EU budget will be cut but I want to see the CAP budget protected as much as possible.

Discussion on the detail of the proposals for CAP reform is continuing also. I am working hard to influence these discussions and achieve a good deal for our farmers and rural communities. I was pleased that our local MEPs put forward my Department's suggested amendments to the CAP reform proposals for consideration and I look forward to seeing which amendments gain the support of the EU Parliament in the next few weeks. The Irish Presidency has now begun and although the task is considerable, they are optimistic that they can make progress.

I am continuously pushing my priority issues in respect of moving to a flat rate and greening. As well as having met the Commission on a number of occasions, I have been engaging directly with Defra Ministers and my Devolved Administration colleagues, as well as with Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the south. And, of course, I will continue to have regular discussions on CAP reform with our local MEPs. My officials are working with their Defra and Devolved Administration counterparts in contributing to the Brussels working groups and they keep in regular contact with officials in Dublin. For my part, I am acutely aware that we are reaching a critical stage in the negotiations and achieving a good outcome is a top priority for me.

Circuses: Wild Animals

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the recent high profile court case in England, whether she has any plans to review her decision not to ban the use of wild animals in circuses. **(AQO 3206/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: I want to make it clear to the Member that I have not yet developed a position on the matter of a ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in the north of Ireland and I have not made any decision regarding a ban on their use.

It is important to note that there are no circuses based in the north of Ireland. There are a number of circuses registered in the south of Ireland, some of which regularly travel here. My Department has an agreed protocol with counterparts in the south of Ireland which provides for an inspection of animals from these registered circuses before they move back to the south of Ireland. We have no evidence to suggest that the welfare of these animals is compromised.

I have no plans to introduce a ban in the immediate future. My immediate priority regarding animal welfare is the roll out of subordinate legislation under the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, including the regulation of dogs in breeding establishments which will come before Members next month and the development of regulations regarding the welfare of animals in petshops, animal boarding establishments and riding establishments. I also intend to bring forward legislation to regulate the welfare of livestock at markets here.

The recent case in England of Anne the Elephant involved acts of deliberate mistreatment which is totally unacceptable, as is causing, or allowing, the suffering of any animal. However, the Radford report published by the Circus Working Group in England in 2007 concluded that there is little evidence to demonstrate that the welfare of animals kept in travelling circuses is any better or worse than that of animals kept in other captive environments. Anne the Elephant suffered because of deliberate mistreatment by her owners, not because of the conditions in which she was kept.

I can advise the Member that I have been approached by Defra Ministerial colleagues who are proposing to introduce a Bill banning the use of wild animals in circuses in England. It is important to realise that this Bill is being brought forward on ethical rather than welfare grounds. This is because the available scientific evidence does not support the view that the welfare of wild animals in circuses is compromised. The tragic case of Anne the elephant does not change this.

Before making any decision regarding the matter of a ban on using wild animals in travelling circuses here, I would want to take the time to assess the available evidence and give the issue detailed consideration. I met with representatives from Animal Defenders International and the Born Free Foundation yesterday to discuss these issues. Our meeting was frank and constructive.. The organisations have undertaken to provide me with evidence which I agreed to examine.

In considering the matter, I would also want to examine developments in the south of Ireland and engage with my Ministerial counterpart there. In addition, I would monitor developments in England, Scotland and Wales and engage with stakeholders, including circus operators and their representatives, to ensure that their views are properly considered. I would wish to take into account developments in Europe. I would also take advice on the legal implications and on the proportionality of the options open to me so that the welfare of animals in circuses is fully protected. I would intend to engage fully with the Departmental Solicitors Office, the Executive and the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to assist the expansion of the agri food sector through Loughry College.

(AQO 3207/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The agri-food industry is one of the more resilient sectors of our local economy, recording growth at a time when many other sectors are experiencing difficulties. Innovation is a key driver for the growth of any sector and within agri-food there has been an increased emphasis on product and process development. It is vitally important that we maximise the support available to meet the current economic challenge and I was delighted to announce recently proposals for a new Food Innovation Centre at Loughry. We aim to deliver this new development by 2015 at an estimated cost of £1.8 million funded from the 'Jobs in the Economy' budget. The Food Innovation Centre will include a product development area and sensory assessment, packaging design and quality control laboratories. This new facility will be a major addition to Loughry's food education, training and industry development programmes and will stimulate innovation and introduce new technologies to the industry. It will help meet the employment demands of the agri-food sector by providing established and start-up companies with the technical staff needed to grow their businesses. It will also provide much needed jobs in its construction phase. The new Food Innovation Centre will act as a hub for innovation and will encourage the adoption of new technologies and the exploitation of market opportunities to increase industry competitiveness.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Sport Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much additional money has been allocated following the recent announcement of further funding for football, rugby and gaelic sports; and how will this money be allocated and spent.

(AQW 17447/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): Additional funding of £4.5m over a three year period has been provided, £1.5m to each of the three sports.

Each of the governing bodies will receive £0.5m in each of the financial years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 with the funding split between capital and revenue spend.

My bid to the Executive for this funding was predicated around promoting equality and participation, targeting poverty and social exclusion. Consequently each of the governing bodies has been asked to bring forward projects and programmes that include the following objectives:

- Tackle poverty
- Promote social inclusion
- Provide opportunities to realise socio-economic returns and community benefits;
- Provide opportunities to train and employ the long-term unemployed as coaches and administrators; and
- Provide suicide prevention initiatives.

The Department is currently working with the three governing bodies to help them develop their proposals in line with these priorities.

As the projects and programmes are agreed the governing bodies will be tasked with taking them forward subject to normal budgetary and due diligence processes.

World Police and Fire Games

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline (i) how her Department will be promoting the World Police and Fire Games in South Down; and (ii) how many people are expected to travel to South Down for the games.

(AQW 17528/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: 2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited (WPFGLtd) has a Communication Strategy in place to ensure that the 2013 Games and the tourism offer of the north of Ireland are promoted locally, nationally and internationally. WPFGLtd has an on-going PR strategy which means that the media in South Down are being targeted on a regular basis in order to get WPFGLtd stories covered in the local media. WPFGLtd are also working closely with the Tourist Board to engage with local councils and further PR opportunities for South Down will arise from this work.

There are ten WPFGLtd events taking place within the South Down/Mournes area; in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor, Donard Park, Newcastle, Castlewellan Forest Park and Ballykinler. It is too early in the registration process to provide confirmed athlete numbers for these sports but it is estimated that together these events could attract up to 2,232 competitors and an associated 700 spectators to the area.

World Police and Fire Games

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline (i) the potential benefit the upcoming World Police and Fire Games can have for the rural community in South Down; and (ii) how Forest Service in South Down is preparing for such events.

(AQW 17532/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are ten WPFG events taking place within the South Down/Mournes area; in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor, Donard Park, Newcastle, Castlewellan Forest Park and Ballykinler. It is too early in the registration process to provide confirmed athlete numbers for these sports but it is estimated that together these events could attract up to 2,232 competitors and an associated 700 spectators to the area.

Local hoteliers and accommodation providers in the area will benefit from the influx of athletes and visitors associated with the Games. This will also mean increased business for local cafes and restaurants.

WPFG are in contact with Newry and Mourne District Council discussing how the Games can be promoted in the area and how those visiting the Games can be encouraged to visit south Down as part of their visit. The Tourist Board is also producing promotional material which will market the regions of the north of Ireland to those coming to the Games including the Mournes.

Forest Service has been engaging with the Games organisers 2013 WPFG Limited, since August 2011, on possible venues within the forest estate, to facilitate a number of events. As a result of this four forest locations have been selected by the organisers, including three in the South Down area. Organisers and Forest Service are currently progressing the operational and licensing arrangements within which the events will be hosted.

400th Anniversary of the Granting of Borough Charters

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if any money has been allocated by her Department to assist in the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the granting of Borough Charters, in 2013.

(AQW 17714/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Budget allocations to Borough Charter projects are subject to business case approval. Currently my Department, through the Ministerial Advisory Group - Ulster Scots Academy (MAGUS), has allocated £42,500 to a Charter project by Coleraine Borough Council. The project will provide a legacy for Coleraine town centre to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the town's charter.

Any further budget allocations to Borough Charter projects will again be subject to business case approval.

Libraries NI and PRONI are organising and contributing to a number of events relating to the 1613 Borough Charters next year. This activity will be funded from existing budget allocations.

CoderDojo Funding

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline how the £50,000 funding for Coderdojo will be accessed and used.

(AQW 17732/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is providing support to Momentum, the trade association representing the IT and digital sectors in the north of Ireland, to plan and lead a collaborative approach extending the CoderDojo initiative to all 6 regional FE colleges by March 2013.

This pilot will promote wider access to CoderDojo and include the development of learning resources, which can also be used by other educational and community/voluntary organisations across the north, to nurture an interest in programming and software development.

Connecting a diverse range of organisations will provide a joined up approach to maximise the impact and reach of the initiative. This will include linkages to further resources within the libraries network (such as books on programming and technology etc) and the STEM programmes delivered by other organisations.

Ulster Scots Agency

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been allocated by the Ulster Scots Agency in the North Down constituency, in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 17834/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below shows the amount of funding allocated by the Ulster-Scots Agency in the North Down constituency over the last five years.

2008	£ 32,460.00
2009	£ 54,026.80
2010	£ 49,464.00
2011	£ 29,116.30
2012	£ 28,820.30

Ministerial Private Office: Running Costs

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the cost of running her Ministerial Private Office in the last financial year.

(AQW 17865/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The cost of running the Ministerial Private Office in the last financial year (2011-12) was £216,363.

Salmon Levels

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department estimates salmon levels when most rivers are devoid of fish counters.

(AQW 17874/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL estimates salmon stocks using a number of methods. Stock levels are calculated on 6 index salmon rivers in the DCAL area which are representative of other rivers in the different geographical areas.

Conservation Limits have been calculated for a number of rivers in the DCAL area, but not for all rivers. DCAL has planned to determine Conservation Limits for all major salmon rivers in the DCAL area over the next 3 years.

Where fish counters are not present, angling salmon catch returns are used, and more recently DCAL has used tagging studies to determine adult abundance in salmon rivers.

DCAL has also been actively developing a stock assessment tool based on juvenile electric fishing data; this 'recruitment index' describes the level of young salmon in a river and is a useful management metric/measure.

Salmon Levels

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) her Department's current estimate of salmon levels, both for wild salmon and hatchery salmon; and (ii) how this equates with reports of a heavy run of salmon in 2012.

(AQW 17875/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department monitors wild salmon and hatchery salmon returning to the River Bush through work at the Department's River Bush Salmon Station. The Department has not collected and analysed all of the data as yet in order to give a definitive assessment of the 2012 salmon run.

The higher than normal levels of rainfall in the late summer resulted in high water levels which have allowed increased numbers of salmon to access the upper reaches of the rivers earlier in the season. This may lead to the reports by anglers' of "heavy runs" of salmon.

Salmon Catch and Return Policy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the casualty rate resulting from the salmon catch and return policy.

(AQW 17876/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The mortality rate for salmon caught and released by anglers depends on a number of factors such as the type of angling equipment used, for example barbed or barbless hooks, and the procedures used by each individual angler to land, handle and release the fish.

Survival rates of salmon caught and released can be over 90% with use of the appropriate equipment and the correct procedures are followed by anglers.

DCAL has prepared guidelines on best practice for catch and release which will be disseminated widely.

Libraries

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what consideration she has given to extending the opening hours of libraries and providing training for librarians to enable them to assist people in making online claims for benefits.

(AQW 17877/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The opening hours of individual libraries and the training provided to libraries staff is an operational matter for the Board of Libraries NI and its Senior Management Team.

Libraries NI has informed me that it is working in partnership with other agencies to consider how it can assist people who do not have access to computers at home or elsewhere. This would allow them to make use of the public access computers in libraries to undertake a range of online transactions, including benefit claims.

The role of libraries in this context is to provide the physical infrastructure, including library space and computers, and to assist people to gain the necessary skills to use computers effectively.

However due to financial constraints there is no scope within its budget to extend library opening hours to facilitate this particular suggestion.

Public Angling Estate

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department will continue, in the 2013 fishing season, the mandatory catch and release of salmon in the Public Angling Estate along with issuing blue tags for the retention of injured or damaged fish.

(AQW 17901/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department will continue the catch and release only policy for salmon on all Public Angling Estate waters for the 2013 fishing season. This is a condition of sale of a DCAL permit.

Only one salmon carcass tag will be issued at a time to game anglers during the 2013 angling season.

Salmon: Catching and Retention

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she proposes to introduce any statutory controls over the catching and retention of salmon by rod and line anglers and commercial nets-men in 2013.

(AQW 17903/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A statutory ban on the sale of rod caught salmon in the DCAL jurisdiction will be introduced in 2013.

Legislation on statutory controls on the catching and retention of salmon by both rod and line anglers and commercial nets-men will be brought forward in 2013 to be in place for the 2014 fishing season.

Cycling Financial Support

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the financial support given to cycling in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 17986/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the last 5 financial years, up to 31 March 2012, Sport NI has provided both exchequer and lottery funding to cycling, totalling £1,119,797. The amount of funding provided each year is detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	Exchequer Funding	Lottery Funding	Total
2007/08	£71,261	£43,922	£115,183
2008/09	£77,096	£80,563	£157,659
2009/10	£142,766	£70,505	£213,271
2010/11	£331,170	-	£331,170
2011/12	£302,514	-	£302,514

Brandywell Sports Stadium

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why AQW 16217/11-15 remains unanswered.

(AQW 18047/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The response to AQW 16217/11-15 issued on the 27th December 2012.

Lurgan Park Lake

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the stock that her Department has provided for Lurgan Park Lake in each of the last 5 years, broken down by species.

(AQW 18070/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department has not stocked Lurgan Park Lake with any fish in the last five years as it is not part of the Department's Public Angling Estate.

Wild Salmon Stocks

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, whether her Department will investigate the current and long-term effect on wild salmon stocks in rivers as a result of increasing numbers of sea-farmed salmon.

(AQW 18403/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DARD is responsible for the licensing and management of commercial fish farms while DCAL is responsible for the protection of wild salmon.

DARD has commissioned the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to investigate the genetic intraggression of farmed genes into wild fish. This work has a further year to run before results will be known. DCAL will consider the findings of this work and the effect on wild salmon stocks.

Salmon Fishing

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department is responsible for regulating salmon farmed in the sea.

(AQW 18442/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DARD is responsible for the licensing and management of commercial fish farms which includes salmon farmed in the sea.

Salmon Catch and Release Restrictions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the salmon catch and release restrictions will apply equally to (i) the special stretches on the River Bush; and (ii) the rest of the river.

(AQW 18535/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Anglers catching salmon in (i) the special stretches of the River Bush will be subject to catch and release which is the Departments policy on all Public Angling Estate waters. (ii) The rest of the river, outside the Public Angling Estate, will be subject to the conditions imposed by the fishery owner, many of whom have followed the Department's lead and implemented a catch and release policy.

A daily bag limit of two salmon applies to all rivers in the Department's jurisdiction where the fishery owner has not implemented a catch and release policy.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQO 3210/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There has been significant progress in the preparation for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games. More than 1,900 athletes from over 40 different countries have signed up for the Games and over 6,400 people have applied to volunteer during the Games, exceeding the target of 4,500 applications. There are already 6,059 bed spaces booked through the Belfast Visitor Convention Bureau, representing a value of over £2 million to the local economy. Furthermore, a number of flagship sponsors have been secured to support the Games and contract details are currently being agreed.

The venues for the 57 sports across the North have been announced and agreements have been reached with the various sports governing bodies who will manage the individual sporting events at the venues.

The Company has and will continue to work with local councils to identify opportunities for them to organise or host events related to the Games.

The Company's website provides details on other events taking place during the Games as well as information on local visitor attractions and places of interest, all aimed at showcasing what we have to offer in the north.

In my discussions with the Company I have highlighted the importance of ensuring the social inclusivity of the Games. As part of this, three charity partners have been appointed: The Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children, the SOS Bus and the Special Educational Needs Advisory Service will all benefit from an increased profile and fundraising opportunities during the Games.

The Company has undertaken a significant amount of work to date and there is still much to do over the coming months to ensure that Belfast delivers the friendliest Games ever. I will be maintaining close contact with the Company as we move towards the Games in August.

World War I Centenary: Battlefield Visits

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans are being put in place to support young people visiting World War One Battlefields in 2014 as part of the Centenary Remembrance plans.

(AQO 3215/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The First World War is one of several major events and significant anniversaries from the 1912 - 1922 period. The Executive is committed to an inclusive approach helping people to explore different interpretations and the lasting political, social and cultural impact of this decade. This approach is being finalised.

There are no plans at present to provide financial assistance for visits to locations relevant to the 'Decade of Centenaries' such as World War One battlefields or, for example, important sites in Ireland linked to the Easter Rising.

The creative and cultural infrastructure and programmes already funded and supported by my Department will play a key role in telling the stories and different interpretations of the First World War and other important events from this important decade in our history

Motorbike Racing

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding has been allocated for Motorbike racing in 2013.

(AQO 3216/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for supporting motorcycle racing in the north of Ireland rests, in the first instance, with the governing bodies of the sport as represented by the 2&4 Wheel Motorsport Steering Group Limited (2&4 Wheel MSG). Sport NI has recently considered an application from 2&4 Wheel MSG under its PerformanceFocus programme. As a result, Sport NI has agreed funding of £338,000 over the period 2013-2017 to assist the development of motorsport across the north, including motorcycle racing. In addition to this, in the financial year to 31 March 2013, Sport NI allocated £57,491 to individual motorcycle racers under its Athlete Investment Programme. Furthermore, in 2009 DCAL, through Sport NI, provided £2m to motorsport to help bring about health and safety improvements at a number of venues across the north. This included improvement works at motorcycle racing venues such as, Nutts Corner, Kirkistown, Bishops court, the North West 200 and Dundrod.

DCAL: Reserved Matters

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the level of engagement she has with her counterparts at Westminster on public services, such as broadcasting, which remain reserved matters.

(AQO 3217/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have had no specific discussions with Ministers in Westminster about broadcasting, but I wrote to Ed Vaizey Broadcasting Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries in May 2012 and reiterated that I believe that culture has a significant role to play in helping communities in the North to understand each other and to understand how we move forward as a more cohesive and integrated society. Furthermore, I have also requested a meeting with Ed Vaizey to discuss broadcasting and I await to hear from him in due course.

I am also currently in the process of holding meetings with local stakeholders and I expect that these will be concluded in the coming weeks.

I expect to be in contact with Westminster in relation to the outcomes of two strategy consultations for indigenous languages which closed on 27th November 2012. Broadcasting will be one of the elements being taken forward. My officials are currently considering responses to the consultations.

World Police and Fire Games

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she is working with Executive colleagues to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for visitors and competitors during the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQO 3218/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Accommodation has, and remains a key area of work for 2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited and in recognition of this the Company has developed an accommodation strategy which is based on an analysis of the accommodation required for athletes and visitors during the Games. The strategy indicates that there will be sufficient accommodation for all athletes and visitors.

The Company is working with the full support of the Tourist Board, Hotel Federation and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau in order to achieve the accommodation targets for the Games and to ensure that all accommodation offered to visitors is of a suitable standard.

In a further effort to maximise the accommodation provision for the Games, the DETI Minister and I attended an Accommodation Breakfast meeting on 20th January which was set up to highlight to Hotels and other accommodation providers the opportunities which the Games present.

There are currently 2,560 rooms booked through BVCB representing a value of over £2 million. The Company will continue to focus on this as a priority and a system is in place to ensure that weekly levels of accommodation uptake can be monitored.

Salmon Conservation

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department is alleviating the detrimental effect of salmon escaping from farms on the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon.

(AQO 3219/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DARD is responsible for the licensing and management of commercial fish farms while DCAL is responsible for the protection of wild salmon.

Bio-security is a priority and DARD's policy is to reduce opportunity for an escape by ensuring good bio-security is in place. Bio-security and other conditions of both the Aquatic Animal Health Authorisation and Fish Culture Licence are checked by DARD, at a minimum, as part of an established annual inspection programme.

DARD has commissioned the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to undertake research on the possible genetic impact, if any, of aquaculture strains on wild fish and to assess the numbers of sea lice on wild fish. DCAL part funds this research which aims to contribute to determining the genetics of wild salmon populations. This will provide a baseline against which the presence of any non native genetic material of aquaculture strain origin can be detected.

There is not, at present, any evidence of detrimental genetic effects of farm strains requiring alleviation in wild salmon stocks in the DCAL jurisdiction.

Cultural Recognition

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she intends to address the perceived lack of recognition of Protestant Unionist Loyalist Culture.

(AQO 3220/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department and its Arms Length Bodies and Agencies deliver a range of programmes and initiatives that support all cultures, including Protestant Unionist Loyalist culture.

My Department in line with the Executive's programme for government 2011-15 Priority 4 'Building a Strong and Shared Community', will continue to support programmes and initiatives to unlock the potential of culture, arts and leisure.

The Executive is firmly committed to the use of public money for maximum improvements to the lives of those areas and communities suffering greatest socio-economic inequalities. My Department continues to meet its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

In this decade of centenaries the Executive is committed to developing an approach and resources to set an inclusive tone and help all sections of our community to learn about the stories, connections and different interpretations behind these events.

DCAL Projects: Mid Ulster

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the plans and projects her Department has delivered for the Mid Ulster constituency in the past five years.

(AQO 3221/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Preliminary work has identified several hundred projects that meet the criteria in your question. While I intend to provide the member with a detailed answer as soon as possible, given the quantity of information involved, I do not anticipate being able to do so until the end of January.

Boxing: Funding

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what expressions of interest have been received for funding boxing clubs.

(AQO 3222/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, which has responsibility for the management and administration of the Boxing Investment Programme, has received expressions of interest from 100 boxing clubs for funding from across the north of Ireland. All 100 clubs identified a need for equipment, based on a closed list of boxing equipment provided by the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA). Of these, 61 also identified a need for capital works (either repairs or major capital improvements).

All expressions of interest are currently being assessed by Sport NI and the IABA before final funding decisions are taken. However, it is anticipated that clubs will begin to receive allocated equipment from late February through to the end of March 2013.

Following a detailed assessment of the capital needs of clubs, it is anticipated that letters of offer will issue in late 2013/early 2014.

Department of Education

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether his Department has acquired the services of consultants in relation to the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; and to outline the individual circumstances and costs.

(AQW 13925/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The engagement of external consultants on the creation of the Education and Skills Authority began in the financial year 2006/7. Examination of DE records since this point, and up to the present day, indicates that the Department of Education has acquired the services of external consultants to assist in the establishment of the Education Skills Authority as per the details set out in the tables below.

2006/7

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
1.	Programme Management Support	PA Consulting	235, 610
2.	RPA Newsletter Design	Lesley Stannage Design	910

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
3.	Preparing RPA Workshop materials	Mentoring Connection	2, 674
4.	Recruitment of ESA CE Designate	Capita Resourcing	24, 385
5.	RPA Element of a larger commissions iro DE Communications Audit	Weber Shandwick	2, 000
6.	EQIA Training	Key Consulting	711
7.	Printing RPA Newsletter	Commercial Graphics	746
8.	Review of Research, Monitoring and Advice	PA Consulting	59, 950
	Total		326, 986

2007/8

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
9.	ICT Audit	PWC	32, 250
10.	Communications Support	PA Consulting	9, 350
11.	Outline Business Case	Deloitte	39, 761
12.	HR Support	Deloitte	26, 000
13.	Joint consultancy with NILA – Finance Systems Development Work	PWC	5,500
14.	Programme Management Support (continuation of Item 1)	PA Consulting	10, 090
15.	ESA 2nd Tier Structure & Location Strategy	Deloitte	20, 000
	Total		142, 951

2008/9

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
16.	HR Support (continuation of Item 12)	Deloitte	14, 000
17.	Change Management	Parity Solutions	70, 000
18.	ESA Management Systems	Vivienne Walker	11, 496
19.	Change Management & Organisational Design	PA Consulting	60, 698

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
20.	ESA 2nd Tier Structure & Location Strategy (continuation of Item 15)	Deloitte	£3, 618
21.	Developing policy codes for use by the proposed ESA	Jackie Simpson	1, 969
22.	Joint consultancy with NILA – Finance Systems Development Work (continuation of Item 13.)	PWC	200
Total			161, 981

2009/10

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
23.	Evaluation of ESA Directors Remuneration	Hay Group	12, 315
24.	Implementation of RPA Programme	QBM	7, 400
25.	Change Management	Parity Solutions	65, 745
26.	ESA Management Systems (continuation of Item 18.)	Vivienne Walker	10, 113.
27.	HR Support	PWC	60, 855
28.	Workforce Database & Organisational Development	Deloitte	44, 926
29.	Design and Branding Concepts for ESA	Hamill Bosket	2, 750
30.	Design and Artwork for ESA	Tandem Design	3, 755
31.	Design Development for ESA	Frank Designs and Communications Ltd	3, 750
32.	Creating ESA Corporate Brand	McCadden Design	3, 960
33.	Workshop	Parenting Forum	1, 250
34.	Telephone Interviews	Millward Brown Ulster	2, 015
Total			218, 834

2010/11

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
35.	Training seminars	Brian Walley	11, 742

Item	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
36.	Working group on Controlled body Sectoral group	Chambre of Public Affairs	2, 807
37.	Change Management (continuation of Item 25)	Parity Solutions	275
Total			14, 824

2011/12

No ESA-related external consultancy

2012/13

	Purpose	Deliverer	Cost incurred in or accrued to the year (£)
38.	Re-evaluation of ESA Directors Remuneration	Hay	5,270
39.	Full Business Case for ESA	Deloitte	To be Confirmed
Total			To Be Confirmed

Education and Library Board: Funding

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 17192/11-15, whether all Irish medium schools or youth groups in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area were made aware of this funding; and when each school or youth group was made aware.

(AQW 18147/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 1) All the Irish medium funding, detailed in AQW 17192/11-15, which was used by the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) was allocated to the youth service. This funding was made available as a result of the Review of Irish Medium Education, which recommended that the Department should "encourage and support informal opportunities for learning through the medium of Irish in the youth sector." The NEELB did not allocate any funding to schools.

The NEELB has advised that his Board drew up a grant scheme and worked in partnership with Foras Na Gaeilge when this youth funding was first established in September 2009 to ensure that all relevant youth groups were made aware of its availability. This included Foras Na Gaeilge arranging an initial information event in January 2010 to inform youth groups about the availability of project funding and to provide information on the registration process. The NEELB Youth Service has contacted registered groups each year to inform them of the Irish medium funding available.

2) The five Education and Library Boards have advised that the Inter Board Youth Panel, in consultation with Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and Foram na nÓg, developed a consistent approach to allocating the Irish medium youth funding. An application process was developed for the registration of constituted youth groups who meet the required criteria and this facility is available to locally based Irish Medium youth groups.

While each Board has used different methods for publicising the Irish medium fund to youth groups, they have all ensured that all Irish medium youth groups have been made aware of the availability of this funding and this is an ongoing process.

Education and Library Board: Funding

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 17192/11-15, whether each Education and Library Board followed similar protocols in making schools or youth groups aware of this funding. **(AQW 18148/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: 1) All the Irish medium funding, detailed in AQW 17192/11-15, which was used by the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) was allocated to the youth service. This funding was made available as a result of the Review of Irish Medium Education, which recommended that the Department should "encourage and support informal opportunities for learning through the medium of Irish in the youth sector." The NEELB did not allocate any funding to schools.

The NEELB has advised that his Board drew up a grant scheme and worked in partnership with Foras Na Gaeilge when this youth funding was first established in September 2009 to ensure that all relevant youth groups were made aware of its availability. This included Foras Na Gaeilge arranging an initial information event in January 2010 to inform youth groups about the availability of project funding and to provide information on the registration process. The NEELB Youth Service has contacted registered groups each year to inform them of the Irish medium funding available.

2) The five Education and Library Boards have advised that the Inter Board Youth Panel, in consultation with Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and Foram na nÓg, developed a consistent approach to allocating the Irish medium youth funding. An application process was developed for the registration of constituted youth groups who meet the required criteria and this facility is available to locally based Irish Medium youth groups.

While each Board has used different methods for publicising the Irish medium fund to youth groups, they have all ensured that all Irish medium youth groups have been made aware of the availability of this funding and this is an ongoing process.

School in Magheralin

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education (i) how many children travel from Moira or Kilwarlin to school in Magheralin; (ii) how many are in receipt of travelling expenses; and (iii) what was the cost in each of the last two years. **(AQW 18345/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board informs me that: (i) 28 pupils, who are eligible for assistance with transport, travel from Moira or Kilwarlin to school in Magheralin; (ii) the parents of all 28 pupils are in receipt of travelling expenses; and (iii) the cost in each of the last two years for which data is available was £4,752.15 (2010/11) and £4,958.17 (2011/12).

Suicide Prevention

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education how much money his Department has invested in preventing suicides in each of the past three years. **(AQW 18347/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education is committed to contributing fully to the suicide prevention strategy through a focus on promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing across the school community. While there is no specific allocation for suicide prevention there are a number of initiatives which contribute to this aim.

The Pupils' Emotional Health and Wellbeing Programme – i-Matter, aims to support schools to promote resilient emotional health and to cope in the event of a crisis. Diary inserts on a range of topics, outlining useful information and sources of help, are produced annually for pupils'. Guidance documents on dealing with "Managing Critical Incidents in Schools" and "Protecting Life in Schools" have also been developed and will be issued to schools this year.

The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) is an independent school based professional counselling service which is accessible to young people of post primary age during difficult and vulnerable periods in their lives.

Expenditure on these initiatives over the past three years is as follows

	09/10	10/11	11/12
i-Matter Programme	2801	25,997	1,360
I.C.S.S.	1,800,000	1,882,000	2,200,000

It is not possible to put a money figure on the delivery of the Personal Development and Learning for Life and Work strands of the Revised Curriculum which also aim to develop the young person as an individual to enhance their awareness of the stressors in their lives and enhance their capacity to deal with them.

Employment of Teachers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have been employed in a shared capacity by two or more schools, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18460/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Academic Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No of Teachers	45	38	28	32	28

Sure Start Developmental Programme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how much of the £23.4 million allocated to the Sure Start Developmental Programme will be directed towards children in North Antrim.

(AQW 18482/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Sure Start services are currently provided to families with children aged under 4 in at least the top 20% most disadvantaged areas, at ward level. Within North Antrim, 17 wards are currently in receipt of Sure Start services. Ballymena Sure Start project serves 8 wards, of which the wards of Ballee, Moat, Harryville, Dunclug, Fairgreen, Castle Demesne and Summerfield are within North Antrim. The 2012/13 budget allocation for Ballymena Sure Start project is £820,506 to serve their whole catchment area. Spend is not identifiable per ward.

Dalriada Sure Start serves the wards of Armoy, Bushmills, Ballylough, Mosside, Dalriada, Kinbane, Glentaise, Dunserrivick, Knocklayd and Bonamargy and Rathlin. The 2012/13 budget allocation for Dalriada Sure Start is £562,063.

There are plans for Dalriada Sure Start to provide services to the Newhill ward, Ballymoney, as part of the planned expansion of Sure Start services to the top 25% most disadvantaged wards. Additional funding will be made available for this.

Irish Language Posters

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail the advertising, promotional or information posters that his Department has produced which are printed in the Irish language only.

(AQW 18500/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department makes use of promotional materials, including posters, in both English and Irish. Any material produced in Irish is also produced in English; therefore there are no instances of posters being printed in Irish alone.

Amalgamation of Blythefield, Fane Street and Donegall Road Primary Schools

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 14916/11-15, for an update on the amalgamation of Blythefield, Fane Street and Donegall Road Primary Schools, given that the Belfast Education and Library Board was due to publish and consult on the area plans for primary schools in Autumn 2012.

(AQW 18511/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Publication of area plans for the primary phase has been delayed in order to factor in the views and lessons learned from the extensive response to the consultation on the draft post-primary plans which will inform the development of an appropriate approach for the consultation on the draft primary area plans.

I have said that area planning should not prohibit the relevant school managing authorities taking necessary action to protect the interests of pupils. Any significant change to a school, such as amalgamation, requires an approved statutory development proposal. To date, however, the Belfast Board has not brought forward such a proposal to amalgamate Blythefield, Fane Street and Donegall Road primary schools.

Special Educational Needs Teachers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what consideration his Department has given to providing Conductive Education training for Special Educational Needs teachers.

(AQW 18515/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: School principals are responsible for determining the training needs of their teachers and they can avail of the wide range of courses on all aspects of special educational needs offered by Education and Library Boards (ELBs). ELBs undertake, on an annual basis, a needs analysis of the training required by schools in the forthcoming academic year.

The Chief Executives of the ELBs have advised that boards do not presently provide conductive education training; until an appropriate level of demand is identified there are no plans to provide it in the near future.

Split-Site Funding for Schools

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18375/11-15, to detail the level of additional funding provided to each dual site school, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18519/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Please see the table attached which details the level of additional funding provided to each dual site school, in each of the last five years.

School	2007-2008 £	2008-2009 £	2009-2010 £	2010-2011 £	2011-2012 £
BELB					
St Brides PS	16,636	17,135	17,665	18,000	18,360
Corpus Christi	50,544	52,060	53,665	55,000	56,100
La Salle College	166,399	171,391	73,613	-	-
NEELB					
St Patricks and St Brigid's PS	-	15,114	15,295	15,266	-

School	2007-2008 £	2008-2009 £	2009-2010 £	2010-2011 £	2011-2012 £
St Patricks & St Joseph's Federated	-	15,733	16,136	16,237	16,053
Parkhall Integrated (inc arrears)	-	149,120	150,188	149,763	150,379
St Patrick's Maghera	-	60,423	61,687	61,772	61,630
St Killian's College	-	-	-	64,257	33,516
SEELB					
St Mary's PS	12,950	14,138	15,836	15,213	14,447
Bangor Academy & 6th Form College	53,716	4,816	-	-	-
SELB					
Craigavon HS	-	57,000	59,000	60,403	62,000
St Patricks College	21,667	-	-	-	-
WELB					
Holy Trinity PS	-	16,700	17,132	17,021	17,246
Holy Cross College	-	61,947	-	-	-

School	2007-2008 £	2008-2009 £	2009-2010 £	2010-2011 £	2011-2012 £
VGS					
Foyle College	46,865	46,998	46,590	47,055	47,165
Victoria College	49,773	49,805	47,872	49,551	49,705

*All figures have been supplied by the relevant funding authority.

Children with Disabilities

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education whether there is a need for a universal policy to state the rights of children with disabilities to access learning opportunities on an equal basis with other children.

(AQW 18524/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides a recognised international human rights standard for people with disabilities. This builds upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which recognises and aims to protect the human rights of all children.

In addition, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005 (SENDO) makes it unlawful for schools to discriminate against a child on grounds of a disability and requires them to make reasonable adjustments. Every aspect of school life is covered by this including after schools clubs and activities provided by schools to their own pupils.

Therefore, there is no need for a further universal policy, as safeguards already exist so that children with disabilities can access learning opportunities on an equal basis with other children.

Primary School Class Size

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education to list the primary schools which have classes of 35 or more children, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 18526/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Reflecting the research that points to the quality of teaching and learning being a much more important influencer of outcomes than class size, the Department does not set restrictions on class sizes at Key Stage 2 and delegates such decisions to schools which are best placed to identify the most effective structures for teaching and learning to meet their own needs.

While most classes at Key Stage 2 will be at or below 30, there are some primary schools recorded with classes of more than 35, including composite classes. These are listed in the table below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH CLASSES OF 35 OR MORE CHILDREN BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA 2012/13

School	Education and Library board
St Mary's Primary School, Divis Street	Belfast
St Mary's Primary School (Glenview)	North Eastern
Meadow Bridge Primary School, Hillsborough	South Eastern
Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School, Dunmurry	South Eastern
Ballyholland Primary School	Southern
Hardy Memorial Primary School	Southern
St Mary's Primary School, Rathfriland	Southern
St Patrick's Primary School, Killyman Rd., Dungannon	Southern
St Peter's Primary School, Bessbrook	Southern
Ebrington Controlled Primary School	Western
Holy Child Primary School, Creggan	Western
Jones Memorial Primary School, Mullylogan	Western
Nazareth House Primary School, Derry	Western
St Mary's Primary School, Killesher	Western
Strabane Controlled Primary School	Western

Source: School census.

Note:

- 1 Figures are provisional. Finalised data for 2012/13 will be published in February 2013.
- 2 Figures include composite and non-composite classes. They include children in Years 5 – 7.

Staff Employed in Procurement

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many staff are employed in procurement in each of his Department's arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 18550/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

	Staff employed in procurement*
BELB	13
WELB	10
NEELB	11
SEELB	17
SELB	17
SCELB	0
CCMS	2
CCEA	3
CnaG	1
NICIE	2
GTCNI	1
YCNI	2
Middletown Centre	3

* includes staff in procurement posts and staff who have procurement duties as an element of their work

Staff Employed in Procurement

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many staff are employed in procurement in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 18551/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

	Staff employed in procurement*
BELB	13
WELB	10
NEELB	11
SEELB	17
SELB	17

* includes staff in procurement posts and staff who have procurement duties as an element of their work

School Pupils in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education (i) how many; and (ii) what percentage of (a) primary; and (b) post-primary school pupils in North Down do not have English as their first language.

(AQW 18574/11-15)

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

Primary and post-primary school pupils who do not have English as their first language and who are resident in the North Down constituency – 2011/12

School type	Pupils with a first language other than English	Total pupils resident in North Down constituency	%
Primary	181	7,005	2.6
Post- primary	119	6,245	1.9
Total	300	13,250	2.3

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures for primary include children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
- 2 The figures included in the table relate to all children who do not have English as a first language. Children classified as ‘newcomers’ are a subset of the figures above.
- 3 Figures relate to children attending primary and post-primary schools, whether located in the North Down constituency, or elsewhere.

Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education for an update on new school build proposals in the Upper Bann Constituency, including the length of time each build was awaiting approval.

(AQW 18601/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: In June 2012 I announced funding to three new school builds in the Upper Bann area; St Mary’s PS, Banbridge, St Theresa’s PS Lurgan and Tannaghmore PS, Lurgan. Work on the planning, design and approval for these schools is progressing and I expect them to move to construction in the coming months.

On 22 January I announced that Portadown Integrated PS and a new build project to encompass the existing schools of St. Mary’s, St Paul’s and St Michael’s Grammar Schools in Lurgan would be advanced in planning.

Authorisation to proceed with construction will be based on the level of capital funding availability at that time and all necessary approvals being obtained.

I have previously made it clear that I would only announce capital projects which I believe could be delivered within a reasonable timeframe. In this regard the projects announced in June 2012 and January 2013 are the only projects from the Upper Bann Constituency on my capital investment plan and any projects previously submitted by schools or managing authorities have no status.

Moving forward I will work with the Managing Authorities to identify priority projects emerging from area plans.

School Intervention Programme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education which schools are currently involved in the School Intervention Programme.

(AQW 18639/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: Where the Education and Training Inspectorate report, following a school inspection, that the quality of education provided by a school is less than satisfactory, the school is entered into the Formal Intervention Process (FIP). The purpose of the FIP is to make sure that a school receives the support and guidance it needs to effect improvement and provide the pupils with the quality of education they are entitled to receive.

There are currently twenty-one schools in formal intervention.

A list of these schools is shown in the table below.

School	Date Entered Formal Intervention
Ballee Community High School, Ballymena	4 March 2010
Blackwater Integrated College, Downpatrick	8 May 2012
Cambridge House Grammar School, Ballymena	3 June 2011
Crumlin Integrated College	1 February 2010
Dundonald High School	17 December 2012
Dunluce High School, Bushmills	7 March 2012
Foley Primary School, Tassagh, Armagh	10 November 2011
Harryville Primary School, Ballymena	22 June 2011
Kirkinriola Primary School, Ballymena	13 April 2011
Knockbreda High School, Belfast	20 October 2009
Laurelhill Community College, Lisburn	10 November 2011
Lisnagarvey High School, Lisburn	6 April 2011
Lisneal College, Derry	11 March 2010
Malvern Primary School, Belfast	24 April 2012
Monkstown Community School	17 December 2012
Omagh North Nursery School	28 September 2011
Orangefield High School, Belfast	10 May 2011
Springhill Primary School, Belfast	23 March 2011
St Gemma's High School, Belfast	13 April 2011
St Patrick's Primary School, Aughagallon	26 October 2010
Tullygally Primary School, Lurgan	23 March 2011

School Intervention Programme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education which schools have exited the School Intervention Programme in the last three years.

(AQW 18641/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Fourteen schools have exited the Formal Intervention Process (FIP) in the last three years. This includes Dundonald High School which exited the FIP in September 2010 but re-entered in December 2012. In addition, two schools that were in the FIP, closed in this period – Beechfield Primary School, Belfast closed at 30 September 2010 and Dunmurry High School closed at 31 August 2012.

The tables below list the schools that have exited the FIP in each of the past three years.

SCHOOLS EXITING FIP IN 2010

School	Date Exited FIP
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, Belfast	10 September 2010
Dundonald High School ¹	10 September 2010

¹ Dundonald High School re-entered FIP on 17 December 2012.

SCHOOLS EXITING FIP IN 2011

School	Date Exited FIP
Bunscoil an Traonaigh, Lisnaskea	6 June 2011
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, Castlewellan	15 March 2011
Bushmills Primary School	4 April 2011
Cliftonville Controlled Integrated Primary School	11 May 2011
Gaelscoil an Lonnain, Belfast	15 March 2011
Gaelscoil na gCrann, Omagh	1 March 2011
Gaelscoil na Móna, Belfast	17 October 2011
St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey	27 July 2011
St Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor	21 September 2011

SCHOOLS EXITING FIP IN 2012

Ballygolan Primary School, Belfast	17 April 2012
Bunscoil an Lúir, Newry	26 June 2012
Gaelscoil na Daróige, Derry	7 March 2012

Hollywood to Crawfordsburn Primary School School Bus

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what his Department can do to help pupils affected by the withdrawal of the school bus from Hollywood to Crawfordsburn Primary School.

(AQW 18677/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: This was a privately arranged bus by the school and was not part of the Department's Home to School Transport scheme. Parents of any pupil in attendance at Crawfordsburn Primary School, and affected by the withdrawal of the school's bus, should contact the South Eastern Education and Library Board. The Board will assess each such pupil to determine whether they are eligible for assistance with transport under the current Home to School Transport policy.

Under the policy, an affected pupil will be eligible for assistance if they live more than two miles from Crawfordsburn PS and there is no other controlled primary school within two miles of their home. Where there is one or more controlled primary school within two miles of an affected pupil's home, then parents of such pupils must demonstrate that they had applied to those schools (at the time when they applied to Crawfordsburn PS) and were refused a place in each, before the Board will provide assistance.

Examinations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) GCSEs; and (ii) A-Levels taken in each of the last five years, broken down by subject.

(AQW 18681/11-15)

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

(i) GCSE Examination Entries, 2006/07 – 2010/11

	GCSE Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Accounting/Finance	87	150	179	117	0
Additional Mathematics	3121	3124	3233	3220	3245
Arabic	4	1	10	9	3
Art and Design	5619	5449	5208	5219	5064
Art and Design (Photography)	1	4	3	7	13
Art and Design (Textiles)	10	0	0	0	17
Art and Design: 3D	1	0	0	0	0
Art and Design: Fine Art	33	49	10	10	7
Bengali	0	0	1	0	1
Biology	2053	3629	4071	4132	4133
Business Studies	4572	4623	4107	3852	3295
Chemistry	1965	2792	2945	2822	2975
Chinese	37	44	64	20	26
Classical Civilisation	77	136	95	90	76
Classical Greek	6	5	14	4	13
D&T Electronic Products	50	38	42	59	114
D&T Graphic Products	135	190	163	175	132
D&T Product Design	0	15	59	51	27
D&T Resistant Materials	369	441	583	738	1018
D&T Systems & Control	274	297	260	173	133
D&T Textiles Technology	14	6	9	13	8
Dance	15	56	14	12	0
Design & Technology	4707	4885	4463	4369	3745
Drama & Theatre Studies	1756	1818	1761	1827	1733
Dutch	0	1	1	0	3

	GCSE Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Economics	280	333	283	278	254
English Language	24632	24849	24115	24224	24299
English Literature	11467	11400	10926	11173	11308
Film Studies	0	0	0	1	2
French	10588	9141	7716	7194	6603
Geography	8468	7697	7181	6864	6816
German	1222	1271	1229	1265	1059
History	8437	8006	7664	7822	7782
Home Economics	4302	4302	4197	4118	2837
Home Economics: Child Development	881	783	689	694	2301
Home Economics: Food	202	197	158	242	186
Human Biology	0	0	1	0	0
Information and Communication Technology	6351	7140	7385	7562	7952
Irish (includes Gaeilge)	2482	2181	1838	1813	1787
Italian	80	47	54	51	33
Japanese	0	0	0	0	2
Latin	119	154	138	122	92
Law	7	5	1	0	15
Mathematics	25395	26037	25326	25880	25924
Media/Film/TV Studies	871	852	831	895	1180
Modern Greek	0	0	2	0	0
Motor Vehicle Studies	919	1186	1187	1071	
Music	1774	1803	1817	1876	1778
Office Technology	2722	2668	2401	2201	1607
Persian	1	0	1	0	1
Physics	1966	2556	2849	2885	2934
Polish	29	81	95	80	101
Portuguese	27	20	24	13	17
Psychology	0	3	1	0	3
Religious Studies	12491	12473	11995	12100	12590
Russian	22	14	14	18	34

	GCSE Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Science (Core)	0	0	0	3993	8678
Science Double Award	12625	8424	7520	7407	7559
Science Single Award	9901	10725	9437	5062	0
Science: Additional	0	1979	1974	1894	1869
Science: Astronomy	8	0	22	22	27
Science: Electronics	0	0	0	12	3
Science: Environmental	0	0	0	18	33
Science: Geology	14	7	0	0	16
Sociology	109	185	140	134	95
Spanish	3119	3319	3118	3197	3382
Sport/PE. Studies	3940	4047	4131	4082	3769
Statistics	272	213	210	276	284
Turkish	0	0	1	0	0
Urdu	1	0	1	4	2

Source: RM data solutions

(ii) A-Level Examination Entries, 2006/07- 2010/11

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Accounting/Finance	115	110	150	157	126
Ancient History	22	16	10	13	13
Archaeology	0	0	0	0	2
Art & Design	1033	1038	1045	1114	1078
Art & Design (Photography)	14	14	9	23	25
Art and Design: Graphics	0	0	1	0	0
Art & Design (Critical &Contextual)	59	73	70	1	0
Art & Design (Fine Art)	11	12	5	7	0
Bengali	0	0	0	0	1
Biology	3097	3157	3197	3132	3334
Business Studies	1273	1186	1228	1249	1249
Chemistry	1762	1823	1775	1831	1768
Chinese	16	30	37	26	30

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Classical Civilisation	125	92	96	82	76
Classical Greek	1	0	0	1	3
Computer Studies/ Computing	182	119	93	69	70
Critical Thinking	1	2	0	1	0
Dance	11	10	2	8	6
Design & Technology: Systems	29	30	45	385	416
Design & Technology: Product Design	313	345	388	501	504
Design & Technology: Textiles Technology	0	0	0	0	2
Design and Technology	379	345	366	3	0
Drama & Theatre Studies	489	496	585	548	547
Dutch	0	0	0	1	0
Economics	420	420	441	370	371
English	72	92	70	57	52
English Language	22	38	37	64	72
English Literature	2448	2359	2337	2249	2302
Film Studies	6	5	7	14	15
French	662	694	657	707	562
Geography	2049	1859	1980	1766	1819
German	145	159	137	153	113
Government & Politics	1011	978	1018	931	1053
History	2299	2312	2311	2186	2176
History of Art	0	0	0	38	45
Home Economics	571	510	558	597	536
Human Biology	1	0	0	0	0
Information and Communication Technology	1131	1001	1101	1368	1476
Irish	254	238	328	334	319
Italian	7	0	2	0	1
Latin	26	26	16	20	19
Law	2	3	3	13	16

	A Level Entries				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Logic / Philosophy	0	0	0	1	0
Mathematics	2462	2501	2704	2933	3062
Mathematics (Pure)	0	1	0	1	0
Maths (Further)	136	153	150	128	175
Maths (Statistics)	7	7	8		6
Media/Film/TV Studies	617	696	850	926	998
Music	483	427	465	485	482
Music Technology	0	0	0	6	12
Physics	1257	1241	1324	1470	1416
Polish	0	3	4	12	21
Portuguese	1	0	1	1	3
Psychology	262	249	307	427	436
Religious Studies	2085	1972	2087	2121	2289
Russian	4	4	9	2	6
Science: Electronics	0	0	0	0	5
Science: Environmental	0	0	1	6	2
Science in Society	0	0	0	9	0
Science: Geology	55	36	46	42	46
Social Science: Citizenship	0	0	0	4	32
Sociology	714	745	787	839	808
Spanish	458	415	407	443	461
Sport/PE. Studies	701	651	753	822	883
Turkish	0	0	0	0	1
Urdu	1	0	0	0	0

Source: RM data solutions

Attendance Policy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education whether he plans to make it a legal requirement for schools to have an attendance policy.

(AQW 18725/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 2010 states that schools should provide strategies for promoting attendance in the School Development Plan.

My Department is currently working with representatives from schools and Education Welfare Service to devise guidance on attendance management policies. This guidance will be distributed to schools for inclusion in School Development Plans for the 2013/14 academic year.

Department for Employment and Learning

Higher Education Institutions

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why £1.4m arising from the easement in the budgets for Higher Education institutions is being surrendered to the Department of Finance and Personnel.

(AQW 18108/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The reclassification of Stranmillis University College as a non-departmental public body meant that the Department had to secure budget cover for its planned expenditure, including its forecast in year depreciation for the financial year 2012-13.

The forecast depreciation provided by Stranmillis at the beginning of the year was revised downwards and the college declared an easement on the depreciation budget of £1.4m. This led to the surrender to DFP of the £1.4m as a reduced requirement in the recent monitoring round.

As depreciation is a ring-fenced budget the easement cannot be utilised elsewhere and there was no alternative to surrendering it to the Department of Finance and Personnel as a reduced requirement.

Depreciation is also non cash in nature and therefore the budget cannot be reallocated to cash spending programmes. This reduced requirement does not represent a loss in spending power to the Department.

The Department issued a briefing paper to the Employment & Learning Committee on 4 January 2013 outlining the detail of the second stage of January monitoring.

Third Level Institutions

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide details of the mechanism used to allocate student places to third level institutions, including relevant statutory instruments and budgetary transfer processes.

(AQW 18297/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of full-time undergraduate places at each university in Northern Ireland is subject to a cap as a means of controlling the cost to government of student support. The cap was introduced in 1994 and is known as the Maximum Student Number (MaSN). Each university's MaSN allocation was initially set in 1994-95 and this has been rolled forward each succeeding year. My department keeps the MaSN under review and it is adjusted as when necessary in light of the resources available for higher education. This can result in increases to the MaSN as was the case with the additional 500 places announced under the Jobs and Economy Initiative. Additional numbers in recent years have been allocated to the universities on a pro rata basis but as you are aware, 50 of the additional 500 places were top-sliced and allocated to the University of Ulster in recognition of the Executive's commitment to the regeneration of Derry.

Such increases are normally made conditional on additional student places being made available in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and economically relevant subject areas.

The MaSN total for each university includes places for medical, dental and social work and the total of these places is determined by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS). Likewise the number of places for Initial Teacher Education in the universities and university colleges, is determined by the Department of Education (DE).

In relation to the further education colleges, my department carries out regular reviews of the MaSN allocations to coincide with the College Development Plan (CDP) cycle. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that the MaSN allocations represent an equitable and rational distribution of full-time higher education places in order to secure maximum recruitment and uptake of places and that the allocations reflect available evidence of existing demand and potential future demand across Northern

Ireland. A number of metrics are used to calculate the Higher Education in Further Education MaSN allocation for each of the six colleges as follows:

- Actual performance over the last six years. The department considers each college's Higher Education in Further Education enrolments, both full-time and part-time, in order to assess the overall historical demand for higher education in each college region;
- Estimated future demand. The department considers the total potential demand for Higher Education in Further Education as measured by the 18-50 year old population in each of the regional college areas; and,
- There is a 75% weighting for historical demand and a 25% weighting for potential future demand. An additional weighting is also applied to reflect the distance from the college to the nearest permanent University campus.

Where the number of places in a university or further education college is changed by either my department or the DHSSPS or DE, the institutions' MaSN allocations are adjusted accordingly. Funding in relation to any adjustment is dealt with through the normal budgetary processes which exist in all Northern Ireland departments.

There are no statutory instruments which cover the allocation of student places to third level institutions. Funding provided to these institutions is done so under The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and as subsequently amended.

Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department will take to help find funding opportunities for the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor.

(AQW 18323/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not have any statutory basis or remit to core fund voluntary or community organisations to deliver training or education, nor is it resourced to assist voluntary and community organisations to find funding. My Department is therefore unable to help find funding opportunities for the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre.

However, in a recent competition under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund to address issues associated with those not in education, employment or training, the Training Women's Network was successful in securing £770,067 for a project to help 440 young women in this category; Kilcooley Women's Education Centre is one of eight community centres collaborating to deliver this project.

Young People in West Tyrone

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of young people from the West Tyrone constituency who are not in education, employment or training; and to outline the efforts of his Department to address this situation.

(AQW 18340/11-15)

Dr Farry: Estimates of young people not in employment, education or training are provided through the Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS sample size and design does not allow for the production of sufficiently reliable estimates of this type at a constituency level. During the period July – September 2012, the LFS estimated that there were 50,000 (22.6%) 16-24 year olds in Northern Ireland who were not in employment, Government supported training or full-time education.

My Department funds a very significant range of programmes and initiatives to support young people from West Tyrone and across Northern Ireland who are not in education, employment or training. I recently secured Executive endorsement of 'Pathways to Success', the cross-departmental NEET strategy for Northern Ireland. I have also secured substantial additional funding of £5.8m for the current financial year, £15.6 million in 2013/14 and £19.6 million in 2014/15, to implement the strategy and the 'Youth Employment Scheme'.

'Pathways to Success' Strategy

My Department is now implementing several new initiatives under the 'Pathways to Success' strategy, to tackle youth unemployment. A Community Family Support Programme (CFSP) pilot commenced in January 2013 to meet the needs of 44 disadvantaged families in Cookstown, Belfast (East and West), Strabane and Newtownabbey.

I recently introduced a training allowance for young people participating in projects funded by the European Social Fund. This allowance ensures that there are effective incentives for young people to participate in programmes that provide the necessary skills and qualifications to secure employment.

In December 2012 I announced a £9 million package under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF) that will fund 18 projects across Northern Ireland and immediately deliver specialised support to 5,000 disadvantaged young people. One of the delivery partners, South Western College, has been awarded £546,000 to provide training for 300 young people in West Tyrone who are NEET.

Youth Employment Scheme

The Department's Youth Employment Scheme provides support to unemployed 18-24 year old through the following measures:

- Initially 1,000 short 2 to 8 week work experience placements, rising to 3,000 placements annually by March 2015, designed to ensure early engagement with the labour market; this will cost £200,000 in 2012/13 rising to £400,000 and £600,000 respectively in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 800 employer subsidies of £5,750 a year in sectors which have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the economy; (rising to 1,200 by 2014/15), to facilitate and enable further skills development; this will cost £2.3 million in 2012/13 rising to £5.75 million in 2013/14 and £6.9 million in 2014/15.
- 400 training places coupled with additional sector based work experience of between 6 and 9 months (rising to 1,800 by 2014/15) in sectors which have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the economy. While in training young people will receive a training allowance of £100 a week. This will cost £1.1 million in 2012/13 rising to £5.3 million in 2013/14 and £6.4 million in 2014/15.
- There will also be an investment of £400,000 this year in direct employer engagement rising to £1.1 million in 2014/15. This will provide for marketing and the development of a dedicated cadre of staff to effectively manage employer engagement and participation in the various strands of the initiative.
- As part of the Youth Employment Scheme, the Careers Service offers a personalised skills assessment to young people aged 18-24 years usually within the first three months of claiming benefit. The aim being to maximise the benefits of the work experience placements or skills development opportunities offered as part of the scheme.
- Additionally, Employment Service clients who are 18 plus will either be in work, in training or will be required to be actively seeking work if they are claiming JSA.

Training Programmes

The Training for Success programme provides a guarantee of a training place on its Training for Success (TfS) programme for all unemployed young people in the 16 to 17 age groups, with extended eligibility for those with a disability up to age 22 and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background.

The programme is delivered through contracted training suppliers including a number who operate in the West Tyrone constituency.

Programme-Led Apprenticeships were introduced in September 2009 under TfS, to assist young people who have been unable to find employment as apprentices, during the economic downturn.

Further Education

In common with all other Further Education Colleges, South Western College provides access to a wide range of pastoral care initiatives for their students, including those in the NEET category. These services are supplemented by local, college-specific measures involving local health trusts and other partner organisations.

These processes are designed to ensure that young people enrol in, and are encouraged and supported to remain in appropriate and relevant programmes of learning.

ESF Funding for NEET Projects

European Social Fund (ESF) Project Promoters, including those operating in West Tyrone, have been awarded an increase in existing funding from the current value of 75% of original costs to the full 100%. The funding increase will commence from the 1 January 2013 and will continue for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Local Employment Intermediary Service

In addition, young people from West Tyrone with employability barriers will also have access to a range of help and support to address unemployment and other issues through the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS).

I hope you find this information helpful.

Higher and Further Education

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) any additional assistance and support his Department provides to young people who have been, or are, in care to help them to gain access to higher and further education; and (ii) what additional support is being given to those who are enrolled to remain engaged.

(AQW 18392/11-15)

Dr Farry:

Further Education

My Department has supported two further education colleges, Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College, to attain the Buttle UK (FE) Quality Mark for Care Leavers, in April 2011.

The Quality Mark provides a set of standards and guidelines to ensure appropriate action is taken to raise aspirations of care leavers in relation to accessing further education provision. This is achieved through:

- outreach activities in local communities;
- developing effective links with key organisations;
- adapting application arrangements to ensure that the additional needs of care leavers are met; and
- providing the necessary support to secure recruitment and retention in further education.

The four remaining further education colleges have made a commitment to attain the Buttle Quality Mark.

My Department also provides assistance for students who are experiencing exceptional financial difficulty with meeting costs associated with learning, through its hardship funds, which are administered by the colleges. This can provide individual students with up to a maximum amount of £3,500 per annum to assist with fees, books and equipment, travel costs and associated living costs.

Higher Education

In academic year 2012-13, my Department is providing widening participation premium funding of almost £1.3m to Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland to assist with the additional costs

of recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from a care background, and to encourage the retention of such students through the provision of on-course support structures, such as mentoring and tutoring.

Students from a care background will be eligible to apply for the same tuition fee loan and maintenance loan support to which all Northern Ireland students who are studying a full-time higher education course in the United Kingdom are eligible. They may also be eligible to apply for a means-tested maintenance grant and supplementary grants, depending upon their circumstances.

My Department is leading on the implementation of Access to Success, the regional strategy for widening participation in higher education. Care leavers have been identified as being under-represented in higher education, and, as such, the strategy will aim to identify these students, and target available resources to support their recruitment and retention in higher education.

Children in Care: Further and Higher Education

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the total number of children, who have experience of care homes, that have been offered places at (i) Queen's University Belfast; (ii) University of Ulster; and (iii) Further Education Colleges, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18394/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not currently have the structures in place to collect data on the number of 'cared for' children applying to or enrolling on higher education courses at universities and further education colleges. However, my officials have contacted the institutions who have provided the following information.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Academic Year	Offers
2009/10	5
2010/11	14
2011/12	5
2012/13	8

No information is available for 2008/09. Offers to Nursing and Midwifery courses at Queen's University, by students from a care background, are not included in the above table as these courses are outside the UCAS admissions system and data is not held. However, from academic year 2013/14 students applying to these courses will be managed through the UCAS system and information relating to applications by individuals from a care background will be recorded.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Academic Year	Offers	Enrolments
2009/10	35	12 full-time undergraduate 2 part-time undergraduate 1 postgraduate
2010/11	36	17 full-time undergraduate 1 postgraduate
2011/12	26	13 full-time undergraduate 1 postgraduate 1 Phd

Academic Year	Offers	Enrolments
2012/13	43	10 full-time undergraduate 2 postgraduate

In 2008 the University of Ulster had 16 students enrolled who had experience of care homes.

Further Education Regional Colleges

The six further education colleges do not hold this information, going back over the last five years. North West Regional College, which recently participated in the Buttle UK pilot programme, has developed and introduced systems for recording and tracking those with a care background. The college has advised that during the 2011/12 academic year 48 students with a care background, 4 of whom undertook higher education provision within the college, were enrolled. In academic year 2012/13 the College has 6 enrolments from a care background all of these are on Further Education courses.

The remaining five colleges have advised that data collection systems to capture information regarding those with a care background enrolling in further education are currently being developed.

“Access to Success” my Department’s regional strategy for widening participation in higher education has identified care leavers as an under-represented group in higher education. The strategy aims to develop mechanisms to gather comprehensive and reliable data pertaining to access to, and participation in, higher education in order to better identify individuals from a disadvantaged background, including care leavers, and to improve the targeting of available resources to support those with greatest need.

Buttle UK Quality Mark

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail which Higher Education Institutes and Further Education Colleges in have been awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark in the last five years.

(AQW 18398/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster was awarded the Buttle UK (HE) Quality Mark for Care Leavers in 2009. Queen’s University Belfast and the two University Colleges have not at this stage formally applied for HE Quality Mark accreditation although both Queen’s University and Stranmillis College have indicated that they now meet the standards expected of the Quality Mark.

My Department contributed towards the development costs of a UK (FE) Quality Framework and two Regional Colleges, Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College, attained this Quality Mark in April 2011. The remaining four colleges have made a commitment to attaining the Quality Mark.

During the development of my Department’s regional strategy for widening participation in higher education Access to Success care leavers were identified as being under-represented in higher education and they are a target group for interventions in the strategy. In that context I would encourage all Northern Ireland higher education providers to gain and maintain Quality Mark for Care Leavers accreditation.

Disabled Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the legislation that employers are obliged to comply with in relation to staff who become disabled and to clarify whether they are expected to take all reasonable steps to accommodate disabled staff.

(AQW 18446/11-15)

Dr Farry: The legislation in place to protect people with disabilities from discrimination in seeking employment and disabled employees in the workplace is the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. This legislation is the responsibility of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, place a legal responsibility on Employers to ensure that discrimination and/or harassment of employees with a disability does not occur in the workplace. The Act also places a duty on the Employer to make reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate staff with a known disability. Details of what is deemed to be reasonable are included in the relevant sections of the legislation.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is the principal source for advice relating to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 and the right of reasonable adjustment therein.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 18277/11-15, to detail the breakdown between school and Further Education Colleges for 2011/2012.

(AQW 18527/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details the total number of students who received Education Maintenance Allowance in academic year 2011/12 broken down by Learning Centre type.

Learning Centre type	No. of EMA recipients
Further Education College	9,580
Grammar School	6,890
Independent School	20
Secondary School	8,350
Special School	330
Total	25,170

Young Adults with Learning Disabilities

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what percentage of his departmental budget is spent on young adults with (i) learning disabilities; and (ii) severe learning disabilities in the Southern and Western Education and Library Board areas.

(AQW 18587/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on relevant spend broken down to the degree set out in this question is not readily available. To extract this information would require individual business areas to review their records in exceptional detail, which would result in disproportionate costs. For information, however, I have set out below a range of provision in place for disabled adults; this has been disaggregated as far as reasonably possible.

My Department funds further education colleges to deliver courses and provide support and assistance to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The colleges have no tightly defined geographical areas but, broadly, Southern Regional College, North West Regional College and South West College most closely cover the Southern and Western Library Boards areas.

In the 2011/12 academic year, the three colleges delivered provision worth £3.6m for students aged between 16 and 25 with learning difficulties and disabilities. This represents 5.5% of these colleges' total recurrent grant, 2.5% of the FE sector's overall recurrent grant, and 2.08% of the overall FE budget, which funds a number of programmes and initiatives outside of the recurrent grant.

In addition, my Department provides ring-fenced financial support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities of £3.5m per annum through its Additional Support Fund (ASF). In the 2011/12 academic year, a total of £1.652m was provided for these three colleges, being 47.2% of the total ASF budget. As ASF funding is for students of all ages, this figure cannot be disaggregated into age groups.

It is not possible to identify Further Education learners with disabilities as categorised in the question.

“Access to Success”, my Department’s regional strategy for widening participation in higher education, has identified that students with disabilities and learning difficulties face significant additional difficulties in accessing higher education. The strategy aims better to identify individuals from a disadvantaged background, including students with learning disabilities, and to improve the targeting of available resources to support those with greatest need.

My Department already pays a widening access premium to the universities and university colleges for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. In academic year 2011/12, this amounted to £249,462. The premium is intended to provide specialist equipment and/or specific support for these students, and it is allocated based on the number of full-time undergraduate students in each institution in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance. The allowance itself attracted £3.013m during 2011/12, which was paid to students of all ages.

My Department guarantees a training place on its Training for Success programme for all unemployed young people in the 16 to 17 age groups, with extended eligibility for those with a disability up to age 22. Specialist providers have been engaged to work in conjunction with Training Suppliers to ensure that specialist support is provided, where needed, to participants in this and the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. For the financial year 2011/12, the Department provided £490,809 for this specialist support.

An additional premium of £30 is paid to the training supplier on top of the weekly training fee under the Training for Success programme for the duration of training. Equally, a disability supplement of up to £1,560 is payable under ApprenticeshipsNI to allow Training Suppliers to provide additional support such as specialist equipment. These payments are contained within the overall funding offer; is not possible to isolate the expenditure.

In 2011/12, under the auspices of ‘Access to Work’, £117k was spent on people with a Learning Disability. In relation to ‘Workable’, the figure was £1,166k.

In 2011/12, my Department provided 25% contribution funding of up to £2.4m towards 20 European Social Fund projects that specifically target participants with disabilities.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Down Business Park

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the companies who own or rent premises in Down Business Park.

(AQW 18101/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI, in line with its intervention criteria, provides property to qualifying businesses across Northern Ireland in support of approved economic development projects.

The table below details those companies that have purchased property within Down Business Park directly from Invest NI. You will note that there is only one property within the Park owned by the Agency that attracts a rent; this factory is currently occupied under licence.

Invest NI does not maintain records of any onward property transactions that may have taken place since the completion of the original sale.

You will note that amongst the transactions listed in the table is a property sale to Jobspace (NI) Limited in May 2000. This site was subsequently developed as Down Business Centre. Invest NI does not hold records of businesses that are located within the Centre.

EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what preparations are in place to ensure that this region will benefit from the pending EU and Canadian Free Trade agreement.

(AQW 18131/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Canada is a developed and sophisticated market providing many opportunities across most sectors. In September 2011, Invest NI appointed an in-market advisor to help Northern Ireland companies maximise the trade and investment opportunities that exist in Canada. More recently, Invest NI has developed an initiative known as GoCanada which is a dedicated export development programme designed to help Northern Ireland companies win business there. Twelve companies are currently on the first phase of the programme and are scheduled to visit Canada as part of a multi-sector trade mission in March this year.

Businesses: Financial Support

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 13912/11-15 and in relation to the support offered to the 1,841 businesses between 1 January and 31 August 2012, how many jobs have been created.

(AQW 18325/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible to provide detailed information on the number of jobs created since Invest Northern Ireland reports on the number of jobs promoted through assisted projects. This is in line with its Corporate Plan and Programme for Government targets.

The 1,841 businesses offered support included 651 employment-related projects which plan to create 3,519 jobs. Since these projects will take some time to fully implement, the jobs associated with them may take up to five years to be fully realised.

Invest NI is currently reviewing options to enable it to report actual job creation in the future. However, this will take some time to implement and for the information to become meaningful, since assisted projects can take up to five years to reach their maximum level of job creation.

Department Financial Support

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses received financial support from her Department, or its arm's-length bodies, between 1 September 2012 and 31 December 2012.

(AQW 18326/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Provisional results show that between 1st September and 31st December 2012, Invest NI approved offers of financial support to 1,159 businesses.

In addition, during this period Invest NI engaged with more than 1,071 individuals who were interested in starting their own business, 227 of which completed business plans.

In the period 1st September 2012 to 31st December 2012 the North South Body InterTradeIreland had 199 companies on their programmes receiving financial support.

Free Wi-Fi Scheme.

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to detail the cities and town centres that have a free wi-fi scheme.

(AQW 18369/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Information on the availability of free Wi-Fi services is not collected or held by the Department.

A number of Wi-Fi directories are published on the internet that list paid and free hotspots, including:

- www.broadbandni.com/wireless.php
- www.thecloud.net
- www.btwifi.com
- www.hotspot-locations.com
- www.fon.com
- www.myhotspots.co.uk

Narrow Water Bridge

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations she has made to (i) the Executive (ii) the Minister of Finance and Personnel; and (ii) the Minister for Regional Development, in support of the Narrow Water Bridge tourism project.

(AQW 18407/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have not made representations to any of the aforementioned, in respect of the Narrow Water Bridge project.

Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of homes that do not have fixed wire broadband; and (ii) how many homes are to be brought on stream as part of the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project.

(AQW 18412/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI does not hold the details of homes that do not have a fixed wired broadband connection.

According to the most recent survey of households undertaken by NISRA, the percentage of households that choose not to avail of an internet connection is 29%. Many of these could, if they wished, be connected with a fixed wired broadband.

Analysis of Northern Ireland's telecoms infrastructure indicates that there are approximately 95,000 premises where the choice of broadband provision is limited and/or the available speeds are less than 2 Mbps.

As part of the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project and in parallel with UK Government targets, it is my Department's objective to provide virtually all Northern Ireland premises access to a broadband service of at least 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) by 2015 and to provide superfast broadband to at least 90% of premises with speeds in excess of 24 Mbps. At present I am unable to comment on how many homes may be brought on stream as this is dependent on responses to the tender brought forward under the project.

Tamboran Resources

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 18021/11-15, to detail (i) whether anyone outside her Department will receive notification of an application by Tamboran for permission to drill a 1000 metre borehole; (ii) who her Department will consult prior to issuing permission to drill; (iii) how her Department intends to ensure that this process will be made transparent; (iv) whether she will inform Members when Tamboran submits its application to drill; and (v) whether she will make details of its proposal available to the public.

(AQW 18437/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The company is obliged to notify Planning Service and the Health and Safety Executive.
- (ii) This will depend on the nature and locality of any proposed drilling operations. Any permission given by my Department to drill will be subject to the company having the appropriate consents from Planning Service and Health and Safety Executive.

- (iii) The process followed by my Department is transparent and well established. On receipt of an application, my Department will carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which will include consultation and also a technical assessment of the application. Details of the HRA process are available on the Department of the Environment website at:
http://www.doeni.gov.uk/wonderfulni/protected_areas_home/natura_2000/hra_advice.htm
- (iv) I would intend to inform members of the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee of any major developments in relation to the Tamboran licence.
- (v) This will depend on the details of the proposal and whether they are deemed commercially sensitive.

Broadband Access

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of households in each council area have second generation broadband available to them.

(AQW 18693/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information requested is not held by my Department.

I understand, however, that the mapping associated with the recent OFCOM Infrastructure Report 2012 Update contains the information required.

The report is accessible at the following link: <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/broadband/broadband-data/>

Broadband Access

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of households in each council area have fibre broadband available to them.

(AQW 18694/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information requested is not held by my Department.

I understand, however, that the mapping associated with the recent OFCOM Infrastructure Report 2012 Update contains the information required.

The report is accessible at the following link: <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/broadband/broadband-data/>

Department of Finance and Personnel

Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the support his Department has provided the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 18164/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): My Department provided the following support to the NICSSA for the maintenance of the Maynard Sinclair Building.

Year	Maintenance	Capital Grant	Total
02-03	Not available	£150,000	£150,000
03-04	Not available	Not available	Not available
04-05	£21,820*	£150,000	£171,820
05-06	£31,820*	£130,000	£161,820
06-07	£19,652	£131,000	£150,652

Year	Maintenance	Capital Grant	Total
07-08	£31,584	£131,000	£162,584
08-09	£52,814	£131,000	£183,814
09-10	£114,109	£131,000	£245,109
10-11	£30,009	£96,000	£126,009
11-12	£27,350	£25,000	£52,350

* As per Planned Preventative Maintenance schedule

My Department through IT Assist has also been providing IT infrastructure services to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association (NICSSA) since October 2008. These services include access devices, application hosting, and voice and data network services. These services are provided to NICSSA on a full cost recovery basis.

UK Gross Value Added

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proportion of UK Gross Value Added received each year from 2005 to 2010.

(AQW 18169/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below shows the Northern Ireland Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices for 2005 to 2010 together with the corresponding UK figure as well as the NI total as a proportion of the total UK figure. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions.

Year	Northern Ireland Total GVA (£ million)	United Kingdom Total GVA (£ million)	NI Total as a % of the UK Total
2005	25,263	1,125,300	2.2%
2006	26,835	1,188,500	2.3%
2007	28,310	1,258,925	2.2%
2008	28,607	1,290,945	2.2%
2009	27,969	1,265,010	2.2%
2010	29,155	1,308,962	2.2%

National Insurance Contributions

Ms Fearon 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 18175/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18239/11-15 and AQW 18240/11-15 respectively.

VAT

Ms Fearon 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 18176/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the Member to my responses to AQW 18239/11-15 and AQW 18240/11-15 respectively.

UK Gross Value Added

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the proportion of UK Gross Value Added received each year from 2005 to 2010.

(AQW 18210/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below shows the Northern Ireland Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices for 2005 to 2010 together with the corresponding UK figure as well as the NI total as a proportion of the total UK figure. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions.

Year	Northern Ireland Total GVA (£ million)	United Kingdom Total GVA (£ million)	NI Total as a % of the UK Total
2005	25,263	1,125,300	2.2%
2006	26,835	1,188,500	2.3%
2007	28,310	1,258,925	2.2%
2008	28,607	1,290,945	2.2%
2009	27,969	1,265,010	2.2%
2010	29,155	1,308,962	2.2%

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he intends to take to ensure that the Northern Ireland Audit Office remains independent of Government and is adequately resourced to complete its statutory duties in relation to the financial governance of public expenditure and the delivery of Government services.

(AQW 18275/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Member will be aware that I have acknowledged the independence of the Audit Office to carry out its statutory role on many occasions. I consider the Audit Office's role to be well defined by Statute and not requiring any further action by my Department to provide clarity. In relation to the resources allocated to the Audit Office, this is a decision for the Assembly. As Finance Minister I will continue to provide the Assembly with the level of detail and analysis I consider appropriate to support budget discussions. This may include my Department's analysis of the Audit Office's financial performance, in the same manner as it would highlight or report on any other body seeking funding from the public purse.

Birmingham City Council v Abdulla

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, following the Supreme Court ruling in the case of Birmingham City Council v Abdulla and others, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (i) current; and (ii) former employees are made fully aware of the entitlement to claim for equal pay over a longer period.

(AQW 18308/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department has not taken any steps to inform individuals of any potential entitlement relating to this matter. An employer does not have a legal obligation to advise current or former employees of their legal rights under equal pay legislation.

Changing Places Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has resources available to promote and install Changing Places facilities in public buildings.

(AQW 18354/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is no central fund available to promote the installation of Changing Places facilities in public buildings. Decisions on installation of such facilities in a given building are a matter for the Department responsible for the building.

Businesses with Rates Arrears

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses in the North Down constituency have rates arrears of over £10,000.

(AQW 18373/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses in the North Down constituency that have rates arrears over £10,000 is not available as data is collated at district council and ward level only for non-domestic properties. As at 31st December 2012, rates of over £10,000 remain unpaid for 176 non-domestic properties in the North Down Borough Council Area and 99 non-domestic properties in the Ards Borough Council Area.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the £2 million required from his Department to complete the EU package for the Narrow Water Bridge Project is now assured, given the additional £132 million infrastructural funding indicated by the Chancellor George Osborne in his Autumn statement.

(AQW 18409/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Narrow Water Bridge project has sought funding from the INTERREG IVA Programme and as such must progress through the agreed assessment process. No funding can be assured until the project has received all approvals.

The project has been approved by the Programme steering committee, the first hurdle of the approval process, and in accordance with the selection process is subject to the approval of DFP and the relevant department in the Republic of Ireland.

The DFP role, as accountable department for the Public Sector Collaboration theme, is to critically review the project and the supporting documentation provided and my officials are currently involved in this process.

Any additional infrastructure funding identified by the Chancellor does not have any impact on the decision to fund the Narrow Water Bridge project.

Climate Change Levy

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

(AQW 18416/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI's share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Aggregates Levy

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

(AQW 18417/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI's share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Customs Duties and Levies

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

(AQW 18418/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI's share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Vehicle Excise Duty

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

(AQW 18419/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI’s share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Climate Change Levy

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

(AQW 18540/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI’s share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Aggregates Levy

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

(AQW 18541/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI's share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Vehicle Excise Duty

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

(AQW 18542/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Annex B of the Northern Ireland Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 outlines the approach used to estimate the various sources of revenue generated in Northern Ireland (NI).

As indicated, climate change levy receipts from electricity consumption are apportioned to NI according to its share of UK electricity consumption. UK revenues from the consumption of solids & other fuels are apportioned on the basis of NI's share of UK GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for the Aggregates Levy is apportioned to NI according to its share of GVA (less extra regio).

The UK figure for customs duties and levies is apportioned according to its share of UK population aged 16 and over.

NI vehicle excise duty is recorded net of refunds in annual reports published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Emergency Response Vehicles

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the provision of emergency response vehicles in the South Armagh area.

(AQW 18133/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Ambulance Service

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) strives to ensure that all Category A calls are responded to within target, irrespective of incident location. The NIAS positions deployment points (DP) on the basis of activity, identified by predictive analysis of historical data, so that emergency resources can respond effectively by ensuring that the nearest ambulance resource is assigned to an incident. Therefore an emergency response to the South Armagh area may not necessarily be by a vehicle based in that area. Emergency response for the South Armagh area is provided by resources operating from:

- Armagh
- Banbridge
- Craigavon
- Dungannon
- Kilkeel
- Lurgan (DP)
- Newry
- Ballygawley (DP).

The implementation of an inter-agency ambulance and rapid response vehicle deployment point in Crossmaglen, at the Fire and Rescue Station, is under discussion between local level management and NIAS.

Fire and Rescue Service

The following table shows the current holdings within the area for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

	Pumping Appliances	Special Appliances	Flexi Duty Officers
Newry District	0	0	4 x Rapid Response Vehicles
Newry Station	1 x WRL 1 x Rescue Pump	1 x Ops Support Unit	0
Crossmaglen Station	1 x WRL	0	0
Rathfriland Station	2 x WRL	0	0
Warrenpoint Station	2 x WRL	1 x Water Tanker	0
Newtownhamilton Station	2 x WRL	0	0
Armagh Station	2 x WRL	1 x Prime Mover with High Volume Pump Unit	0
Keady Station	1 x WRL	0	0

WRL – Water Tender Appliance

Rescue Pump – carries additional specialist equipment for RTCs/special service calls

Ops Support Unit – carries specialist firefighting equipment for emergency incidents

Prime Mover – hook lift truck

Health of Residents of the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency have spent over the last twelve months on improving the health of residents in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18167/11-15)

Mr Poots: Over the past year the Public Health Agency has been developing close working relationships with the Kilcooley Community. Funding investment includes:

- In 2011-2012, the PHA provided a total of £51,180 toward the development of the Kilcooley Allotments project.
- £15,000 in 2012/13 to fund a horticultural assistant to develop the community allotments project.
- £35,000 in 2012/13 to fund a new Community Health Development Worker post for an initial period of three years with a key role in developing capacity and local services for children and families, as well as addressing the health and social wellbeing needs of the surrounding community.

Other resource support includes the allocation of a senior officer to work directly with the Kilcooley Forum and local partners to provide strategic support and facilitate inter-sectoral working within the community focussing on specific health and social wellbeing needs of Kilcooley residents.

Aligned to this the PHA provides funding of £6,400 (estimated staff costs) to the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, through its Specialist Health Development Team, to deliver a wide range of health and social wellbeing improvement programmes across the North Down area which are accessible to Kilcooley residents.

Health and Social Care Trust

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012, (i) the total number of invoices paid; and (ii) the number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt, by each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 18185/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of invoices paid by each Health and Social Care Trust for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012 and the number paid within ten working days of receipt are contained in the table below.

TRUST'S 10 DAY PROMPT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

Trust	Number of invoices paid	Number of invoices paid within ten working days of receipt
Northern	106,273	48,288
Belfast	266,578	105,573
Western	85,649	64,254
South Eastern	111,549	55,109
NIAS	11,155	2,679
Southern	88,569	41,208

Posts within Fire and Rescue Services

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the people fulfilling the roles of (i) Chief Fire Officer; (ii) Director of Human Resources; (iii) Director of Corporate Planning; (iv) Deputy Director of Corporate Planning; (v) Stores Manager, (vi) Deputy Stores Manager; and for how long they have been in post.

(AQW 18227/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- i The Chief Fire Officer post has been filled on an interim basis by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer since 27 June 2012.
- ii. The Director of Human Resources post is currently vacant. Since August 2011 the duties of the post have been covered on a rotation basis by 2 senior managers; prior to that they were covered by a senior HR manager seconded from Health and Social Care role. The NIFRS expect to have a substantive Director in post by April 2013.
- iii. The Director of Planning, Performance & Corporate Affairs post has been vacant since 1 April 2012 and duties have been covered by other members of staff. The recruitment process for this post is ongoing.
- iv. The NIFRS has no Deputy Director of Corporate Planning post.
- v The Stores Manager post has been overseen by an operational Group Commander since November 2009. The recruitment of this post is currently being planned.
- vi. The NIFRS has no Deputy Stores Manager post.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) children; and (ii) adults in North Down are diagnosed with autism.

(AQW 18267/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures provided by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust indicate that at 14th January 2013, 104 children in the North Down area had a confirmed diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Trust was unable to provide figures for the number of adults in the North Down area diagnosed with ASD.

Within the previous two years 287 children and 15 adults in the North Down area had undergone a formal assessment for ASD.

These figures have not been validated by the Department.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) children; and (ii) adults in North Down have undergone a formal assessment for autism.

(AQW 18269/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures provided by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust indicate that at 14th January 2013, 104 children in the North Down area had a confirmed diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Trust was unable to provide figures for the number of adults in the North Down area diagnosed with ASD.

Within the previous two years 287 children and 15 adults in the North Down area had undergone a formal assessment for ASD.

These figures have not been validated by the Department.

Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the services that have been removed from Altnagelvin Hospital in the last five years.

(AQW 18284/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that the following services have been removed from Altnagelvin Hospital in the last five years:

- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) procedures following an ongoing Regional Review of Vascular Services. However in an emergency situation and in the interest of patient safety this procedure may still be performed in Altnagelvin.
- Upper Gastrointestinal (UGI) surgery for cancer as a result of a retirement of a consultant and a regional reconfiguration of UGI on one site for all NI.
- Radical prostatectomy for prostate cancer following a decision, regionally, that this procedure would be centralised at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Elective paediatric orthopaedic surgery following the retirement of an orthopaedic surgeon in September 2011. Paediatric orthopaedic inpatient surgery is now performed in Belfast. Paediatric orthopaedic outpatient services have been maintained at Altnagelvin provided by paediatric surgeons from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has for mental health respite care in North Down following the recent decision to close the House 9 mental facility as a result of Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority assessment.

(AQW 18298/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Trust is currently negotiating the provision of a respite bed within one of their statutory residential facilities in Enterprise Court in order to replace the bed that had been provided within House 9.

Mental Health Illnesses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what alternative respite care is available for carers of people diagnosed with mental health illnesses in North Down, given the closure of the House 9 mental health facility.

(AQW 18299/11-15)

Mr Poots: The following respite provision is currently available within the North Down area:

- Day Hospitals - In each of the Trust's three sectors, Down, Lisburn and North Down and Ards. Planned therapeutic programmes for individuals may provide respite care Monday to Friday 9 - 5pm.
- Day Care provision via voluntary sector agencies- Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health (NIAMH) i.e. Willow tree House, Lisburn and Scrabo View, Newtownards. Both provide a range of day care and support which may facilitate respite on a day to day basis Monday to Friday 9-5pm.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many business cases have been made by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service in each of the last five years; (ii) the average length of time of a business case takes from inception to approval during this period; (iii) the average cost of an individual business case; and (iv) how many business cases are currently awaiting approval.

(AQW 18318/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The table below details the number of business cases prepared by NIFRS in each of the last 5 years. Figures for 2008/09 and 2009/10 have been estimated as NIFRS commenced keeping formal records relating to business cases only from October 2009

Year	Business Cases
2012/13 to date	81
2011/12	138
2010/11	28
2009/10	34
2008/09	49

- (ii) Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service does not record the length of time a business case takes from inception to approval.
- (iii) The costs of preparing business cases are not collated.
- (iv) On 15 January 36 business cases were awaiting approval.

Health of Residents of the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding the Public Health Agency will direct towards improving the health of the population of the Kilcooley estate, Bangor over the next twelve months.

(AQW 18321/11-15)

Mr Poots: Over the next twelve months the PHA intend to maintain the services and funding for the population of the Kilcooley Estate as detailed in the response to AQW 18167/2011-15.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why respite provision for multiple sclerosis patients at the Dalriada Hospital has been cut from eight weeks to four weeks.

(AQW 18381/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that although there is no standard respite care package for MS patients, their respite policy states service users and their carers are entitled to respite of up to 8 weeks per year. Such provision is based on their individually assessed needs and allocated accordingly.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the respite provision available to people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in all areas.

(AQW 18382/11-15)

Mr Poots: Details of Health and Social Care Trusts' respite provision for people with Multiple Sclerosis in Northern Ireland are attached.

Belfast HSC Trust

Belfast Trust has a recurrent contract with the MS Society to provide a range of respite services for people with MS. These include yoga, neuro physiotherapy, counselling, art classes, exercise classes, aromatherapy, hand massage, mindfulness course, computer class, bowls, outings, history talks, and reminiscing class.

The Trust also contracts with a wide range of voluntary and independent organisations to provide a range of services for people with disabilities, including MS. These organisations have expertise in working with a full range of disabilities. The ultimate goal is to ensure the equality and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

The Trust has three day centres for people with disabilities providing a range of rehabilitative, social and respite functions which can be accessed by people with MS – Beech Hall in West Belfast, Woodlands in North Belfast, and Island Resource Centre in East Belfast.

Some service users are in receipt of direct payments which are used to purchase respite services tailored to their individual needs.

Northern HSC Trust

People in the Northern Trust area with MS have access to a range of respite provision including nursing and residential homes with appropriate RQIA registration; the MS unit in Dalriada; Thompson House in Lisburn; Foster Green Brain Injury Unit in Belfast; the Share Centre in Lisnaskea and the MS Centre in Cumbria. Respite is also provided by way of respite grants from the voluntary sector; used to help people to go away for respite breaks and also through Direct Payments.

Southern HSC Trust

People aged 18-65, diagnosed with MS in the SHSCT area, are provided with respite in nursing and residential homes, at Forster Green Hospital in Belfast and through the use of Direct Payments.

South Eastern HSC trust

Within South Eastern Trust there are 7 neurological respite beds situated in Thompson House Hospital which can be accessed by people with MS. In addition, people with MS may avail of the usual range of respite options, including residential or nursing homes or domiciliary based services.

Western HSC Trust

Within the Western HSC Trust area, people with MS have access to respite provision including Spruce House, Londonderry (in-patient respite); the Dalriada MS regional centre respite; the Share Centre in Lisnaskea; Strangford Lough Lodge Disabled Holiday Centre in Portaferry and at a range of nursing and residential homes –

Hill Crest Nursing Home, Omagh; Silverdale Nursing Home, Castlederg; Woodmount Nursing Home; Culmore Manor, Londonderry; Longfield PNH, Londonderry; Brooklands Nursing Home, Belfast; Cornfield Care Home, Londonderry; Deanfield PNH, Londonderry; Daleview House, Londonderry; Edgewater, Londonderry; Templemoyle, Londonderry; Rush Hall, Limavady.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the facilities to which patients with multiple sclerosis have been referred in each of the three years; and to list the number of referrals to each provision.

(AQW 18385/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Trusts have advised that this information is not readily available.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has considered any proposals to use the beds provided for patients with multiple sclerosis at Dalriada Hospital for any other purpose.

(AQW 18389/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that it has not considered any such proposals.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department or any of the Health and Social Care Trusts have considered proposals to refer patients with multiple sclerosis to care homes rather than the unit at Dalriada Hospital.

(AQW 18390/11-15)

Mr Poots: HSC Trusts access respite for their patients from a range of providers, including the facility at Dalriada Hospital. Service user engagement undertaken along with the Multiple Sclerosis Society in the Northern Trust area in 2010, confirmed that not all service users want their respite provided within a hospital based setting.

In accordance with Transforming Your Care, HSC Trusts are seeking to move from a service-led approach to a more person-centred model in which Trusts act as enablers, working in partnership with disabled people and their families/carers to help people access the support that meets their individual needs. This may include some of the traditional residential and day care services but will increasingly reflect a wider range of needs.

Registered Child Minders

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the new regulations and the impact they will have on registered child minders with assistants.

(AQW 18399/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department issued new Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 in July 2012. There are no new regulations associated with these standards.

Compliance with the standards is mandatory for all registered providers of childminding and day care services, including childminders who employ an assistant.

All services have until September 2013 to adjust their practice in accordance with standards and, during the interim period, Trusts will work with providers to assist them in attaining compliance.

The Health and Social Care Board has produced implementation guidance to accompany the standards and is working with a range of stakeholders, including the Northern Ireland Childminding Association to refine the guidance to minimise any adverse impact on children, parents and providers.

Transfer of Antrim Hospital

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether discussions have taken place between his Department and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on the transfer of Antrim Hospital to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and to publish the detail of these discussions.

(AQW 18401/11-15)

Mr Poots: No discussions have taken place between my Department and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on the transfer of the Antrim Hospital to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The public consultation on the proposed changes emerging from Transforming Your Care closed on the 15 January 2013. The consultation document stated that the principal hospital in the current Northern network is Antrim and that it would continue to deliver all core general hospital services. The document noted that a large number of people using Antrim Area Hospital live in the greater Belfast area and proposed that future hospital network arrangements should reflect this and ensure appropriate links with Belfast Hospitals. The responses to the consultation exercise are now being considered.

Fracking

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether anyone from his Department or the Public Health Agency has been invited to Enniskillen on 28 January 2013 to hear Dr. Eilish Cleary, Chief Medical Officer for Health for New Brunswick in Canada, discuss her recent report on fracking and its effects on public health; and (ii) whether anyone will be attending on behalf of his Department or the Public Health Agency.

(AQW 18404/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department and the Public Health Agency are aware of the event scheduled for 28th January and officials hope to attend.

Foster Care Allowance

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current rate payable per child though Foster Care Allowance, broken down by age; and to detail the purpose for which these allowances are to be used.

(AQW 18405/11-15)

Mr Poots: All foster carers, including kinship foster carers, receive financial support from social services to help them meet the costs associated with caring for foster children. The allowances from 1 April 2012 are detailed below. These allowances include provision for food (including school meals), household costs (including heating, electricity and general wear and tear), clothing and footwear, pocket money and travel costs. Foster carers are free to spend the food, household and travel allowances as they feel benefits the child most. In addition, foster carers receive additional payments for other essential items and for birthdays, holidays and Christmas. In some placements, enhanced payments or fees are made, on a case by case basis, in acknowledgement of the greater time and effort needed to care for and support some children.

Age Group	Per Week	Per 4 Weeks	Per Annum
0-4	£115.40	£461.60	£6000.80
5-10	£127.51	£510.00	£6630.80
11-15	£146.78	£587.12	£7632.56
16+	£170.02	£680.00	£8840.00

Thrombolysis

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients admitted to Antrim Hospital received out of hospital thrombolysis in the year (i) preceding; and (ii) following the withdrawal of the cardiac ambulance.

(AQW 18420/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not readily available as there is not a dedicated data base for the capture of such.

Information that has been taken from a ward source indicates that;

- (i) In the year prior to pre hospital thrombolysis for cardiac patients being taken over by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) there were 3 patients who received this treatment.
- (ii) In the year following pre hospital thrombolysis for cardiac patients being taken over by the NIAS there were 4 patients who received this treatment.

This information has been provided by the Northern HSC Trust who have advised that they cannot give assurance of the reliability of this information.

Greenfield Nursing Home, Strabane

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the future status of Greenfield Nursing Home, Strabane.

(AQW 18450/11-15)

Mr Poots: Departmental officials have been informed by the Western Health & Social Care Trust that no decision has been taken in relation to any change in the provision of services at any of its statutory residential homes, including Greenfield Residential Home.

Furthermore, the Trust will continue to develop its services to meet local needs in the context of reform and modernisation of service provision, and the strategic direction of Transforming Your Care. This outlines the expectation of a reduction in residential accommodation for older people over the next 5 years.

The public consultation on the proposals emerging from Transforming Your Care took place over the period 9 October 2012 to 15 January 2013. Decisions on the way forward will be taken in response to the feedback received during the consultation.

Any local decisions will be taken in a planned way with the involvement of residents, families and the local community.

Food Standards Agency of Ireland: Horsemeat

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for her assessment of the risk to public health posed by the information from the Food Standards Agency of Ireland that horsemeat has entered the food chain through beefburgers sold in supermarkets.

(AQW 18506/11-15)

Mr Poots: There is no evidence to suggest that there is a risk to public health posed by the information from the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's (FSAI) authenticity survey.

There may however prove to be food labelling regulation breaches identified. The fundamental principle of all food labelling rules is that a product must be labelled accurately. For example, if a product is labelled as a beef burger, it must only contain beef. If a product is labelled as a burger, the label should list all of the meat contained. It is unacceptable for consumers to be misled in any way.

That is why the Food Standards Agency (FSA), as the UK central competent authority, has launched an urgent investigation into the issues highlighted by the survey. The FSA is working closely with the food industry and FSAI to ascertain how or why horse meat was used in the affected products. All of the retailers involved so far have removed potentially affected products from their shelves.

Fire Station in Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the development of the new fire station in Omagh, following the collapse of the Patten Construction Group.

(AQW 18513/11-15)

Mr Poots: The process for the selection of a replacement contractor to complete the Omagh Fire Station project has commenced. It is anticipated that tender documentation will be issued on 23 January 2013. It is intended to appoint a contractor to re-commence works on site in March 2013 with a planned completion date in February 2014.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests; and (ii) the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18607/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I can confirm that my Department has no record of any staff who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests.
- (ii) I can confirm that my Department has not incurred any associated financial cost to its departmental budget since 3 December 2012 due to the civil unrest associated with the flag protests.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any of the Fire and Rescue Service's declared underspend will be used for disability and special needs services in the Glens and elsewhere in Antrim.

(AQW 18714/11-15)

Mr Poots: Any underspends arising within the resource budgets of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, or any of my Department's Arms Length Bodies, are considered as part of the management of the Department's overall financial resources to secure the key Ministerial priority of delivering financial breakeven. In terms of capital underspends, these are typically considered as part of the overall proactive management of the capital programme in order to identify other projects to which funding can be allocated.

Department of Justice

Benefit Appeal Hearings

Mr Wells asked Minister of Justice why the Courts and Tribunals Service decided to transfer benefit appeal hearings to court buildings.

(AQW 18102/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The use of courthouses for social security benefit appeals is not unusual as hearings are already heard in courthouses throughout Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service is required to maximise court estate utilisation and efficiently use public funds. Tribunal business levels are increasing and will continue to rise with the advent of Welfare Reform.

Courthouses provide an independent and dignified environment with appropriate facilities for a diverse range of hearings in less formal accommodation, including civil and family matters. The use of suitable informal hearing rooms in courthouses will be carefully planned and listing tribunals when courts are hearing major criminal cases will be avoided.

Prison Staff Security Threats

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what assistance is provided for prison staff who have been forced to leave their homes because of security threats.

(AQW 18104/11-15)

Mr Ford: In addition to advice and support, financial assistance is available for:

- temporary accommodation;
- travel & subsistence expenses;
- removal expenses;
- mortgage arrangement and survey fees;
- solicitors and estate agents fees;
- transfer grant to cover additional items of expense; and
- additional housing cost allowance.

Help is also available when a shortfall occurs between the purchase price of the new house and the money available for the purchase; an advance of salary up to half of gross pay can be allowed. Should an advance be granted, repayment is deferred for two years, after which it becomes repayable through monthly salary deductions for up to 10 years.

Prisoners Released for Christmas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many prisoners were released for Christmas; and (ii) of these, how many (a) did not return at the appointed time; (b) defaulted or breached the terms of their release; (c) came to police attention; and (d) were returned to custody before their appointed time.

(AQW 18106/11-15)

Mr Ford: A total of 72 prisoners were released under the Christmas Home Leave Scheme. Of these, two prisoners failed to return at the time stipulated by the Christmas Home Leave Board.

Ten prisoners and one young offender failed to abide by their home leave conditions. Of these eleven, ten came to the attention of the police and seven were returned to custody before the time originally stipulated.

Royal Ulster Constabulary Part-time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether the £392,000 surplus from the Royal Ulster Constabulary Part-time Reserve Gratuity Scheme was (i) kept ring-fenced; (ii) held within the Department; or (iii) surrendered.

(AQW 18141/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is approximately £392,000 remaining of the £20m funding provided by Treasury for the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme. This residue is held within the Department awaiting a final decision. No decision has yet been taken on how the residue can or should be used.

Dissident Republican Threat

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what additional resources his Department is employing to help combat the dissident republican threat.

(AQW 18142/11-15)

Mr Ford: 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 Treasury to meet PSNI security pressures.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked inister of Justice, in relation to the staff suspended from duty and subsequently dismissed following the investigations into the deaths in custody of Colin Bell and John Deery at Maghaberry Prison, to detail the (i) start and end date of each suspension; (ii) dates of recommendations by Adjudicating Governors to dismiss the staff members; (iii) the staff who appealed to the Prison Service and the date that each appeal was determined by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; (iv) the result of each appeal; (v) the total cost to the Prison Service in respect of each suspended member; and (vi) the combined total cost in the Colin Bell and the John Derry cases.

(AQW 18149/11-15)

Mr Ford: As less than five members of staff were suspended and subsequently dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, in both cases cited, the information has been withheld.

This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

HMP Maghaberry and HMP Magilligan

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of prisoners released on parole from HMP Maghaberry and HMP Magilligan during 2012, and of those released how many had been imprisoned for committing (i) sexual related crime; (ii) terrorist related crime; and (iii) other crime.

(AQW 18209/11-15)

Mr Ford: Table A below details the number of prisoners released on home leave from both Maghaberry and Magilligan Prisons during 2012:

TABLE A

	Maghaberry	Magilligan
Total number of prisoners released	539	1,437
Number of prisoners released who were convicted of sexual related crime	24	50
Number of prisoners released who were convicted of terrorist related crime	20	Nil
Number of prisoners released who were convicted of other crime	495	1,387

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17942/11-15, (i) to detail the reason why the Northern Ireland Prison Service did not test the competence of those in receipt of Supporting Prisoners at Risk training to an appropriate standard; and (ii) whether, since June 2012, the Northern Ireland Prison Service has introduced an examination or assessment for all staff attending such training.

(AQW 18212/11-15)

Mr Ford: The testing of competence does not routinely take place following regular training courses and was not in place prior to June 2012 in relation to Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) training. An assessment was introduced in June 2012.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Committee for Justice is deemed to be a key stakeholder in the consultation process relevant to the proposed revised Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline and Code of Ethics, and to explain the reason if it is not so deemed.

(AQW 18214/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Justice Committee will be given the opportunity to consider the Code of Conduct and Discipline and Code of Ethics on completion of the drafting process.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16744/11-15, to provide a copy of the staff training programme for Northern Ireland Prison Service staff who are responsible for the care, management and support of such prisoners as outlined, and in particular those at risk of self-harm.

(AQW 18215/11-15)

Mr Ford: While it would not be feasible to provide all of the information requested due to the significant content of the pack, the programme's aims and objectives are attached at Annex A.

Annex A

Aim:

To identify prisoners at risk of suicide or self harm and provide holistic care, support and interventions, in a multi-disciplined manner.

Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- Recognise behaviours, statements and reactions that may indicate a risk of suicide or self-harm.
- Open a SPAR Document and complete a Referral Form.
- Recognise that accurate and timely record keeping is essential, in the management and support of prisoners deemed 'at risk'.
- Understand the procedure for placing an inmate into a Special Observation Cell.
- Take part and contribute to Case Reviews.
- Recognise the importance of effective and accurate handovers.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) to detail the aspects of disciplinary and/or employment legislation or related policies that differ between the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Prison Service; (ii) whether PSNI training officers have been made aware of the differences and are able to provide the necessary tuition to meet the specific needs of the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and (iii) whether the Chief Constable will be held accountable for any future litigation cases related to the malpractice or failings of the proposed Professional Standards Unit.

(AQW 18252/11-15)

Mr Ford: The PSNI and the Northern Ireland Prison Service are two separate bodies; therefore the employment legislation and disciplinary policies relating to each of them are unrelated. Prison officers are Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) employees, whereas police officers are not employed by NICS, but are warranted officers with terms and conditions set out in specific legislation agreed at the Police Negotiating Board.

In respect of discipline, it would therefore not be appropriate to compare these organisations. Differences in employment legislation and disciplinary policies are not pertinent to the generic investigative skills training which staff in the Professional Standards Unit will receive from the PSNI.

The Chief Constable's office will not be held accountable if, in the future, there are litigation cases relating to alleged malpractice or failings of the Professional Standards Unit.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many Northern Ireland Prison Service staff have been dismissed for gross misconduct; and (ii) of those dismissed, how many appealed but withdrew the appeal before hearing and received a discretionary or similar monetary payment, since 2004.

(AQW 18253/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 2004 the Northern Ireland Prison Service has dismissed 26 staff for gross misconduct. None of the individuals who appealed to the Civil Service Appeal Board withdrew their appeal prior to their hearing.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that the Inspectors who conducted the announced inspection at Maghaberry Prison in March 2012 found that serious complaints made by prisoners

about staff were often poorly investigated and that more robust monitoring is required, to outline his proposals for how the Northern Ireland Prison Service will manage such complaints in the future to ensure compliance with correct procedures and best practice.

(AQW 18259/11-15)

Mr Ford: A dedicated team has been established within Maghaberry Prison to routinely monitor prisoners' complaints ensuring compliance with the correct procedure. The team will also monitor the withdrawal of complaints made against staff.

All serious complaints by prisoners against staff are now referred directly to the duty governor or a senior manager for investigation. If appropriate, the complaint can be investigated by the PSNI.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16619/11-15 and with reference to paragraphs 44 and 63 of the Pearson Review Team Report of 9 June 2009, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service will be employing a bank of experienced investigators, namely retired senior police officers and others with investigative skills, and if not give the reason.

(AQW 18261/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service will not be seeking to recruit retired senior police officers for the Professional Standards Unit. Staff will be appointed from within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and provided with appropriate training.

Convicted Sex Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convicted sex offenders being managed in the community are currently unaccounted for; and of these offenders (i) for how long they have been missing; (ii) what is their category of sex offender; and (iii) when they were (a) convicted; and (b) released back into the community.

(AQW 18301/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information concerning offenders who have failed to comply with the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Prisoner Release Victims Information Scheme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of victims of crime who registered with the Prisoner Release Victims Information Scheme since its inception; and the number of victims who did not.

(AQW 18302/11-15)

Mr Ford: As at 11 January 2013, 3,663 victims of crime (or their families) have met the qualifying criteria for registering with the Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme. Of these, 926 have registered with the scheme and 2,737 have not.

Supporting Prisoners at Risk

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that the journal of custody of suicide victim Frances McKeown showed that she knew how to appear non-suicidal, and a body of evidence stating that those contemplating suicide become adept at hiding their feelings, whether he will consider his stance on the current Supporting Prisoners at Risk procedures and ensure that these procedures are applied to vulnerable prisoners at all times and introduce a grading system of risk.

(AQW 18303/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is currently no decision to review the SPAR procedures in order to apply them to vulnerable prisoners at all times.

Legal Services Commission

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice on how many occasions the Legal Services Commission has run out of legal aid funds and (i) requested; and (ii) been granted additional finance; and to list the dates of payments and the additional amounts requested and awarded.

(AQW 18304/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12 April 2010; therefore financial information has been provided from 2010/11 onwards.

The Northern Ireland Legal Service Commission's (NILSC) initial budget allocations for legal aid funds in 2010/11 and 2011/12 are set out in the table below, with comparison against annual expenditure levels.

TABLE 1: LEGAL AID BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2010/11 AND 2011/12

	Main Budget Allocation £m	Additional Funding granted £m	Total Funding granted £m	Total Net Spend £m
2010/11	85	17.7	102.7	101.1
2011/12	83.6	25.3	108.9	108.2

Note: Figures relate to civil and criminal legal aid and running costs.

Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) in-year monitoring process provides a formal system for subsequent review of spending plans to ensure that resources are directed towards the highest priority areas, offering an opportunity for Departments to bid for additional funding allocation, if required.

As set out in the above table, additional resources of £17.7m and £25.3m were allocated to the NILSC via Budget Monitoring Rounds in years 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. The NILSC met all liabilities throughout this period and did not run out of legal aid funds.

In 2012/13, an unfunded pressure of £22m was identified by the NILSC and bid for during the recent Monitoring Round. The NILSC wrote to the Law Society of Northern Ireland and the Bar Council of Northern Ireland on 18 December 2012, to inform them of the in-year funding pressures which have emerged in the course of the financial year and to advise them of the work which continues to secure additional funding. This is the first occasion that the NILSC has felt it is necessary to alert the legal profession in this way. My Department has already provided additional budget cover of £10m towards this pressure and is considering what further funds may be made available. Final budget allocations will be confirmed by end of January 2013.

Additional published information relating to the NILSC's expenditure in the years prior to devolution is available in the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) report on Managing Criminal Legal Aid, dated 28 June 2011. (Refer to page 36, para. 4.3).

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17469/11-15, if he will provide guidance on where the Northern Ireland Prison Service should hold, store or transfer this information should it be required by another agency or person at a later date.

(AQW 18305/11-15)

Mr Ford: Decisions relating to ill-health are only held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) for current staff and those retired on these grounds. Once a member of staff is dismissed they are no

longer an employee and NIPS are not entitled to have access to medical decisions taken after this date. Therefore, NIPS are not required to hold, store or transfer such information.

Limavady Courthouse

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice whether he will conduct an assessment of the impact on users of the closure of Limavady Courthouse, to identify ways of minimising inconvenience.

(AQW 18329/11-15)

Mr Ford: The impact of closure on users was considered throughout the consultation process and informed my decision. While there is potential that some users may be inconvenienced, there will be other users who will benefit from the transfer of business to Coleraine Courthouse. All court users, in particular victims and witnesses, will be provided with a higher standard of accommodation and facilities at the Coleraine Courthouse.

Fireworks Licences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many fireworks licences have been issued in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 18367/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice became responsible for issuing firework licences on 12 April 2010. The information available from that date is set out below:

Year	Firework Licences Issued
2010	615
2011	575
2012	570

Firework Offences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, to detail the number of convictions for offences related to the use of fireworks, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18368/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is as follows:

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS FOR FIREWORK RELATED OFFENCES 2004-2009¹.

Year	Convictions
2005	17
2006	10
2007	48
2008	26
2009	21

The offences included are, unlawfully keeping fireworks for sale, throwing firework, unlawfully exposing fireworks for sale, possession of the “banger”, possession of fireworks without a licence, possession of prohibited fireworks, selling fireworks without production of a licence, failing to keep proper records of fireworks sales, purchasing fireworks without a licence and using fireworks without a licence.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2005-2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2009 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Badger Baiting

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of convictions for badger baiting in each of the last five years.

(AQW 18413/11-15)

Mr Ford: Badger baiting related offences may be prosecuted under a number of statutes. In particular, badgers are classed as a Schedule 5 species and protected within the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985. Badger baiting may be prosecuted as an animal cruelty offence under Article 10 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 and section 13 of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

Conviction data does not distinguish between offences involving badgers and other animals under this legislation. In terms of more general convictions for direct cruelty to animals, there have been 63 convictions in total between 2005 and 2009 (the latest year for which conviction statistics are available): three for damaging or destroying the shelter of a wild animal and 60 for more general, direct animal cruelty offences.

The table below gives the number convicted for the calendar years 2005 – 2009 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR RELEVANT ANIMAL CRUELTY RELATED OFFENCES, 2005-2009

Year	Number of Convictions
2005	18
2006	14
2007	19
2008	12
2009	10
Total	63

The offences included are, Causing Unnecessary suffering to animals, Cruelty to animals and Damaging or destroying shelter of wild animal.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2005 to 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2009 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Policing and Justice in Local Communities

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what courses his Department makes available to help young people understand the role and responsibility his Department has for policing and justice in local communities.

(AQW 18427/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department is committed to engaging with young people in order to raise awareness and understanding of its areas of responsibility. While it does not offer specific courses, there are a wide range of initiatives being taken forward that help young people to understand the justice system. These are detailed in the table below.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) also have a role to play in raising awareness around policing and community safety issues through their engagement with communities and the delivery of solutions to locally identified issues.

A wide range of information on the roles and responsibilities of my Department is also available on NI Direct.

Lead	Initiative
Department of Justice	Outreach events with schools to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of becoming involved in crime. Recent engagement has focussed on anti-social behaviour and hate crime.
	Contributions to the Young Citizen's Passport Northern Ireland , a guide to those parts of the law that have most relevance to everyday life for young people in Northern Ireland. Made available to all young people in secondary education.
	Research material provided by the Department as well as material from outreach events made available to pupils through the LearningNI network.
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service	An outreach programme which includes a number of annual events including the Magistrates' Mock Trial Competition for Key Stage 3 pupils, the Advocate Challenge and work experience for Key Stage 4 pupils.
	Annual Internship Programme offering placements for second-year law students in Northern Ireland. Providing opportunities to meet Judges and legal practitioners and gain insight into administration of the courts.
	Facilitation of court visits by school and community groups, which give an insight into the workings of the court and justice system.
Youth Justice Agency	The Generic Offender Programme which includes a section designed to help young people referred to the Agency understand the importance of laws, law enforcement and the responsibilities of citizens. This programme includes examination of the role of the PSNI and wider criminal justice system.
	Young people on Community Responsibility Orders spend 50% of their time examining citizenship issues and impact of crime on victims.

Policing

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to outline his Department's role within policing.
(AQW 18428/11-15)

Mr Ford: Policing is a complex business involving a number of key stakeholders, all of whom have a shared interest in ensuring the delivery of the best possible policing service in partnership with the wider community.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has a range of powers relating to devolved policing and justice functions, set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010. As Justice Minister I am accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the policing and justice functions for which the DOJ is responsible, namely the resourcing, legislative and policy framework of the justice system. The Department keeps these under regular review.

The Department is responsible for securing adequate resources for policing and ensuring the propriety of their use.

Under the terms of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I may determine and revise the long term objectives for policing in Northern Ireland, in consultation with the Policing Board, Chief Constable and such other persons as deemed to be appropriate.

The Department is also responsible for the effective governance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, arrangements for which are set out in a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum for each organisation, in line with DFP requirements.

My Department, alongside the Policing Board, is responsible for overseeing the work of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) through the PCSP Joint Committee. PCSPs play a pivotal role in consulting and engaging with the local community in order to identify and prioritise the issues of concern in relation to policing and community safety.

Maghaberry Prison

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to outline the changes that have been implemented to the regime in the separated section of Maghaberry Prison since the end of the so called dirty protest by republican prisoners.

(AQW 18436/11-15)

Mr Ford: The regime for republican prisoners held in Roe House was returned to a pre-protest position to reflect the fact that prisoners were no longer participating in protest action. No further changes have been made.

Human Trafficking

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the resources that are being made available to facilitate the work of the Engagement Group on Human Trafficking.

(AQW 18517/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department hosts meetings of the Engagement Group on Human Trafficking and provides the secretariat. No financial resources have been allocated to the Group as such, but clearly major expenditure is allocated to tackling human trafficking. The purpose of the Group is to formalise and strengthen partnerships between statutory bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and to provide an arena for the exchange of information, ideas and expertise.

A Crimestoppers campaign, launched on 21 January 2013, to raise awareness of human trafficking for forced labour and domestic servitude, is an example of the Group working in practice. My Department and the Police Service of Northern Ireland contributed funding for the development of posters and leaflets, as well as a video and a radio clip. Members of the Engagement Group then assisted in distributing the leaflets and posters across Northern Ireland.

G8 Summit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many police officers from outside Northern Ireland are expected to be drafted in to help police the G8 Summit; (ii) whether they will operate in PSNI uniforms and as PSNI officers; (iii) what is the expected cost; and (iv) from what constabularies they will be sourced.

(AQW 18530/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mutual aid is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Training Centre, Desertcreat

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether the insignia of Her Majesty's Prisons will be displayed at the new training centre planned for Desertcreat; and what are the plans for such provision.

(AQW 18588/11-15)

Mr Ford: The insignia of the three partner services, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, will be displayed in appropriate positions within the new Community Safety College at Desertcreat.

Northern Ireland High Risk and Conflict Areas

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to detail any communication his Department has with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs in relation to people from Northern Ireland working in high risk and conflict areas.

(AQW 18628/11-15)

Mr Ford: There has not been any communication between my Department and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs on this matter.

Department for Regional Development

Salt Bins

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development how many salt bins have been provided on public roads in each winter since 2009.

(AQW 18201/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The number of salt bins provided by my Department's Roads Service, in each winter since 2009, is detailed in the table below:

Year	Number of Salt Bins provided
2009	3516
2010	3875
2011	4281
2012	4759
Total	16431

In addition, the following number of grit piles has been provided over the same period:

Year	Number of Grit Piles provided
2009	37731
2010	39593
2011/12	50286
Total	127610

Footpath Upgrades

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on upgrading footpaths in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor in each of the last five years,
(AQW 18203/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service completed a footway reconstruction and upgrading scheme in Kilcooley Estate in 2011/12, at a cost of £145,000.

This work was in addition to the routine maintenance repairs carried out in the estate over the past five years for which cost details are not readily available.

Planning Service and Roads Service

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) for his assessment of Spatial Planning Advice Note: SP12/09 Planning Applications for Wind Turbines Sited Near to Trunk Roads, which is used by the Planning Service and Highways Agency in England; (ii) how this advice could be used by the Planning Service and Roads Service when assessing wind turbine applications considering that with PPS18 and best practice guidance as the only substantive requirement for safe location of turbines and roads is for a turbine setback distance of fall over height plus 10 percent from a road.
(AQW 18268/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have consulted with officials from my Department's Roads Service and can confirm my Department currently uses the guidance available in PPS 18 and the accompanying Good Practice Guidance, which it considers to be adequate. Details of haulage routes, access, etc as part of the Environment Impact Assessment, along with confirmation about de-icing and shadow flicker, if considered necessary, are requested. The set-back of fall over distance plus 10% is also applied. Although this is seldom an issue, it has been used on a few occasions.

Wind Farms

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of (i) the risks associated with wind farms that are located close to roads, in particular junctions, sharp bends and pedestrian and cyclist crossings; and (ii) whether he agrees that wind farms could cause visual distraction.
(AQW 18271/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently uses the guidance available in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 and the accompanying Good Practice Guidance in relation to wind farms. The guidance covers many of the issues related to the road safety impacts of wind farm developments, such as structural failure and visual distraction. The issue of visual distraction is addressed in sections 1.3.25 and 1.3.55 of the Good Practice Guidance and forms the basis of any assessment undertaken.

Roads Service officials further advise they are not aware of any wind farms in existence, or proposed, that could be considered to be close to junctions, sharp bends, or pedestrian or cyclist crossings on a major road. Wind farms are, by their very nature, much more likely to be sited in open spaces, usually well away from any form of settlement.

Wind farms, like many other features visible from the road network have the potential to cause a visual distraction. However, I am content that application of the aforementioned guidance ensures there is adequate consideration of the potential risks caused by wind farms.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the steps that Northern Ireland Water have taken to source materials and equipment locally and to outline the initiatives taken to increase procurement opportunities for local suppliers.
(AQW 18273/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it takes the following steps to ensure its tender opportunities are made known to local and regional suppliers:-

- Publishing all tender opportunities on the E-Sourcing Northern Ireland website. This website is used extensively by the public sector in Northern Ireland to advertise tender opportunities.
- Publishing tender opportunities, tender guidance and details of the tender programme for the year ahead, on the NIW's website www.niwater.com.
- To ensure compliance with the Utilities Regulations, all tender opportunities with an estimated value of £347,868 or above, are advertised in the European Journal which can be accessed by local suppliers.
- Taking appropriate steps to implement procurement guidance from Central Procurement Directorate, some of which is specifically directed towards improving opportunities for local enterprises.

In addition, NIW recognises that some local suppliers may not have the capacity to contract directly with NIW, but will participate in the supply chain as sub-contractors. To assist local suppliers in identifying potential sub-contracting opportunities, NIW publishes on its website details of contracts awarded along with the details of the successful suppliers.

Finally, NIW annually advertises and hosts its own 'Meet the buyer' event and actively takes part in other such events that are hosted by local business forums, as and when appropriate. These events provide an opportunity for local suppliers to:-

- Better understand the tendering procedure.
- Network with other suppliers from across the industry.
- Inform NIW of their capabilities which NIW can use to shape future sourcing strategies.
- Know where to obtain information on potential tender opportunities.
- Discuss current/envisaged opportunities with procurement professionals.
- Have their procurement queries answered.

Unadopted Roads and Footpaths

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how he plans to deal with the number of unadopted roads and footpaths.

(AQW 18281/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service works within current Private Streets legislation to bring about the satisfactory completion of roads determined for adoption within new housing developments.

Roads Service liaises with developers and other responsible parties to agree arrangements to have the necessary works completed and, when appropriate, uses the appropriate legal enforcement powers and calls upon the road bond monies, if required.

Bangor and Holywood Masterplans

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what role his Department will have in the Bangor and Holywood Masterplans; and what financial support the Department will provide.

(AQW 18309/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Social Development (DSD), in conjunction with North Down Borough Council (NDBC), has led in the development of a Masterplan for Bangor, which was published in July 2011. My Department's Roads Service was part of an advisory group providing assistance to the development of urban regeneration initiatives for the town centre of Bangor. The same arrangements are to be adopted when the advisory group for the Holywood Masterplan is formed in the coming months.

My Department was asked to fund the reconfiguration of Hamilton Road in Bangor Town Centre, if traffic modelling showed a future benefit. However, this benefit has not yet been proven and such a scheme may not be classed as a priority, when considered alongside other competing projects promoting safety and traffic progression.

My Department has also been asked to contribute to the cost of resurfacing the carriageways within the extents of the Bangor and Holywood public realm schemes. I can confirm Roads Service would be prepared to fund and carry out resurfacing works to the main carriageway (High Street) as part of the Holywood public realm scheme. However, it is not in a position to commit any further additional funding for roads within Bangor, at this time.

My officials remain committed to working with DSD, NDBC and their consultants on the development of the Holywood Masterplan programme, as well as implementation of the public realm schemes in Bangor and Holywood over the period of the works, to the end of 2015.

Footpath Resurfacing

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether all the footpaths in the Kilcooley estate, Bangor have now been resurfaced.

(AQW 18320/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: All of the footways in Kilcooley Estate, Bangor were originally constructed with flagstones. My Department's Roads Service has resurfaced in asphalt all of the footways for which it has maintenance responsibilities, however others within the estate, which the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for, remain in their original form.

Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what support his Department is giving to help achieve the One Plan theme of Sustainable Connected Cities as part of the Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture vision.

(AQW 18336/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is a member of the One Plan Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Group and is committed to supporting implementation of the One Plan. This is reflected in the significant commitment my Department is making towards the delivery of a range of Roads and Public Transport projects in the North West. These align with the One Plan and include the following:

Public Transport:

- funding a project to upgrade the railway track between Coleraine and Londonderry over three phases, with the first phase to be completed in 2013 in time to accommodate a projected increase in passengers for the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture year;
- a full revision of Londonderry city bus services by Translink and creation of a quality bus corridor; and
- development of proposals for a bus priority lane and investigating associated technology.

Roads:

- the proposed dualling of part of the A5 between Londonderry and Strabane improving access to both Londonderry, the main centre of population in the North West with its port and airport facilities and to Strabane, with its important cross border link. In addition, Roads Service continues to progress development of the planning process for the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dualling scheme, with the results awaited of a Public Inquiry held last September (progression of this scheme will be subject to funding being made available in future budget settlements);
- an extension of park and ride facilities at Drumahoe to 271 spaces (to be delivered by the middle of February 2013);

- completion of the Outer Orbital Route Feasibility Study;
- the development and processing of legislation required to deliver a Residents' Parking Scheme in the Bogside by end of 2013;
- the development of a Car Park Management system, which will utilise variable messaging signs located strategically throughout the city; and
- the delivery of a traffic calming scheme at Rossville Street/Lecky Road, and progression of a further scheme at Steelstown Road.

In addition, officials within my Department continue to engage with ILEX and Derry City Council to examine further opportunities to support the delivery of the One Plan and are currently looking at options to widen the One Plan as part of a Spatial Planning Framework for the wider North West.

Rural Roads Infrastructure

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the budget that has been set aside for the maintenance of the rural roads infrastructure in the (i) Omagh District Council area; and (ii) Strabane District Council area in (a) 2013/2014; and (b) 2014/2015; and whether additional monies have been secured for essential maintenance work in the previous three years' monitoring rounds. **(AQW 18339/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain separate financial records to distinguish between rural and urban roads. In addition, final budgets for the maintenance of all roads infrastructure in the Omagh and Strabane District Council areas for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years have not yet been set. When available, budget details will be published in the Annual Reports to District Councils.

Details of additional monies secured for Structural Maintenance in Omagh and Strabane District Councils in the three financial years from 2009/10 to 2011/12 are provided in the table below:

District Council	Financial Year		
	2009/10 (£k)	2010/11 (£k)	2011/12 (£k)
Omagh	932	1,515	1,736
Strabane	741	1,082	1,507

Town Centre Trade

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what assessment has been completed to ascertain the impact on town centre trade of charging for car parks that were previously free to use, **(AQW 18378/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's budget, which was approved by the Assembly in 2011, included plans to increase parking charges in each of the four years of the budget period. While the Year 1 increases were applied, including the introduction of charges to a number of car parks which were previously free, I announced in November 2012 there would be a freeze on any further increases within the current budget period.

Charging in Roads Service car parks serves to discourage all-day parking and consequently improves availability of spaces for town centre users. While it is beyond the remit of my Department to monitor levels of trading in town and city centres, I would expect that improved accessibility, through the increased availability of car-parking spaces, would make a positive contribution towards town centre activity.

Civil Servants

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of Civil Servants from his Department who have left work early since 3 December 2012 due to unrest; (ii) and to detail the associated financial cost to his departmental budget.

(AQW 18456/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not issued any formal instruction to its staff on this matter. However, staff can make use of flexible working arrangements which allow them to leave work early if required. The nature of flexible working is such that hours unworked during a particular day or time period are made up at a later stage.

Translink: Community Transport Pilot Scheme

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the proposed pilot scheme between community transport provision and Translink is on schedule.

(AQO 3169/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is working in co-operation with Translink, the Southern Education and Library Board, the Rural Community Transport Partnerships, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and representatives from the Health Boards to identify the opportunities for improvements to the integration and efficiency of publicly-funded transport services. In order to assess the short, medium and long-term changes that are possible, it is proposed to undertake a pilot project in the Dungannon/Cookstown area. It is expected that after a period of planning the pilot will begin later this year, followed by an evaluation, the duration of which has yet to be decided. Local stakeholders will be involved at key points throughout the project.

A5: Funding

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any recent discussions he has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to securing the budget for the A5.

(AQO 3170/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department continues to work closely with the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding future budgets for the A5 and any financial implications arising from the delayed start to the scheme.

This co-operation has enabled some internal reprofiling of my Department's budget, which will facilitate the deferral of some of the A5 allocation, to when it is required. In addition, at my prompting, the Finance Minister has secured flexibility from HM Treasury to carry forward £50 million of Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI) borrowing power into 2014-15. This additional flexibility is immensely helpful in managing the ongoing delay to the A5 project.

Taxis: Bus Lanes

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the consultation on all taxis being allowed access to bus lanes.

(AQO 3171/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's officials are currently finalising the Consultation Report relating to all taxis being allowed access to bus lanes. I hope to be in a position to make a decision on this issue before the end of this month.

However, should I decide that all taxis are permitted access to bus lanes, this would be conditional on the Department of the Environment changing the taxi licensing regime to move to a single licence type.

Cars: Short Journeys

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on how his Department is encouraging the public not to use their cars for short journeys.

(AQO 3173/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Executive has agreed my Active Travel Strategy and I intend to launch the Strategy shortly.

The strategy was developed in co-operation with other Departments. It encourages more active and healthier modes of travel such as cycling and walking – particularly for the large number of shorter journeys which we all make.

The strategy includes funding active travel demonstration projects to show how active travel can benefit people and communities, the environment and the economy, and in so doing generate enthusiasm to develop active travel more widely. One of these projects, the Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme, involves installing a third generation bike hire scheme in Belfast city centre by 2014/15.

Under 'Belfast on the Move' 20 new controlled pedestrian crossing points, 0.8km of new dedicated cycle lanes and 2.6km of new bus lanes, which also accommodate cyclists, will be introduced within the city centre. This will help free up city centre street space for the benefit of walking and cycling.

My Department continues to work with Schools promoting the walking and cycling targets in the Programme for Government. Working with school children provides the opportunity to mould travel behaviour for life.

My Department was at the forefront of implementing the NICS Cycle to Work scheme which I launched last June. This scheme enables staff to hire a cycle for use for the journey to and from work. This scheme has been made available to staff within the Northern Ireland Civil Service since June 2012.

Car Parking: Block Payment Schemes

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to introduce weekly, monthly or yearly block payment schemes for town centre car parking,

(AQO 3174/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: A limited number of monthly and quarterly season tickets are made available at the majority of Roads Service charged car-parks. The season tickets offer a cost saving in comparison to daily charges.

The number of season tickets made available for each car-park will depend on the number of spaces and normal usage of spaces within the car-park but does not secure the availability of a parking space in the car-park.

At present, there are no plans to introduce weekly or yearly season tickets for town centre car parking.

Street Lighting: Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the delays in repairing street lighting in Belfast.

(AQO 3175/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am pleased to inform the Member that the contractual issue, which had recently delayed the repair of street lights within Belfast, has been resolved. The backlog of repairs has also been cleared and any new street lighting outages are presently being attended to within the normal response period of 5 working days.

Car Parking: Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has considered the introduction of pay on foot (barrier) car parks in Enniskillen town centre to improve compliance with parking payments and to reduce traffic congestion in the town.

(AQO 3176/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Although pay on foot car parks are automated, they do require the presence of a parking attendant. Due to the costs of purchasing and maintaining the equipment required to operate these car parks and the requirement to provide an attendant, the capital and ongoing operational costs for Pay on Foot barrier systems are substantially higher than those for Pay and Display car-parks. As my Department is obliged to seek recovery of the costs of providing parking services, its policy is to use more economical Pay and Display car parking systems, where possible.

My Department therefore currently has no plans to introduce any Pay on Foot car parks in Enniskillen.

Unadopted Housing and Roads: NAMA

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development what proposals are in place for dealing with unadopted housing developments and roads which are National Asset Management Agency held properties.

(AQO 3177/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In cases where housing developers have ceased trading, including those sites owned by the National Asset Management Agency, officials from my Department's Roads Service will liaise with the responsible parties to seek completion of unfinished roads.

Irrespective of current ownership, the bond providers remain liable for the cost of completing the roads, if the developer or administrators are unable or unwilling to do so. If necessary, enforcement action will be taken, with bond monies being accessed and used to complete the roads to a suitable standard for adoption into the public road network.

Department for Social Development

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the consequences if the Welfare Reform Bill does not become law.

(AQW 18161/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Although Northern Ireland has devolved responsibility for Social Security, by and large we operate a single social security system as the cost of social security benefits payments is met direct from HM Treasury on a needs basis. Effectively this means that individuals in Northern Ireland receive the same by way of social security benefits and tax credits as individuals elsewhere in the UK and are subject to the same conditions of entitlement.

If the Welfare Reform Bill for Northern Ireland does not become law then the outcome has to be planned for, that the Northern Ireland Block Grant would be affected by very significant costs on an ongoing basis until such times as parity is reinstated. Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary for Work and Pensions has already made it clear that divergence from the GB social security system would have financial consequences for the Block Grant. The level of any adjustment would be a matter for discussion between the Northern Ireland Executive and the United Kingdom government. Any reduction in the Block Grant would have major consequences across all Northern Ireland Departments and their spending priorities with the inevitable consequence that other public services provided to all citizens in Northern Ireland would suffer.

An issue which cannot be ignored in such a scenario would be our ability to continue to process claims and pay claimants under current benefit rules. The IT systems used in Northern Ireland are

owned and maintained by GB, with Northern Ireland paying a small percentage of the cost of running the GB system. As GB implements the new benefits and changes to existing benefits created by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 the DWP IT system will be changed. In that event Northern Ireland would have to either procure a Northern Ireland specific system or implement clerical work-arounds in order to continue to pay benefits under existing rules. Neither solution is appealing and paying full costs of procuring and maintaining a dedicated IT system would not be affordable.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been spent on Neighbourhood Renewal for the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor over the last five financial years.

(AQW 18165/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total amount spent on Neighbourhood Renewal for the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor over the last five financial years is as follows:

Financial Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Amount spent	£140,989	£374,689	£293,814	£295,634	£416,738	£1,521,864

Small Pockets of Deprivation

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been spent on Small Pockets of Deprivation for the Rathgill Estate, Bangor over the last five financial years.

(AQW 18166/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The amount spent on Rathgill Estate, Bangor through the Small Pockets of Deprivation programme over the last five financial years is set out in the table below:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
£49795	£73647	£78248	£78136	£76400

Environmental Improvements

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been spent by his Department on environmental improvements at the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor over the last five years.

(AQW 18168/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the past 5 years almost £170,000 has been spent on environmental improvements in the Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Area. This is in line with the funding priorities determined by the Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's Action Plan, which takes account of the needs of the area, and reflects previous spending in the preceding period when over £720,000 was allocated to environmental improvement programmes.

Co-Ownership Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 17078/11-15, to detail the total cost of administering the Co-Ownership Scheme during the period from April 2008 to October 2008 inclusive.

(AQW 18208/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total cost of administering the Co-Ownership scheme during the period from April 2008 to October 2008 inclusive was £1,763,350.00

This amount is broken down as follows, Personnel Costs £775,158.00; Establishment Costs £133,103.00; Administration Costs £192,422.00; and Funding Costs £662,667.00

The breakdown is provided to show “funding costs”, which was a unique item in that period when the NI Co-Ownership Housing Association was obtaining private finance, and also “personnel, establishment and administration costs” which, together, comprise the running costs of the organisation.

Co-Ownership Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 17078/11-15, given that £15m was available to the Co-Ownership Scheme for 2008/09, to detail the amount paid by the Co-Ownership Scheme to assist the purchase of property during the period April to October 2008.

(AQW 18228/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The amount paid by the Co-Ownership Scheme to assist the purchase of property during the period April to October 2008 inclusive totalled £13,757,330.00. This was in respect of 248 properties in which the applications were received prior to April 2008.

Benefit System

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development whether changes to the benefit system, which were made by the Coalition Government, have been rolled out in all areas of Northern Ireland; and if only in some areas, which areas have been targeted first.

(AQW 18251/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill contains a number of proposed changes to the benefit system which largely correspond to those which have been (or will be) implemented by the Coalition Government.

Although introduced in the Assembly on 1st October 2012, the Northern Ireland Bill is currently at the Committee Stage and therefore none of the proposed changes have been rolled out in Northern Ireland yet.

High Streets Taskforce

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development (i) when the departmental High Streets Taskforce will report; (ii) how many town centre meetings the Taskforce has called; and (iii) whether he has been given an interim report.

(AQW 18255/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I received the Taskforce report at the end of November and was pleased to be able to endorse a number of recommendations which my Department can take forward to support town and city centres. The DSD High Streets Taskforce consulted with a range of stakeholders and Departments most closely involved with city and town centre issues. In addition the taskforce also held 29 ‘High Street’ meetings in cities and towns across Northern Ireland to hear directly the views of high street traders and other parties on the issues affecting them. A number of the issues raised were cross-cutting or within the remit of another department and for this reason I brought the report to the Executive’s economic sub-committee in December for discussion. In the coming weeks I intend to fulfil my commitment to report back to a core group of High Street stakeholder representatives. Following this meeting I will make the report available on my Department’s website for others to read and consider.

Department Spend

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department’s spending in each constituency since May 2011.

(AQW 18258/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Departmental spending is not routinely captured and recorded on a constituency basis.

However, full details of the Department's expenditure for the 2011-12 financial year were published in the annual Resource Accounts, laid before the Assembly and copy placed in the Assembly library in July 2012. The 2012-13 Resource Accounts will similarly be published in July 2013.

Welfare Reform

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development 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 18265/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development does not yet have a budget allocation for the next Comprehensive Spending Review period. This will only be determined once HM Treasury has conducted a comprehensive spending review and once the Northern Ireland Executive has set the budget for the next spending review period.

The amount of funding allocated for Welfare Reform will be a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive in line with Northern Ireland Executive priorities and the outcome of the UK comprehensive spending review process.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what level of funding is planned to go towards Neighbourhood Renewal for the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor in the next three financial years. **(AQW 18285/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership's Action Plan sets out priorities for implementing Neighbourhood Renewal through to 2015. The action plan is reviewed yearly by the Neighbourhood Partnership with new actions and projects added. Currently funding of £863,023 has been committed to a range of projects, which have already been approved, over the next three financial years. Future projects will be considered, as and when these are added to the Action Plan, taking into account their value for money, their potential contribution to addressing deprivation and the availability of finance.

Small Pockets of Deprivation Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what level of Small Pockets of Deprivation funding is planned for Rathgill Estate in Bangor for the next three financial years. **(AQW 18286/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Small Pockets of Deprivation programme is due to end in March 2015.

The funding allocated to Rathgill Estate under the Small Pockets of Deprivation programme is based entirely on bids for funding from Rathgill Community Association. It is not possible to anticipate their future bids, which will be subject to appraisal, however funding for the last three years has averaged approximately £77,530.

Areas at Risk Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on the Areas at Risk programme in the Beechfield Estate, Donaghadee. **(AQW 18287/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Beechfield Estate in Donaghadee received funding of £67,766 from the Department's Areas at Risk programme for the period 1 April 2011 until 31 March 2013 to finance the running costs of the Beechfield Community House and a range of community activities drawn up by the Beechfield Residents' Association Planning Team. To date £16,478 has been drawn down.

Areas at Risk Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether there is any flexibility to allow a year's extension for the Areas at Risk Programme for the Beechfield Estate, Donaghadee.

(AQW 18288/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Beechfield Estate in Donaghadee received funding of £67,766 from the Department's Area's at Risk programme for the period 1 April 2011 until 31 March 2013 to finance the running costs of the Beechfield Community House and a range of community activities drawn up by the Beechfield Residents Association Planning Team. The programme, however, was slow to start and it was agreed that the end date would be extended until 30 September 2013 by which time it is anticipated that the funding allocation will be fully drawn down.

Housing Executive

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what plans are in place for district, area and inter-agency Housing Executive meetings in light of its restructuring, with particular reference to North Down.

(AQW 18296/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to the restructuring programme currently underway in the Housing Executive which will result in their offices largely aligning with the proposed councils under the Review of Public Administration. Hence 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. Once the restructuring is complete the Housing Executive will communicate the new arrangements.

In the interim services to the public and elected representatives will continue as normal with interagency, council and partnership meetings proceeding as before.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Disability Living Allowance appeals that have been (i) lodged; (ii) processed; and (iii) successfully overturned in the claimant's favour, in the Foyle Constituency, in the last three months.

(AQW 18300/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided in the format sought. The Appeals Service arranges for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) appeals to be heard at venues throughout Northern Ireland. The selection of venues for appeal hearings is determined by the postal district within which the appellant resides. The data is only available in this format.

Any appeal lodged with the Social Security Agency is subject to reconsideration and may therefore not progress to The Appeals Service. Appeals may not be dealt with in the same year that they are received.

The Chairman of the Tribunal records whether the decision made on appeal was either more or less advantageous than a previous decision. A more advantageous decision may increase the allowance or direct that a new award be made. A less advantageous decision may reduce the allowance or make no change to the original determination. The table below sets out information for the last three months in respect of DLA appeals within the postal district of Londonderry:

Period	No. of appeals received	No. of appeals determined	No. of appeals determined that were more advantageous
1/10 – 31/12/2012	86	98**	44

** Note – more appeals were determined than received, as some of those received in previous months are included in the determined figure, whereas the received numbers relate solely to the 3-month period.

Full Duty Applicant Status

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of children under the age of 16 who are in receipt of full duty applicant status.

(AQW 18316/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that it does not accept homelessness applications from children under the age of 16 years of age. Accordingly, no one under 16 years old has been awarded Full Duty Applicant status (FDA). In the event that a young person under 16 years of age approaches the Housing Executive, contact is made with the local Social Services.

Demolition of the Flats at Kilclief Gardens

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what is the timescale for the demolition of the flats at Kilclief Gardens in the Kilcooley estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18324/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive anticipates that the flats at Kilclief Gardens, Kilcooley, Bangor will be demolished within 3 to 4 months.

The Housing Executive is currently in the process of procuring a new contractor for this work as the contractor originally scheduled for the demolition has gone into liquidation.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the additional financial impact on his Department's budget if the Welfare Reform Bill does not receive Royal Assent until June 2013.

(AQW 18328/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Social Security spending on Northern Ireland and all the associated risk of increased demand is met directly by HM Treasury on the basis that Northern Ireland maintains parity of social security policy. It is outside of the Northern Ireland Executive managed Departmental Expenditure Limit Block and does not directly impact the funding allocated by the Executive to spending on areas such as health and education.

A delay in the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill would mean that Northern Ireland is unlikely to achieve the same introduction dates as Great Britain. Under the funding arrangement between HM Treasury and Northern Ireland, adjustments can be made to the Northern Ireland Executive Block where the Northern Ireland Executive decides to change social security policy to differ from the rest of the United Kingdom. The level of any adjustment would be a matter for discussion with UK ministers.

The Northern Ireland Executive would have to decide where any resulting deductions are found from the budgets of Northern Ireland departments.

The early estimated cost of a delay in the Welfare Reform Bill is £38m. This timescale is based on 6 months and assumes that the Welfare Reform Bill receives Royal Assent in June 2013 with a further 3 months to pass the required regulations. The £38million estimate includes annually managed expenditure controls which will not be achieved and the funding which may have to be found by the Northern Ireland Executive for the discretionary elements of Social Fund. The impact of recent changes

to introduction dates for welfare reform such as the delay in the managed migration for Personal Independence Payment announced by the Coalition government or the Northern Ireland flexibilities secured for Universal Credit are excluded.

The costs of the administering, calculating and paying social security benefits and implementing welfare reforms are met from the Northern Ireland Executive Block Departmental Expenditure Limit and the Department for Social Development budget. This will have to meet any additional costs of administrative work arounds, welfare reform projects and costs of accessing later IT releases or using IT systems which the Department for Work and Pensions have updated or amended as the reforms go live in Great Britain.

My officials are continuing work to ascertain the costs and impacts.

Tenant Regulations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to introduce regulations that will ensure that tenants of private rental properties will be protected should their landlord be declared bankrupt, including provision to ensure they do not lose their deposits.
(AQW 18335/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is currently assessing applications by a number of bodies to become tenancy deposit scheme providers. It is envisaged that the schemes, which will safeguard tenant deposits and provide a fair and effective mechanism to resolve disputes, will be operational from April this year.

Where a landlord takes out a mortgage and makes the lender fully aware that a tenancy exists, or will exist, the general rule is that the lender will also be bound by the lease. This means if the landlord is declared bankrupt and the lender later gains possession of the property they will have to let the lease run on until the end of the contractual period and accept rent from the tenant. Once a lender obtains a possession order from the Courts he must apply to the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO) to have it enforced. I understand that the EJO has protocols in place which aim to keep tenants involved in cases of repossession.

Housing Executive

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of his recent announcement regarding the Housing Executive, what assurances he can give to people who remain as leaseholders of former Housing Executive properties on which the Housing Executive still holds responsibility for external maintenance, that these responsibilities will be met by any new housing authority or association.
(AQW 18342/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My statement announces the beginning of a process to explore the development of new structures which will deliver focused and sustainable housing into the future. It is not my intention to adversely affect the rights of tenants or former tenants but is about improving services. We are at the very early stages of the design process and I acknowledged in my statement that much work is still to be done. That said I can assure you that all responsibilities currently held by the Housing Executive will be considered and appropriate transfer of these responsibilities will be developed. There will be engagement and consultation as the process evolves to deal with all areas of concern.

Housing Executive Temporary Accommodation

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many children are in households which are deemed as temporary accommodation.
(AQW 18348/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It should be noted that temporary accommodation is not defined in legislation. However, legislation requires the Housing Executive to ensure that temporary accommodation (such as

Housing Executive Hostels, Voluntary Hostels, or accommodation in the Private Rented sector) is made available to applicants who are deemed to be homeless.

The information is not available in the format requested. However, the Housing Executive advise that, at 14 January 2013 there were 934 households with children who are living in temporary accommodation as follows:-

- 115 - Housing Executive Hostels
- 144 - Voluntary Sector Hostels
- 675 - Private Sector

Full Duty Applicant Status

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many children are in receipt of full duty applicant status.

(AQW 18349/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I would refer the Member to the answer provided to AQW 18316/11-15

Credit Union Accounts

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the powers of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division to investigate Credit Union accounts.

(AQW 18350/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division have powers of investigation into Credit Unions under article 17 of the Child Support (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

This provides that inspectors appointed by the Department can acquire such information as is required for the assessment and enforcement of maintenance liability and as may be required by the Department for any purpose of the Child Support Order.

We have recently become aware that Credit Unions have been subject to regulation by the Financial Services Authority from 1 April 2012. My Officials are currently seeking legal opinion and clarification on the inclusion of Credit Unions in respect of enforcement powers

- collection and enforcement powers under Article 29 of the Child Support (NI) Order 1991.
- Lump sum deduction Order under Article 32E and Regular Deduction Orders under article 32A of the Child Support (NI) Order 1991.
- Enforcement of a Liability Order through a garnishee orders via the Enforcement of Judgements office under Article 35 of the Child Support (NI) Order 1991.

I will report back to the Assembly when I have received a definitive answer.

LAPs Window Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the timescale for the LAPs window schemes for North Down.

(AQW 18361/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 15835/11-15 on 23 October, which advised that the need for double glazing schemes to be programmed through Local Area Priority schemes was superseded by the Programme for Government target to ensure full double glazing in all Housing Executive properties by 2014/15.

The Housing Executive has advised that the current position regarding double glazing schemes in North Down is as follows: -

- The scheme in Lisnabreen/Clanmorris for 168 properties started in August 2012 with an approximate end date of May 2013.
- The scheme for 167 properties in Rathgill/Kilcooley/Loughview started in October 2012 and is estimated to be completed in July 2013.
- The scheme in Whitehill for 257 properties started in November 2012 with an approximate end date of September 2013.

Housing Executive

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether any maintenance schemes are planned for Housing Executive homes in Conlig.

(AQW 18362/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A kitchen replacement scheme for 44 properties is planned for Conlig in 2015/16.

Public Realm Works in Millisle

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether any funding is available for public realm works in Millisle.

(AQW 18365/11-15)

Mr McCausland: DSD's urban regeneration activities are restricted to settlements which have a population of 4,500 or more. The population of Millisle recorded in the 2001 Census figure was 1,791 persons within the statutory development limit. Consequently, Millisle is defined by NISRA as a rural settlement and, therefore, falls under the remit of DARD.

Welfare Reform

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how many people will lose their (i) mobility scooters; and (ii) guide dogs as a result of Welfare Reform.

(AQW 18433/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The provision of both these services is through charitable organisations which fall outside the direct remit of my Department.

- (i) Motability is an independent voluntary organisation and is responsible for the administration of the Motability contract hire scheme. While my Department facilitates the operation of the scheme by diverting payments of Disability Living Allowance to meet contract hire payments, it is not directly involved in setting the policy for the Scheme.

At present, eligibility to the Motability scheme depends upon a person being in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement. As a result of Welfare Reform, it is proposed that Personal Independence Payment will replace Disability Living Allowance for those of working age, and the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment will act as the gateway to the Motability scheme in the future. The new assessment criteria for Personal Independence Payment have been designed to ensure that individuals whose ability to get around is severely impacted by impairments affecting either physical or non-physical abilities may receive the mobility component at the enhanced rate. This reflects the key principle of developing an assessment which considers the impacts of impairments equally, regardless of their nature. It is not possible to pre-empt the outcome of individual assessments under Personal Independence Payment and consequently any potential impact on the number of people who will be eligible for mobility scooters in the future.

- (ii) Guide dogs are the responsibility of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and are provided on a voluntary, charitable basis. This is outside the scope of my Department.

Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU)

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development how he intends to meet Article 4 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU) to mobilise investment in the renovation of the national stock of residential and commercial buildings.

(AQW 18434/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Article 4 of the Energy Efficiency Directive requires member states to establish a long term strategy for mobilising investment in the renovation of the national stock of residential and commercial buildings, both public and private. The strategy should encompass:

- an overview of the national building stock;
- identification of cost effective approaches to renovations;
- policies and measures to stimulate cost effective deep renovations to buildings;
- a forward looking perspective to guide investment decisions; and,
- an evidence based estimate of expected energy savings and wider benefits.

Cross departmental discussions are being facilitated by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to determine the department with lead responsibility on each of the articles contained in the Directive.

Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development why Supporting People has withdrawn its funding for Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre, given the role it plays in supporting people through their recovery from addiction problems.

(AQW 18470/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive Supporting People Programme had an annual funding agreement of £52,192 for 8 places at the Northlands support living scheme.

Following an inspection by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority we were advised on 9th May 2012 that the service had been registered as a residential care unit.

In line with the Housing Support Regulations NI (2003) it was necessary to cease funding to Northlands with effect from the date of registration, 11th March 2012 as registered schemes are not eligible for Supporting People funding.

Willowbrook Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans there are to replace windows in Willowbrook Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18473/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive owns 104 dwellings in the Willowbrook Estate in Bangor. 80 of which already has double glazing installed previously. The remaining 24 dwellings are included in a double glazing scheme programmed for 2013/14.

Willowbrook Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any plans for maintenance schemes for the Willowbrook Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 18474/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Of the 104 dwellings owned by the Housing Executive in the Willowbrook Estate, 19 are programmed to have kitchens replaced in 2017. The remaining 85 dwellings had their kitchens replaced in 2006. There are also 13 dwellings with Economy 7 heating which will have gas installed in

2013/14. All other dwellings already have either gas or oil heating, apart from some properties where a tenant refused a heating change.

Housing Benefit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people who are living in Housing Executive properties are currently in arrears for Housing Benefit.

(AQW 18476/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to how many Housing Executive tenants who receive Housing Benefit are also in rent arrears. As at 16 January 2013 there were 12,724 Housing Executive tenants receiving Housing Benefit who were also in rent arrears of any value.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 15771/11-15, what was the percentage of recipients of Disability Living Allowance, in each constituency at 31 December, in each of the preceding ten years.

(AQW 18507/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the percentage of recipients of Disability Living Allowance, in each Assembly Area for the years 2002 to 2010.

Assembly Area	% of Assembly Area Population receiving Disability Living Allowance								
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Belfast East	9.8%	9.6%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	9.4%	9.2%	8.7%	8.4%
Belfast North	14.6%	14.2%	13.8%	13.8%	13.8%	13.7%	13.5%	12.7%	12.4%
Belfast South	8.0%	7.9%	7.8%	7.7%	7.7%	7.5%	7.4%	6.9%	6.7%
Belfast West	19.2%	19.0%	18.4%	18.2%	18.2%	18.0%	17.7%	16.9%	16.5%
East Antrim	8.1%	7.9%	7.8%	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%	7.1%	6.6%	6.3%
East Londonderry	8.5%	8.2%	7.9%	7.8%	7.6%	7.5%	7.3%	6.8%	6.6%
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	8.9%	9.2%	8.8%	8.7%	8.5%	8.5%	8.8%	8.4%	8.1%
Foyle	13.3%	13.1%	13.0%	13.0%	12.9%	12.9%	12.7%	12.2%	11.9%
Lagan Valley	7.7%	7.6%	7.5%	7.4%	7.3%	7.1%	7.0%	6.6%	1.2%
Mid Ulster	10.3%	10.2%	10.0%	9.9%	9.7%	9.8%	9.9%	9.5%	9.2%
Newry And Armagh	10.6%	10.6%	10.5%	10.5%	10.6%	10.7%	10.7%	10.0%	9.7%
North Antrim	7.8%	7.6%	7.5%	7.3%	7.3%	7.1%	6.9%	6.5%	6.2%
North Down	6.8%	6.7%	6.5%	6.5%	6.3%	6.1%	5.9%	5.5%	2.9%
South Antrim	7.9%	7.7%	7.5%	7.4%	7.3%	7.3%	7.2%	6.8%	5.8%
South Down	9.9%	9.8%	9.6%	9.5%	9.6%	9.5%	9.3%	8.8%	8.0%
Strangford	8.1%	7.9%	7.7%	7.6%	7.5%	7.4%	7.1%	6.7%	0.5%
Upper Bann	10.8%	10.7%	10.5%	10.5%	10.6%	10.6%	10.4%	9.8%	9.6%

Assembly Area	% of Assembly Area Population receiving Disability Living Allowance								
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
West Tyrone	13.7%	13.6%	13.3%	13.1%	13.0%	12.9%	12.7%	12.1%	11.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>10.3%</i>	<i>10.1%</i>	<i>9.9%</i>	<i>9.8%</i>	<i>9.8%</i>	<i>9.7%</i>	<i>9.6%</i>	<i>9.1%</i>	<i>8.0%</i>

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Social Housing in Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently on the social housing list in Carrickfergus.

(AQW 18512/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 963 applicants on the social housing waiting list for Carrickfergus, 548 of whom are in housing stress.

Welfare Reform

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what changes to his Department's services for people with mental health issues will result from Welfare Reform.

(AQW 18520/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Welfare Reform will bring about a number of changes to existing benefits and the way they are administered. Whilst the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate impact on those with mental health issues specifically, my Department is currently considering the impact of the changes on all vulnerable groups in order to put in place appropriate support mechanisms.

Housing Executive

Mrs Dobson asked Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 13996/11-15, what impact his recent decision to abolish the Housing Executive will have on the delivery of a new double glazing contract for existing Housing Executive tenants.

(AQW 18525/11-15)

Mr McCausland: For clarification my recent announcement referred to restructuring and not the abolition of the Housing Executive. It is important to realise that there is still a need for the functions that the Housing Executive currently performs to continue within the new structure in order to deliver services to tenants.

The double glazing programme is on target to be completed by March 2015 and the restructuring of the Housing Executive will have no impact.

Social Housing in Larne

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently on the social housing list in Larne.

(AQW 18567/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 495 applicants on the social housing waiting list for Larne of whom 147 are in Housing Stress.

Housing Executive

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in Donaghadee and Millisle are waiting to be housed by the Housing Executive.

(AQW 18575/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 155 applicants on the social housing waiting list for Donaghadee, 94 of whom are in Housing Stress; and 63 applicants on the social housing waiting list for Millisle, 32 of whom are in Housing Stress.

Oaklee Housing Association

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how much public money has been awarded to Oaklee Housing Association since 2010; and how much more will be awarded by the end of this Assembly term.

(AQW 18597/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The amount of Housing Association Grant (HAG) payable to Oaklee Housing Association against schemes which started on site from 2010/2011 to 31 December 2012 is shown in Table 1: -

TABLE 1

Year	Total HAG Paid
2010/11	£21.7m
2011/12	£7.7m
2012/13*	£0.869m

* Figure represents starts to 31/12/2012

In addition, the Housing Executive estimates that Oaklee Housing Association could potentially receive a further £11.9m HAG approximately, based on schemes which are programmed to start on site before the end of the current financial year, as shown in Table 2: -

TABLE 2

Programmed schemes Jan – March 2013	Total estimated HAG payable
Project approved (yet to start)	£2.1m
Schemes under assessment	£6.8m (estimate)
Schemes yet to be submitted	£3m (estimate)

The Housing Executive also administers Housing Association Grant to Housing Associations to adapt homes to meet the accommodation requirements of tenants with special needs and for Voluntary Purchase Grants. Funding awarded to Oaklee in respect of these is detailed in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3

Year	Funding
2010/11	£364,000
2011/12	£171,000
2012/13 (up to 31/12/12)	£80,000

Table 4 below details Housing Executive Supporting People funding paid to Oaklee for the current financial year and for the previous two years.

TABLE 4

Year	Funding
2010/11	£1,678,000
2011/12	£1,621,000
2012/13 **	£1,463,000

** Figure is a projected figure based on payments as at January 2013.

Note: It is not possible at this stage to provide information for 2013/14 and 2014/15 for Adaptations and Voluntary Purchase Grants; and Supporting People funding.

With regard to the period up until the end of this Assembly term, the new Social Housing Development Programme for the period 2013/14 – 2015/16 is currently with me for approval and it is therefore not possible to give an estimated Housing Association Grant figure in respect of Oaklee programmed schemes at this stage.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Neighbourhood Renewal: Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the economic regeneration projects funded in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area of the Upper Bann Constituency in each of the last three financial years, including the amounts granted.

(AQW 18598/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is as follows:

NR Area	Economic Renewal Project	Annual amount granted		
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Portadown	Retail Capacity Building	-	£9,825.31	£17,362.29
Portadown	Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles Instructor Training	-	-	£2,582.47
Portadown	Practice Firms	-	£17,530.00	£14,310.00
Portadown	Grow Project	-	-	£7,784.94
Brownlow	Retail Capacity Building	-	£4,466.05	£7,891.95
Brownlow	Bluestone Business Park	£12,470.00	-	-
Brownlow	Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles Instructor Training	-	-	£6,456.10
Brownlow	Practice Firms	-	£17,530.00	£14,310.00
Brownlow	The Enterprise Firm	-	-	£27,927.30
Brownlow	The Grow Project	-	£2,800.00	£14,462.35
Brownlow	Outdoor Pursuits Instructor Training	-	£13,600.00	£53,800.00
Lurgan	Retail Capacity Building	-	£75,028.80	
Lurgan	Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles Instructor Training	-	-	£9,407.46

NR Area	Economic Renewal Project	Annual amount granted		
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Lurgan	Practice Firms	-	£17,530.00	£14,310.00
Lurgan	The Enterprise Firm	-	-	£18,070.00
Lurgan	The Grow Project	-	-	£21,073.71

Pension Centre, Carlisle House

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the action his Department has taken to fill vacant posts in the Pension Centre in Carlisle House.

(AQO 3183/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As at 13 January, there were four vacancies in the Pension Centre in Carlisle House.

At that date my Department had 413 staff working in Carlisle House and in an operation of that scale vacancies are a regular occurrence. My officials make use of all the options open to them under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Vacancy Management Policy when seeking to fill posts and over the past six months have filled 28 posts in the Pension Centre and identified three people who will be taking up posts in the coming weeks.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development what measures he has taken to engage with trade union representatives and staff with regard to the proposed changes in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

(AQO 3181/11-15)

Mr McCausland: NIPSA were involved in the earlier consultation phase of the PwC Housing Executive review in 2011. The overall findings of this earlier consultation informed my proposals for developing new social housing structures. I welcome NIPSA's continued input going forward and can confirm that I and my officials will be engaging with NIPSA throughout the process.

Following the release of the written statement, my Permanent Secretary wrote to the General Secretary of NIPSA stating that the Housing Executive will be asked to work with my officials in the development of this programme and there will be consultation with Trade Union Side representatives throughout.

Indeed, work on this has already begun: shortly after the issue of the written statement, Departmental officials held an initial meeting with John McPeake and Maureen Taggart, the NIHE Director of Personnel & Management services, to address primary staff concerns and to agree to work jointly to allay staff anxieties. Over the forthcoming weeks, I plan to meet with Alison Millar of NIPSA to discuss staffing concerns.

Social Houses

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development how many new and affordable social houses his Department plans to build in South Down in 2013-2015.

(AQO 3186/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am currently considering the new three year Social Housing Development Programme for approval in respect of 2013/14-2015/16.

Based on the details of the schemes currently included in the Social Housing Development Programme for 2012/13-2014/15 for South Down, there are 115 General Needs units, eight units for Young People Leaving Care, nine units of Supported Housing for people with Learning Disabilities, and 12 units of Supported Housing for the frail and elderly.

This adds up to a total of 144 units for the period 2012/13-2014/15.

Based on last year I am pleased that through Co-Ownership, in South Down, 49 houses were provided in 2011/12 and 55 so far in 2012/13.

The Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2012/13 – 2014/15 is published on the Housing Executive's website. The link is as follows: - http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/services/housing_need.htm

Childcare

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Social Development whether any sanctions will be imposed on lone parents when no affordable and suitable childcare options are available to enable them to work.
(AQO 3187/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A lack of affordable and suitable childcare provision is currently considered acceptable as 'good reason' if an individual in receipt of social security benefit turns down an offer of work.

This operational flexibility will be carried forward in the guidance to support the Welfare Reform Bill for Northern Ireland which is currently undergoing its legislative passage in this Assembly.

Welfare Reform

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development how he will ensure that the independent advice sector will have adequate resources to assist with any impacts of Welfare Reform.
(AQO 3188/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department supports frontline advice services through its Community Support Programme which provides approximately £1.6 million annually to councils who add their own funding allocation, £1.9 million in 2012/13, and commission services for their local areas.

Regional support for advice is delivered by the Northern Ireland Advice Services Consortium - made up of Advice NI, Citizens Advice NI and Law Centre NI - with a funding contract from my Department of £3.5 million in place from 1 October 2012 to 31 March 2015.

Funding of advice provision is linked closely to supporting communities and providing advice and support on new and emerging government policies and initiatives. My Department is conscious of the potential impact of Welfare Reform and officials are currently engaging with the Northern Ireland Advice Services Consortium to discuss how we can work alongside the Advice Sector to best support our claimants through the implementation of Welfare Reform.

Housing Associations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development what measures he plans to put in place to ensure that his Department has the ability to hold housing associations to account following the proposed abolition of the Housing Executive.
(AQO 3190/11-15)

Mr McCausland: For clarification my announcement referred to restructuring and not abolition, which is a phrase the media and some members have used.

The landlord function of the Housing Executive will fall under the same regulation and inspection regime that applies to all social housing providers within the Housing Association sector.

There are a number of key measures undertaken by the Department to hold Housing Associations to account. The key areas are: -

Inspections – a rolling programme of Inspections which are carried out by my Department's Regulation and Inspection Unit to determine individual Housing Associations' compliance of the Housing Associations Guide and ongoing monitoring of Board minutes and relevant financial information. The Inspections carried out in the past four years have resulted in: -

- Eleven Housing Associations being suspended from the Social Housing Development Programme;
- Five Associations entering into mergers with other Associations;
- A further eight Associations currently in the process of merging into three;
- Nine Chief Executives being removed from their posts and two Management Teams being replaced in two associations;
- Boards having been completely refreshed in two Associations with a third moving towards this by their next Annual General Meeting.

As I said in my written statement on Social Housing Reform released on 9 January, my Department will be responsible for overall Housing Strategy, policy, legislation and funding and in addition there will be significant enhancement of the Department's Regulation and Inspection unit and function. This will be developed through a detailed programme of projects and key stakeholders will be consulted throughout the process.

A positive relationship has developed with Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Association under the leadership of Cameron Watt who has acknowledged that the inspection process is instrumental in strengthening the Housing Association movement and has indicated that NIFHA will continue to cooperate closely with the Inspection Unit.

Social Housing

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Social Development whether any of the proposed changes to the provision and management of social housing will be made on the basis of objective need.

(AQO 3191/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive currently identify housing need and deliver housing services on the basis of objective need and any new regional housing body would continue that responsibility.

Social Housing

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development why the construction of social housing does not reflect the types of houses required.

(AQO 3192/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Housing Development Programme is formulated to address the needs of those households assessed as being in Housing Stress on the Social Housing Waiting List.

Before the announcement of the proposed Welfare Reform bill, it was considered that two and three bed properties would address the needs of the vast majority of households seeking social housing in Northern Ireland. With Welfare Reform, I recognised the potential for under occupation within current housing stock and the need for additional one bed units. I have instructed the Housing Executive, who manage the Social Housing Development Programme, that they must ensure that Housing Associations bring forward additional single units over the next three years.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Parliament Buildings: Fax Machines

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission to detail the total annual cost of renting the phone lines for the fax machines in Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 18156/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The total annual cost for line rental (for telephones and fax machines) in Parliament Buildings is in the region of £58k. We do not have a separate cost for line rental for fax machines.

Building Services Branch will shortly be carrying out an audit of fax machines being used in the building and I will provide you with an update when I have the result from that review.

Parliament Buildings: Fax Machines

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission whether it has carried out a cost-benefit analysis on the use of fax machines in Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 18160/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission has not carried out a cost benefit analysis on the use of fax machines in Parliament Buildings. However, following the last election, the number of fax machines in Parliament Buildings was reduced with a number of MLA's and staff no longer requiring one.

Building Services Branch will continue to monitor the need for the provision of fax machines and look for opportunities to further reduce the numbers. This will include an audit of fax machines being used in the building and I will provide you with an update when I have the result from that review.

Parliament Buildings: Great Hall Electronic Message Board

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission why the large electronic message board in the Great Hall remains switched on at night, weekends and public holidays.

(AQW 18163/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The electronic information board located in the Great Hall is managed by the Information Systems Office. However, as they are not the last people to leave the building, it was agreed with Security that Doorkeepers /Ushers would be requested to switch off the screen last thing at night and turn it on first thing in the morning.

As well as being used to display information about Assembly business, the information screen is also used to provide emergency evacuation details and directions for 'out of hours' functions.

I can assure you that the Office of the Keeper, in conjunction with the IS Office, will endeavour to ensure that the screen is not left on for any longer than necessary to facilitate tours and events.

I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought, however, should you require any supplementary information I would be very happy to assist with your enquiry.

Parliament Buildings: Great Hall Internet Terminal

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission whether there has been a recent analysis of electricity consumption and frequency of use of the internet terminal that is located at the entrance of the Great Hall.

(AQW 18182/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The kiosk located at the entrance to the Great Hall is owned and maintained by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Assembly Commission does not record details of its use. However, DFP have confirmed that in an average month there are approximately 450 sessions on the terminal each lasting an average of 3 minutes.

The kiosk uses the same electricity as a standard desktop computer and is programmed to turn off on a Friday evening at midnight and to restart on Monday morning to save electricity over the weekend.

Parliament Buildings: Telephone System

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission whether it has any plans to change the telephone system in Parliament Buildings to allow people who are being called from the Assembly to view the phone number of the caller.

(AQW 18306/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission is currently considering the future provision of telephony within Parliament Buildings as the current service provided by the Northern Ireland Civil Service will no longer be supported from September 2013.

A number of options are being considered including the installation of Internet Protocol Telephony (IP Telephony). While there are no specific plans at this stage to provide a system with 'caller display', this issue will be considered when developing the specification for any new system.

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	WA 82	Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU)	WA 98
A5: Funding	WA 87	Environmental Improvements	WA 90
Bangor and Holywood Masterplans	WA 84	Full Duty Applicant Status	WA 94
Car Parking: Block Payment Schemes	WA 88	Full Duty Applicant Status	WA 96
Car Parking: Enniskillen	WA 89	High Streets Taskforce	WA 91
Cars: Short Journeys	WA 88	Housing Associations	WA 104
Civil Servants	WA 87	Housing Benefit	WA 99
Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture	WA 85	Housing Executive	WA 93
Footpath Resurfacing	WA 85	Housing Executive	WA 95
Footpath Upgrades	WA 83	Housing Executive	WA 97
Northern Ireland Water	WA 83	Housing Executive	WA 100
Planning Service and Roads Service	WA 83	Housing Executive	WA 101
Rural Roads Infrastructure	WA 86	Housing Executive Temporary Accommodation	WA 95
Salt Bins	WA 82	LAPs Window Schemes	WA 96
Street Lighting: Belfast	WA 88	Neighbourhood Renewal	WA 90
Taxis: Bus Lanes	WA 87	Neighbourhood Renewal	WA 92
Town Centre Trade	WA 86	Neighbourhood Renewal: Upper Bann Constituency	WA 102
Translink: Community Transport Pilot Scheme	WA 87	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	WA 103
Unadopted Housing and Roads: NAMA	WA 89	Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre	WA 98
Unadopted Roads and Footpaths	WA 84	Oaklee Housing Association	WA 101
Wind Farms	WA 83	Pension Centre, Carlisle House	WA 103
		Public Realm Works in Millisle	WA 97
Department for Employment and Learning	WA 46	Small Pockets of Deprivation	WA 90
Buttle UK Quality Mark	WA 51	Small Pockets of Deprivation Funding	WA 92
Children in Care: Further and Higher Education	WA 50	Social Houses	WA 103
Disabled Staff	WA 51	Social Housing	WA 105
Education Maintenance Allowance	WA 52	Social Housing	WA 105
Higher and Further Education	WA 49	Social Housing in Carrickfergus	WA 100
Higher Education Institutions	WA 46	Social Housing in Larne	WA 100
Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor	WA 47	Tenant Regulations	WA 95
Third Level Institutions	WA 46	Welfare Reform	WA 92
Young Adults with Learning Disabilities	WA 52	Welfare Reform	WA 97
Young People in West Tyrone	WA 47	Welfare Reform	WA 100
		Welfare Reform	WA 104
Department for Social Development	WA 89	Welfare Reform Bill	WA 89
Areas at Risk Programme	WA 92	Welfare Reform Bill	WA 94
Areas at Risk Programme	WA 93	Willowbrook Estate, Bangor	WA 98
Benefit System	WA 91	Willowbrook Estate, Bangor	WA 98
Childcare	WA 104		
Co-Ownership Scheme	WA 90	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	WA 5
Co-Ownership Scheme	WA 91	Aerial Surveillance Equipment	WA 6
Credit Union Accounts	WA 96	Agri-Food Sector	WA 17
Demolition of the Flats at Kilclief Gardens	WA 94	Agri-Food Sector	WA 19
Department Spend	WA 91	Ash Dieback Disease	WA 5
Disability Living Allowance	WA 99	Ash Dieback Disease	WA 5
Disability Living Allowance Appeals	WA 93	Central Investigation Service	WA 7
		Circuses: Wild Animals	WA 18
		Civil Servants	WA 12

Common Agricultural Policy	WA 18	Salmon Levels	WA 22
Comprehensive Spending Review	WA 12	Salmon Levels	WA 22
Crime in Rural Areas	WA 15	Sport Funding	WA 20
Criminal Justice Inspectorate	WA 7	Ulster Scots Agency	WA 22
Deloitte Review	WA 7	Wild Salmon Stocks	WA 24
EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement	WA 12	World Police and Fire Games	WA 20
Farm Business Identification Numbers	WA 10	World Police and Fire Games	WA 20
Farm Business Identification Numbers	WA 11	World Police and Fire Games	WA 26
Farmers: Financial Assistance	WA 9	World Police and Fire Games 2013	WA 25
Farming Community: Financial Problems	WA 16	World War I Centenary: Battlefield Visits	WA 25
Farm Inspection	WA 7		
Farm Inspections	WA 8	Department of Education	WA 28
Farm Regulatory Burden	WA 15	Amalgamation of Blythefield, Fane Street and Donegall Road Primary Schools	WA 34
Food Produce containing Horse Meat	WA 13	Attendance Policy	WA 45
Gaelic Athletic Association Centre of Excellence	WA 12	Children with Disabilities	WA 35
Government Construction Clients	WA 10	Education and Library Board: Funding	WA 31
Hen Houses	WA 13	Education and Library Board: Funding	WA 32
Horse DNA	WA 14	Education and Skills Authority	WA 28
Horsemeat Investigation	WA 13	Employment of Teachers	WA 33
Horse Passport System	WA 14	Examinations	WA 40
Northern Irish Agri-Food Items	WA 5	Hollywood to Crawfordsburn Primary School School Bus	WA 40
Organic Farming	WA 6	Irish Language Posters	WA 33
Rural Development Programme	WA 14	Primary School Class Size	WA 36
Single Farm Payment	WA 16	School in Magheralin	WA 32
Water Bore Hole Scheme	WA 16	School Intervention Programme	WA 38
Woodland	WA 8	School Intervention Programme	WA 39
Woodland Cover	WA 8	School Pupils in North Down	WA 37
Woodland Cover	WA 8	Special Educational Needs Teachers	WA 34
Woodland Grant Scheme	WA 9	Split-Site Funding for Schools	WA 34
Woodland Grant Scheme	WA 10	Staff Employed in Procurement	WA 36
		Staff Employed in Procurement	WA 37
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	WA 20	Suicide Prevention	WA 32
400th Anniversary of the Granting of Borough Charters	WA 21	Sure Start Developmental Programme	WA 33
Boxing: Funding	WA 28	Upper Bann Constituency	WA 38
Brandywell Sports Stadium	WA 24		
CoderDojo Funding	WA 21	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	WA 53
Cultural Recognition	WA 27	Broadband Access	WA 56
Cycling Financial Support	WA 24	Broadband Access	WA 56
DCAL Projects: Mid Ulster	WA 28	Businesses: Financial Support	WA 54
DCAL: Reserved Matters	WA 26	Department Financial Support	WA 54
Libraries	WA 23	Down Business Park	WA 53
Lurgan Park Lake	WA 24	EU and Canadian Free Trade Agreement	WA 54
Ministerial Private Office: Running Costs	WA 22	Free Wi-Fi Scheme.	WA 54
Motorbike Racing	WA 26	Narrow Water Bridge	WA 55
Public Angling Estate	WA 23	Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project	WA 55
Salmon Catch and Release Restrictions	WA 25	Tamboran Resources	WA 55
Salmon Catch and Return Policy	WA 23		
Salmon: Catching and Retention	WA 23	Department of Finance and Personnel	WA 56
Salmon Conservation	WA 27	Aggregates Levy	WA 60
Salmon Fishing	WA 25	Aggregates Levy	WA 62

Social Investment Fund	WA 1
Social Protection Fund	WA 4
Victims and Survivors' Service	WA 3

Revised Written Answers

Friday 25 January 2013

(AQW 18219/11-15)

My Department aims to respond to queries that arise following farm inspections according to DARD's Customer Service Standards as follows:

- To see 95 % of customers, with a pre-arranged appointment within 10 minutes of agreed time;
- To see 95 % of customers, without an appointment within 15 minutes of their arrival time;
- To acknowledge 95% of letters / faxes / emails requiring a response within 3 working days;
- To provide a full response to 95% of letters / faxes / emails within 15 working days of receipt; and
- Ensure all telephone calls are answered as quickly as possible and within 6 rings.

Specifically, with regard to queries arising from Single Farm Payment inspections, the claimant may use a Client Referral Form if they wish to query their initial farm inspection findings. Following an inspection, claimants receive this form, along with letter, field report and an updated map that outlines the initial findings of the inspection. My Department aims to action and complete these queries within 15 working days of receipt.



Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk

Textphone 0870 240 3701

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

© Copyright Northern Ireland Assembly Commission 2013

ISBN 978-0-339-70279-0

