

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 15 February 2013

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

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Weir, Peter (North Down)
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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 15 February 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Childcare Funding

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) which organisations can bid for childcare funding from their Department; and (ii) to detail the process by which this funding is distributed.

(AQW 18680/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Executive allocated an additional £12 million across the current Comprehensive Spending Review period to support the development of the Childcare Strategy. Departments currently bid annually to the Childcare Fund, putting forward projects that will support the development of the Strategy. The bids are submitted to OFMDFM and we take the final decisions on which projects to support. It is the responsibility of individual departments to secure the relevant expenditure approvals, including business cases and evaluations.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18866/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive is expected soon to confirm the functions which will transfer to Local Government under Local Government Reform.

Child Poverty Delivery Plan

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when a child poverty delivery plan will be published.

(AQO 3236/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires the Executive to publish a Child Poverty Strategy and to measure how actions it takes impact on the numbers of children living in poverty. The Act details four statutory measures against which progress has to be measured and reported on annually. The overall target is the eradication of child poverty in the UK by 2020.

To support the delivery of these targets, OFMDFM commissioned work by the National Children's Bureau to develop a Child Poverty Outcomes Model to help better understand the role of each department in addressing the issue of child poverty. We have also developed a number of signature projects as part of our Delivering Social Change programme that we announced in October 2012 which will contribute to the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy.

We are pleased with the progress that has been made and look forward to further progress in line with our commitments in the Programme for Government. However, there are no plans to publish a stand-alone action plan. The next annual report on child poverty is scheduled to be laid before the Assembly in March 2013.

Sporting Provision: Shackleton Base, Ballykelly.

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether there has been any investigation into the potential for sporting provision within the curtilage of the former Shackleton base, Ballykelly. (AQW 19049/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM has held discussions with local community organisations in Ballykelly who have an interest in using a vacant building on the former Shackleton Barracks site and also the possibility of using parts of the site for sports. Options are being considered on the future uses for the site including the location of the DARD Headquarters and how the site can deliver social and economic benefits for the local community.

In the meantime, the Shackleton Barracks site has been used for motor sports events in 2012 with further events planned and approved for 2013, which will bring visitors and competitors into the area.

Educational Underachievement

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the three year Queen's University Belfast research programme which examines the causes and differences in educational underachievement.

(AQW 19054/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This project entitled 'Understanding differential educational achievement within and between areas of multiple deprivation in NI – a case study approach' is being carried out by Professor Ruth Leitch, Professor Joanne Hughes, supported by Dr Ian Shuttleworth and Dr Michael Levers.

The project commenced in March 2012 and is currently on schedule and within budget.

The project has, to date, submitted one progress report and the second progress report is due in March 2013. To date (as per the first interim report) the research has conducted the following:

- Literature review to set the context for the research
- Quantitative analysis (secondary) to establish historical trends
- Development and design of baseline information in the target electoral wards.
- Establishment of key contacts and relationship building in each of the target wards
- Developed a data collection strategy and action plan for the next phase of research – (Nov/Dec 2012 – September 2013).

The findings are not scheduled to be published until the final project report which is due to be received in March 2015.

Childcare Fund

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much of the £12 million ring-fenced for the Childcare Fund has been spent by (a) each Department; and (ii) projects within each Department; (ii) to outline the rationale for funding each project and how it fits with the vision for a childcare strategy.

(AQW 19221/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: All departmental bids to the Executive Childcare Fund are assessed to ensure alignment with proposals for the development of the Childcare Strategy.

The overall aim of the Strategy will be to promote the availability of good quality, accessible, integrated and affordable childcare provision that is sustainable in the long-term. Working with key partners, we aim to:

- support the development of children and young people and enable children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds to avail of life opportunities;

- support increased parental participation in the workforce, thereby making a significant impact on the economy, families and communities; and
- support learning and development activity which will improve opportunities for employment.

In 2011/12, we allocated departments £322,000 from the Fund for spending in that year. These allocations are detailed below by department and project.

DHSSPS was allocated £250,000 to:

- (a) (i) expedite reducing the backlog in the registration and inspection of childminding and day care settings; and (ii) to implement revised procedures to mitigate future delays. Registration and inspection of facilities are essential to ensure the safety of children in childcare settings.
- (b) OFMDFM spent £20,000 to enable PlayBoard to provide additional grant funding to the South Armagh Childcare Consortium (SACC). This funding was necessary to enable SACC to continue its progress towards financial sustainability.
- (c) DCAL spent £52,000 enabling Northern Ireland Screen to increase – from 68 to 338 – the number of extended service schools benefiting from After School Film Clubs. After School Film Clubs target schools in areas of high social deprivation and provide support for parental participation in the workforce. They offer child-centred activity in a safe place, and promote positive social interaction and cultural awareness.

In 2012/13, we took decisions that would allow Childcare Fund expenditure of up to £4.5 million over the remaining years of the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Of this, £860,000 will be spent before the end of 2012/13. The £860,000 is detailed below by department and project.

- (a) DHSSPS will spend £220,000 to scope the childcare needs of vulnerable families. This information will enable childcare services to be tailored to respond to particular family needs.
- (b) DHSSPS will spend £150,000 to enhance provision for children with a disability, directly addressing the quality of childcare available for children with a disability.
- (c) DE will spend £370,000 to provide additional support programmes for children aged 2-3 and their parents, particularly those who have expressed an interest in the Sure Start developmental programme for 2-3 year olds but have not received a place. Sure Start projects are based in the most disadvantaged areas; families in these areas will be able to benefit from any extension of the work of Sure Start.
- (d) DCAL will spend £120,000 enabling Northern Ireland Screen to continue provision of After School Film Clubs to extended schools.

Children and Young People's Early Action Paper

Mr McCallister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the Children and Young People's Early Action paper replaces the Children and Young People's Strategy 'Our Children and Young People, 2006-16 Action Plans'; (ii) who has responsibility for delivering on the Children and Young People's Early Actions paper; (iii) how success will be measured; and (iv) given that the action plans detailed in the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People ended in 2011, whether further action plans will be developed to ensure the delivery of this ten year strategy.

(AQW 19222/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Children and Young People's Strategy is being taken forward under the Delivering Social Change Framework.

The Delivering Social Change Framework allows us to move away from previous lengthy and disjointed action plans and enables us to identify the most pressing issues and co-ordinate and focus action to maximise impact.

The Children and Young Persons Early Action Paper identifies the key priorities for children and families and focuses efforts and resources on a joined up approach to tackling poverty and improving the lives and experiences of our children and young people.

Actions arising from the Early Actions Paper will be assigned to a lead department which will be responsible for overseeing delivery as well as evaluating effectiveness.

The delivery of the six Signature Programmes, which we announced on 10 October 2012 and which included proposed work around Family Support Hubs, Children's Nurture Units and Parenting Support Programmes, is the first tangible outworking of this approach.

Further actions will be identified taking account of the Early Actions Paper and the detail of the Children and Young People's Ten Year Strategy. The format in which these will be presented is under consideration.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Childcare Strategy will be published for public consultation.

(AQW 19273/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the Childcare Strategy opened on 5 December 2012. The closing date for consultation responses is 5 March 2013.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Childcare Strategy will be completed and implemented.

(AQW 19274/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the Childcare Strategy is currently underway and will conclude on 5 March 2013. The final Strategy will be published as soon as possible after that date. All comments and views received during consultation, and the findings of research being carried out in parallel, will be considered to inform the detail of the Strategy, including the timescale for its implementation.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what weight will be given to the public consultation events due to take place on the Childcare Strategy, given that the business case for the final strategy is already being undertaken by consultants.

(AQW 19275/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Childcare Strategy is still in development and public consultation is an integral part of that development process. The comments and submissions received during the current consultation will inform and shape the final Strategy.

In parallel to the consultation exercise, research is currently underway to examine factors relevant to childcare such as need, cost and capacity. The research will identify potential options for intervention and, ultimately, produce a business case for the preferred option. The researchers are engaging directly with childcare stakeholders and will take full account of the comments and submissions received during consultation.

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how Social Investment Fund groups will work with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to ensure that the evidenced based need, which was established by the CYPSP, is not duplicated; (ii) how these groups will be monitored; and (iii) how these groups will deliver for children and young people.

(AQW 19278/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) Initial steering groups, some of which include representatives from the children and young people's sector, have been actively engaging the wider community in the identification of evidenced based, objective needs over the past four months. This has included active engagement with organisations which are represented on the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to scope existing priorities and interventions to inform final proposed projects and identify how the Social Investment Fund (SIF) can add value, enhance provision and maximise the impact for local communities in relation to priority issues.
- (ii) An OFMDFM development officer has been allocated to each zone to support steering groups in the development of the area plans and to monitor delivery of approved projects on the ground. Steering groups will be expected to report progress on a regular basis via monitoring reports.
- (iii) Where issues affecting children and young people are identified as a priority for the zone, in consultation with the wider community, relevant interventions should be included in the final plan for delivery in targeted communities across the zones. Indeed, we would expect to see projects targeted at children and young people given the strategic objectives and their focus on tackling educational underachievement, addressing poor mental and physical health and supporting young parents and children and young people at risk.

Social Protection Fund

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Protection Fund. **(AQW 19590/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Social Protection Fund was designed to help individuals and families facing hardship due to the ongoing economic downturn.

Last year, some £22 million was distributed by the Department for Social Development and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety as Winter Fuel Payments for benefit recipients and cancer patients.

However, no funding was explicitly allocated to the Social Protection Fund over the remaining three years of the budget period, rather a commitment to make money available if or when required.

Following further policy development, we now have one consolidated and integrated 'Delivering Social Change Fund' which will afford us the opportunity to respond quickly, and in a flexible manner, to urgent social needs as they arise and address the specific needs of some of our most vulnerable individuals and families. The initial consolidated fund has £92 million over this spending review period.

Economy

Mr McQuillan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on how they are progressing towards rebalancing the Economy. **(AQO 3355/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The devolution of Corporation Tax is one of the key measures that will help towards rebalancing the economy.

The final report of the findings of the Joint Ministerial Working Group was sent to the Prime Minister for his consideration in November.

The Prime Minister wrote to us on 9 January to confirm he will meet us in London to hear our views on Corporation Tax devolution in detail and his office would work with ours to identify a suitable date. We continue to press for this meeting to take place as soon as possible.

In March 2012, the Executive launched their Economic Strategy which set out a long-term vision to rebalance the Economy to 2030.

Less than one year on, Departments across the Executive are making significant progress in implementing their Economic Strategy commitments, activity which will, in the longer term, improve the competitiveness of the local economy and deliver higher levels of sustainable growth and employment.

The Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy is monitoring progress and will produce an annual report in June which will detail the extent to which these commitments are being delivered and an assessment of the wider health of the Economy.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Drainage of Agricultural Land

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department has taken to improve the drainage of agricultural land over the past year.

(AQW 19007/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Drainage (NI) order 1973 grants permissive power to Rivers Agency to conduct maintenance on rural watercourses that have been designated for upkeep at public expense. The Rivers Agency operates an ongoing inspection and maintenance regime for rural watercourses based on a 6 year cycle and during the financial year 2011/2012 the Rivers Agency inspected and maintained some 1,200 kilometres of rural watercourses throughout the province.

Waterlogging and High Rainfall Levels

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what impact waterlogging and high rainfall levels have had on food production in the past year, and which crops have been affected.

(AQW 19008/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The high rainfalls throughout 2012 have had a significant effect on all crops. My technical teams at CAFRE have indicated the reduction in production compared to average is:

Crop	Estimated Reduction in yield
Potatoes	19%
Barley	13%
Wheat	23%
Oats	21%
Grass	10%
Forage Maize	35%
Bramley apples	35 -40%
Carrots	20%
Parsnips	10%
Turnips	25%
Leeks	10%
Scallions	No change
Cabbages	20%
Cauliflowers	50%

Crop	Estimated Reduction in yield
Broccoli	40%
Brussels Sprouts	30%

Both grass and forage maize are converted into food through animals producing milk and red meat. Farmers have compensated for reduced quantity and quality of forage by feeding more concentrates and, as a result production of milk and meat has not fallen commensurately.

Land and Soil Quality Improvement

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what provisions and systems exist within her Department to encourage land and soil quality improvement.

(AQW 19009/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department published advice on managing farmland soils in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Soil. This Code sets out practical advice for farmers to maintain and improve soil quality and fertility and avoid pollution of soil.

- All farmers in receipt of direct agricultural support payments must meet the cross-compliance requirements. One element of these requirements is the need to keep land in Good Agricultural and Environment Condition (GAEC). GAEC 1, Soil Management, and GAEC 2, Supplementary Feeding, are specifically designed to protect soil. Failure to adhere to these requirements could lead to penalties being applied.
- DARD further encourages farmers to manage their land for environmental enhancement through their participation in agri-environment schemes. These voluntary schemes provide funding in return for undertaking sustainable farming practices which include measures aimed at improving soil quality.
- Development Advisers and Technologists at my Department's College, CAFRE, provide advice for farmers on land and soil quality improvements through press articles, awareness events and training courses. Training covers the topics of soil structure, nutrition, compaction and drainage. In the last 4 years CAFRE has delivered 161 courses on Nutrient Management to which 878 farmers have attended.
- Development Advisers also assist farmers with the interpretation of soil analysis and facilitate the processing of samples through laboratories. CAFRE has also developed and a suite of online calculators to help farmers work the amount of fertiliser they can apply to comply with legislative requirements.
- Financial support is available to farmers through the Farm Modernisation Programme. The list of items eligible for grant aid include equipment used for improving land and soil quality, for example: sub-soiler, soil aerator, rush control mulcher, soil pH meter, soil nitrogen meter and soil sampling kit.
- In addition financial support is also available through DARD's Manure Efficiency Technology Scheme (METS). This provides capital grant support to help farmers to invest in advanced slurry spreading systems. This specialised equipment enables farmers to maximise efficient use of the nutrients contained in slurry/manures to improve soil fertility and reduce chemical fertiliser costs. The equipment also delivers a range of other productive and environmental benefits, including increased flexibility in timing of slurry spreading and reduced odour.

Solar Energy Applications

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the requirements solar energy applications are required to meet in order to receive funding under the Rural Development Programme, in each Local Action Group area.

(AQW 19011/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme grant assistance may be provided for standalone renewable initiatives including the installation of Photovoltaic panels, hydro and wind or for projects where renewable energy technology is planned as part of the larger project. None of the energy produced may be used to reduce farm business or farm home domestic running costs ie 100% must be exported to the grid. This is a European Commission requirement.

Private promoters which include farmers and farm family members and rural micro businesses (less than 10 employees) may be offered financial assistance at a rate of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant amount of £50,000. Social Economy Enterprises and Community Groups seeking to introduce renewable technologies can be funded at a rate of 75% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant amount of £170,000 depending on the measure applied to. A feasibility study is a Programme requirement and as an eligible cost may be supported through technical assistance at similar grant rates up to a maximum grant amount of £5,000.

Detailed guidance for renewable energy projects can be found at Appendix 25 of the Axis 3 Operating Rules on the DARD website at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-grants-and-funding/publications-grants-and-funding-axis-3-operating-rules.htm>

Lough Agency's Jurisdiction

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, which Department's regulations, legislation or guidance takes precedence when waters that are within the remit of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure lie within the Loughs Agency's jurisdiction.

(AQW 19016/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Where DCAL waters lie within the Loughs Agency areas DCAL shall determine fishery specific regulations. These are given legal effect in the Loughs Agency jurisdictions by legislation made by Loughs Agency in consultation with and on behalf of DCAL. Guidance is provided by both bodies. The principle applying is that a fishery owner may wish to see more specific or more stringent regulations than apply in general legislation or byelaws. Those fishery specific regulations cannot be less stringent than the general legislation.

Departmental Headquarters: Ballykelly

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether discussions have commenced with trade union representatives regarding the departmental headquarters moving to Ballykelly or to detail when they are likely to begin.

(AQW 19067/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A departmental level committee was established in October 2011 to facilitate consultation with trade union representatives specifically regarding the departmental headquarters relocation programme. This is a formal committee established within the departmental Whitley arrangements which is the recognised consultation mechanism within the NI Civil Service.

There have been 5 meetings of this committee since I announced that Ballykelly was the preferred site. As the work on the business case is well under way the committee now meets on a monthly basis.

Other formal and informal discussions are held outside of these meetings to keep staff representatives apprised of developments and where practical issues require it. NIPSA have been invited to participate in the pre-consultation exercise being undertaken as part of the EQIA work and have contributed to the design of the staff survey on relocation.

The issues around the relocation of the DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly have also been subject to consultation at Central Whitley level.

Woodland

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many hectares of land are covered by woodland in (i) North Down; and (ii) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19174/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) There are approximately 950 hectares of woodland within the North Down Borough Council area.
- (ii) Woodland cover in the north of Ireland is estimated to be 105,771 hectares.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 18218/11-15, how many hectares of trees will need to be replanted as a result of Ash Dieback disease.

(AQW 19175/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Approximately 11 hectares of ash within Woodland Grant Scheme will require to be replanted to remain eligible for future Woodland Grant Scheme payments.

Animal Cruelty

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what sanctions can be imposed on people who are prosecuted for animal cruelty.

(AQW 19179/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The welfare of animals here is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act 2011. The 2011 Act recognises that causing unnecessary suffering to any animal is a very serious offence and the new stiffer penalties contained within the Act reflect this. The powers in the 2011 Act cover not just offences of unnecessary suffering, but also a wide range of other offences such as failing to provide for the welfare needs of the animal. The maximum penalties for animal welfare offences are 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine of £5,000 on summary conviction (Magistrate's Court); and 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine on conviction by indictment (High Court with jury).

In addition, the Court can deprive a person convicted of a serious animal welfare offence of ownership of the animal to which the offence related, should they be the owner. The Court can also disqualify a person, convicted of a serious animal welfare offence, for such a period as it sees fit, from owning, keeping, participating in the keeping, control or influencing the way an animal is kept. Such disqualification also stops a person from dealing in animals and from transporting, or arranging the transport, of animals. This disqualification could be for life, even for a first offence, and can be imposed in relation to animals generally, or to one or more species of animal. If the Court decides not to make an order to disqualify the person for cases brought forward under the 2011 Act, the Court must state its reason.

As the powers of disqualification in the 2011 Act are very extensive and cover not just ownership, but also the keeping or influencing the keeping of animals, the 2011 Act provisions prevent a person banned from keeping animals from simply transferring them to another family member. Where any person subsequently breaches a Court disqualification order, an offence will have been committed and that person would become liable to the penalties outlined above.

DARD: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether her Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19248/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The Special Adviser has not made a declaration of interest.
- (ii) The NICS HR Handbook sets out at section 6.01 the Standards of Conduct to which all Civil Servants must adhere. In respect of conflict of interest it states "where a conflict of interest arises, you must declare the interest to your Establishment/Personnel Division so that a decision can be made on the best way to proceed".
- (iii) Not applicable (see response to (i) above).

Drainage Council Grants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much the Drainage Council has awarded in grants in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19260/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Drainage Council is constituted in line with the requirements of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973, and its status is that of an advisory non departmental public body which has no staff, budget or responsibility for the awarding of any grants. The primary function of the Drainage Council is in producing determinations on what watercourses are to be designated for maintenance and upkeep at public expense.

Meat Packaging Investigations

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) who is responsible for investigating issues related to meat packaging and queries regarding labelling and traceability; (ii) when are her Department, the Food Standards Agency and Environmental Health informed of such investigations; (iii) what is a reasonable time scale for investigating such issues; and (iv) in addition to the recent case in at Freeza Meats, Newry, how many other investigations are taking place regarding labelling and traceability.

(AQW 19507/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i). The Food Standards Agency NI (FSA) is responsible for investigating issues related to meat packaging, and queries regarding labelling and traceability. The investigations are carried out by enforcement officers appointed by District Councils who carry out food safety and standards inspections in accordance with a Framework Agreement between the Councils and the FSA. Officers inspect food businesses in accordance with the Food Safety Code of Practice and Practice Guidance. Premises are inspected on a risk assessed basis.

DARD is responsible for enforcing the Beef Labelling legislation in abattoirs and approved cutting plants, which provides customers with assurance about the origin of beef at meat processors. District Councils enforce Beef Labelling legislation at retail level and cold stores on behalf of DARD, along with general food labelling regulations on processed meat products.

DARD is also responsible for meat hygiene official controls in approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments on behalf of the FSA.

- (ii). If as a result of routine investigations the enforcement officers of the District Council identify a potential food safety incident, they are obliged to inform the Food Standards Agency in accordance with the FSA Incidents Response Protocol as soon as possible. An incident is defined as any

event, where based on the information available, there are concerns about actual or suspected threats to the safety or quality of food and/or feed that could require intervention to protect consumer interests.

In regard to 'Beef Labelling' legislation, the principal responsibility for compliance rests with Food Business Operators. DARD undertakes a programme of risk based inspections in abattoirs and approved cutting plants and any non-compliances observed during these inspections are followed-up, and appropriate action taken as soon as possible.

- (iii). Incidents are classified as either high, medium or low based on a classification matrix set out in the protocol. All incidents are immediately acted upon by FSA and details cascaded to those required to investigate further. Timescale in relation to investigation of an incident is dependent on complexity and scale of the issue. An incident investigation will not be closed until the FSA is satisfied that all necessary action has been taken to protect consumer interests.
- (iv). There are currently no other investigations taking place regarding labelling and traceability.

Horse Passport System

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of reports that 70,000 horses are unaccounted for, what confidence can the public have in her Department's horse passport system. **(AQW 19732/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has no knowledge of the quoted figure of 70,000 unaccounted for horses but understands that the USPCA has now clarified that the 70,000 animals referred to in its statement covered a 5 year period on the island of Ireland. There are 35,615 horses registered to owners in the north of Ireland and at least 183,000 in the south. Assuming the USPCA figures can be extrapolated on the basis of the relative horse populations north & south, the number of horses alleged to be unaccounted for in the north of Ireland in any one year is therefore around 2,000.

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. These regulations, on the identification of equidae, implement Commission Regulation (EC) No. 504/2008 in the north of Ireland. DARD enforces these Regulations at point of slaughter and at import / export at ports in the north of Ireland and will continue to keep these safeguards under review and make improvements as they present themselves.

Farm Safety: Slurry Pits

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the recent inquest into the deaths of the Spence family members, what action her Department is taking, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive, to raise awareness of farm safety issues in regard to slurry and slurry pits.

(AQO 3391/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has joined with the Health & Safety Executive NI, the Ulster Farmers' Union, NI Agricultural Producers Association, National Farmers Union Mutual, and the Young Farmers Clubs for Ulster to form the Farm Safety Partnership, the aim of which is to reduce and, ultimately, eradicate all work related fatalities on farms.

The Partnership has recently launched a comprehensive Action Plan which will deliver on 4 Key areas:-

- Provision of Information and Promotion of Safe Working;
- Health and Safety Training;
- Motivating Good Practice and Discouraging Poor Practice; and
- Collection and Analysis of Information.

For its part the Health & Safety Executive NI has produced a new guidance leaflet for farmers on safe slurry handling. Over 10,000 leaflets have already been distributed to the farming community either directly by HSENI staff or partner organisations such as the UFU, NIAPA, and Young Farmer's Clubs.

HSENI also has an ongoing programme of inspections across the north, which is designed to offer farmers advice and guidance on safe work practices including the safe handling of slurry. Over 1,000 farms having been visited since November last year. In addition to this HSENI staff has delivered numerous farm safety talks to farmers groups over recent months.

My Department plays its part in delivering the farm safe message in a number of ways.

Through locally based CAFRE Development Advisers information is distributed to farmers attending training events and workshops across the north. Currently the information being distributed is focussed on slurry mixing, including the dangers from gases, and safe use of machinery when mixing and spreading.

Also my Department is currently rolling out the FarmSafe Awareness course to 3,000 farmers across the north. The FarmSafe course covers the four key risk areas on the farms:-

- Tractors and Machinery;
- Livestock;
- Falls from Height; and
- Slurry.

The section of the course, dedicated to the management of slurry, covers its safe management in detail. This message is reinforced during the farm walk which includes examples of good, safe working practice in relation to the management of slurry.

Mountain Biking

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the assistance she has given to mountain biking in the Forest Service estate.

(AQO 3392/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This spring will see the opening of a further 66 kilometres of mountain biking trails on forestry land, developed and delivered in partnership with Newry and Mourne, Down, and Cookstown District Councils, and Outdoor Recreation NI, and paid for in large part by EU funding from the Tourist Board, the Sports Council and my own Department's Rural Development Division. This is in addition to the 34 kilometres already open and developed in partnership with the National Trust at Castleward.

This is a major achievement by the partners. The designs were complex, and took full account of the need to work and maintain the forests and protect them from erosion by excessive and inappropriate use; they were difficult to construct as, by definition, the trails are narrow and inaccessible, and I pay tribute to the contractors who are carrying out the work so that they are built to specification and will be delivered in time to support the World Police and Fire Games. And I especially want to recognise the commitment by local government to support their recreation and tourism objectives, as they will become the operating partner looking after the trails for many years to come.

I hope the Member will try the trails for himself!

Rose Energy

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the impact on the poultry industry following the rejection of the planning application for the Rose Energy project.

(AQO 3393/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The broiler poultry sector is a key part of our agri-food industry and an important contributor to the local economy. A by product of the sector is poultry litter and around 260,000 tonnes of it are

produced each year. The management and utilisation of poultry litter is an issue which cuts across the responsibilities of a number of government departments.

Traditionally, the local poultry industry has relied on spreading poultry litter on agricultural land as an organic fertiliser as its primary method for management. However, such practices are no longer sustainable at current levels. In short, there is not sufficient land available to use the nutrients in all the poultry litter that is produced here. In addition, there are regulatory obligations on the industry arising from the EU Nitrates, Water Framework and IPPC Directives to prevent pollution which must be met. Therefore, alternatives to land spreading are needed.

If long term sustainable solutions are not found, it has the potential to constrain the industry, both in terms of production and in supply of raw material to the processing sector.

I have been concerned about the lack of progress with alternative solutions for surplus poultry litter. Even if the Rose Energy planning application had been approved a legal challenge from objectors was highly likely. There would have been a further delay and no certainty that the project would ever proceed.

Therefore, over a year before the decision on the Rose Energy Planning application, I commissioned a review of poultry litter management options by my Department and the Agri-food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI). The review was published in April 2012.

The review highlighted that emerging technologies have developed in recent years and have potential. This is why, in December 2012, I together with the Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment, launched the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition to explore the potential for these emerging technologies.

Phase 1 is the technical and commercial feasibility stage of the SBRI competition and contracts will be awarded, to those selected, in May 2013 for completion within 6 months. If Phase 1 identifies viable proposals for a Phase 2 to develop and evaluate prototypes, Phase 2 will commence in autumn 2013. There has been significant interest in the SBRI so far. By 4 February, 77 organisations had registered for the competition and applications close on 20 February.

Given the importance of finding a sustainable solution for poultry litter, I strongly believe that our poultry industry needs a sound evidence base to inform its future decisions. The outcomes from the SBRI competition will provide this.

Although the Rose Energy planning application has been refused, we already have a structured and managed process underway to progress alternatives through the SBRI.

Childcare: Rural Areas

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to address the lack of childcare provision in rural areas.

(AQO 3394/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As you know DARD does not hold primary responsibility for Childcare service provision. However between 2009 and 2011, as part of our wider poverty and social inclusion work, the Department developed and implemented the Rural Childcare Programme. This was an innovative pilot programme which aimed to enhance the rural evidence base for the development of future policy and priorities in the area of rural childcare provision.

A composite evaluation of the programme was subsequently provided to OFMDFM to help influence the development of the new Childcare Strategy for the north. OFMDFM is taking the lead role in developing and co-ordinating the Strategy, working in partnership with other Government Departments which have lead responsibility for key policies relevant to childcare.

OFMDFM launched their 'Towards a Childcare Strategy' for consultation in December 2012. The consultation period closes on 5 March and I will continue to press for the need for the Strategy to take account of the very specific circumstances of rural areas.

I also want to look again at the achievements from our pilot programme and to give further consideration as to what more needs to be done in rural areas.

Badger Setts

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the timescale for the preliminary badger sett survey in the Banbridge/Rathfriland area.

(AQO 3396/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As I announced at the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development Committee on Tuesday 29 January 2013, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) have been commissioned to commence a badger sett survey in a 100km² area between Banbridge and Rathfriland in County Down as soon as permissions from local farmers are obtained.

This badger sett survey is the next important step to help inform the design of the proposed “test and vaccinate or remove (TVR)” wildlife intervention research. The TVR approach would involve testing live badgers; vaccinating and releasing the test negative badgers; and removing the test positive ones. This wildlife intervention research would focus on removing diseased badgers and protecting uninfected ones. This balanced approach, which enjoys broad spectrum support from stakeholders, would avoid removal of uninfected badgers and it is hoped will lead to a reduction of TB levels in the badger population in the study area with a reduced capacity to transmit TB to other badgers and to cattle.

Badger sett surveying must be taken forward before foliage cover makes identifying the location of badger setts difficult. That is why it is being taken forward as a priority at this time. On 31 January 2013, my Department’s Chief Veterinary Officer wrote to some 600 farmers in the 100km² area between Banbridge and Rathfriland to ask them to give permission for AFBI staff to conduct a badger sett survey on their farm.

I am pleased that permission slips are already being returned. As a high level of farmer participation is absolutely vital to the badger sett survey, I would therefore encourage everyone who has received a letter from the Chief Veterinary Officer to return their permission slip in the pre-paid envelope provided as soon as possible.

Farms: Waterlogged Land

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to address the problem of waterlogged agricultural land.

(AQO 3397/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Drainage (NI) order 1973 grants permissive power to Rivers Agency to conduct maintenance on rural watercourses that have been designated for upkeep at public expense. The Rivers Agency operates an ongoing inspection and maintenance regime for rural watercourses based on a 6 year cycle and during the financial year 2011/2012 the Rivers Agency inspected and maintained some 1,200 kilometres of rural watercourses throughout the province.

DARD: Headquarters

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the scores achieved against the defined set of criteria by the 23 local government districts for the relocation of her Department’s headquarters.

(AQO 3398/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The process for identifying appropriate locations for my new headquarters was done in two stages – the first stage identified the 23 local government districts highlighted in the Spatial Framework of the Regional Development Strategy. These 23 areas were then scored against a set of 9 bespoke criteria. The scores for each of the 23 locations are as follows:-

SCORE OF THE 23 POTENTIAL LOCATIONS

Location	Score
Antrim	30
Ards	50
Armagh	44
Ballymena	35
Banbridge	57
Belfast	34
Carrickfergus	17
Castlereagh	20
Coleraine	37
Cookstown	53
Craigavon	49
Derry	51

Location	Score
Down	53
Dungannon	49
Fermanagh	41
Larne	45
Limavady	59
Lisburn	24
Newry & Mourne	56
Newtownabbey	21
North Down	23
Omagh	42
Strabane	73

Department of Education

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how the interests of the voluntary grammar sector will be represented on the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 18939/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The provisions in the Education Bill that provide for the membership of the Board of ESA reflect the Heads of Agreement published by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and were also agreed by the Executive. Those provisions preserve the established role of the Transferors and Trustees in membership of the administrations arrangement for education. No other sector has such rights at present and none are proposed for the Bill. There will also be four members appointed from the community

Children in Urban Areas: Support Services

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what form of mapping exercise will be put in place to ensure that all children in urban areas receive equal opportunities to support services.

(AQW 19037/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Support services in the form of Sure Start are not restricted to urban areas. Mapping exercises are not required as Sure Start is a targeted service which has a specific geographical remit. The current coverage is at least the top 20% most disadvantaged wards and Super Output Areas in the north of Ireland, currently as defined by the Noble indicators MDM 2010. All children aged 0-4 and their families within the catchment area of each Sure Start can access services, as provision is universal within the targeted areas.

Services for children in need of support are not restricted to urban areas. The Department enables a range of programmes and services to be delivered to ensure that all disadvantaged children receive appropriate support, such as Free School Meals, Uniform Grants, and the Targeting Social Need element of the Schools' Budget, Full Service and Extended Schools. The focus of these interventions

is on improving lives and longer term opportunities for children who may experience barriers to learning because of disadvantage.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education what representation the Integrated sector will have on the board of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 19128/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The provisions in the Education Bill that provide for the membership of the Board of ESA reflect the Heads of Agreement published by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and were also agreed by the Executive. Those provisions preserve the established role of the Transferors and Trustees in membership of the administrations arrangement for education. No other sector has such rights at present and none are proposed for the Bill. There will also be four members appointed from the community.

Principals: Professional Qualification of Headship

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many Principals hold a Professional Qualification for Headship, broken down by (i) type; and (ii) sector.

(AQW 19186/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- 1 Professional Qualification for Headship, Northern Ireland, PQH (NI) is a programme intended to provide training prior to appointment to a post as a school principal and has been in operation since 2000. However it is not a mandatory qualification. The first PQH(NI) graduates were in 2001. The tables below set out the information requested.

TABLE (I) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WORKING IN SCHOOL WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY SCHOOL TYPE, 2011

School Type	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Grammar	Special	Total
Number	87	249	61	35	17	449

TABLE (II) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WORKING IN SCHOOLS WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY MANAGEMENT TYPE, 2011

Management Type	Controlled	Maintained	Voluntary	Grant Maintained Intergrated	Total
Number	223	187	22	17	449

Source: Regional Training Unit and Teachers' Pay and Pensions System

Notes to Tables (i) and (ii):

- 1 Figures are based on Principals working in schools during the week 21-25 November 2011.
- 2 Controlled includes Controlled and Controlled Integrated.
- 3 Maintained includes Catholic Maintained and other Maintained.
- 4 Figures exclude Acting Principals

TABLE (III) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY SCHOOL TYPE AT YEAR APPOINTED AS PRINCIPAL

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	Total
Nursery & Primary	10	14	13	12	29	18	32	128
Post Primary	#	*	7	6	12	8	6	48
Special	*	0	0	*	*	*	*	9

TABLE (IV) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY MANAGEMENT TYPE AT YEAR APPOINTED AS PRINCIPAL

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	Total
Controlled	#	12	*	12	24	17	23	103
Maintained	6	6	14	7	15	10	15	73
Grant Maintained Integrated	0	0	*	*	*	0	*	9

Source: Regional Training Unit and Teachers' Pay and Pensions System

Notes to tables (iii) and (iv):

- 1 Year appointed is based on the academic year September to August.
- 2 Controlled includes Controlled and Controlled Integrated.
- 3 Maintained includes Catholic Maintained and other Maintained.
- 4 Figures exclude Acting Principals
- 5 Figures exclude Voluntary Grammar schools
- 6 Figures relate only to those who held PQH on appointment.
- 7 * Relates to fewer than 5 cases.
- 8 # Relates to figures which have been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Principals: Professional Qualification of Headship

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many Principals were appointed in each of the last 7 years who held a Professional Qualification of Headship broken down by (i) type; and (ii) sector.

(AQW 19187/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- 2 Professional Qualification for Headship, Northern Ireland, PQH (NI) is a programme intended to provide training prior to appointment to a post as a school principal and has been in operation since 2000. However it is not a mandatory qualification. The first PQH(NI) graduates were in 2001. The tables below set out the information requested.

TABLE (I) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WORKING IN SCHOOL WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY SCHOOL TYPE, 2011

School Type	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Grammar	Special	Total
Number	87	249	61	35	17	449

TABLE (II) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WORKING IN SCHOOLS WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY MANAGEMENT TYPE, 2011

Management Type	Controlled	Maintained	Voluntary	Grant Maintained Intergrated	Total
Number	223	187	22	17	449

Source: Regional Training Unit and Teachers' Pay and Pensions System

Notes to Tables (i) and (ii):

- 1 Figures are based on Principals working in schools during the week 21-25 November 2011.
- 2 Controlled includes Controlled and Controlled Integrated.
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	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	Total
Nursery & Primary	10	14	13	12	29	18	32	128
Post Primary	#	*	7	6	12	8	6	48
Special	*	0	0	*	*	*	*	9

TABLE (IV) NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS WITH A PQH QUALIFICATION BY MANAGEMENT TYPE AT YEAR APPOINTED AS PRINCIPAL

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	Total
Controlled	#	12	*	12	24	17	23	103
Maintained	6	6	14	7	15	10	15	73
Grant Maintained Integrated	0	0	*	*	*	0	*	9

Source: Regional Training Unit and Teachers' Pay and Pensions System

Notes to tables (iii) and (iv):

- 1 Year appointed is based on the academic year September to August.
- 2 Controlled includes Controlled and Controlled Integrated.
- 3 Maintained includes Catholic Maintained and other Maintained.
- 4 Figures exclude Acting Principals
- 5 Figures exclude Voluntary Grammar schools
- 6 Figures relate only to those who held PQH on appointment.
- 7 * Relates to fewer than 5 cases.
- 8 # Relates to figures which have been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Pre-School Pilot Project A

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the Pre-School Pilot project A in 2011, to detail (i) the criteria used to decide which children took part in the pilot; and (ii) whether any children suggested for the pilot were later denied participation.

(AQW 19196/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Special Educational Needs (SEN) pilot in early years' settings provides additional supports to some Department of Education-funded statutory and non-statutory providers for children in their immediate pre-school year. As a pilot not all settings or children will have access to the pilot supports. Where a setting is not part of the pilot any SEN child who requires access to Education and Library Board (ELB) services will be managed through the normal arrangements. An independent evaluation of the pilot will inform the development of an appropriate model of future supports from both early years' settings and ELBs.

- (i) Within the parameters of the pilot, each ELB implemented a model, based on their professional judgement of greatest need in their area. Settings, rather than children, were identified by ELBs to participate in the pilot. The models developed differ across the ELBs with some focusing on particular types of SEN such as: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD); Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN); or Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD).

Once within a pilot, it will be the setting that identifies children requiring pilot supports, with parental consent as appropriate. The criteria used by each ELB to identify settings were as follows:

ELB	Criteria used by ELB to identify pilot settings
NEELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All pre-school settings were ranked in order of social deprivation using the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 ■ 60 settings with the highest ranks were offered the opportunity to participate in the pilot ■ 32 settings chose to participate in the pilot
BELB	<p>Pre-school settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expression of interest ■ Number of referrals for ASD, SLCN and SEBD over the previous 3 years ■ Setting not involved in many other initiatives ■ All education sectors to be represented ■ All parts of the city to be represented <p>Playgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Numbers of children attending ■ Social deprivation ■ Geographical spread

ELB	Criteria used by ELB to identify pilot settings
SELB/ WELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offered to 20 SLCN and 20 SEBD settings in each ELB; 80 pre-schools classes in total. ■ Statistical analysis of data on SEN and social need was accessed from the Department of Education. ■ Consultation with Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts to identify areas of need. ■ Consultation with the Early Years Organisation to identify specific areas that would benefit from participation. ■ The SELB/WELB Early Years Steering Group, on the basis of the information gathered, made the decision to target specific areas for the pilot, including geographical clustering.
SEELB	<p>The SEELB pilots relate to ASD and SEBD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In school year 2011/12 the pilots supported all nurseries and funded playgroups. ■ This model was re-aligned in school year 2012/13 to provide focused support to 44 pre-school settings. ■ All those settings which had received individual support for pupils during 2011/12 year were offered a place in 2012/13. (2 settings declined.) ■ Social Deprivation index was obtained for all SEELB Nursery Schools, Nursery Units and PEAG Playgroups. ■ SEELB Pre-school settings were categorised according to their geographical area and whether they were urban or rural. ■ All SEELB Nursery Schools, Nursery Units and Playgroups were categorised as Controlled, Maintained, Integrated, Reception Class or Irish Medium. ■ Considered which categories the Pre-school Settings that received support for individual pupils in 2011/12 fell into (i.e. Social Deprivation, geographical area, urban/rural, Controlled, Maintained, Integrated, Irish Medium.) Gaps in each of these categories were identified. ■ Nursery Schools, Nursery Units and PEAG playgroups, which had only attended training provided by the Project during 2011/12 and also fell within the “gap” categories were identified and offered a place in 2012/13. Most accepted. ■ A very small number of settings, which had not engaged in the Project during 2011/12 were offered a place for 2012/13 in order to fill all categories and ensure that the SEELB target settings were representative of the range of pre-school settings within the Board.

(ii) In response to the second part of the question, the ELBs have advised as follows:

ELB	Whether any children were denied participation
NEELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All pupils with SEN enrolled in the pilot settings may benefit from participation. There are no exclusions
BELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No children appropriately referred within the scope of pilot have been denied participation.
SELB/ WELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The SELB and WELB are not aware of any pupil who has been excluded from participation where settings are still part of the pilot.

ELB	Whether any children were denied participation
SEELB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="357 226 1378 293">■ Under the pilot in 2011/12 only those children whose difficulties related to areas of need covered by the pilots (ASD or SEBD) were supported through the pilots. <li data-bbox="357 315 1378 360">■ Under the school year 2012/13 procedures, the SEELB is not aware of any children suggested for focused support who have been denied participation.

Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the findings of the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit review into the regionalisation of support services.

(AQW 19207/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit carried out an initial report examining the scope for operational efficiencies in a range of education services and two more detailed reports examining the scope for cost reduction in home to school transport and school catering services.

A key finding of all three reports was that there was often variation in practice and in costs across the Education & Library Boards. A central theme of the reports was the scope to improve value for money by operating services on a more consistent basis, learning from and applying good practice that already exists within some ELBs and best practice from elsewhere.

The establishment of ESA will require the design and delivery of support services that operate consistently across all parts of the north. This provides an early opportunity to address unnecessary variations in practice and to apply learning and best practice in line with the recommendations of PEDU. That work is now being taken forward.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the projected job losses following the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; and (ii) the projected final staffing levels of the Authority.

(AQW 19208/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Implementation of the new ESA structure will be carried out in a managed way and is likely to take several years to complete. When implementation is complete it is expected that ESA will have fewer staff than are currently employed in the organisations it will subsume, particularly at senior and middle management levels. This work is being developed by the Full Business Case for ESA which shall be completed shortly.

Donacloney Primary School

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education when he will make a decision in relation to the proposed expansion of Donacloney Primary School from eight classes to nine.

(AQW 19289/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Development Proposal (DP) No'279, which proposes an increase in the size of Donacloney Primary Schools from eight class bases to nine class bases, was published by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) on 15 October 2012. Once a DP is published, a statutory 2-month consultation period then ensues, during which anyone who wishes to express an opinion may do so directly to DE. At the end of the 2-month period I make a decision on the proposal taking account of all the pertinent issues and the comments received.

I note that the consultation period for DP No'279 ended on 15 December 2012. DE officials have, however, been working with the SELB to clarify a number of issues but unfortunately, some of these remain unresolved.

The Board has therefore been asked for further comment as a matter of urgency and a response is expected shortly. Subject to the outstanding issues being resolved satisfactorily, officials will then

finalise the recommendation and submit to me for my consideration. I expect therefore to be in a position to take a decision in respect of DP No'279 in the very near future.

Schools with a Shared Principal

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail which schools have a shared Principal.
(AQW 19315/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: St Therese Nursery School, Belfast has a shared Principal.

School's Entrance Criteria

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education to outline the power, statutory or otherwise, under which his Department, or any Education and Library Board, can remove a school's right to set its own entrance criteria, including the right to select on the basis of academic merit if it so chooses.

(AQW 19316/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The admissions criteria used by any school are a matter for the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors of every school has a statutory duty to set admissions criteria capable of distinguishing between applicants down to the last available place.

If a school attempts to publish criteria that are not capable of distinguishing between applicants down to the last available place, and it has not been possible to resolve the matter through any other means, the Department has the power to direct the school to change its criteria in a manner that will enable the school to meet this statutory duty.

Killowen Primary and Millburn Primary Schools, Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education when Killowen Primary and Millburn Primary Schools in Coleraine will be included on any future Capital Build Programme.

(AQW 19345/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that Killowen and Millburn Primary Schools will be disappointed not to be included in my recent capital investment announcement.

The projects I announced on 22 January were determined as priorities by the relevant Managing Authority and as certain to perform part of area solutions for the future schools estate.

While the recent announcement I have made in no way implies that other schools, including Killowen and Millburn Primary Schools, will not be considered at a later stage, I will only announce capital projects which I believe can be delivered within a reasonable timeframe.

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

Reading Recovery Tutors

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education how Reading Recovery Tutors, who were trained by the Reading Recovery National Network, are utilised to disseminate good practice in primary schools.

(AQW 19354/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department (DE) provided substantial financial support for the Reading Recovery programme from 1998/99 to 2007/08. During this period over 600 teachers were trained in Reading Recovery strategies by Reading Recovery tutors in the Education and Library Boards (the Boards). When funding ended in 2008 a number of schools continued to provide Reading Recovery from within their delegated budget, utilising teachers previously trained in Reading Recovery techniques.

When funding ended the Reading Recovery tutors in the Boards no longer had access to the Reading Recovery National Network and were therefore no longer licensed to provide Reading Recovery training.

Some Boards still have trained tutors within their staff and these officers are now engaged in providing support and training in the areas of literacy and school improvement.

Reception and Nursery Classes

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's definition of a (i) reception class; and (ii) nursery class.

(AQW 19361/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Definitions are provided within Article 18, Paragraph 4, of the Education (NI) Order 1997.

"Reception class" means a class in which education is provided which is suitable to the requirements of children aged four and any pupils over that age whom it is expedient to educate together with pupils of that age.

"Nursery class" means a class in which education is provided which is suitable to the requirements of children who have attained the age of two but have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age.

Education and Library Board: Enrolment Figures

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) maximum; and (ii) actual enrolment figures for each (a) nursery; and (b) reception class in 2012/13, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 19363/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged to have the information requested placed in the Assembly Library.

International Study

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the accuracy of the (i) Progress in International Reading Literacy Study; and (ii) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

(AQW 19364/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are major international surveys conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement and I have been assured that both surveys are subject to rigorous technical standards.

I understand that numerous quality assurance steps and procedures are implemented by all those involved in the PIRLS and TIMSS assessment, including the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, the IEA Secretariat, the IEA Data Processing and Research Center, Statistics Canada, Educational Testing Service, and the National Research Coordinators and their teams in the participating countries.

I am therefore confident that the results of PIRLS and TIMSS are reliable and valid and that we should celebrate and strive to build on the success of our primary schools.

Teachers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many teachers are currently employed in schools across Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19420/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The latest available information indicates that schools across the north of Ireland employed 3,616 teachers in a temporary capacity and 15,979 teachers in a permanent capacity. These figures do not include teachers in Voluntary Grammar Schools for whom the Department does not hold information.

C2K Fibre Programme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Education (i) how much the installation of the C2K Fibre programme has cost to date; (ii) what is the completion date of the programme; and (iii) how much of the budget remains.

(AQW 19422/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- i) The cost of C2k Broadband installation for the 67% of schools deployed to date remains consistent with the corresponding percentage of budget allocated for this purpose.
- ii) The completion date of the programme is currently projected to be 31st May 2013. This date is subject to satisfactory agreement to additional digging and construction work by schools and Education and Library Boards where necessary.
- iii) The cost of installing C2k Broadband in the remaining 33% of schools remains consistent with the corresponding percentage of budget allocated for this purpose.

It is not possible to identify the specific contract cost of delivery of enhanced broadband to our schools, as this is part of the wider contract, which includes many elements. The type of contract in place for delivery of improved ICT services to schools is called a 'packaged managed service' and the level of cost relates directly to the services that are needed and are to be provided. Examples of services include the delivery of much enhanced broadband to all of our schools, as well as WiFi in schools, new software, including a portal called 'My School', a helpdesk service that operates from 7am to 7pm each week day etc. To provide this specific breakdown of parts of the service would be considered to be a breach of 'commercial in confidence' agreements between the contractor and their partners.

C2K Fibre Programme

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Education how much of the C2K Fibre programme has been implemented to date; and whether any schools or Boards of Governors have declined installation.

(AQW 19424/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: To date, 746 schools out of an overall total of 1,116 schools (67% of all schools) have received their C2k Broadband enhancement. No schools or Boards of Governors have declined installation up to this point.

Bangor Central Integrated Primary School

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed new school building for Bangor Central Integrated Primary School.

(AQW 19426/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that Bangor Central Integrated Primary School will be disappointed not to be included in my recent capital investment announcement, and the process in no way implies that other school projects will not be considered at a later stage.

The reality is that the budget settlement for this Spending Review period means that the need for investment far exceeds the funds available.

I will continue to petition to secure the additional funds to address the difficulties faced in many schools.

Special Educational Needs Review

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether the Special Educational Needs review, and any resulting changes to regulations, will retain the provision detailed within part 3 sub section 2 that a statement of Special Educational Needs should be specific, detailed and quantified.

(AQW 19429/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) includes guidance for Education and Library Boards (ELBs) on the completion of statements. Paragraph 4.21 of the Code provides guidance on how the special educational provision should be set out by the Education and Library Board in part 3, sub section 2 of a statement. The guidance states that this sub-section should “normally be specific, detailed and quantified”.

The form, which a statement should take, is currently set out in Part B of the Schedule of the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (NI) 2005. These Regulations refer to what the ELBs should specify in the statement, but do not use the terms “specific, detailed and quantified”.

Revised Regulations are yet to be drafted and all amendments to existing Regulations or new provisions will be consulted upon. The overall intention will be to ensure that the arrangements set out are in the child's interests, that provision is made as soon after assessment as necessary, and that a less bureaucratic framework can allow for the changing needs of children.

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, given that the Special Educational Needs (SEN) code of practice states that provision detailed within part 3 sub section 2 of a statement of SEN should normally be specific, detailed and quantified, whether each Education and Library Board ensures such quantification and specification in a statement.

(AQW 19430/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Part IV paragraph 4.21 of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP) states that Part 3 subsection 2 of a statement of special educational needs (SEN) should normally be specific, detailed and quantified although there will be cases where flexibility should be retained in order to meet the changing special educational needs of the child concerned.

The Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that, where appropriate, ELBs ensure that the provision detailed in part 3 subsection 2 of statements of special educational needs (SEN) is specific, detailed and quantified by:-

- 1 Adhering to the guidelines outlined in the COP, including specification pertaining to;
 - the appropriate educational setting which has been recommended;
 - any additional support required to meet the pupils' individual needs;
 - access to a range of ELB services e.g. the Sensory Support Service, the Autism Advisory and Intervention Service or the Specific Learning Difficulties and Behaviour Support team etc.
- 2 Employing skilled and experienced officers to write statements;
- 3 Providing on-going training, support and supervision for these officers;
- 4 Seeking updated advice from parents/stakeholders when writing or amending statements;
- 5 Seeking clarification from advice givers should there be any ambiguities in their reports;
- 6 Carefully considering of all information gathered and the needs of children on an individual basis.

Specific details relating to teaching programmes and approaches, experiences, opportunities or modifications required, special examination provision and appropriate facilities and equipment are also detailed within the appendices to the statement when appropriate.

ELBs have also advised that in a small number of cases flexibility in relation to quantification and specification is required in order to meet the changing SEN of the child concerned.

Reception Classes in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education which schools in North Down have reception classes; and how many pupils attend each class.

(AQW 19448/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Two schools in the North Down constituency have reception pupils in 2012/13. In both these cases, the reception pupils are integrated into a Year 1 class. Information relating to the number of reception pupils in the schools concerned and the total number of children in the class of which they are a part, is detailed in the table below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY THAT HAVE RECEPTION PUPILS, 2012/13

School name	Number of reception pupils	Total pupils in class of which reception pupils are a part
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	5	18
St Patrick's Primary School, Holywood	4	23

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures included are provisional and may be subject to minor revision once the Education and Library Boards' auditing process is complete. Finalised figures will be available at the end of February.

Business Education Partnerships

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education whether any Business Education Partnerships (BEP) exist in South Down; and to outline the benefits of BEPs to pupils and young people.

(AQW 19455/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education currently funds 13 Business Education Partnerships (BEPs) across the north to run a variety of employability, enterprise and career events. Currently the Down and Banbridge BEPs cover the South Down Area within their delivery programmes.

BEPs are voluntary organisations made up of staff from local schools from a particular geographic area, together with staff from local employers and members of the business and wider community. Individuals working in BEPs do so on a voluntary basis.

BEPs enable local teachers to develop and deliver employability and enterprise projects to meet the specific needs of their pupils and programmes are delivered in partnership with local employers which enable schools and local businesses to develop mutually beneficial relationships.

BEPs run a variety of employability, enterprise and careers type events e.g. careers conventions, work experience activities, interview skills and workplace visits, and have as their aim the development and facilitation of business education activities, aligned to the revised curriculum. The benefits for pupils include enhanced insight and information into the world of work in order to make informed career choices, better understanding of employability skills, entrepreneurship skills, interview skills and personal development skills such as confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

New Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 14378/11-15, when each of the new schools will open.

(AQW 19468/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The design and planning work, which is still ongoing and required for all these projects to enable them to reach tender approval /construction stage is a complex process which also involves a number of statutory approvals. As such, at this stage in the overall design process it is still not possible to give definitive opening dates for any of these projects.

Total Spend on Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19484/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education spent £19k on hospitality in 2011/12.

Roddensvale School in Larne

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education why the earmarked allocation for Roddensvale School in Larne has reduced from £20,878 in 2006/07 to £7,000 in 2012/13; and whether a reduction replicated across all special schools.

(AQW 19557/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The earmarked allocation to Roddensvale School was made up of the following initiatives:

- Extended Schools;
- SEN COP(Special Educational Needs Code of Practice); and
- Direct Addition to Special Schools.

The reduction from £20,878 in 2006-07 to £7,000 in 2012-13 occurred due to the following:

- The cessation of extended schools earmarked funding, as the school no longer met the criteria to receive this funding from 2008-09. The allocation for this in 2006-07 and 2007-08 was £12,420;
- The cessation of SEN Code of Practice Funding by my Department from 2010-11. The allocation for this in 2006-07 was £5,308;
- The Direct Addition to Special Schools budget increased from £3,150 in 2006-7 to £7,000 in 2012-13;

Any reductions mentioned above will be either due to the school no longer meeting the necessary criteria (Extended Schools), or the funding ceasing across all schools (SEN COP).

Schools: Energy Costs

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to outline measures that his Department has taken to assist schools in lowering their energy costs.

(AQW 19558/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The purchase of Energy for schools is managed by a joint grouping of Procurement Professionals and Energy Officers on behalf of all Education & Library Board estates. Energy commodities are purchased at a market price, with suppliers being paid a margin for profit and delivery only.

The ELB Energy Officers are responsible for purchasing oil, natural gas, liquid petroleum gas, electricity and water utilities on behalf of the estate at the most beneficial cost for schools. This collective purchasing power ensures that the cost of the energy supply for schools is kept to a minimum, releasing funding for other priorities.

Since 2000/01, significant ELB investment in plant conversions has increased the area of the estate heated by natural gas from virtually zero to around one third, resulting in an estimated saving of £8m and a reduction in CO2 emissions of some 65,000 tonnes.

Following the emergence of the single electricity market across the island of Ireland in 2007, ELB Energy Officers recently implemented a contract for the supply of electricity for the schools estate and it is anticipated that this will deliver savings of approximately 10% or £1.6m against baseline figures.

The ELB Energy Officers have also taken steps to monitor and reduce water usage and waste in schools, to install a range of renewable energy systems and to upgrade the estate through energy saving schemes, all of which contribute to reducing the usage and thus the cost of energy for schools.

Nursery Units

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education which reception classes in North Down are currently awaiting a decision on an application to become a nursery unit.

(AQW 19564/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently no proposals with my Department for any reception class in North Down to become a nursery unit.

Competition to Appoint Members to the General Teaching Council

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW14678/11-15, for an update on the current situation.

(AQW 19581/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As a result of the breaches identified by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, I tasked my Permanent Secretary with carrying out a review to establish how these breaches occurred and to ensure that lessons were learned and systems improved so that there can be no risk of recurrence.

The review has been completed and the Department has agreed an Action Plan which addresses the shortcomings in the process which were identified. Advice has also been promulgated to all Directorates within my Department.

In addition, my Department is represented on an Inter-Departmental Working Group on Public Appointments. Its role is to identify risks and challenges for Departments in making public appointments, to disseminate good practice and to ensure greater compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

Schools: New Computer Based Assessment System

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW15217/11-15, for an update on the current situation.

(AQW 19583/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I wrote to schools on 12 November to advise them that I was satisfied that the main technical difficulties associated with the computer based assessments (CBA) had been addressed. I also stated that I expected them to continue with the assessments before the end of term.

In agreement with the suppliers of NINA and NILA, CCEA wrote to schools on 20 December advising that the assessment period had been extended until 11 January, allowing schools additional time to complete the assessments.

CCEA has confirmed that 96% of the NINA (Numeracy) assessments and 95% of the NILA (Literacy) assessments in student terms have been completed.

Standardised outcomes will be released to schools shortly.

Going forward, I have agreed to a 4-part review of computer based assessment being undertaken by my Department. The review will encompass:

- A review by CCEA of the particular problems reported and how they will be addressed;
- A review by ETI to establish the value and use to which schools put the assessments;
- An independent review of the technical problems encountered this year, to establish why they occurred and how they can be avoided in future; and
- A review by DE of the CBA policy.

Educational Psychologist

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education (i) what is the longest waiting time from the point of initial referral to an appointment with an education psychologist in the South Eastern Education and Library Board during the last 12 months; and (ii) what steps he has taken to clear the backlog of children waiting to see an educational psychologist since this issue was identified during Question Time in September 2012.

(AQW 19594/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has advised that the longest waiting time from initial referral to an appointment with an educational psychologist for children who had an appointment in the period 1 February 2012 to 31 January 2013, in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, is 23 months.

The child in question was referred for an appointment with an educational psychologist before starting school but subsequent consultation with the school indicated that the child was showing progress since starting school. The case was therefore managed to establish if the child continued to make progress while retaining the option of an individual appointment with an educational psychologist which was necessary at a later date.

Since the issue of the backlog of children waiting to see an educational psychologist in the SEELB was highlighted during Question Time in September 2012, I understand that the SEELB has taken the following steps to address this:-

a) Pre-school Referrals

On 10th September 2012, SEELB Educational Psychology and Special Education departments met with colleagues from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to review practices and protocols to address the needs of pre-school children with developmental or potential educational difficulties. As a result, revised protocols are currently being piloted for the joint working of Education and Health professionals, in Child Development Clinics and Autism Assessment Clinics, regarding the needs of pre-school children with developmental or potential educational difficulties. One of the main aims of this pilot initiative is to reduce waiting times for those pre-school children in the Board's area who require an appointment with an Educational Psychologist.

b) School-age Referrals

The SEELB identified the referrals backlog as a priority for the 2012/13 school year and devised a strategy to address this issue, with the target that by 30th June 2013, no child will have been waiting more than six school months for an appointment with an Educational Psychologist. The Chief Executive has written to all school principals setting out the Board's strategy and promoting a partnership approach with schools to achieve a significant reduction in waiting times for Educational Psychology Services. As the majority of new referrals of school-age children originate from primary schools, the senior managers of the Educational Psychology Service have also met with local primary principals' groups to clarify the strategy for addressing the referrals backlog and to promote the partnership approach towards the achievement of the set target by the end of the present school year.

c) Recruitment of Educational Psychologists

The number of educational psychologists available for assessments was considerably affected by recruitment difficulties during the 2011/12 school year. Although six Educational Psychologists took up employment on temporary contracts with SEELB in September 2012, two subsequently left at the end

of December 2012 to take up employment elsewhere. SEELB is currently seeking to recruit educational psychologists to fill these vacancies as a matter of urgency.

The Board has also recruited one Psychology Assistant, and is seeking to recruit a second, to assist with assessments under the supervision of an educational psychologist.

School Closures

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the schools that have been approved for closure in each of the last ten years, broken down by (i) sector; and (ii) type.

(AQW 19599/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A chronological list of the schools that have closed in the last ten school years is provided in the table below. The table records the school sector and type as requested.

SCHOOL CLOSURES (BETWEEN 2002/03 AND 2011/12 SCHOOL YEARS)

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
103-6550	St Patrick's Primary School	BELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/03
201-1878	Earl of Erne Primary School	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/03
201-6592	Maydown and Strathfoyle Primary School	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/03
203-2733	St Joseph's Primary School, Lisconrea	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/03
221-0049	Templemore Secondary School	WELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/03
242-0229	Foyle and Londonderry College Prep Dept	WELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/03
501-2445	Toberlane Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/03
301-0803	Ballypriormore Primary School	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/12/03
111-0004	Frederick Street Nursery School	BELB	Nursery	Controlled	31/08/04

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
111-6156	Denmark Street Nursery School	BELB	Nursery	Controlled	31/08/04
301-0824	Ballyrock Primary School, Bushmills	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/04
303-2102	Brackalislea Primary School, Desertmartin	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/04
561-0057	Lurgan College Prep Dept	SELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/04
203-2680	St Mary's Primary School, Laught	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/05
301-6010	Antiville Primary School, Larne	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/05
501-6169	Granville Primary School, Dungannon	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/05
561-0067	Portadown Prep Dept	SELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/05
201-1900	Stragowna Primary School, Enniskillen	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
101-0247	Mersey Street Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
301-0722	Lisnamurrigan Primary School, Broughshane	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
301-3327	Glenarm Primary School	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
303-2266	St Mary's Primary School, Aghadowey	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/06

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
311-6161	Larne Nursery School	NEELB	Nursery	Controlled	31/08/06
321-0292	Massereene Community College, Antrim	NEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/06
501-1114	Ardmore Primary School, Derryadd	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
501-1655		SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/06
503-6021	All Saints Primary School, Ballela, Banbridge	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/06
121-0273	Mount Gilbert Community College, Belfast	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/07
223-0141	St Joseph's High School, Plumbridge	WELB	Secondary	Maintained	31/08/07
301-6226	Ballyduff Primary	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
311-6019	Ballycastle Nursery School	NEELB	Nursery	Controlled	31/08/07
401-1508	Charley Memorial Primary School, Dunmurry	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
401-1627	Lambeg Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
401-1648	Hillhall Primary School, Lisburn	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
401-1686	Drumbo Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
401-3001	Groomspart Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
403-3029	St Mary's Primary School, Ballygowan	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/07
431-6546	The Lindsay Hospital School, Belfast	SEELB	Special	Controlled	31/08/07
501-1618	Tullymacarette Primary School, Dromora	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
501-2616	Eglisk Primary School, Dungannon	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07
104-6654	Gaelscoil an Damba, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Irish Medium	31/08/08
121-0288	Balmoral High School, Belfast	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08
123-0032	St Gabriels College, Belfast	BELB	Secondary	Maintained	31/08/08
201-1866	Shanmullagh Primary School, Ballinamallard	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08
201-2709	Trillick PS, Omagh	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08
401-3032	Conlig Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08
403-1295	Guinness Primary School, Ballynahinch	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/08
405-3016	Kindle Integrated PS, Tyrella, Ballykinlar,	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
421-0030	Lisnasharragh High School, Belfast	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08
425-0272	Down Academy, Downpatrick	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08
501-0988	Collone Primary School, Armagh	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08
501-6109	Minterburn Primary School, Caledon	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08
405-0618	Hilden Controlled Integrated Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	30/11/08
403-1693	St Colman's PS, Moira	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/03/09
101-0863	Suffolk Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09
121-0258	Castle High School, Belfast	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09
133-6012	St Francis De Sales Special School, Belfast	BELB	Special	Maintained	31/08/09
203-2679	St Columba's PS Curley, Dromore	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09
203-2716	St Patrick's PS Garvallah, Seskinore	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09
321-0090	Maghera High School	NEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09
401-1610	Newtownbreda Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09
421-0031	Donaghadee High School	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
501-2451	Benburb Primary School, Dungannon	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09
503-1155	St Colmcille's PS, Armagh	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09
526-0307	Armagh Integrated College	SELB	Secondary	GMI	31/08/09
203-2681	St Patrick's PS, Creggan	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/10
301-6171	Ballee Primary School Ballymena	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/10
503-1658	St John's Primary School, Glenn	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/10
101-0271	Beechfield Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	30/09/10
101-0283	Grove Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	15/10/10
101-0321	Vere Foster PS, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11
113-6302	St Paul's Nursery School, Belfast	BELB	Nursery	Maintained	31/08/11
162-0018	Bloomfield Collegiate Prep Dept	BELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/11
303-0836	Braid Primary School, Broughshane	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/11
303-6093	Lourdes Primary School, Whitehead	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/11
401-1678	Ballycloughan Primary School, Saintfield	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11

School ref	School	ELB area	Type	Management (Sector)	Date of closure
401-3309	Derrriaghy Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11
462-0015	Connor House Prep Dept, Bangor GS	SEELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/11
501-2659	Clogher Regional Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11
203-2664	St Davog's Primary School, Scraghey	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/12
303-0713	Carlane Primary School, Toomebridge	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/12
401-1647	Ballykeigle Primary School, Comber	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/12
401-1688	Redburn Primary School, Holywood	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/12
421-0194	Dunmurry High School	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/12
501-1034	Aghavilly Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/12
501-6028	Keady Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/12
231-0029	Altnagelvin Hospital School	WELB	Special	Controlled	30/09/12

Minority Groups: Educational Needs

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for which minority groups, excluding Travellers, his Department has undertaken significant work to determine and address educational needs.

(AQW 19619/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department undertakes significant work to support the additional educational needs of pupils such as Newcomers, School Aged Mothers (SAMs), Looked After Children (LAC) and Services children. A range of policy initiatives and funding seek to build the capacity of schools to ensure these pupils can access the curriculum and get involved in every aspect of school life.

Independent Panel: Common Funding Scheme

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of each of the recommendations contained in the report of the Independent Panel which reviewed the Common Funding Scheme.
(AQW 19621/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I intend to take time to consider carefully each one of the recommendations and, informed by these, I will bring forward my response to the report and my own proposals for reform of the Common Funding Scheme in due course.

English Baccalaureate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how he intends to proceed with his review of GCSE and A Levels in light of the decision by the Education Secretary to abandon his plans for an English Baccalaureate.
(AQW 19720/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The fundamental review of GCSEs and GCE A levels here will proceed in line with the Terms of Reference I announced to the Assembly in October 2012. This will not change following the latest announcement by Michael Gove on decisions taken in England.

A final report is due in June 2013, following two interim reports in January and March. I will consider the evidence based on the final report, and I will make decisions on the way forward here in the best interests of all learners.

Department for Employment and Learning

Unemployment in North Down

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he plans to address unemployment in North Down, particularly in the Conlig, Clondeboye and Harbour wards.
(AQW 19173/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): My Department is committed to reducing unemployment for all individuals across Northern Ireland, irrespective of where they live. Bangor JobCentre, which covers the Conlig, Clondeboye and Harbour wards, offers a range of services, initiatives and programmes to help jobseekers find employment, particularly people who are unemployed, individuals with disabilities and those with other barriers to work. Services include job search, help with writing a CV or job application form, preparing for interviews, careers guidance, or help with travel costs for job interviews.

Steps to Work (StW) programme

All unemployed clients in the North Down area can participate in the StW programme, which is the Department's main adult return to work programme. The aim of StW is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, Bangor JobCentre placed 389 StW clients into employment. From 1 April 2012 to date, 282 StW clients have been placed into employment in North Down. There are currently 606 clients from North Down on the StW programme and of these 155 are from the 3 aforementioned wards (approximately 25.6%).

First Start

A new initiative has recently been implemented within the StW programme known as 'First Start'. Between now and 2014, First Start will support 1,700 waged employment opportunities across Northern Ireland, each lasting a minimum of six months, for young people aged 18 to 24 who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for at least six months.

Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

In March last year the Executive agreed a package of new measures, incorporating the Youth Employment Scheme, to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment.

In the past few months my Department has been actively working with employers to secure opportunities across Northern Ireland. I have been delighted by the response of employers in the North Down area so far and I expect many more to come forward to offer opportunities for young people in the coming months. We are now focusing our efforts on the young unemployed and are encouraging them to participate in the Scheme.

Pathways to Work

The Department's Pathways to Work programme assists people with health conditions and disabilities move into employment.

YMCA Craft Programme

Last September, a programme entitled C.R.A.F.T. (Careers Related Advice and Further Training), which is a joint initiative between my Department, North Down YMCA and the South Eastern Regional College (SERC), was piloted in the Bangor area. 11 young people in the 18-24 year old cohort participated in this programme and the outcomes were very positive. The C.R.A.F.T. programme comprises an 8 week structured programme of Careers Guidance Clinics, Employment Adviser liaison and a series of personal development and training opportunities provided by SERC and the North Down YMCA. Following the success of the pilot programme another CRAFT programme commenced on 4th February 2013.

Other Departmental training programmes, such as Apprenticeships NI and Training for Success, are also available across Northern Ireland. These opportunities are open to eligible people from all areas and staff at the Bangor Jobcentre can provide advice on all of the programmes and initiatives available.

DEL: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19300/11-15)

Dr Farry: Special Advisers are contractually required to abide by the conduct provisions in the NICS HR Handbook with the exception of the rules on political activities, as per Standards of Conduct Section 6.01: "Where a conflict of interest arises, you must declare the interest to your Establishment/Personnel Division so that a decision can be made on the best way to proceed." Special Advisers are treated the same as civil servants in this regard.

All staff in my Department are required to notify the Establishment Officer/Senior Business Partner if they wish to undertake any secondary paid or unpaid employment to ensure compliance with the requirements in the HR Handbook. Human Resources holds a database of this information. The Department does not open this information to public inspection. The database contains personal data as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Disclosure of such information is likely to breach the first and sixth principles of the DPA.

Prior to appointment, my current temporary Special Adviser notified the Department of his secondary occupation as a Councillor. His duties as a Councillor do not preclude him from undertaking his role as my Special Adviser. The details on the secondary occupation are recorded on the database held by Human Resources.

South Eastern Education and Library Board: Budget

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what percentage of his Departmental budget is spent on young adults with (i) learning difficulties; and (ii) severe learning difficulties, in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 19312/11-15)

Dr Farry: Each of my Department's operational divisions provides significant levels of support to those people with disabilities that require assistance in overcoming barriers to employment or to learning. Unfortunately, information on all relevant departmental 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. I have, however, set out below the range of provision that is in place for disabled adults which 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 (SLDD). Funding is provided to colleges through the recurrent block grant and the Additional Support Fund. The South Eastern Regional College (SERC) does not have a tightly defined geographical area but, broadly, it corresponds with that of the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

In the 2011/12 academic year, SERC delivered provision worth £1,130,500 for students aged between 16 and 25 with learning difficulties and disabilities. This represents 4.6% of the college's total recurrent grant; 0.8% of the FE sector's overall recurrent grant; and 0.7% 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 SLDD, of £3.5m per annum, through its Additional Support Fund (ASF). For SERC, in the 2011/12 academic year, a total of £480,918 was provided through this fund, being 13.74% of the total ASF budget. As ASF funding is for students of all ages, this figure cannot be disaggregated into age groups; similarly, further education colleges do not differentiate between levels of disability. Therefore, my Department is unable to disaggregate spend into the categories outlined in the question.

My Department's regional strategy for widening participation in higher education, "Access to Success", has identified that students with disabilities and learning difficulties face significant additional difficulties in accessing higher education. The strategy aims to better 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 the 2011/12 academic year, 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. Similarly, 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 and it is not possible to isolate the expenditure.

“Access to Work (NI)” is a flexible programme designed to overcome employment related obstacles faced by people with disabilities. In 2011/12, £117k was spent on people with a learning disability through that programme. Similarly, £1,166k was spent through “Workable (NI)”, which is a programme that gives people with disabilities the opportunity of working alongside non-disabled employees in a wide variety of jobs.

Finally, 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.

Funded Learning Units

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the formula by which Funded Learning Units are calculated.

(AQW 19337/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Funded Learning Unit (FLU) is the method by which my Department allocates recurrent grant to further education colleges and is calculated on the basis of each eligible student enrolment within an academic year. A full-time student enrolment generates one FLU, which has a basic value of £3,400, and a part-time student enrolment will receive a proportion of that amount dependent on the number of hours attended. The value of this basic FLU can, however, vary significantly as a result of the application of several weightings.

The first weighting applied is for qualification level. For those student enrolments undertaking a qualification at Level 2, or above, the basic FLU is multiplied by a qualification-level weighting of 1.1. Provision below Level 2 does not attract any weighting, except in the case of Essential Skills and of English for Speakers of Other Languages, which receive a 1.8 weighting.

Next, an economic-priority weighting is applied which ranges from a multiplier of 1.2 to 1.8 depending on the area of study. This weighting is applied to those courses which are considered to be more expensive to deliver.

Thirdly, a weighting relating to disadvantage is calculated with colleges being ranked based on the Noble indicators of deprivation, which were recently reviewed. All eligible enrolments generate an additional disadvantage FLU with students at Northern Regional and South East Regional colleges receiving an additional 1% of their weighted FLU, students at South West and Southern Regional colleges receiving an additional 1.1% and students at North West Regional and Belfast Metropolitan colleges receiving an additional 1.2%.

Finally, the total FLU generated for each eligible student enrolment is the sum of the weighted and disadvantage FLU. The college will receive that amount of funding if the student completes his or her course of study. If, however, the student withdraws before January, only one third of the FLU will be payable and if attendance ends before May, only two thirds of the FLU value will be paid.

The total recurrent grant allocations made to each college in the last three years, using the FLU methodology, are as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast Metropolitan College	£34,424,765	£33,230,416	£34,442,000
North West Regional College	£23,297,739	£22,757,139	£23,453,200
Northern Regional College	£22,026,775	£21,240,121	£21,824,600
South Eastern Regional College	£25,323,564	£24,396,470	£23,919,000

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
South West College	£16,105,037	£16,028,501	£16,231,600
Southern Regional College	£27,022,120	£26,252,441	£26,129,000
Total	£148,200,000	£143,905,088	£145,999,400

Funded Learning Units

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the funds allocated to each of the Further Education Colleges for each Funded Learning Unit.

(AQW 19338/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Funded Learning Unit (FLU) is the method by which my Department allocates recurrent grant to further education colleges and is calculated on the basis of each eligible student enrolment within an academic year. A full-time student enrolment generates one FLU, which has a basic value of £3,400, and a part-time student enrolment will receive a proportion of that amount dependent on the number of hours attended. The value of this basic FLU can, however, vary significantly as a result of the application of several weightings.

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Southern Regional College	£27,022,120	£26,252,441	£26,129,000
Total	£148,200,000	£143,905,088	£145,999,400

Further Education Colleges: Success Rate Statistics

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the success rate statistics of Further Education Colleges and how these compare with similar institutions in the rest of the UK.

(AQW 19339/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department publishes data in relation to achievement rates in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector. Achievement rates are calculated as the proportion of final year enrolments who have completed their courses and gained full or partial achievement. Success rates however are calculated as the proportion of final year enrolments who started their courses and gained full or partial achievement.

Success Rates by college for the 2011/12 academic year, the latest year for which data are available, are set out in the Table below.

College	Success Rate
Belfast Metropolitan	71%
Northern Regional	71%
South Eastern Regional	75%
Southern Regional	81%
South West	76%
North West Regional	72%
Sector	74%

Source: Further Education Leavers Survey

While other parts of the UK also publish Further Education success rates, due to variances in methodology employed these are not directly comparable with Northern Ireland figures. However, my Department is currently initiating a benchmarking exercise to determine the feasibility of adjusting for these differences, and the results of this exercise will be available by the end of 2013.

Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to amend the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, to place Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland on a level playing field with their counterparts in England.

(AQW 19340/11-15)

Dr Farry: On the assumption that you are referring to the decision made by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to reclassify further education colleges as Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), I can inform you that I intend to launch a public consultation, in the near future, on the future status of further education colleges in Northern Ireland. The consultation will inform a final decision on colleges' future status, which will, in turn, determine the extent to which, if at all, the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 needs to be amended.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sectors

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures will be introduced to support the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors with the difficulties they have faced as a result of the recent civil unrest.

(AQW 18670/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, will provide financial support to help with the promotion of Belfast City Centre through the 'Backin Belfast' marketing campaign.

The aim of this campaign, which is being co-ordinated by Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, in consultation with Belfast City Council, is to encourage people to come into the city, to increase footfall and restore confidence amongst visitors through the use promotional offers from local businesses.

The ni2012 campaign was hugely successful in enhancing the image of Northern Ireland and I want to ensure that a positive message continues to be delivered.

InvestNI

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs have been (i) created; and (ii) promoted by InvestNI activities between the financial years 2007/08 and 2011/12.

(AQW 18969/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI reports on the number of jobs promoted (expected to be created) since this is the basis upon which the Programme for Government and Invest NI's Corporate Plan targets are set. Table 1 below presents this information for the five years 2007/08 to 2011/12.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED (2007-08 TO 2011-12)

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2007-08	4,202
2008-09	5,252
2009-10	4,058
2010-11	4,940
2011-12	5,233
Total	23,684

NOTES:

- 1 New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 2 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In addition, Invest NI supported over 8,000 jobs through the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP), delivered in partnership with Enterprise NI. These jobs are detailed in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: INVEST NI JOBS SUPPORTED THROUGH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (2007-08 TO 2011-12)

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2007-08	2,058

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2008-09	1,431
2009-10	1,321
2010-11	1,888
2011-12	1,323
Total	8,021

NOTE: These figures are based on an estimate of jobs created by an individual EDP offer. This estimation process is derived from an independent evaluation of the programme.

Invest NI works with businesses to promote new jobs but it is ultimately the responsibility of the company to ensure that those jobs are delivered on the ground. It should be recognised that employment grants will only be paid to a business based on the jobs actually created.

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

New Businesses in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what potential exists through her Department to assist in attracting new businesses to North Down.

(AQW 19017/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In terms of inward investment, Invest NI is responsible for selling Northern Ireland at a regional level. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a large part in the economic growth of Northern Ireland and Invest NI has a very successful track record of attracting high quality investment which will benefit the whole of the region.

Invest NI is very aware of the challenges facing local areas in Northern Ireland and acknowledges the importance of working closely with councils and other stakeholders to develop the features and benefits of each local area in order to maximise opportunities for economic growth.

Invest NI has also developed & launched a smartphone application ('FDI app') to help raise Northern Ireland's profile within international markets which can be used as a tool to help promote the benefits of setting up in the region to potential investors. The app will present the regions' key selling messages and relevant data in a format that is current, easily accessible, easy to read and easily updated. Presenting key selling messages in this innovative manner will help Northern Ireland differentiate itself from other competing regions. The app will focus on Northern Ireland as a region, and local councils, including North Down District Council Area have been invited to participate in using this tool to input with a local proposition for their area.

Electricity-Generating Tidal Developments off the North Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the existing capacity of the electricity grid, in the context of possible electricity-generating tidal developments off the North Antrim coast; and what long-term planning is in place in this regard.

(AQW 19059/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Grid capacity and development are matters for the independent Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland in conjunction with NIE, the grid owner and SONI, the system operator, not my Department. Provision is made under the Price Control process between the Utility Regulator and NIE to agree long term planning and funding requirements to upgrade the network to support the integration of renewable electricity projects. The Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland is due to consult on the connection policy for offshore renewables shortly.

Electricity-Generating Tidal Developments off the North Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what grid upgrade would be required to facilitate electricity-generating tidal developments off the North Antrim coast.

(AQW 19060/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer to my response to AQW 19059/ 11-15.

City of Culture and One Plan, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the bespoke marketing campaign for the City of Culture and the One Plan for Derry.

(AQW 19087/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is liaising closely with Derry City Council and the Culture Company to develop aligned marketing and communications plans going forward.

Derry City Council is developing a One Marketing Plan for the City of which The UK City of Culture is an important focus and opportunity for 2013.

NITB's Spring marketing campaign promoting short breaks in the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets launched on Monday 28 January 2013 and the 30 second TV advert had a strong focus on Londonderry as UK City of Culture 2013. A bespoke Londonderry 10 second edit has aired from Monday 4 February 2013.

Tourist Destination: Mournes

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how her Department is marketing the Mournes as a tourist destination.

(AQW 19111/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 15729/11-15.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) remit is to promote Northern Ireland as a short break destination to both the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets and they will continue to promote and market The Mournes.

In November 2012, NITB facilitated two marketing workshops in the Mournes area (Newcastle and Newry) for local tourism providers.

Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in Great Britain and overseas markets and regularly features the Mourne Mountains as part of its extensive global destination marketing programme. Tourism Ireland also works with tourism industry partners from the region to promote the Mournes overseas and this year tourism industry partners from County Down will join Tourism Ireland at major consumer events such as the Philadelphia Flower Show, Canada Blooms and PGA Orlando, Florida.

American-based Venture Capital Funds

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of American-based Venture Capital Funds having a clause in their contracts that bars them from doing business with any start-up company which has operations in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19143/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am not aware of any specific barriers to American based Venture Capital Funds investing in Northern Ireland. It would be for each individual fund to decide on the basis of its legal operation and investment policy. In order to address the specific question, I would have to seek legal advice. However, American based VCs tend not to invest in start-ups in Northern Ireland (or Europe) and that is why Invest NI promotes seed and other development funds, such as the NISPO Funds and Co-Fund NI to deal with the market failure.

There have been a limited number of investments by American based Venture Capital Funds in Northern Ireland companies. These have tended to be larger deals beyond the start-up stage. There are commercial barriers to Northern Ireland companies attracting venture funding below the £2 million deal size from outside the region. The Northern Ireland market is not particularly attractive to external Venture Capital Funds because of the higher risk/reward profile, and the higher transaction and investment management costs associated with managing a small portfolio, perhaps only one investment, remotely.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what additional resources her Department will receive to cover any additional costs as a result of hosting the G8 Summit and from where these resources will be allocated.

(AQW 19160/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No additional resources have been allocated to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for the G8 Summit.

Tourist Board Allocation

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 18379/11-15 whether the Coagent appraisal based its findings on the allocation of £40,000 to the Foyle Cup Tournament; and whether the 9,801 bed nights generated was considered as part of this year's Tourist Board allocation.

(AQW 19204/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 18379/11-15.

Route Developments

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the prospects for further route development in 2013 at (i) Belfast International Airport; (ii) Belfast City Airport; and (iii) Londonderry airport.

(AQW 19238/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through Tourism Ireland, is in dialogue with Northern Ireland's airports on an ongoing basis to help bring new air services to Northern Ireland and to explore opportunities to promote, and drive demand for, existing services. However, while under development, these discussions are of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature.

In terms of future prospects, I am keen to see improved access to all markets which offer the business and inbound tourism links which are important to the Northern Ireland economy. In particular, I believe there is real potential to reinstate direct air services from Northern Ireland to Germany and Canada.

UK City of Culture 2013: Londonderry

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she plans to attend any events connected to the UK City of Culture 2013 in Londonderry.

(AQW 19242/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I attended the Sons & Daughters Concert. I would hope to be invited to as many events as possible associated with the Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013, diary permitting.

Mutual Energy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQO 3298/11-15, for an update on her discussion with Mutual Energy.

(AQW 19386/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I had a useful meeting with Mutual Energy and discussed a range of issues. In relation to the current fault on the Moyle Interconnector, the company continues to work to pinpoint the fault and consider the range of options, associated costs and timescales for bringing it back to full capacity. These options will, in due course, be submitted to the Utility Regulator for consideration and a decision on the way forward. With regard to the cost of repairing the faults which occurred in 2012, Mutual Energy continues to engage with their insurance company on this matter.

Shale Gas Forum

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the dates when the Shale Gas Forum met; and the dates it is due to meet over the next two years.

(AQW 19435/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The inaugural meeting of the Shale Gas Regulators Forum took place on 18 October 2012. Future meetings will take place on a quarterly to six monthly basis but exact dates remain to be determined. The frequency of future meetings may change in response to any major developments which the Forum may need to consider.

Department of the Environment

Current Depth of the Water Table

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what is the current depth of the water table in each (i) constituency; and (ii) council area and how much has this varied over the past ten years.
(AQW 19006/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) does not currently hold representative data of the current depth of the water table (groundwater level) for each constituency and council area in Northern Ireland. The location and most recently held data on depth to water table for each NIEA groundwater monitoring site and the corresponding constituency and council areas for each monitoring location is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. GROUNDWATER MONITORING SITE LOCATION AND GROUNDWATER LEVEL

No.	Constituency	District Council Area	Groundwater Level Monitoring Site	Location		Most recent monthly average depth to water table (metres)	When recorded	Long term average depth to water table (metres)
				Easting	Northing			
1	East Antrim	Larne	Killyglen	336633	403099	24.2	Dec-12	24.4
2	East Londonderry	Limavady	Gortgarn	271056	424220	5.1	Dec-11	5.0
3	Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Fermanagh	Derrylin	228212	322053	2.0	Aug-12	2.4
4	Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Fermanagh	Silverhill	221736	345572	2.6	Sep-12	3.1
5	Lagan Valley	Lisburn	Dunmurry	329136	369500	3.5	Nov-12	3.6
6	Newry & Armagh	Armagh	Tullyard	287805	347252	2.0	Sep-12	1.9
7	North Antrim	Moyle	Armoey Road	307662	434540	1.4	Aug-12	0.8
8	North Antrim	Ballymoney	Drumbest	302459	424889	0.9	Nov-12	na

No.	Constituency	District Council Area	Groundwater Level Monitoring Site	Location	Most recent monthly average depth to water table (metres)	When recorded	Long term average depth to water table (metres)
9	North Antrim	Ballymena	Buckna	320221	408151	Aug-12	na
10	South Belfast	Belfast	Lady Dixon Park	330396	367472	Nov-12	na
11	South Belfast	Belfast	Mary Peter's Track	331719	368570	Nov-12	4.4
12	South Belfast	Belfast	Newforge	332602	369628	Nov-12	na
13	South Belfast	Belfast	Orchardville	330176	370504	Nov-12	1.0
14	West Tyrone	Strabane	Newtownstewart	241213	386430	Feb-12	na

It should be noted that the depth to water table will vary throughout the year with generally higher water table levels being observed throughout the winter months. The depths to water table observed at the NIEA monitoring sites are indicative of the relative water level within the groundwater body (aquifer) in which they are located. Depth to water table in the surrounding area may vary greatly with depths generally increasing with altitude. Therefore the depth to water table is specific for the point of monitoring only.

At the majority of the NIEA monitoring sites, records are intermittent and an annual average depth cannot be calculated. The most representative long term continuous records of water table depth are for the monitoring sites Killyglen (4) and Dunmurry (5).

Records for the last 10 years indicate that the annual average groundwater levels for each year do not vary by more than 2.7% for Killyglen and 7.1% for Dunmurry from the long term annual average levels. There is also no evidence of a rising or falling trend in depth to water table at either site.

More detailed information including the underlying data records for groundwater level monitoring is available on request from waterinfo@doeni.gov.uk

Noise Pollution

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to deal with noise pollution.

(AQW 19091/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of the Environment has responsibility for legislation and policy on noise control; however, noise complaints and the enforcement of noise control legislation is a matter for the environmental health department within each district council.

Noise is an issue which I take very seriously as there is no doubt that nuisance noise can badly affect people's health and well being. The recently published 'Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland 2011/2012' shows that there were over 12,000 complaints made to district councils across Northern Ireland. As with previous years, domestic noise is the major culprit and this is something that can, in the main, be avoided, especially those complaints relating to loud music/televisions and parties. One of the reasons that I was keen to have the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 enacted was to give district councils greater powers to deal with noise from domestic premises at night. I have been strongly urging all district councils to make full use of all the powers available to them to deal with persistent offenders and I will be monitoring the noise complaints statistics to assess the impact of the new legislation.

In addition my Department is also progressing work to tackle noise through the requirements of the EU Environmental Noise Directive. The aim of the Directive is to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to exposure to environmental noise. It focuses on the impact of such noise on individuals, complementing existing EU legislation, which sets standards for noise emissions from specific transport and industrial sources.

During 2012, and in line with the requirements of the Directive, my Department completed work on determining the noise exposure of the population through the second round noise mapping exercise. The next stage of this work, to be undertaken during 2013, is to establish Action Plans based on the mapping results. Once I have approved or adopted these Action Plans they will be submitted to the EU Commission. The noise maps are currently available for the public to view on the Department's noise web site at: www.noiseni.co.uk, while the noise Action Plans will be added once adopted.

Further support and guidance on noise policy and legislation is available online through a range of information and advice at: www.doeni.gov.uk and www.noiseni.co.uk. The Department also publishes the annual noise complaints statistics report on both websites. In addition to providing statistics the report also provides details of councils' new and innovative ways of tackling noise nuisance.

DOE: Special Advisor

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Special Advisor has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19250/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Special Advisor has made no declarations of interest since his appointment. In line with NICS arrangements declarations of interests in this Department are centrally recorded on HRConnect. Such declarations by staff are personal data as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998. Any requests to view this central record would be considered on a case by case basis under the provisions of that Act, including seeking the consent to disclosure of the data subject concerned.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Alleged Disciplinary Offences

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of Civil Service personnel currently suspended from work for alleged disciplinary offences; (ii) the length of time they have been suspended; and (iii) the cost to date in salaries, National Insurance and pension contributions.

(AQW 18736/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The information requested is provided in the table below. In order to protect the identity of individuals, the information is presented on a NICS-wide basis.

Number of personnel	Length of time suspended	Total salary	Total National Insurance Contributions	Total Pension contributions
19	10 years, 2 weeks	£140,463.16	£12,459.36	£26,705.84

North/South Pension Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how the core North/South Pension Scheme differs from the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension scheme; and who is eligible to join the scheme.

(AQW 19001/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The core provisions for northern members of the North/South Pension Scheme were originally modelled on the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland. The Civil Service Pension Scheme introduced Nuvos – a career average pension scheme for all new entrants from July 2007. The North/South Scheme has continued to offer a final pension scheme to all eligible members.

In addition, the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland introduced increased contributions for employees from April 2012 and these will be increasing again in April 2013. It is intended that they will increase further in April 2014. Details of this are available on website www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni.

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland also changed from April 2011 to increase pensions in payment annually in line with the Consumer Prices Index instead of the Retail Prices Index. It is intended that the North/South Pension Scheme will be aligned with this change from April 2013 and work is underway to align the other provisions of the North/South Scheme with the Civil Service Pension Scheme.

In terms of eligibility, the Bodies currently participating in the North/South scheme are as follows:

- Waterways Ireland;
- The Food Safety Promotion Board;
- The Trade and Business Development Body;
- The Special EU Programmes Body ;
- The North/South Language Body; and
- Tourism Ireland Limited.

Professional Legal Studies Course

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people, who passed the examination for the Professional Legal Studies course, have been unable to take up their places as a result of being unable to find a solicitor master, for each of the last three years.

(AQW 19057/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel understands that there is not a “pass mark” for the examination for Admission to the Professional Legal Studies course, and that there is, alternatively, a list of merit. The Department does not hold statistics on how many people on the list of merit have been unable to take up their places as a result of being unable to find a solicitor master.

This information may be obtained from the Law Society for Northern Ireland.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to improve the methodology employed within the Net Fiscal Balance report.

(AQW 19075/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department does not have any specific plans at this time to revise the methodology used to produce the Net Fiscal Balance Report. This report and the estimates contained therein have been produced by applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication.

It must be recognised that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of Northern Ireland’s public sector finances and in particular to produce an estimate of our overall net fiscal balance position or fiscal deficit. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items - many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors.

That said, where beneficial, practical and appropriate to do so, DFP will consider how the methodology might be developed in the future. For example, where new or improved data becomes available or in light of any methodological updates to the GERS report with which we attempt to maintain consistency.

G8 Summit

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to explain the use of estimates within the Net Fiscal Balance report published in November 2012.

(AQW 19076/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department does not have any specific plans at this time to revise the methodology used to produce the Net Fiscal Balance Report. This report and the estimates contained therein have been produced by applying the methodology originally designed to produce the “Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland” (GERS) publication.

It must be recognised that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of Northern Ireland’s public sector finances and in particular to produce an estimate of our overall net fiscal balance position or fiscal deficit. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items - many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors.

That said, where beneficial, practical and appropriate to do so, DFP will consider how the methodology might be developed in the future. For example, where new or improved data becomes available or in light of any methodological updates to the GERS report with which we attempt to maintain consistency.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to identify the funding gap between the Departmental Expenditure Limit allocated and the estimated revenue generated in each financial year from 2006-07 through to 2010-11.

(AQW 19079/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The NI DEL allocated in each financial year from 2006-07 to 2010-11 is as follows:

£million					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
NI DEL	8,175.7	8,892.3	9,253.9	10,234.4	11,330.0

Source: Final Budget Plan position for each of the years requested as reported at that time.

The estimated revenue from NI in each financial year from 2006-07 to 2010-11 is as follows:

£million					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Estimated Revenue	12,356	13,191	12,679	11,887	12,703

Source: NI Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11.

There is no direct relationship between the Northern Ireland (NI) Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) and tax revenue generated locally. Furthermore, the NI DEL does not represent the totality of public expenditure in the region and therefore it is not appropriate to consider a 'funding gap' in this regard.

DFF: Non-Tax Revenue

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the non-tax revenue which is generated by each Department.

(AQW 19085/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I assume that the question refers to receipts scoring within the Northern Ireland departmental DEL budgets since these translate into additional spending power for the Executive. I also assume that the Member is interested in the latest available full year Final Outturn figures. In the 2011-12 financial year, these receipts amounted to £1,010 million of resource income and £165 million of capital income.

The resource income is generated from a wide variety of revenue streams arising from the services provided by departments, whilst the capital income stems mainly from the sale of surplus assets and repayment of loans to public corporations. Income from the EU is also included in both the resource and capital income numbers.

Excluded from these figures are the income from Regional Rates (which scores as a tax receipt) and the RRI £200 million loan facility.

A breakdown by department is shown in table 1 below.

TABLE 1: DEPARTMENTAL NON-TAX RECEIPTS 2011-2012

Department	£millions	
	Resource	Capital
AOCC	-	0.0

Department	£millions	
	Resource	Capital
DARD	-334.4	-15.9
DCAL	-10.8	-0.2
DE	-10.3	-1.9
DEL	-37.5	-0.8
DETI	-28.9	-26.9
DFP	-96.2	-1.5
DHSSPS	-157.0	0.0
DOE	-18.7	-1.4
DOJ	-63.3	-2.4
DRD	-113.2	-5.9
DSD	-111.2	-107.9
FSA	-3.6	0.0
NIA	0.0	-
NIAO	-2.5	-
NIAUR	-6.5	-
OFMDFM	-15.3	-
PPS	-0.8	-
TOTAL	-1,010.3	-164.8

Non-Payment of Rates

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how many court cases were initiated against people for the non-payment of rates during each of the last three financial years; (ii) how many of these cases reached court; (iii) how many people were found guilty of non-payment; and (iv) of the people found guilty, how many were declared bankrupt as a result.

(AQW 19114/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are a number of steps involved in the process of recovering debt from ratepayers. When a ratepayer fails to pay their bill LPS issues a 'final notice' asking for the outstanding rates to be paid or contact to be made immediately in an attempt to enter into a mutually agreeable payment arrangement. In 2011/12 a total of 136,937 'final notices' were issued.

If payment is not received and the ratepayer fails to contact LPS, then the case will be listed for Court action and a Court process issued. There were 45,902 Court processes issued in 2011/12. In many cases (around half) the receipt of a Court process is sufficient to prompt the ratepayer to contact LPS and pay in full or enter into a payment arrangement.

If the case goes to court and is found in favour of LPS, a decree is awarded. This enables LPS to pursue payment through the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO) or, to a lesser extent, through the bankruptcy route. 19,634 decrees were awarded in 2011/12.

Of the 1,569 bankruptcy orders made in 2011-12, LPS was the petitioner in 189 cases and individual debtors were the petitioners in 847 cases. In the same period there were 219 company compulsory liquidations, with LPS being the petitioner in 17 cases and HMRC was the petitioner in 104 cases.

Pursuing debt through the EJO requires the issuing of a Notice of Intention (NOI) to enforce the judgement. LPS will issue a letter to the ratepayer advising them that enforcement will proceed unless payment is received or an acceptable payment arrangement is made. If no payment or arrangement is made within seven days, then the NOI is forwarded to EJO who will issue it to the ratepayer on behalf of LPS. In 2011-12 15,370 NOIs were issued. During this process LPS has to confirm that the ratepayer still lives at the address given. When confirmed, the debt is passed to EJO to recover.

The table attached provides the relevant figures for the last three years. It should be noted that the recovery process can span more than one financial year so the numbers quoted within any given year are not directly related. For example, the 19,634 decrees awarded in 2011/12 are not all as a direct consequence of the 45,902 Court processes issued in that year.

Debt Recovery Stage	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
'Final Notice' issued	123,853	122,251	136,937
Court processes issued	49,422	42,912	45,902
Decrees awarded	16,454	18,155	19,634
Notices of Intention issued	14,871	14,788	15,370
All bankruptcies	1,250	1,456	1,569
Bankruptcies where LPS is the petitioner	46	78	189
All company compulsory liquidations	179	262	219
Company compulsory liquidations where LPS is the petitioner	6	17	17

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assurances he has received from the British Treasury on covering the costs of the G8 summit which will take place in Fermanagh in June.
(AQW 19144/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The costs of hosting the G8 event have not yet been fully quantified. An Executive Steering Group has been established to coordinate all activities involved in hosting this event, including the identification of all associated costs involved.

My officials are also liaising with the NI Office and HM Treasury on the funding arrangements and it is clear that there is likely to be substantial contributions made by the UK Government to the hosting of this event.

Peace III Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to publish the (i) names of each group benefiting from Peace III funding under Theme1:2; and (ii) allocation of funding to each group.

(AQW 19200/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details funding awarded under PEACE III Theme 1.2, Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past, as of 31 January 2013. An exchange rate of £1=€1.25 has been used where required.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Total Award £
An Teach Bán: Centre for Peace Building	Remember and Change	423,459.36
Ashton Community Trust	Exploring the Past Together for a Better Future	402,707.60
Ashton Community Trust	Bridge Of Hope	392,903.90
Belfast Interface Project	Enabling Our Future	379,362.00
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	Citizenship and Fellowship Education [CAFE]	371,556.63
Best Cellars Music Collective	Peace Radio	154,753.13
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC)	DISC II	746,756.00
C.A.L.M.S	Gateways to Health	255,598.33
Calipo Theatre Co	Sharp Focus - Crossing the Divide	496,208.80
Cavan Family Resource Centre	Buandóchas (B) (Eternal Hope) Counselling	229,841.52
Communities Connect - Dundalk institute of Technology	Deepening the peace, Widening the web - working title	452,670.30
Community Dialogue	Securing Our Future: 3 Steps to Dialogue	297,757.26
Community Workers Co-operative - Donegal Network	Collective Action for Positive Peace (CAPP) Project	389,068.00
Community Workers Co-operative - Donegal Network	Harnessing Equality for Lasting Peace (HELP) Project	468,469.77
Conflict trauma Resource centre	Beyond Conflict	406,641.92
Corpus Christi Services	Healing The Troubled Past	185,584.56
Creggan Neighbourhood Partnership	Giving Opportunities to Address Legacies (GOAL)	347,471.39
Crossfire Trust	Restoring Hope	277,462.05
Cunamh (Help)	Peace In Mind/Suaimhneas Intinne	278,132.60
Curriculum Development Unit	Education for Reconciliation	454,870.00

Lead Partner	Project Name	Total Award £
Diversity Challenges Ltd	The Green and Blue Across the Thin Line	216,400.00
Diversity Challenges Ltd	'The Way We Were' - Uncovering our shared past.	95,565.00
Expac Ltd	Future Resolutions	302,820.00
Expac Ltd	Conflicts of Interest	407,495.46
Falls Community Council	Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium	826,749.15
Falls Community Council	Pieces of the Past	293,280.48
Falls Community Council	Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium	806,651.02
Falls Women's Centre	Training & Employment Project	155,661.57
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives	Support and Active Carer Respite for Excluded Dependents (SACRED)	155,931.04*
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives	Conflict Archive Project And Border Lands Experience (CAPABLE)	187,578.01*
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Five Decades	128,191.50
Forward Learning	Knowing Me Knowing You - An historical and cultural adventure!	151,789.19*
Gaslight Media Trust	'The Arc: Acknowledging the Past, Negotiating the Present & Facing the Future'	386,725.00
Gaslight Media Trust	Epilogues Facilitating Understanding of the Other	231,979.53
Healing Through Remembering	Voyager	526,120.00
Healing Through Remembering	Whatever You Say Say Something	817,097.83
Holy Trinity Centre	Out Of Hours Community Counselling Service	169,728.06
INCORE	Journeys Out	474,098.16
Inishowen Development Partnership	Engage Youth	470,717.60
Inishowen Development Partnership	YOUTH 52 - Securing the Future	510,338.63
Institute for Counselling & Personal Development	RENEW-Community Challenge and change for peace & reconciliation	248,655.74

Lead Partner	Project Name	Total Award £
Ionad Forbartha Gnó Teo. t/a WESTBIC (Business Development Centre Ltd)	Glórtha Aduaidh (Northern Voices)	522,810.40
Irish Football Association	Football For All Project	516,765.90
Irish Football Association	Football For All - 2012-2015 - Looking Back to Move Forward	541,763.06
Junior Achievement Ireland	Our World	476,303.20
Justice for Innocent Victims of Terrorism	Pathways to Justice	369,430.00
Latton Social Services and Development Ltd	Border Roads to Memories and Reconciliation	390,950.40
Monaghan Education Centre	Embracing Shared Communities	328,267.20
New Life Counselling	Victims and Survivors Counselling Project	208,953.90
North West Play Resource Centre	Theatre of Witness	455,602.00
North West Play Resource Centre (T/A The Playhouse)	Theatre of Witness	325,661.86
Northern Ireland Phoenix Organisation (NIPO)	Northern Ireland Phoenix Project	996,867.00
Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC)	“Media Initiative for Rural Children Cross Borders” (Respecting Difference Programme)	420,978.00
Northern Ireland Trade Union Education and Social Centre	DISC- Development for Inclusion and Sustainable Communities	336,624.00
Pat Finucane Centre	Legacy Project	375,680.55
Peace and Reconciliation group	Dealing with Past, Shaping the Future (D.P.S.F.)	182,195.79
R.A.F.T. - Restorative Action Following the Troubles	Transcending Trauma	448,068.40
Relatives for Justice	Transitional Legacies	242,548.00
Relatives for Justice	Participative Transitional Support	544,793.87
SAVER/NAVER	Practical steps towards reconciliation	208,034.53*
Seán McConville	The Irish Peace Process: Layers of Recollection and Meaning	862,297.00
Seaview Enterprises Ltd	‘Mes Que Un Club’ (More than a Club)	422,600.00

Lead Partner	Project Name	Total Award £
Smashing Times Theatre Company	The Memory Project	418,347.20
South Armagh Rural Women's Network	Behind the Masks	317,593.14
South East Fermanagh Foundation	The Phoenix Project	1,092,001.56
Survivors of Trauma	A Future Together	272,702.55
TARA CENTRE	Reconciliation: Individuals and Communities Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past	435,884.71
Taughmonagh Community Forum Ltd	Shared Futures	321,447.22
Taughmonagh Community Forum Ltd	Legacy	241,277.00
Teach Oscail (Open House)	Tullacmongan/Cavanaleck Cross Border Youth Project	312,922.86
The Bytes Project	Foundation for Reconciliation	97,212.33
The Corrymeela Community	Corrymeela Facing the Future with NICRAS	191,920.62
The Ely Centre	Project Elohim	285,145.59
The Pat Finucane Centre Ltd	Recovery of Living Memory Archive	643,542.00
The Peace Factory	PA.Z. Peace Action Zone	314,009.18
Towards Understanding and Healing	Developing and Sustaining Storytelling and Dialogue Processes	346,536.00
Towards Understanding and Healing	Healing through Storytelling and Dialogue	228,726.27
Trademark	Consolidating the peace	257,269.37
Trauma Recovery Network	Connecting Head and Heart	223,075.48
Tyrone Donegal Partnership	Border Lives	420,128.00
Ulster Peoples College	The Peoples History Initiative	213,808.42
Verbal Arts Centre	Crows on the Wire	378,604.00
Victims and Survivors Trust	3 Tiers Project - Creating pathways for inclusion through active participation	203,924.96
WAVE Trauma Centre	Journeys Out	668,868.43
WAVE Trauma Centre	Back to the Future - Building Peace Programme	229,577.74

Lead Partner	Project Name	Total Award £
WAVE Trauma Centre	Breaking the Cycle of the Troubles Legacy for our future Generations	312,010.00
WAVE Trauma Centre	Learning from the Past to educate our Future	534,757.00
Youth Action Northern Ireland	Reconciling communities - champions for change	414,638.00
Youth Initiatives	Crosslinks Culture Connections (CLCC or Crosslinks)	330,751.19
Youth Initiatives	Crosslinks Legacy Project	380,260.00
Youth Link: NI	Building Positive Sustainable and Integrated Communities	417,484.00
Youth Link: NI	Community Capacity Building Strategies	419,348.85
YouthAction NI	Peace Dividend For Young People	494,548.60

Note to table:

* – Letter of Offer

PEACE III

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current estimate of expenditure on administration in respect of Peace III.

(AQW 19201/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The PEACE III Programme has a Technical Assistance budget of £15,978,805.60. Expenditure was £9,542,036 as of 31 December 2012, and the current forecast is for expenditure of £13,452,957.60 by the end of the programme.

Ulster Savings Certificates

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much of the £6m held in the form of Ulster Savings Certificates, issued between 1922 and 1991, has been reclaimed following his public announcement three years ago.

(AQW 19269/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As at 4 February 2013, the amount reclaimed by holders of Ulster Savings Certificates since 1 January 2010 is £568k.

Ulster Savings Certificates

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the information held on file of the original purchasers of Ulster Savings Certificates including (i) name and address; (ii) birth details and (iii) date of purchase.

(AQW 19270/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My department holds an electronic and paper register of around 28,000 original purchasers of Ulster Savings Certificates which remained unclaimed as at 31 March 2005.

The register includes information such as holder names and address details; certificate numbers and purchase dates; the number of certificates purchased and the original value; and the amount of principal and interest due on unclaimed certificates. In some instances, birth dates are also held.

The register is used to ensure all claims made to redeem certificates are valid.

Land and Property Service: Mapping

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what changes or alterations have been made to the mapping system used by Land and Property Service in the last five years; (ii) how many mapping errors and inaccuracies have been found in maps issued in each of the last five years; (iii) what investigations are taking place into other errors found in the mapping system; and (iv) with whom responsibility lies, including financial responsibility, for the correction of errors in individual folios which result from errors in the mapping system.

(AQW 19285/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Land & Property Services (LPS) Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) mapping database is continually revised to take account of new information relating to roads, housing, and commercial property developments etc. Over the past twelve months a programme of positional improvement (PI) of the OSNI mapping database has been implemented, whereby the database is being updated to accuracy levels made possible by ever more sophisticated methodologies, and global positioning satellite technologies. The PI programme is due to complete in mid summer 2013. This means that the representation on a map of real world features will be more accurately positioned. LPS Land Registry Mapping is required by Section 62 of the Land Registration Act (NI) 1970 (the Act) to be based upon the OSNI map. Land Registry mapping, however tends only to be updated when an application for registration is received, on the sale or mortgage of a property. A consequence of this is that registration boundaries previously coincident with OSNI mapping will on occasions appear as offset from the positionally improved OSNI mapping. In these instances where the inconsistencies are brought to the attention of the Land Registry, the Registry map will be updated in accordance with the provisions of Rule 149 (1A) of the Land Registration (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Rules).

It is not possible to say how many errors or perceived inaccuracies there have been in the last five years. Mapping queries are dealt with as line of business as they arise – both by staff in LPS Mapping and Valuation and in the Registration Directorates.

Legislation governing the operation of the Land Registry is specific in terms of the accuracy limitations of the information recorded on the Registry Map. It is for location purposes only (Rule 141), and therefore folio boundaries are not guaranteed. (Section 64 of the Act).

The coincidence of Land Registry boundaries and OSNI features may have been affected by revisions of the OSNI map subsequent to registration. Warning texts appear on all copy map products to make customers aware of this possibility. They are also displayed at the commencement of an electronic map searching session.

Perceived mapping errors and anomalies are fully investigated as they are identified on a case-by-case basis. Where errors in the Land Registry Map are identified, they are rectified in accordance with the provisions of Section 69 of the Act which provides for errors to be rectified by consent of all of the interested parties. In the absence of such consent, a Court Order is required.

When mapping errors are identified and fully investigated by Land Registry staff, they will be rectified within the legislative constraints outlined in (iii) above. If an error results in a loss, a claim for compensation can be submitted to LPS in accordance with the provisions of Section 71, and Schedule 9 of the Act. Compensation payments are made by DFP from the consolidated fund.

DFP: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19291/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Minister's Special Adviser has completed a 'Declaration of Interests' form and has advised of any declarations of interest.

Completed 'Declaration of Interests' forms are held by the Departmental Establishment Officer.

The DFP Website currently advises that a Register of Interests is maintained by DFP.

Local Sports Clubs: 100 Percent Rates Relief

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will consider enabling local sports clubs to avail of a discretionary 100 percent rates relief to help communities in these difficult economic times.

(AQW 19325/11-15)

Mr Wilson: You may recall that the issue of a review of rates relief for Community Amateur Sports Clubs was the subject of a No Named Day motion in November 2011. During this debate I indicated that I would be happy to re-examine the level of relief afforded to amateur sports clubs but that this should follow a more extensive review of the needs of that sector, including the full range of options for providing support. My position on this matter has not changed.

There must be a full and proper assessment of need- does every local sports club need help and if so how best can that support be offered? This assessment should include the issue of exclusive clubs versus more open clubs, treatment of clubs with bar and restaurant facilities and last but not least consideration of alternative ways of providing support outside the rating system.

You will appreciate that my Department is not in the best position to consider these matters, as they fall within the policy competence of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

DCAL have advised recently that they are currently engaging with the sports and recreation sector (via the NI Sports Forum) to seek views on the matter. Clearly the sector will be arguing to pay no rates but I expect DCAL to present their own evidence around the adequacy of support and what the priorities are; whether that be addressing poverty and social exclusion through sport or something broader. Whatever that is, DCAL will be looking also at alternative ways of providing support.

Should it emerge that rate relief is DCAL's preferred option, that will need to be looked and I am sure some form of discretionary relief could be considered as part of that process. Quite how this would operate and who should exercise that discretion are important considerations. Local Authorities can exercise discretion in the rest of the UK but the context is different there. They do not have two rates as we do (regional and district), nor do they have sports that are associated with one section of the community; which could easily lead to inconsistency of decision making in a NI context if these matters are decided at Council level. Furthermore, many private members' clubs in the rest of the UK pay full rates for their sporting facilities which are not the case here.

Officials within my Department have already written to their counterparts in DCAL and are prepared to offer advice before any case is put forward for consideration, bearing in mind that every pound in rate relief is a pound less to pay for hospitals, schools, roads, houses and council services. So, value for money has to be assured.

Payment of Rates

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what percentage of total retail outlets in (i) 2007; and (ii) 2012 were functioning charitable or other similar status which precluded the payment of rates.
(AQW 19346/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As at the end of March 2010 (the earliest year for which comparable information is available) the percentage of occupied retail outlets that were occupied and were getting a rating exemption as a result of being a charity was 4.1%. As at the end of March 2012 the equivalent figure was 4.6%.

Centre for Applied Learning: Fraud Awareness Workshops

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who is the appointed training provider for fraud awareness workshops through the Centre for Applied Learning.
(AQW 19403/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Fraud Awareness Training is delivered by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), through the "Governance and Risk Management Category" of the CAL External Framework Contract.

FOI on Special Advisers Pay

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how long it took his Department to respond to a Freedom of Information request from the Sunday Life in August 2011 on the uplift of the Special Adviser upper salary band to £90,000 pa; and why it took this length of time.
(AQW 19412/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It took the Department six months to respond to a Freedom of Information request relating to Special Adviser pay received in August 2011. The delay in issuing the final response was due to revised handling procedures adopted by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

FOI on Special Advisers Pay

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the Information Commissioner's ruling, whether he will now release the information sought, since August 2011 by Sunday Life under the Freedom of Information Act, on the uplift of the Special Adviser upper salary band to £90,000 pa.
(AQW 19413/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am currently considering the options available to the Department in light of the Information Commissioner's decision.

Private Healthcare for Senior Civil Servants

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether private healthcare is considered an option for senior staff and directors as part of their Civil Service contracts.
(AQW 19421/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Senior civil servants no longer have specific contracts of employment. Their terms and conditions are set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook. The HR Handbook does not include a provision for private healthcare for any civil servant, including members of the senior civil service nor are there any current plans for such a provision.

Practising Barristers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of practising barristers in Northern Ireland, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 19490/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not hold statistics on the numbers of practising barristers in Northern Ireland in any given year.

The Bar Council, as the regulatory body for barristers, may hold such information.

Practising Solicitors

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of practising solicitors in Northern Ireland, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 19491/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not hold statistics on the numbers of practising solicitors in Northern Ireland in any given year.

The Law Society for Northern Ireland, as the regulatory body for solicitors, may hold such information.

Ulster Bond

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the information relating to original Ulster Bond owners is held in year order or in spans of years according to purchase date.

(AQW 19586/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department holds a list of Matured Ulster Development Bonds outstanding for repayment as at 31 March 2003.

The information is held in order of redemption date.

Dormant Bank Accounts Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the operation of the Dormant Bank Accounts Scheme.

(AQW 19614/11-15)

Mr Wilson: On 12 September 2012, my officials provided evidence to the DFP Committee detailing my proposals for the NI Dormant Accounts Scheme and outlining the spending priorities that I have identified. These being:

- **Children and young people groups** - This would target those under the age of 18.
- **Faith-based groups** - This would target faith based groups whose religious denominations have recognised moral or ethical objections to applying for funding derived from gambling and as a result of that the applicant group has not previously accepted or applied for lottery funding. A further restriction is placed on any loan that it should be applied solely for charitable purposes according to the law of Northern Ireland.

Following this discussion my Department has undertaken further consultation regarding the proposed appointment of an Investment Trust who will use the Dormant Accounts funds to create a self sustaining loans fund. This consultation has now closed and I will be shortly writing to the DFP Committee detailing the outcomes of this consultation.

Further to this, in November I wrote to the First and deputy First Minister detailing my proposals for the NI Dormant Accounts Scheme, and provided them with a draft Executive paper. Following their endorsement I intend to bring this paper to the Executive seeking agreement.

Education and Skills Authority: Business Case

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Department of Education has submitted the full Business Case for the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 19616/11-15)

Mr Wilson: To date, the Department of Education has not submitted the Full Business Case to my Department.

DFP: Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19628/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Hospitality expenditure by the Department of Finance and Personnel (including its executive agencies) for 2011/12 was £64k.

Peace III Funding

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) whether there is an underspend in the current Peace III funding; (ii) how much is the underspend; and (iii) to where the money has been reallocated.

(AQW 19772/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The PEACE III Programme will be fully committed when final decisions are taken on the applications currently being processed. It is not anticipated that there will be an underspend.

In order to ensure that the programme remains fully committed until the end of the programming period, taking into account factors such as slippage and exchange rate variations, it may be necessary to reallocate funding between the programme's themes. To date no such reallocations have taken place.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made in establishing the number of abortions that have been facilitated or carried out at the Marie Stopes Clinic in Belfast; and how his Department will bring such regulation to the clinic.

(AQW 18937/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): It is not possible to collect information on terminations carried out at Marie Stopes within the current legislative and regulatory framework. However officials are exploring options to ensure that statistics on all terminations in Northern Ireland are collected. One possibility is requiring independent organisations to provide the required information through the successful development, consultation and publication of a standard on terminations which could then be enforced by RQIA. Legislative options are also being considered.

Marie Stopes has stated their intention to comply with the law on termination of pregnancy in Northern Ireland.

HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the total number of nursing staff attached to the healthcare facility at HMP Maghaberry broken down by those in (a) full time Northern Ireland Prison Service employment; and (b) bank or agency staff; and (ii) the total cost to employ each group per year since 2007.

(AQW 18974/11-15)

Mr Poots: Responsibility for the provision of prison healthcare services transferred to the HSC on 1st April 2008. Since then, services have been commissioned by the HSC Board and delivered by the South Eastern HSC Trust. However healthcare staff remained employees of the NI Prison Service until 1 April 2012 when they transferred to the South Eastern HSC Trust. The information to answer this question is set out in the tables below. The Department of Justice has indicated that information in relation to 2007-08 is not readily available in the form requested and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
NI Prison Service	Expenditure £k	1,770	2,001	2,191	2,157
	Nursing Staff Numbers	45	51	48	48
SE Trust	Expenditure £k	0	11	26	53
	Nursing Staff Numbers	0	3	2	1
Bank & Agency	Expenditure £k	101	159	287	557
	Nursing Staff Numbers ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	Expenditure £k	1,871	2,171	2,504	2,767
	Nursing Staff Numbers¹	45	54	50	49

- 1 The use of bank/agency varies considerably from day to day. New primary care and mental health structures have been established and the recruitment drive is underway. However, security requirements can lead to delays in newly recruited staff taking up post. Bank/agency will therefore continue to be used in order to deliver services until such times as the whole structure is in place.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Multi Agency Support Teams

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the money allocated from each Health and Social Care Trust to each of the five Multi Agency support teams in each year since 2007.

(AQW 18986/11-15)

Mr Poots: A breakdown of the money allocated from each Health and Social Care Trust to each of the five Multi Agency support teams in each year since 2007 to 31 March 2013 is set out in the table below:

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (Children's Inter Disciplinary Schools Team-CIST)	£880,000	£879,000	£853,000	£847,000	£804,000	£798,000
Northern Health & Social Care Trust (Multi-Agency Support Team for Schools -MASTS)	£994,938	£994,938	£985,364	£985,364	£1,002,944	£943,848
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (Additional Support for Children in Education -ASCET)	£803,029	£771,703	£641,331	£637,384	£867,377	£771,688
Southern Health & Social Care Trust (Action for Children in Education - ACE)	£944,915	£762,563	£565,525	£807,652	£801,588	£746,000

	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Western Health & Social Care Trust (Western Education Support Team - WEST)	£664,452	£661,554	£685,566	£682,998	£688,125	£687,000
Total	£4,287,334	£4,069,758	£3,730,786	£3,960,398	£4,164,034	£3,946,536

Human Trafficking

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many places of refuge are available for victims of human trafficking.

(AQW 19151/11-15)

Mr Poots: In my view, the designation of places of refuge for victims of human trafficking could be highly risky for the victims and refuge providers given the insidious nature of the crime. As a result, there are no designated places of refuge for victims of human trafficking within the health and social care stock. However, where a place of refuge is required this will be provided. Provision differs depending on the age of the victim.

Child victims of human trafficking, who become looked after by a Health and Social Care Trust, will be accommodated in a place deemed to serve the child's best interests. This includes accommodation in children's residential care, foster care or supported accommodation/lodgings.

Adult victims of human trafficking will also be provided with a package of care which meets their assessed needs. Where they require to be accommodated, accommodation will be sought from a range of provision, including residential care, supported accommodation/lodgings or private accommodation. This is in addition to the accommodation provided to victims of trafficking during the 45-day period of recovery and reflection, which is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice.

Human Trafficking

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what help or support is provided for victims of human trafficking to help them to rebuild their lives.

(AQW 19153/11-15)

Mr Poots: All children and young people who are suspected of having been trafficked should be considered to be children in need of care and protection under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. As a result, the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in whose area a trafficked child is recovered, will be responsible for the provision of accommodation, protection, care and support to the child to best meet his/her assessed needs.

In the case of adults who are suspected of having been trafficked, the Department of Justice currently has a contract with Migrant Help, together with their delivery partner Women's Aid Federation (NI), to provide accommodation and a range of support services for potential victims during the initial 45 day period of recovery and reflection.

Where adult victims are able to exercise Treaty rights or have been given discretionary leave to remain or other immigration status, they will normally be able to apply for relevant social security benefits and housing assistance and will be entitled to access health and social care. However, assessment under the care management process, which is needs-driven, will determine what, if any, health and social care services will be provided. This could include mental health or sexual health services as well as rehabilitative services to help victims integrate within the community in the longer term.

Human Trafficking

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what training is provided by his Department to enable social workers to deal effectively with victims of human trafficking.

(AQW 19154/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department funds undergraduate training for those who wish to become social workers. The curriculum covers generic training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation, as well as methods of intervention with individuals at risk, in crisis or who have experienced trauma. In addition, the undergraduate curriculum addresses specific issues such as refugee and asylum-seeking children and adults, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic and sexual violence and human rights.

My Department also funds a range of awareness and specialist training at post-qualifying level for social workers employed by the HSC dependent on job roles. Those undertaking specific roles in respect of Human Trafficking, such as joint investigations with the police into allegations of abuse, receive specialist training.

Given the respective roles of the PSNI and Social Services for the welfare and protection of child and adult victims of Human Trafficking, there is ongoing collaboration and co-operation between the PSNI, the HSC Board and Trusts in planning and delivering joint training initiatives which are supported by my Department and the Department of Justice.

Meningitis B Vaccine

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he plans to introduce the new meningitis b vaccine into the Childhood Immunisation Schedule.

(AQW 19220/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vaccination policy in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is guided by the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert advisory committee that advises the four UK Health Ministers on matters relating to the provision of vaccination and immunisation services. JCVI consider all the available medical and scientific evidence before recommending which vaccines should be offered.

The JCVI has begun an evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of possible meningitis B vaccination strategies. This evaluation requires a complex analysis and final JCVI advice is not expected until later in the year. I will consider the JCVI recommendation when I have received it.

Allotment Schemes in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Public Health Agency would fund allotment schemes in North Down to encourage healthy living.

(AQW 19262/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency continues to develop its work with local groups and communities across the North Down area to encourage, support and fund the development of community allotment projects such as the Kilcooley Allotments project.

In the last year the Agency's South Eastern Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement team have also provided smaller amounts of resource through its community grant scheme to help local groups develop allotments and gardens within disadvantaged areas.

Recently "Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland" have been commissioned by the team to work with them in designing a community allotments support programme that will be rolled out in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The project will be formally launched in the near future across the South Eastern area including North Down, and will involve working with a minimum of five local groups per year.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Waiting Times

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, for each Health and Social Care Trust, the (i) target waiting time; and (ii) actual waiting time for all procedures with a current waiting list of greater than eight weeks

(AQW 19307/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I have set a challenging waiting time target for elective care inpatient/daycase treatment that covers all clinical specialties. This is:

- From April 2012, at least 50% of inpatients and daycases are treated within 13 weeks with no one waiting longer than 36 weeks; increasing to 60% by March 2013, and no patient waits longer than 30 weeks for treatment.
- (ii) My Department publishes inpatient waiting time figures on a quarterly basis in the Northern Ireland Waiting Time publication, on the basis of clinical specialty, and not procedure type. The latest data published relate to the position at 30th September 2012 and can be found at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ni_inpatient_waiting_list_bulletin_september_12.pdf

I refer you to Table 2a, which details the number of people waiting for admission by weeks waiting, broken down by specialty.

Information on the waiting times for specific procedures are available on request, but are not routinely published given the volume of procedure types that may be carried out, which at 30th September 2012 totalled nearly 2,000.

All Party Group on Muscular Dystrophy: Collum Report

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will respond to the recommendations made in the Collum report which was compiled by the All Party Group on Muscular Dystrophy.

(AQW 19341/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am currently considering my response and will respond to the All Party Group on Muscular Dystrophy very shortly.

Halal Meat Products

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps the Food Standards Agency is taking following traces of pork DNA found in halal meat products supplied by a local distributor.

(AQW 19353/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) was made aware of the discovery of traces of pork DNA in a selection of meat pies labelled as Halal by the Prison Service of England and Wales on the evening of Thursday 31 January. This is not a food safety issue, however it is totally unacceptable, particularly to those faith communities who abstain from eating pork.

In accordance with established protocols, the FSA is working closely with the relevant authorities to investigate this incident to ascertain details around the supply chain and any necessary action to be taken.

As part of the investigation, the FSA has instigated a program of enhanced food standards inspections of approved meat products and preparations establishments across the UK. In Northern Ireland, this work is being conducted by District Councils, with the program of work commencing on 6 February 2013. The FSA has also instigated a UK wide study to investigate the presence of undeclared equine and porcine DNA in product containing beef from a range of food businesses. In Northern Ireland this work is being carried out by District Councils. This program of work is being conducted with the purpose of ensuring that consumers' interests are being protected in relation to the declaration of species in meat products.

Shale Gas Development

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether his Department will review the report on the Chief Medical Officer's Recommendations Concerning Shale Gas Development in New Brunswick by Dr Eilish McCleary; (ii) whether the Department plans to give any consideration to the public health implications of the proposals to extract shale gas; and (iii) why

no one from his Department, who works in the field of public health, is represented on the cross-departmental Shale Gas Forum.

(AQW 19437/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) My Department has considered the report by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health concerning shale gas development in New Brunswick, Canada.
- (ii) The Health Protection Agency (HPA) provides support and specialist advice to my Department on a wide range of health protection matters. HPA has undertaken to review the potential health impacts of shale gas extraction. It is anticipated that this scoping report will be available in the near future.
- (iii) My Department is represented on the Shale Gas Regulators' Forum by an official from the Public Health Advice Directorate.

Programme for Government: Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the recent announcement on organ donation, to explain why this issue was not included in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 19449/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Programme for Government, as a strategic document, includes a number of commitments and associated milestones for each Department. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything that any given Department will deliver upon.

During the life cycle of a Programme for Government, Departments will continue to develop new policy and update existing policy as part of their normal remit, as is the case with my recent announcement on organ donation.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: Paediatric Cardiac Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will announce his decision on the future of paediatric cardiac surgery provision at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.[R]

(AQW 19461/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answer that I gave to AQO'S 3137/11-15 and 3146/11-15.

Slaughtered Horses

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to the Urgent Oral Question on 5 February 2013, where horses have been slaughtered in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19464/11-15)

Mr Poots: Oakdale Meats (NI) Ltd in Lurgan is currently the only establishment in Northern Ireland approved for the slaughter of horses (in addition to being approved for cattle and sheep slaughter). I understand however, that the food business operator has recently taken a commercial decision to discontinue the slaughter of horses. There was historically a small number of horses slaughtered for human consumption from this plant.

Wind Farms

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has ever been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications for residents and unborn children living in close proximity to wind farms.

(AQW 19473/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to wind farms.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of wind turbines. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Wind Turbines

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what research has been carried out by his Department or any other Department on the health implications of wind turbines.
(AQW 19475/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to wind farms.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of wind turbines. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Wind Turbines

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the outcome of any research that his Department has carried out in relation to the health implications of wind turbines.
(AQW 19476/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to wind farms.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of wind turbines. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Electricity Pylons

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has ever been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications for residents and unborn children living in close proximity to electricity pylons.
(AQW 19477/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to electricity pylons or electricity substations.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of electricity pylons or electricity substations. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) are both produced wherever electricity is used. Common sources are electrical wiring and appliances in the home, electricity substations and electricity power lines.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) provides support and specialist advice to DHSSPS on a wide range of health protection matters including radiation protection. The role of HPA in this regard includes maintaining an oversight of relevant national and international research, reviews and guidance produced by authoritative and competent scientific bodies such as the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the European Commission Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the HPA's own independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR).

In 2004 the Health Protection Agency (HPA) Radiation Protection Division (formerly the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB)) published advice on limiting public exposure to electromagnetic fields following an extensive review of the science and a public consultation. This advice recommended the adoption in the UK of guidelines from ICNIRP for limiting exposures to EMFs. This advice remains extant. The European Council Recommendation EC/519/1999 adopts the same levels.

HPA advise that the evidence to date suggests that in general there are no adverse effects on the health of the population of the UK caused by exposure to EMFs below the guideline levels.

HPA has also developed advice in response to the SAGE (Stakeholder Advisory Group on extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields) recommendation for more information to be provided to people about exposures and the actions they could take to reduce exposures. This information is available on the HPA web site.

Electricity Pylons

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what research has been carried out by his Department or any other Department on the health implications of electricity pylons. **(AQW 19478/11-15)**

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to electricity pylons or electricity substations.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of electricity pylons or electricity substations. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

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HPA has also developed advice in response to the SAGE (Stakeholder Advisory Group on extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields) recommendation for more information to be provided to people about exposures and the actions they could take to reduce exposures. This information is available on the HPA web site.

Cancer

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what preventative measures are being taken to reduce the high level of new cancer incidence being diagnosed in North Down. **(AQW 19480/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Information in the Health Committee's recent report on Health Inequalities indicated that North Down had the highest cancer prevalence rate (18 per 1,000). However, following standardisation for the age of the population, rates of all cancers combined were 7.1% lower for males and 6.4% lower for females in North Down than the Northern Ireland average.

The Department has brought forward measures for the prevention and early detection of cancer including:

- the Cancer Prevention, Treatment and Care Service Framework;

- Bowel cancer and breast cancer screening programmes and, for Cervical cancer, screening and the HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) immunisation programme;
- Development of the new public health strategic framework and a number of underpinning health improvement strategies. In particular: –
 - Lung cancer and other smoking related cancers - a new ten-year tobacco control strategy in 2012;
 - Melanoma and other Skin cancers - a new strategy for prevention of skin cancer in July 2011 as well as the commencement of the sunbed legislation;
 - The New Strategic Direction for Drugs and Alcohol; and
 - The Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework.

Preventative services for residents of North Down are commissioned and/or provided by the Public Health Agency and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, as well as by primary care, community health development workers, and the Community and Voluntary sector:

- Regional cancer awareness programmes - in the last year these have focused on Breast, Bowel, Skin, Lung, Cervical and Oral Cancer; and
- A range of locally provided health improvement programmes including:
 - Smoking cessation services targeting young people, manual workers, individuals residing in areas of deprivation, and pregnant women and their partners;
 - Skin cancer prevention programmes (such as Living Willows);
 - Physical activity and weight programmes (such as Bike-it and the Healthwise Physical Activity Referral Programme);
 - Healthy eating programmes (such as Cook it! and Community allotments/gardens); and
 - A new alcohol project delivering brief intervention services to hazardous drinkers across the South Eastern area in GP practices.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children: Clark Clinic

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future of Clark Clinic at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

(AQW 19482/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answer that I gave to AQO'S 3137/11-15 and 3146/11-15.

Card Before You Leave Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that the Card Before You Leave Scheme will be maintained for the foreseeable future.

(AQW 19506/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has confirmed that the Card Before You Leave (CBYL) Scheme will be maintained for the foreseeable future. It is fully operational and well embedded in all Trusts.

The HSCB's evaluation of the scheme is expected to be completed shortly. Any work emerging from this review will be progressed through the joint PHA and HSCB Self Harm Working Group.

Paediatric Cardiac Care

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is being done to ensure that the standards of paediatric cardiac care are maintained during the current review of the service.

(AQW 19513/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised that the Health and Social Care Board continues to ensure that robust arrangements are in place for all children who require cardiac care. All centres undertaking surgery on children from Northern Ireland submit outcome data to the centrally held register, the Congenital Cardiac Audit Database (CCAD), which publishes information on mortality rates for surgical and cardiological interventional procedures.

DHSSPS: Capital Spend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's capital spend since May 2011, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19518/11-15)

Mr Poots: Expenditure is not currently collated or monitored at constituency level.

My Department's capital spend for 2011/12 was £204.5m. The approved capital budget for 2012/13 is £325m. The following table provides a breakdown of the spend by Trusts and other Bodies:

Trust/ Body	Actual Spend 2011/12	Projected Spend 2012/13
Belfast	£78.7m	£55.8m
Northern	£21.5m	£35.2m
South Eastern	£24.5m	£22.7m
Southern	£20.5m	£25.6m
Western	£36.3m	£144.5m
NIAS	£3.4m	£3.8m
NIFRS	£4.7m	£2.4m
HSCB	£2.7m	£1.6m
BSO	£3.3m	£8.7m
Other Agencies	£0.7m	£0.8m
Dept Spend/Other	£8.2m	£23.9m
TOTAL	£204.5m	£325m

Electricity Pylons

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the outcome of any research that his Department has carried out in relation to the health implications of electricity pylons.

(AQW 19539/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to electricity pylons or electricity substations.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of electricity pylons or electricity substations. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) are both produced wherever electricity is used. Common sources are electrical wiring and appliances in the home, electricity substations and electricity power lines.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) provides support and specialist advice to DHSSPS on a wide range of health protection matters including radiation protection. The role of HPA in this regard includes maintaining an oversight of relevant national and international research, reviews and guidance produced by authoritative and competent scientific bodies such as the International Commission on

Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the European Commission Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the HPA's own independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR).

In 2004 the Health Protection Agency (HPA) Radiation Protection Division (formerly the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB)) published advice on limiting public exposure to electromagnetic fields following an extensive review of the science and a public consultation. This advice recommended the adoption in the UK of guidelines from ICNIRP for limiting exposures to EMFs. This advice remains extant. The European Council Recommendation EC/519/1999 adopts the same levels.

HPA advise that the evidence to date suggests that in general there are no adverse effects on the health of the population of the UK caused by exposure to EMFs below the guideline levels.

HPA has also developed advice in response to the SAGE (Stakeholder Advisory Group on extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields) recommendation for more information to be provided to people about exposures and the actions they could take to reduce exposures. This information is available on the HPA web site.

Electricity Substations

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has ever been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications for residents and unborn children living in close proximity to electricity substations.

(AQW 19540/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to electricity pylons or electricity substations.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of electricity pylons or electricity substations. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

Electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) are both produced wherever electricity is used. Common sources are electrical wiring and appliances in the home, electricity substations and electricity power lines.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) provides support and specialist advice to DHSSPS on a wide range of health protection matters including radiation protection. The role of HPA in this regard includes maintaining an oversight of relevant national and international research, reviews and guidance produced by authoritative and competent scientific bodies such as the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the European Commission Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the HPA's own independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR).

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HPA has also developed advice in response to the SAGE (Stakeholder Advisory Group on extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields) recommendation for more information to be provided to people about exposures and the actions they could take to reduce exposures. This information is available on the HPA web site.

Electricity Substations

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the outcome of any research that his Department has carried out in relation to the health implications of electricity substations.

(AQW 19541/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has not been asked by any other Department to consult on the health implications of living in close proximity to electricity pylons or electricity substations.

My Department has not commissioned any research on the health implications of electricity pylons or electricity substations. My Department is not aware of any research carried out by any other Department on this issue.

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HPA has also developed advice in response to the SAGE (Stakeholder Advisory Group on extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields) recommendation for more information to be provided to people about exposures and the actions they could take to reduce exposures. This information is available on the HPA web site.

Department of Justice

Prison Maintenance

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of maintenance of prisons, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 18956/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The cost of maintenance of prisons in each of the last three financial years is set out in the table below:

Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
£	5,110,863	4,955,591	5,092,864

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the daily cost per prisoner to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 18959/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not calculate the daily cost per prisoner but rather the average cost per prisoner place, which is published in its Annual Report and Accounts.

In 2011-12 the cost per prisoner place was £71,398. This is equivalent to a daily cost per prisoner place of £195.61

Article 63 Firearm Prohibition Appeals

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Justice how many Article 63 firearm prohibition appeals have been received in each of the last 5 years broken, down by constituency.

(AQW 18971/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice became responsible for applications for the removal of prohibition, that do not involve national security, under Article 63 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, on 12 April 2010. Information is not routinely held by constituency but has been collated insofar as possible. The information available from that date is set out below:

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2010	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1	0
	Mid Ulster	3	0
	Upper Bann	1	0
	West Tyrone	1	0
	Total	6	0

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2011	Belfast East	1	0
	Belfast West	1	0
	East Londonderry	3	0
	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4	1
	Mid Ulster	3	0
	Newry and Armagh	1	0
	North Antrim	3	0
	North Down	1	0
	South Antrim	1	1
	Upper Bann	5	1

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
	West Tyrone	3	0
	Total	26	3

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2012	Belfast East	1	0 (not yet determined)
	Belfast North	2	2
	East Londonderry	2	0 (1 not yet determined)
	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1	0
	Lagan Valley	1	0
	Newry and Armagh	1	0
	North Antrim	1	0
	North Down	1	0 (not yet determined)
	Upper Bann	2	1 (1 not yet determined)
	West Tyrone	4	0 (2 not yet determined)
	Total	16	3

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2013	Belfast West	1	not yet determined
	Newry and Armagh	1	not yet determined
	Total	2	

Eight applications have been included in the tables as received but as yet have no outcome.

One prohibition had expired when the application was received.

Article 63 Firearm Prohibition Appeals

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Justice how many Article 63 firearm prohibition appeals have been successful in each of the last 5 years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 18972/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice became responsible for applications for the removal of prohibition, that do not involve national security, under Article 63 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, on

12 April 2010. Information is not routinely held by constituency but has been collated insofar as possible. The information available from that date is set out below:

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2010	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1	0
	Mid Ulster	3	0
	Upper Bann	1	0
	West Tyrone	1	0
	Total	6	0

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2011	Belfast East	1	0
	Belfast West	1	0
	East Londonderry	3	0
	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4	1
	Mid Ulster	3	0
	Newry and Armagh	1	0
	North Antrim	3	0
	North Down	1	0
	South Antrim	1	1
	Upper Bann	5	1
	West Tyrone	3	0
	Total	26	3

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2012	Belfast East	1	0 (not yet determined)
	Belfast North	2	2
	East Londonderry	2	0 (1 not yet determined)
	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1	0

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
	Lagan Valley	1	0
	Newry and Armagh	1	0
	North Antrim	1	0
	North Down	1	0 (not yet determined)
	Upper Bann	2	1 (1 not yet determined)
	West Tyrone	4	0 (2 not yet determined)
	Total	16	3

Year prohibition removal application received;	Constituency of applicant;	Number of prohibition removal applications received;	Number of successful applications;
2013	Belfast West	1	not yet determined
	Newry and Armagh	1	not yet determined
	Total	2	

Eight applications have been included in the tables as received but as yet have no outcome.

One prohibition had expired when the application was received.

Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases per court division, are currently in the court system in relation to charges brought under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

(AQW 18973/11-15)

Mr Ford: As of 27 January 2013, there were a total of 29 active cases against which a Certificate under Section 1 of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 (the Act) has been issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Court Division	Belfast	Londonderry	Total
Cases	28	1	29

Section 4 of the Act provides for these cases to be held in Belfast unless the Lord Chief Justice otherwise directs.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the estimated total cost of compensation payments made to date to Northern Ireland Prison Service staff who were wrongly suspended or dismissed, for any reason, on the recommendation of the Prisoner Ombudsman.

(AQW 18975/11-15)

Mr Ford: I would refer the Member to the reply I provided to AQW/18562/11-15 on 1 February 2013.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17940/11-15, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service intends to engage more consultants.

(AQW 18976/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has engaged its Integrated Design Team Framework to progress the delivery of several business cases during the next twelve months as well as the Business Consultancy Service (BCS) to profile the potential benefits of its Reform Programme.

The full scope of the requirements to resource the NIPS Reform Programme is currently under development, including staffing requirements.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Northern Ireland Prison Service staff since 2004 have been dismissed but subsequently have had the decision overturned by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeal Board; and how many were reinstated in their posts or awarded compensation.

(AQW 18977/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 2004 seven individuals dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service have had this decision overturned by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeal Board and were awarded compensation.

Disclosure of Convictions and Criminal Records

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the circumstances in case 13/008028 which enabled the offender to register with a recruitment agency to which he failed to disclose his convictions, and obtained work abroad whilst subject to a notification order; (ii) the agencies that were tasked with monitoring the offender; and (iii) any other actions taken to monitor the behaviour of the offender.

(AQW 18990/11-15)

Mr Ford: As this case is before the court, it would not be appropriate for me to provide any detail.

Supporting Prisoners at Risk

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18303/11-15 and following the inspection at Maghaberry Prison between 19-23 March 2012, which identified a number of deficiencies in the Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures and in the December 2012 report, recommended that arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable prisoners should be strengthened and reflect regional guidance and that Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures should be improved with a particular focus on case management and reviews, whether the alteration of current Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures could be of assistance in addressing problems, or whether the issues in relation to Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures have been rejected.

(AQW 19013/11-15)

Mr Ford: Maghaberry Prison has accepted the recommendation that Supporting Prisoner at Risk (SPAR) procedures should be improved with a particular focus on case management and reviews. Representatives from the Prisoner Safety and Support Team participate in SPAR case conferences, ensuring good multi-disciplinary representation and case management. Regular audits of SPAR documentation are also completed.

Prisoner Assessment Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to concerns raised in the report into the investigation of the closure of the Prisoner Assessment Unit, whether night custody staff were trained in control and restraint techniques.

(AQW 19014/11-15)

Mr Ford: Night Custody Officers were trained in Control and Restraints as part of their induction into the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Prison Officers' Association

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of law firms which are retained by the Prison Officers' Association and their locations and; (ii) whether prison officers who are members of the Prison Officers' Association and would prefer to instruct a solicitor of their choice in duty related matters, will receive Prison Officers' Association funding or whether the Prison Officers' Association only provides funding to officers who use a firm that has been retained by the Association.

(AQW 19015/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Officers' Association is an independent body and the Member may wish to write to it directly about this matter.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18193/11-15 and AQW 18189/11-15, and given that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development requested that the Criminal Justice Inspectorate conduct an independent inspection of the Central Investigation Service, why he did not facilitate this with a change in legislation.

(AQW 19021/11-15)

Mr Ford: No approach was made to me or to my officials to add the DARD's Central Investigation Service to the list of organisations that can be inspected by the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland. I am advised that in May 2010 the DARD Permanent Secretary spoke with the Deputy Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) with a view to CJI conducting an independent review of the DARD Central Investigation Service and was advised CJI did not have the statutory remit to conduct an investigation into an organisation that is not specified in section 46 of the of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

I have previously advised that I will consult the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Chief Inspector on this issue.

Prison Service Trust: Contributions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how much his Department has contributed to the Prison Service Trust in each of last three years; (ii) what is the projected funding to the Trust for each of the next two years; (iii) what services are offered by or through the Trust; and (iv) whether the services provided by the Trust are available to all Prison Service staff.

(AQW 19050/11-15)

Mr Ford: Table A below shows the contribution provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to the Prison Service Trust (PST) in each of the last three financial years:

TABLE A

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	£000	£000	£000
Grant funding by NIPS to the Prison Service Trust	298	298	302

The projected funding to the PST in each of the next two financial years is shown in table B below:

TABLE B

	2012-13 *	2013-14	2014-15
	£000	£000	£000
Projected funding by NIPS to the Prison Service Trust	298	289	284

* The 2012-13 funding has also been provided for completeness.

The PST provides healthcare, life planning and support services. These services are offered to its client base which includes serving members who donate to the Trust, family members of murdered officers and officers who died in service or retired on ill-health grounds.

This does not preclude the Trust from the provision of other services, or to persons other than those within the client group from monies other than those received by government grant, i.e. member subscriptions.

Acting Governor of HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Acting Governor of HMP Maghaberry (i) was assaulted whilst in the course of his work; (ii) whether this was by a prisoner; and (iii) whether the person was charged.

(AQW 19071/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no "Acting Governor" of Maghaberry Prison. The Governor has confirmed that there have been no assaults or injuries at work involving those in the Governor grades.

National Crime Agency

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the benefits that the National Crime Agency could provide in tackling human trafficking.

(AQW 19072/11-15)

Mr Ford: The plan was that the National Crime Agency (NCA) would build on the functions and expertise of the Serious Organised Crime Agency and the UK Human Trafficking Centre to provide an enhanced approach to tackling human trafficking. The Executive, however, has not supported the extension of the NCA to Northern Ireland.

The Department of Justice is now working with the Home Office and other relevant partners to establish what the impact will be. The aim is to continue to tap into the NCA's expertise in tackling all crime types, including human trafficking. I still hope to see, for instance, the sharing of information and provision of advice; but the NCA will not have an operational role here. As a result it will not be able to undertake civil recovery against human traffickers or directly assist in human trafficking operations in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the legal costs incurred by the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association, related to members in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, for each of the last seven years.

(AQW 19073/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Officers' Association is an independent body and the Member may wish to write to it directly about this matter.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18357/11-15, to detail (i) the dates that the figures supplied relate to; (ii) when this case first went to court; (iii) on what date Legal Aid was granted; and (iv) the total counsel fees submitted to date, or the estimated total based on the level and number of counsel involved and the duration of the case.

(AQW 19074/11-15)

Mr Ford: The figures provided in AQW/18357/11-15, relate to magistrates court proceedings which ran from 21 January 2009 to 25 February 2009. The first court attendance was 21 January 2009 and legal aid was granted on that date. No counsel fees have been submitted to date. The defendants were committed for trial to the Crown Court and VHCC certificates have been granted in respect of these proceedings. These fees will be determined by the Taxing Master on the basis of a time-based claim. It is not possible to estimate the total fees at this time.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 19095/11-15)

Mr Ford: No departmental functions will be transferred from the Department of Justice to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

Apparel in Court

Mr Rogers asked Minister of Justice whether he plans to review the practice of wigs and gowns being worn by personnel, other than judges, in courts.

(AQW 19108/11-15)

Mr Ford: The practice of wigs and gowns being worn in court by the legal profession is a matter for their relevant professional bodies. I have no plans to review the court dress worn by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals staff who support the judiciary in the role of tipstaff or court crier.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Justice what assurances he has received from the British Government with regard to covering the additional policing costs which may arise from the G8 summit taking place in Fermanagh in June 2013.

(AQW 19147/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Office committed to ensuring PSNI have the resources required to deliver a safe and secure summit. The PSNI are developing cost estimates to be reviewed by my officials, which will form the basis of discussions with HM Treasury, led by DFP on behalf of the Executive.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Financial Assistance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18104/11-15, whether all financial assistance available will be paid by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to staff forced from their homes; and for how long temporary accommodation costs will be paid to allow purchase of a new home.

(AQW 19152/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service will reimburse in full those costs necessarily incurred as a result of removal. Assistance with temporary accommodation is normally limited to six months.

Prisoner Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) what measures are in place to ensure Gerry McGeough complies with the terms and conditions of his release; (ii) the course of action that will be taken if the terms and conditions are breached; and (iii) whether the implications for the victim in this case were considered.

(AQW 19155/11-15)

Mr Ford: The operation of the legislation under which Mr Gerry McGeough was released (the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998) remains the responsibility of the Secretary of State. That legislation requires fixed term prisoners released under its terms to comply with two conditions, namely, that the individual does not support a specified organisation (within the meaning of Section 3 of the aforementioned Sentences Act) and that they do not become concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland.

An individual believed to be in breach of these conditions may be liable to have his licence suspended by the Secretary of State and be returned to prison and to have his case considered thereafter by the independent Sentence Review Commissioners. The Sentences Act provides for the Secretary of State to give victims information about releases where she has received a written request to do so.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18253/11-15, (i) how many of the 26 staff dismissed for gross misconduct from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, exercised their right of appeal to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeal Board; (ii) how many of those who lodged a Notice of Appeal against dismissal subsequently withdrew the appeal prior to the hearing taking place; (iii) of those former staff who withdrew appeals, how many received a payment from the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and (iv) of those former staff who received such payment, how many were reinstated to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 19156/11-15)

Mr Ford: I would refer the Member to the response provided to AQW 18253/11-15.

15 staff exercised their right to appeal to NICSAB.

Supporting Prisoner at Risk Procedures

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how Supporting Prisoner at Risk procedures will be improved with a particular focus on case management and reviews, as recommended in the inspection report on Maghaberry Prison on 19-23 March 2012.

(AQW 19158/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Safety and Support Team within Maghaberry now attend and quality assure Supporting Prisoner at Risk (SPAR) case conferences ensuring good multi-disciplinary representation and case management. In addition, a new auditing system for SPAR booklets has been developed and implemented.

Monitoring and Supervision of Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Prisoner A, who was responsible for the monitoring and supervision of this person after release from prison.

(AQW 19159/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where licence conditions are imposed on persons released from prison they are monitored by the Probation Board with support, where appropriate, from the PSNI, Prison Service and DOJ.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice for an update on plans for the Northern Ireland Prison Service site at Woburn House/Lisnevin, Millilise.

(AQW 19178/11-15)

Mr Ford: The site will continue in its present role as the Prison Service College until the Northern Ireland Community Safety College at Desertcreat is completed. Thereafter, the Millilise site will be advertised for sale on the open market.

Professional Standards Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17980/11-15, whether the Professional Standards Unit will have a remit to investigate (i) the conduct of senior staff and governors; and (ii) retrospective issues against staff employed in the Prison Service.

(AQW 19228/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Professional Standards Unit will have responsibility for all staff but will not deal with retrospective cases.

New Technology at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the evaluation of the pilot schemes to test new technology at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood which were announced by the Director General in August 2012.

(AQW 19229/11-15)

Mr Ford: The three month pilots of millimetre wave technology at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood Young Offender Centre have now concluded and the results of the pilots are currently being evaluated.

Investigation of Deaths in Prison Custody

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the official Terms of Reference for Investigation of Deaths in Prison Custody by the Prisoner Ombudsman, (i) what is meant by the "discretion of the Ombudsman to investigate to the extent appropriate in cases, that raise issues about the care provided by the prison service"; (ii) whether the Ombudsman has the legislative power to pursue or investigate matters of residual discipline concerning staff who have not directly contributed to the circumstances surrounding a death in custody, or when not on duty at the time in question; (iii) under which legislation the Ombudsman has this power; (iii) in how many cases the Ombudsman has pursued prison staff by way of investigation in terms of evidence gathering supplied to the Prison Service; (iv) to provide the number of cases of death in custody since the Ombudsman took office, in which the issue of the suspension of staff was discussed between the Ombudsman, the Director General or the Deputy and where undertakings were given by the Prison Service that prison staff would be suspended.

(AQW 19230/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Within the Prisoner Ombudsman's Terms of Reference, the Ombudsman has discretion to investigate, to the extent appropriate, cases that raise issues about the care provided by the prison, and the Ombudsman will consider the circumstances of a death where the individual is

on temporary release or has been recently released from custody. In exercising discretion, the Ombudsman will consider concerns of the family, medical treatment while in custody, and post release, discharge arrangements and issues of individual vulnerability.

- (ii) The Ombudsman does not have legislative power to pursue investigations.
- (iii) As per (ii).
- (iv) The Ombudsman does not pursue prison staff during investigations; rather investigations are intended to identify the facts surrounding the circumstances of a death in custody.
- (v) I refer to AQW 18562/11-15, and confirm that the Ombudsman has not been involved in discussions with the Director General or Deputy on suspension of prison staff, although the Ombudsman was informed of the intention to suspend staff members pending a full internal disciplinary investigation.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the findings by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland following inspection at Maghaberry between 19 and 23 March 2002 and the subsequent recommendation in the December 2012 Report that the length of time prisoners spend in reception should be significantly reduced and initial health interviews shortened, whether health screening and access to appropriate healthcare is a Prison Service core business aim; and whether health screening will be included within its performance monitoring system as purposeful activity.
(AQW 19231/11-15)

Mr Ford: A continuous change programme is currently ongoing to reduce the time prisoners need to spend in reception. However, the individual needs of each prisoner need to be assessed prior to their first night in Custody.

Delivery of Healthcare services within the Northern Ireland Prison Service is the responsibility of the South Eastern Trust.

The Trust is committed to providing services which are equivalent to those provided to the wider community. While the Trust has put procedures in place to improve and streamline healthcare screening during the committal process, it remains an important opportunity for newly committed prisoners to discuss medical conditions, chronic disorders and any outstanding hospital or GP appointments. Healthcare screenings also provide the opportunity to ensure that prisoners receive timely and appropriate healthcare to meet their clinical needs when committed to prison.

Additional Personnel

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice what recent discussions he has held with the Chief Constable regarding levels of additional personnel required and the range of their deployment.
(AQW 19240/11-15)

Mr Ford: PSNI personnel matters, including recruitment and deployment, are an operational matter for the Chief Constable. However, the Chief Constable has advised me that the PSNI is currently conducting a review of their resilience and capability against demands going forward. This review will form the basis of any future business case in relation to the recruitment of additional officers, will be evidence based and conducted in an ethos of scrutiny and challenge, to ensure that there is a well articulated and understood assessment of future need.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18452/11-15, what is the closing date for the public sector trawl; and when an announcement on future useage will be made.
(AQW 19256/11-15)

Mr Ford: The closing date for expressions of interest in Bangor Courthouse was 7 February 2013. Land & Property Services has advised that some flexibility in time limits is allowed and that they would not refuse a serious expression of interest within any reasonable timescale, provided that no open market sale was imminent.

There is no procedure for the announcement of the expression of interest exercise or for open market sales of property.

Royal Ulster Constabulary Part-time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18141/11-15, whether the decision on how the residue is spent will be a matter for the Executive as a whole or for his Department.

(AQW 19258/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Part Time Reserve Gratuity terms and conditions were set by the Northern Ireland Office, in agreement with HM Treasury. My Department administered the Scheme on their behalf.

It is a matter for the Department of Justice to determine how the residue will be spent, in consultation with NIO and HM Treasury and not a matter for the Executive as a whole.

Illegal Fuel Laundering

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted in connection with illegal fuel laundering in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19267/11-15)

Mr Ford: Fuel laundering offences may be prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

HMRC have advised that 27 people have been prosecuted in respect of HMRC reported fuels related frauds in the last five financial years, including 2012-13 to date, all of whom have been convicted.

Roman Catholic Priests

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail the sentences imposed on Roman Catholic priests in respect of convictions since 2000, for offences of sexual abuse.

(AQW 19321/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my response to AQW/8729/11-15.

Restorative Justice Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how much funding is provided by his Department to Restorative Justice Schemes, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 19352/11-15)

Mr Ford: The funding provided to Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives through the Department of Justice is set out in the table below.

Financial Year	Community Restorative Justice Ireland	Northern Ireland Alternatives
2010-11	£95,000	£90,000
2011-12	£101,000	£95,000
2012-13	£100,000	£100,000

Attacks on Elderly People

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what plans his Department has to increase sentences for those who attack elderly people.

(AQW 19416/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sentencing in the individual case is a matter for the judiciary, taking into account all the circumstances of the offence and any relevant mitigating or aggravating factors in a case. In making these decisions, judges are guided by sentencing guidelines, which indicate that the age and vulnerability of the victim should be treated as an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sentence.

In the Programme for Government, I have made a commitment to consult with the Lord Chief Justice on sentencing guidelines.

Ballymena Courthouse: Union Flag

Mr Allister asked Minister of Justice (i) why the Union flag was not flown from Ballymena Courthouse on the designated day 6 February 2012; (ii) whether disciplinary or other action has been taken in consequence; (iii) what action has been taken; and (iv) what steps have been taken to prevent this happening again.

(AQW 19565/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Union flag was not flown at Ballymena Courthouse on 6 February 2013 due to an oversight by G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited (G4S), the security and ancillary services provider to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS).

Under the terms of the contract with G4S, they are required to fly the Union flag at all court premises on designated flag flying days. G4S were asked for an immediate report on why this failure occurred and have advised that it was due to human error. The NICTS Chief Executive is meeting the Northern Ireland Managing Director of G4S urgently to discuss this matter. Any disciplinary action will be a matter for G4S.

Coroners Office

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the announcement made by Senior Coroner Mr John Leckey on Wednesday 6 February, whether he plans to provide an explanation to the family of the late Arlene Arkinson for the failure to hold an inquest into her death and to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to the Coroners Office to hold a full inquest.

(AQW 19606/11-15)

Mr Ford: The scheduling and holding of an inquest is a matter for the Coroner and I understand that there are a number of outstanding issues which need to be dealt with before the Coroner can convene an inquest. It is not clear what additional resources the Senior Coroner considers are required. Officials will meet with him at the earliest opportunity to discuss his concerns.

Cattle Theft

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Justice in relation to the Clogher Valley area, Co.Tyrone: 'F' District, to detail (i) the number of cattle reported as stolen; (ii) the number of people that have been arrested for cattle theft; and (iii) whether there been any convictions relating to cattle theft, in the last two years.

(AQW 19747/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no specific offence of 'cattle theft' and convictions datasets do not record any information on the nature of items stolen that would allow us to identify convictions for theft of cattle.

While they may not be able to supply data specifically relating to cattle, further information in relation to recorded offences of theft in 'F' District may be obtained by contacting PSNI directly.

Laundered Fuel

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19326/11-15, to detail (i) the law that defines the offence of selling laundered fuel; (ii) the procedures used by the agencies involved in inspecting filling station forecourts to detect laundered fuel; (iii) the penalties for selling laundered fuel; and (iv) the number of successful prosecutions for the sale of laundered fuel, over the last ten years.

(AQW 19748/11-15)

Mr Ford: These are of course reserved matters for which Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is responsible/accountable to Westminster however they advise that:

- (i) The offence of selling laundered fuel is covered by Section 170 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 and Section 13 of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. In addition, any fuel, storage tanks, dispensing pumps, associated equipment and any vehicles fuelled with or containing laundered fuel are liable to seizure and forfeiture under the provisions of section 139 and 141 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.
- (ii) HMRC Officers use a range of statutory powers to enter premises to test fuel and inspect records including, regulatory powers under Regulations 47 and 48 of the Hydrocarbon Oils Regulations 1973; Search warrants issued under Section 161 of the Customs & Excise Management Act 1979, Search warrants issued under Article 10 of the Police & Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 and Entry and search of premises after arrest under Article 20 of Police & Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989.
- (iii) Upon conviction on indictment the penalty for being knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of duty are, a fine of any amount and/or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 7 years. Conviction in summary proceedings has a maximum penalty of 3 times the value of the goods and/or a term of 6 months imprisonment. Following conviction, the Crown may also seek Confiscation Orders in respect of criminal assets.
- (iv) It is not possible to identify the number of prosecutions relating specifically to the sale of laundered fuel however, details of the number of successful prosecutions for all types of fuel offences have been provided as answer to AQW 19267/11-15.

Department for Regional Development

Street Parking Meters

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how his Department sets the Euro currency rate for on-street parking meters.

(AQW 18994/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The Euro currency rate for on-street parking meters was based on the market Euro exchange rate and the direct costs of conversion incurred by the service provider. The Euro currency rate is incorporated into the service provider's contract. This rate is fixed, therefore, Roads Service neither benefits from or is disadvantaged by any currency fluctuations.

Following the commencement of the new Parking Enforcement contract on 30 October 2012, the Euro currency rate is currently being reviewed. I would point out that the provision of the additional facility to accept euro coins incurs additional operational costs in relation to programming, cash handling and banking. Therefore, the exchange rate which is offered for euro coins at the machines needs to take account of the additional costs involved.

Street Parking Meters

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Regional Development how much revenue his Department has generated as a result of increased Euro exchange rates charged by street parking meters, in each year since 2010.

(AQW 18995/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not generated any revenue from parking, as a result of increased euro exchange rates.

For those Pay and Display machines that accept euro coins, a fixed exchange rate has applied for some considerable time. The rate is programmed into the machines and does not take account of exchange rate fluctuations.

Following the commencement of the new parking enforcement contract with NSL, the euro exchange rate for Pay and Display machines is currently under review. I would point out that the provision of the additional facility to accept euro coins incurs additional operational costs in relation to programming, cash handling and banking. Therefore, the exchange rate which is offered for euro coins at the machines needs to take account of the additional costs involved.

Average Speeds of Traffic at Peak Times

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average speeds of traffic at peak times on arterial routes in the Greater Belfast area.

(AQW 19051/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service carries out a Journey Time Survey for the Belfast Metropolitan Area on a biennial basis, to measure the journey times on 11 predetermined routes in the Belfast Metropolitan Area during the morning peak traffic period.

The most recent data is contained in the 2011 report and details of average speeds during the morning peak period (07.30 – 09.15) are shown in the table below:

Routes	Total Average Speed (mph)
M2 / A2 Westbound	36.27
M2 / A2 Eastbound	37.15
Newtownards Road Inbound	10.66
Newtownards Road Outbound	17.73
Orbital (A55) Eastbound	21.33
Orbital (A55) Westbound	19.19
Castlereagh Road Inbound	10.71
Castlereagh Road Outbound	17.16
Ormeau Road Inbound	6.37
Ormeau Road Outbound	21.8
Lisburn Road Inbound	13.85
Lisburn Road Outbound	18.12
M1 / Westlink Inbound	24.57
M1 / Westlink Outbound	49.64
Falls Road Inbound	10.73

Routes	Total Average Speed (mph)
Falls Road Outbound	18.5
Crumlin Road Inbound	16.71
Crumlin Road Outbound	16.46
Antrim Road Inbound	18.13
Antrim Road Outbound	22.32
Shore Road Inbound	19.03
Shore Road Outbound	21.46

Traffic Attendants

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many traffic attendants have been assaulted or injured in the course of their duties, in the last twelve months?

(AQW 19063/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Traffic Attendants are employed by a private company, NSL Services Group (NSL).

NSL has advised that, in 2012, there were 29 cases of physical abuse of Traffic Attendants, with 12 of these cases resulting in injury.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development how many motorists (i) appealed fixed penalty notices issued in 2012; and (ii) had their appeals upheld.

(AQW 19065/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In 2012, some 16,900 challenges to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were received. This figure equates to some 15% of all PCNs issued. In the same period, some 9,100 PCN challenges were successful which is approximately 54% of the number of challenges received.

Criteria for Grit Boxes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to reduce the criteria for grit boxes to be placed on individual streets.

(AQW 19086/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Firstly, I should explain that the policy of my Department's Roads Service in respect of all aspects of winter maintenance is to target the limited resources available for this service on the busier main through routes.

The Member is aware that on roads adopted or maintained by Roads Service, which do not qualify for inclusion onto the treated road network, salt bins or grit piles may be provided for use by the public, on a self-help basis. Providing the necessary criteria are met, there are no limits placed on the number of salt bins which may be provided, although they will not normally be provided within 100m of another bin.

When considering requests for the provision of a salt bins, Roads Service carries out an evaluation using a criteria-based system which takes into account various factors, together with residential usage and community facilities including schools, hospitals and care homes for the elderly. To this end, Roads Service already commits significant resources to maintain approximately 4,800 salt bins and over 50,000 grit piles provided on public roads, which it endeavours to constantly replenish throughout the winter period.

As I am sure you will appreciate, Roads Service is required to work within its policy guidelines, which are established to be fair and equitable whilst taking account of the finite levels of resource and

expenditure available. Given current financial pressures, I would not be in a position to vary the criteria for the provision of grit boxes on individual streets.

Ticket Office at Ballymena Railway Station

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the future plans for the provision of a ticket office at Ballymena Railway Station.

(AQW 19094/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink advise that they have no immediate plans to permanently reopen the ticket office at Ballymena Railway Station. Staff at Ballymena Station are now required to inspect / sell tickets at the platform areas which provides a much improved visible and mobile staff presence in the station. However they may continue to operate from a ticket office at certain times of the day. Passenger information on where to purchase a ticket is available at the existing office location.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 19096/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Minister for the Environment is currently consulting with Executive Colleagues on the list of functions to transfer under the current programme of Local Government Reform.

Water: Leakages and Defective Pipes

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what percentage of water is currently lost to leakages and defective pipes in the system before point of delivery; and (ii) what effect such defects have on the purity of water.

(AQW 19099/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) the total amount of water entering the water distribution network (referred to as distribution input) in 2011/12 was 584 MI/d. The level of leakage in 2011/12 was 168 MI/d of which 122 MI/d occurs before the point of delivery. It should be noted that both Ofwat and NIAUR do not record the level of leakage as a percentage of distribution input. The reason being that water demand will vary dependent on customer usage and the pertaining weather conditions in any year. (ii) Water mains operate under positive pressure and as such there are no water quality risks associated with leaking defects. NIW has in place a comprehensive sampling and testing programme, overseen by the Drinking Water Inspectorate, to ensure that quality of water delivered to the public meets Regulatory Standards.

Chemicals in the Water Supply

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) all chemicals that are added to water and the rationale for doing so; and (ii) the cost of adding such chemicals to the water supply.

(AQW 19100/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that (i) in order to meet the requirements of current Drinking Water Regulations and to provide wholesome drinking water to customers, a number of chemicals are used in the water treatment process to remove impurities present in raw water. The table below details the chemicals which have been approved by the Drinking Water Inspector for use in the water treatment process.

Chemical Type	Purpose
Aluminium and Iron products	Coagulation and removal of organics from raw water; Thickening of the sludge by-product before disposal.

Chemical Type	Purpose
Polyelectrolyte	Used as a coagulant aid in the clarification process.
Lime / Sodium Carbonate / Sulphuric Acid	Adjusts the pH of the water to optimise treatment processes.
Carbon	Enhances removal of organics and pesticides.
Orthophosphoric Acid	Used to reduce plumbosolvency from existing lead pipes.
Chlorine	Disinfection of the final water.

- (ii) The cost of chemicals used in the drinking water treatment process is approximately £6.65 million per annum.

Residents Parking Scheme for the Bogside Area

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the residents parking scheme for the Bogside area.

(AQW 19101/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Residents Parking Scheme for the Bogside area is progressing through the legislative process and it is anticipated the scheme will be implemented late in 2013.

Oil Spillages on Roads

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what legislation he intends to bring forward to address the problem of oil spillages on roads.

(AQW 19105/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has no plans to bring forward specific legislation. Roads Service already has plans in place to deal with roads related incidents, including oil spillages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and responds immediately to any calls regarding such issues.

The policy and procedures that direct Roads Service in its response to oil spillages are aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and preventing oil from entering watercourses or causing other environmental damage.

Treatment of oil spillages is undertaken by trained personnel in accordance with advice from manufacturers and other statutory organisations, such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), as required.

All Roads Service policies and procedures are reviewed on a continuous basis to ensure that all operations are carried out in line with current health and safety procedures.

However, it should be noted that primary responsibility for dealing with oil spillages lies with those who caused the spillage to occur in the first place, although it has to be accepted that it can often be difficult to trace those responsible.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development what additional resources his Department will receive to cover any additional costs as a result of hosting the G8 Summit and from where these resources will be allocated.

(AQW 19161/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has made a preliminary assessment of essential works in relation to the G8 Summit and has obtained DFP approval to commence priority works with a view to confirming a full bid in the 2013/14 financial year. This will be funded by displacing some work planned for this year into the 2013/14 financial year. No bids have been made by the Department for additional resources in support of the Summit in the 2012/13 financial year.

Car Parking Problems: Clarawood Estate

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the car parking problems in the Clarawood Estate and whether he has any plans to address these matters.

(AQW 19164/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As with many other social housing estates, Clarawood was designed and built at a time when the level of private car ownership was much lower than it is currently. Roads were primarily intended to provide access, rather than parking. As a result, the level of parking provision in these areas can lead to difficulties for residents seeking to park immediately outside their property. I understand the difficulties this can cause for some residents.

Unfortunately, my Department's Roads Service does not have sufficient resources to simply provide parking at private residences. However, current policy also recognises that the level of car parking may, in certain circumstances, significantly affect road safety or traffic progression on through routes. In such instances, Roads Service may take appropriate action.

In keeping with this aim, Roads Service has already introduced parking and waiting restrictions to ensure the safe movement of vehicles along main routes within the estate. If you wish to highlight other areas of specific concern, I will arrange to have these assessed by Roads Service officials.

Funeral Traffic Management

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has for traffic attendants to assist with traffic management at funerals in town centres.

(AQW 19167/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: With the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) in 2006, the role of Traffic Attendants, as set out in The Traffic Management (NI) Order 2005, is to provide enforcement of decriminalised parking contraventions, on-street, and in Roads Service car parks.

There are no powers to permit Traffic Attendants to provide any other traffic management functions, and this position was supported by the police when DPE was being developed and introduced.

Banbridge Bus Station Upgrade

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the plans for the upgrade of Banbridge bus station and the progress to date.

(AQW 19168/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department issued a letter of offer in November 2012 giving approval for Translink to proceed with a project to construct an off street Bus Facility in Banbridge. The estimated costs of the project are £746,000.

Translink has developed a scheme to construct the facility at Kenlis Street in Banbridge and it is in the process of finalising Planning Permission. Translink is also currently engaged in purchasing the land required for the facility. Assuming that Planning Permission is approved and land purchase proceeds without any hold-up, the project is expected to be completed around the end of 2013.

Portadown Railway Station: Staff Car Parking

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what additional provision for staff car parking is available at Portadown Railway Station given the removal of a number of spaces to facilitate the new building works.

(AQW 19170/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that there will be 11 spaces provided in the revised car park layout for Translink staff. Prior to the new building works there were 12 spaces for Translink staff.

Northland Road/Springtown Junction Signalisation, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the Northland Road/Springtown Junction signalisation in Derry, including whether these schemes will be included in the programme for 2013/14.

(AQW 19216/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Northland Road/Springtown Junction signalisation scheme in Londonderry is included in my Department's Roads Service 2013/14 works programme for Minor Improvement schemes.

Resident Parking Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the resident parking schemes currently in operation; (ii) resident parking schemes under consideration or in development; and (iii) the process for proposing resident parking schemes including any criteria by which proposals are assessed.

(AQW 19219/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At present there are no Residents' Parking Schemes operating in Northern Ireland, however, a number of schemes are at various stages of development. These are:

- Lower Malone, Stranmillis Road, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and College Park Avenue/Rugby Road area in Belfast;
- the Bogside area, Londonderry; and
- the Bridge Street/Massereene Street area, in Antrim.

Roads Service considers a number of factors when considering a request for a Residents' Parking Scheme in an area. However, the main task is to identify whether residents in the area are experiencing significant parking difficulties due to non-resident parking. Parking surveys are undertaken to identify the extent of non-resident parking and assess the extent of available off-street parking provision. Schemes will not be introduced, where residential parking is primarily off-street.

A Residents' Parking Scheme will be justified where, during the working day (normally Monday to Friday 8:00am to 6:00pm):

- it is estimated more than 60% of the available kerbside space is occupied by non-residents' vehicles for more than 5 hours; and,
- more than 80% is occupied in total for the same 5 hours.

Outside of these hours, a scheme may be justified where:

- it is estimated more than 40% of the available kerbside space is occupied by non-residents' vehicles for more than any consecutive 4-hour period outside of the working day; and
- more than 80% is occupied in total for the same 4-hour period.

When there appears to be sufficient justification for a scheme, Roads Service officials will draw up draft scheme designs and meet with local residents to discuss the finer details. Upon completion of this local consultation, Roads Service will issue a questionnaire to all households to gauge the level of support for the scheme. To proceed with a scheme, two thirds of responding households must be

in favour of the proposed scheme, subject to a minimum response rate of one third of all households. If the response is positive, proposed layouts are then finalised and the necessary legislative arrangements made.

Northern Ireland's Ports

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what are the possibilities for further growth at each of Northern Ireland's ports in 2013.

(AQW 19239/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have regular meetings with the main public trust ports and officials also meet regularly with the Port of Larne. The main possibilities for further growth in 2013 at the four main commercial ports in Northern Ireland are set out as follows:

The overall cargo tonnage through Belfast Harbour is expected to increase in 2013. Key sectors for growth will be windfarm components, bulk coal, aggregates and freight vehicles. Cruise call bookings currently stand at 58, an increase of 29% on last year.

The current works to improve the A8 road to dualling standard throughout its length are hugely significant for the Port of Larne. They will improve the attractiveness of Larne as a port to haulage/logistics business. While traffic is reduced from its 2007 peak, the upgraded road will place Larne in a good position to grow again as the NI economy recovers.

At Londonderry Port there are significant renewable energy development prospects in Biomass and Anaerobic Digestion and the Port hopes to conclude deals this year which will have long term sustainable growth. The conclusion of a land purchase deal in 2013 to extend the Port's land holding would provide a platform for short and medium term development.

Warrenpoint's potential for growth in the short and long term has been improved by the acquisition of an additional 8 acres of land and over 40,000 Square feet of covered storage. It is hoped that a project to increase covered storage adjacent to the quayside will be complete before the end of 2013 so that the storage can be used to increase volumes in 2013. The additional land will allow the port to free up vital quay space to attract new business. In January 2013 Warrenpoint Port discharged its first coal boat in over 10 years.

Reliability of Pay and Display Machines

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any assessment has been made in the last twelve months of the reliability of Pay and Display machines that are located in departmental controlled car parks.

(AQW 19241/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department monitors all parking equipment on a monthly basis to ensure it is being maintained in a working condition. This measurement is incorporated into its parking enforcement and car park management contract with NSL Services.

This check measures NSL's performance in seeking to respond to machine faults within 24 hours of reporting, whether the report is automated by the machine or manually. To achieve this Key Performance Indicator (KPI), NSL has to respond within these timescales on at least 98% of occasions in a calendar month. NSL has achieved this KPI during the period January 2012 to December 2012.

Landscaping Roundabouts

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to change regulations to allow private companies to sponsor landscaping on roundabouts which are located off the M1 slip ways.
(AQW 19243/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: While the Department permits private sponsors to fund the planting and maintenance of roundabouts, verges and available areas within car parks, on the majority of the road network, this

facility does not extend to areas adjacent to the motorway network which are classed as “Special Roads”. As this roundabout is clearly sited on a Special road no such sponsorship would be permitted in this case.

You will appreciate the motorway network presents its own set of issues, with larger volumes of traffic generally travelling at higher speeds than on the rest of the network. There would be concerns over traffic disruption and safety in terms of safe access, both to those people working on landscaped areas adjacent to motorways and other road users.

Given these circumstances, I would have no plans to allow private companies to sponsor landscaping on roundabouts which are located adjacent to the motorway network and categorised as Special Roads, for example the M12 roundabout near the M1 at junction 11.

Finally, sponsorship on roundabouts off the M1 slip ways which are not Special Roads has been permitted, for example the Saintfield Road Roundabout which is managed by the Lisburn City Council.

Flooding on the Bloomfield Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to resolve the flooding on the Bloomfield Road at the Skipperstone Glen area of Bangor.

(AQW 19254/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service’s investigations into the flooding at this location on the Bloomfield Road have highlighted that debris and other foreign matter is being washed into the mouth of a culvert that facilitates the passage of water from Skipperstone Glen to Bloomfield Road playing fields.

Roads Service has carried out temporary measures to prevent debris and other foreign matter entering the road culvert, however, a more permanent measure, in the form of installation of a “grill”, will be implemented within the next few weeks.

Bus Depots

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the location of the bus depots his Department plans to (i) create; and (ii) remove over the next twelve months.

(AQW 19259/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This is an operational matter for Translink, however it has advised me that it continually reviews the performance of its services, including support structures and facilities, to ensure effectiveness and to improve service quality/efficiency.

Grit Boxes in Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many grit boxes there are in Holywood.

(AQW 19263/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department’s Roads Service currently provides 52 salt bins and 5 grit piles within the Holywood area.

Metered Property: Domestic Property or a Farm

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the criteria by which a metered property is determined to be either a domestic property or a farm.

(AQW 19290/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the property designation applied by Land and Property Services (LPS) for rating purposes is the basis upon which NIW determines whether a property is domestic or non-domestic and therefore liable for water charges. The term “House (Agricultural)” is used by LPS to describe a farm dwelling. If the water supply to the dwelling

is also used for non-domestic purposes, such as farming, then the property is liable for water charges and may be eligible for a domestic allowance in respect of the dwelling.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the policy that allows Northern Ireland Water to charge when leakage has occurred between (i) the meter and a domestic property; (ii) the meter and a farm building or water trough; and (iii) the meter and a commercial building.

(AQW 19294/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the current policy on leakage which affects metered bills seeks to ensure that domestic customers are treated equitably and that non domestic customers are only charged for the services used. In the situations you have described, the policy would be applied as follows:-

- (i) If a leak has occurred between the meter and a domestic property, customers can apply to have both the water and (for properties connected to a public sewer) sewerage elements of the bill adjusted provided certain conditions have been met. These conditions relate to the location of the leak, the repair of the leak and whether or not the leak occurred through negligence. A site inspection may be carried out to verify the location and repair of the leak. This policy ensures equality of treatment across all domestic customers.
- (ii) In cases where the leak has occurred between the meter and a farm building or water trough, the customer will be billed and will be liable for the cost of all water supplied, whether this has been used or lost through leakage or wastage. This reflects the principle that customers are charged for the services used. Commonly properties of this type are not connected to a public sewer and therefore not liable for sewerage charges (which are linked to the volume of water supplied).
- (iii) If a leak has occurred between the meter and a commercial building the customer will be billed and will be liable for the cost of all water supplied (in the same way as agricultural customers), whether this has been used or lost through leakage or wastage. If the commercial property is connected to a public sewer, the customer will also be liable for sewerage charges linked to the volume of water supplied. If the leak has occurred in a location which means that the leaked water

does not reach the sewer, then the customer can apply to have the sewerage charges adjusted provided certain conditions have been met. These conditions are the same as those described at (i) above. In this way customers are only charged for the services used.

The detail of this policy is explained in Section 9 of NIW's Code of Practice on Billing and Metering for Non Domestic Customers and in Section 5 of NIW's Scheme of Charges (both can be viewed on NIW's website www.niwater.com).

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the Northern Ireland Water policy in a case where a water leak is undetected by the property owner due to Northern Ireland Water sending bills to the wrong address.

(AQW 19295/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that customers have a responsibility to prevent waste and misuse of water supplies. For this reason, NIW encourages metered customers to check their consumption regularly by reading the meter so that any water leak that may occur is detected and repaired as soon as possible. The receipt of a bill should not be relied upon as a leakage alert because some bills may be based on a system estimate.

Without details of a specific case, NIW is unable to comment on whether or not any address errors were its responsibility.

DRD: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19299/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm that no declarations of interest have been made by my Special Adviser.

Crumbling Road Infrastructure in Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how he plans to address the crumbling road infrastructure in Beechfield and Ashfield estates, Donaghadee.

(AQW 19305/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service operates a cyclic inspection and repair system whereby any defects in roads and footways requiring remedial action, are noted for repair in line with established maintenance standards. This system is designed to allow Roads Service to react to defects, such as potholes, and carry out repairs to make the area safe for road users and pedestrians.

I am sure the Member will appreciate that Roads Service must prioritise its works programme to optimise use of its finite resources. Whilst I understand the aesthetic appearance of roads in both the Beechfield and Ashfield estates may show signs of wear and tear, along with the presence of patches from previous repairs, there are many other roads within the Ards Borough Council Area, which carry greater traffic volumes, that are considered to be in greater need of resurfacing.

The Member will be aware the footways in the Beechfield estate were replaced some years ago and are in a satisfactory condition, while the entire footway network in the Ashfield estate was replaced last year at a cost of £120k.

Roads Service will, however, continue to keep the Beechfield and Ashfield estates, Donaghadee under consideration for potential inclusion in a future resurfacing programme.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many penalty charge notices have been issued in (i) Bangor; (ii) Holywood; and (iii) Donaghadee in 2012, and how does this compare with 2011.

(AQW 19311/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Bangor, Holywood and Donaghadee, in each of the last two years, are provided in the table below:

Town	2011		2012	
	PCNs Issued	% of Total PCNs Issued in Northern Ireland	PCNs Issued	% of Total PCNs Issued in Northern Ireland
Bangor	3,291	2.6%	3,706	3.3%
Holywood	1,691	1.3%	1,191	1.1%
Donaghadee	226	0.2%	159	0.1%

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices were issued in Ballymena in 2012 and how this compares with 2011.

(AQW 19327/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Ballymena, in each of the last two years, are provided in the table below:

Year	PCNs Issued In Ballymena	% of Total PCNs Issued in Northern Ireland
2011	6,855	5.4%
2012	4,693	4.2%

Traffic Calming Measures in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are planned for the North Down area over the next year.

(AQW 19350/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformatiotype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Future of Railway Investment

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the consultation document on the Future of Railway Investment, to outline the reasons for not utilising the Antrim to Lisburn rail line for passenger services, considering that Northern Ireland Railways pays for the maintenance of the line for emergency diversion and driver training purposes.

(AQW 19394/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The decision to close the Antrim to Lisburn rail line for passenger services in 2003 was made against a background of other competing transportation priorities, taking into account financial feasibility, value for money and wider social and economic considerations. At the time of closure, Translink took the view that the costs of maintaining and modernising the line to retain regular services could not be justified.

The same reasons prevail today and Translink has advised that it has no plans at this time to re-introduce regular services on the line. Any improvement work to bring back passenger services to the Antrim to Lisburn line would require the support of a positive economic appraisal before a bid for funding could be considered.

Looking to the longer term, my Department is carrying out a public consultation to seek views on the priorities for future investment in our railways network beyond the current budget period. Re-opening the Antrim to Lisburn line and establishing a rail link to Belfast International Airport is one of a range of options identified in the consultation, should passenger demand increase in the future to support the necessary capital investment.

Road Safety on the Gransha Road, Bangor

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps his Department is planning to take to improve road safety on the Gransha Road, adjacent to Bangor Grammar School.

(AQW 19428/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As part of the planning approval for the new Bangor Grammar School, to which my Department's Roads Service provided input as a consultee, the education authority carried out a number of improvement works including:

- widening the footways at the site frontage along Gransha Road;
- installing a new Puffin enhanced road crossing;
- the relocation of two pedestrian islands on Gransha Road;
- creating a right turn pocket and new road markings on Gransha Road;
- installing 'Safe Routes to School' solar signs;
- the provision of a pedestrian guard rail at entrance of the school;
- providing school bus boarding and drop off points within the school premises;
- creating a dedicated bus lay-by, with lowered kerbs for easier access;
- providing drop-off lay-bys for parents to use on Gransha Road; and
- installing a new bus shelter on Gransha Road.

Roads Service also reviewed the road junctions serving residential areas close to the school entrance, which officials considered had adequate sight splays and footway provision to provide safe access.

The Gransha Road in the vicinity of the school has also previously been provided with central hatching, right turn pockets and central pedestrian refuge islands, which channel the traffic and make it safer for pedestrians to cross the road. In addition, Roads Service has also recently widened the junction of Cranley Road to allow a left turning vehicle to safely pass a right turning vehicle.

Roads Service is aware of public concern relating to road safety on the Gransha Road and in particular, the Gransha Road Roundabout. Officials have started a series of surveys of pedestrian demand and vehicle flow at the roundabout, which will continue during February 2013. This will identify the level of pedestrian demand, now that the school is fully operational, and determine if any further measures are deemed necessary.

Glenavy to Moira Road

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the work on the Glenavy to Moira road.

(AQW 19434/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service officials recently completed a route improvement study for the A26 strategic route. This study has identified a number of potential improvement schemes and in order to make the best use of resources and ensure best value, Roads Service has prioritised these schemes for implementation.

Work on a scheme to provide a right turning pocket for vehicles leaving the A26 Moira Road at Main Street, Glenavy started on 4 February 2013. It is anticipated this work will be completed in May 2013 and greatly improve safety and assist with traffic progression at this busy junction.

Greencastle - Magilligan Ferry

Ms Ruane asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the recent speculation around the establishment of a Greencastle - Greenore Ferry, what progress has been made on the preservation and subvention for the Greencastle - Magilligan Ferry in order to maintain it for the North West region. **(AQO 3380/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The member will know that my Department has no statutory powers in relation to ferry services that go outside Northern Ireland (shipping is a reserved matter), it was not involved in setting up this service and it has no responsibility for its operation. The provision of a ferry service between Magilligan and Greencastle was undertaken by Limavady and Donegal Councils and is operated by a private company. This would also apply to any proposed service between Greencastle in County Down and Greenore.

The Member may be aware that the two Councils recently invited applications from those interested in operating a ferry service between Magilligan and Greencastle for a three year period from 1st April 2013. I understand one application was received to operate the service on the basis of no financial subvention from either Council.

Unadopted Roads

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the Inquiry into Unadopted Roads by the Committee for Regional Development, for an update on the work he has done in relation to the recommendations. **(AQO 3381/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The Committee for Regional Development published the Report on its Inquiry into Unadopted Roads on 4 December 2012.

The report contained 10 recommendations covering a wide range of legal, financial, prioritisation and procedural issues relating to unadopted roads in housing developments. I subsequently tasked Departmental officials to consider and provide detailed opinion, comments and proposals on five of the recommendations that relate to the Department's areas of direct responsibility. When this assessment has been completed, I will be in a position to formally respond to the Report.

In addition, I have written to other stakeholders who are responsible for, or have direct interests in the other five recommendations. These include the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), The Law Society of Northern Ireland, The Construction Employers Federation (CEF), The National House Building Council (NHBC), and the Department of the Environment (DOE). I have also met with representatives from a number of these organisations to discuss a range of issues, where they have specific interests.

Over the forthcoming weeks, I will be carefully considering the feedback from all contributors, and making my formal response to the Committee for Regional Development.

Railways: A2 Road Project

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what increase is anticipated in rail passenger numbers on the Larne line during the A2 upgrade work. **(AQO 3382/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I announced the award of the A2 upgrade contract on 31 January 2013. Scheme construction should commence early in 2013 and is expected to take two years to complete.

In relation to anticipated increases in rail passengers during the upgrade work, Translink advise that following the introduction of the new timetable, latest figures for passenger growth on Larne rail line already show a tenth increase on last year since the introduction of new trains. While it is difficult to forecast increased passenger numbers as a direct result of the upgrade work, the increased frequency and availability of new trains will help accommodate any further increase in passenger numbers. On

the basis of previous experience, for example, Westlink works and the impact on the Portadown rail line approximately a one fifth growth was experienced over a period of 2 years during the works and most of this was subsequently retained as passengers opted to continue to use the train following their experience of enhanced rail services.

Finally, on 7 January 2013, parking charges were suspended at St Brides Car Park, Carrickfergus, near the railway station, in order to provide additional Park & Ride/ Park & Share opportunities during the construction period of the scheme.

Gransha Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what more his Department can do to improve the flow of traffic and safety of pedestrians using the Gransha Road, Bangor.

(AQO 3383/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will recall my recent response to his similar question regarding the Gransha Road in Bangor.

As part of the planning approval for the new Bangor Grammar School, to which Roads Service provided input as a consultee, the education authority carried out a number of improvement works including:

- widening the footways at the site frontage along Gransha Road;
- installing a new Puffin enhanced road crossing;
- the relocation of two pedestrian islands on Gransha Road;
- creating a right turn pocket and new road markings on Gransha Road;
- installing 'Safe Routes to School' solar signs;
- the provision of a pedestrian guard rail at entrance of the school;
- providing school bus boarding and drop off points within the school premises;
- creating a dedicated bus lay-by, with lowered kerbs for easier access;
- providing drop-off lay-bys for parents to use on Gransha Road; and
- installing a new bus shelter on Gransha Road.

Roads Service also reviewed the road junctions serving residential areas close to the school entrance, which officials considered had adequate sight splays and footway provision to provide safe access.

The Gransha Road in the vicinity of the school has also previously been provided with central hatching, right turn pockets and central pedestrian refuge islands, which channel the traffic and make it safer for pedestrians to cross the road. In addition, Roads Service has also recently widened the junction of Cranley Road to allow a left turning vehicle to safely pass a right turning vehicle.

I can assure the Member that Roads Service is aware of public concern relating to road safety on the Gransha Road and in particular, the Gransha Road Roundabout. Officials have started a series of surveys of pedestrian demand and vehicle flow at the roundabout, which will continue during February 2013. This will identify the level of pedestrian demand, now that the school is fully operational, and determine if any further measures are deemed necessary.

Public Transport: Fares

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will ensure that any train or bus fare increases this year will be linked to inflation.

(AQO 3384/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Each year Translink produce a 3 year Corporate Plan which is discussed with my Department. The focus is on the year ahead. Plans are drawn up which take account of Translink's statutory obligations, funding, costs, fares, fare income and levels of service.

My role, and that of my officials, is to consider the Translink Corporate Plan for each of Metro, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways. I am of the opinion that any proposed fare increases have to balance social considerations against the commercial obligations placed on Translink. We have managed to ensure only limited fare increases in the last few years. Indeed fares have fallen in 'real' terms.

Discussions begin at official level a number of months before the start of the financial year, mainly about funding scenarios. While this process has commenced and I am aware of the issues, discussions are still at an early stage. It is also important to take into account the views of key stakeholders.

Department for Social Development

Housing Associations

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's policy on Housing Associations releasing retention monies to main contractors; and what checks are made to ensure that main contractors pay sub-contractors retention monies on time.

(AQW 18948/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Housing associations release retentions to main contractors in accordance with the relevant conditions of their construction contracts. Generally one half of the retention monies will be released at completion and the remainder at the end of the maintenance period which normally has a twelve month duration.

The Department's Housing Association Guide requires associations to operate a prompt payment policy whereby, unless different terms are agreed in the contract, associations should pay properly claimed amounts to main contractors within 30 days. The Guide also requires associations to include a 'prompt payment' clause in its conditions of contract with the main contractor requiring prompt payment by main contractors to their subcontractors. These prompt payment provisions are applicable to all payments including the release of retentions.

Recent guidance regarding the monitoring of payments to subcontractors has been published by Central Procurement Directorate. This requires the monitoring of payments to subcontractors to be a standing item on the agenda at project meetings with the main contractor providing a report on payments made to subcontractors at each meeting. In addition, the guidance includes a provision that the association's project manager makes periodic checks with subcontractors on the payment performance of the main contractor. Such checks can, if appropriate, be extended to any payments made during or after the maintenance period.

If there are any issues concerning delays in payments these would be investigated by the Departmental inspection team during its rolling programme of Inspections.

It should be noted that it is not intended that there should be any legal liability on associations to enforce the prompt payment provisions in any subcontract. Any remedy under the sub-contract lies with the subcontractor and the legislation on payment of debt available.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 18950/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Under the Reform of Local Government my Department will be transferring Housing Functions in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Housing Unfitness. In addition legislation will be brought forward that will enable the new Councils to address issues related to social need and to take forward regeneration within their areas.

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development how much maintenance arrears must be accrued before the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division commences enforcement proceedings. **(AQW 18957/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division can seek to refer any case to the Enforcement of Judgments Office where there is a debt to be paid.

Each case is considered on its own merits and there is no prescribed amount that must be first outstanding before this can be considered.

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development what measures are in place for Child Maintenance Enforcement Division to take enforcement measures against non-resident parents who are not in work and not on benefits and cannot be contacted. **(AQW 18958/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: When a non-resident parent is not in employment or on benefits, alternative means of collecting any outstanding child maintenance are always considered if the non-resident parent is not prepared to make their own arrangements to pay their child maintenance. These measures can include applying to the courts for a liability order to recognise the debt outstanding or the making of an application for a deduction order to recover any money owed directly from a non-resident parent's bank account.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division also has access to information about non-resident parents through Service Level Agreements with the credit reference agency Experian as well as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The Department can also access information through the Customer Information Service which provides a central store of client data for all government departments.

Personal Independence Payment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 18433/11-15, to detail the number of people (i) who qualify for the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance; and (ii) who are expected to qualify for the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment.

(AQW 18984/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) As at August 2012, 97,110 Disability Living Allowance claimants qualified for higher rate mobility. Of these, 2,500 were aged under 16 and 43,210 were aged 65 and above.*
- (ii) Personal Independence Payment will replace Disability Living Allowance for people aged 16-64 only. Children will continue to receive Disability Living Allowance provided they satisfy the conditions of that benefit until they turn 16. People over the age of 65 who are already receiving Disability Living Allowance will continue to receive that benefit and are unaffected by the introduction of Personal Independence Payment

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. While it is not possible to pre-empt the outcome of individual assessments under Personal Independence Payment, work is ongoing to provide meaningful and statistically valid estimates on the impact of the introduction of Personal Independence Payment.

*The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Queens Parade Project in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Queens Parade project in Bangor. (AQW 19022/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is in the process of purchasing the landholding assembled by the developer, Karl Greenfarm Properties (KGP) Limited. This transaction is due to be completed by the end of February 2013. Having reviewed the scale of the proposed development on the site, the Department then expects to commence work on assembling the remaining land needed for the development scheme and seeking planning approval for same. This is likely to take up to two years to complete.

Cost of Domestic Heating Oil

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what impact a (i) 5 percent; (ii) 10 percent; and (iii) 15 percent rise in the cost of domestic heating oil would have on fuel poverty statistics. (AQW 19033/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Fuel poverty is influenced by three factors, household income, energy inefficiency and fuel price. While improvements to the energy efficiency of homes can reduce the risk of fuel poverty, it is important to recognise that low income and high fuel prices are the main contributors to fuel poverty. Any increase in the cost of domestic home heating oil will lead to an increase in the level of fuel poverty. However, my Department continues to tackle the causes of fuel poverty which we can have an impact on through our energy efficiency improvement schemes and benefit uptake campaigns.

Expansion of the Gas Network

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development what impact the expansion of the gas network would have on fuel poverty statistics. (AQW 19034/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The latest Northern Ireland House Condition Survey reports that almost 70% of households in Northern Ireland use oil to heat their homes. Oil is currently 30 to 35% more expensive than natural gas so switching to gas would lower energy costs and help tackle fuel poverty. On 10 January the Executive approved financial support of up to £32.5 million for the extension of the natural gas network to the main towns in the West and North-West of Northern Ireland, which would potentially serve some 34,000 new gas consumers.

Social Security Benefit Appeal Tribunals

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister for Social Development to list the premises used for social security benefit appeal tribunals, broken down by constituency. (AQW 19058/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The list of venues used in 2012 and the constituency they are in, is set out in the table below¹.

Venue	Constituency
Bedford House, Belfast	Belfast South
Cleaver House, Belfast	Belfast South
Corn Exchange, Belfast	Belfast North
Laganside Courts, Belfast	Belfast South
Ballymena Courthouse	North Antrim
Ballymena Business Centre	North Antrim

Venue	Constituency
Riada House, Ballymoney	North Antrim
Coleraine Courthouse	East Londonderry
Coleraine Causeway Enterprise Agency	East Londonderry
Coleraine Town Hall	East Londonderry
Limavady Advice Centre	East Londonderry
Central Library, Londonderry	Foyle
City Hotel Londonderry	Foyle
Londonderry Courthouse	Foyle
Millennium Forum, Londonderry	Foyle
Magherafelt Council Offices	Mid Ulster
Signal Centre, Bangor	North Down
Ards Business Centre, Newtownards	Strangford
Newtownards Courthouse	Strangford
Armagh Business Centre	Newry and Armagh
Armagh Courthouse	Newry and Armagh
Banbridge Enterprise Centre	Upper Bann
Downpatrick Courthouse	South Down
Down Business Centre, Downpatrick	South Down
Ballybot House, Newry	Newry and Armagh
Newry Courthouse	Newry and Armagh
Craigavon Courthouse	Upper Bann
Mount Zion House, Lurgan	Upper Bann
Cookstown Enterprise Centre	Mid Ulster
Dungannon Business Centre	Fermanagh and South Tyrone
Enniskillen Business Centre	Fermanagh and South Tyrone
Omagh Appeals Service	West Tyrone
Omagh Library	West Tyrone
Omagh Courthouse	West Tyrone
Strabane Enterprise Agency	West Tyrone

1 Appeals listed at these venues are determined by the appellant's postal address and not by constituency.

Empty Homes Strategy

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of vacant houses in each constituency that have been brought back into use through the empty homes strategy.

(AQW 19062/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is responsible for the implementation of its 2007 Empty Homes Strategy. It has informed me that it does not hold information on the number of private properties brought back into use as a result of its strategy. I find this disappointing and unacceptable. However, it does hold information on its own stock and the table below shows that the number of void properties (by district office) has been reduced from 3634 to 2152 during the period March 2007 to March 2011.

DISTRICT	2007	2011
WEST BELFAST	54	39
EAST BELFAST	104	60
NORTH BELFAST	566	194
SHANKILL	138	241
SOUTH BELFAST	44	406
BELFAST AREA	906	940
BANGOR	215	63
NEWTOWNARDS	203	91
CASTLEREAGH	209	44
LISBURN A ST	96	51
LISBURN DFARM	24	9
DOWNPATRICK	27	32
S.E. AREA	774	290
BANBRIDGE	74	26
NEWRY	87	21
ARMAGH	89	18
LURGAN/B'LOW	110	118
PORTADOWN	55	20
DUNGANNON	60	19
FERMANAGH	49	22
SOUTH AREA	524	244
BALLYMENA	184	106
ANTRIM	229	86
N'ABBEY 1	151	129
N'ABBEY 2	112	2
C'FERGUS	68	10
LARNE	190	157
BALLYCASTLE	17	6
BALLYMONEY	8	10
COLERAINE	115	24

DISTRICT	2007	2011
N.E. AREA	1074	530
WATERLOO PL	60	31
WATERSIDE	88	29
COLLON TCE	12	16
LIMAVADY	15	10
MAGHERAFELT	28	7
STRABANE	63	19
OMAGH	73	28
COOKSTOWN	17	8
WEST AREA	356	148
N.I. TOTAL	3634	2152

I am committed to bringing empty homes back into use and I have tasked the Housing Executive and my officials with developing an appropriately resourced Northern Ireland-wide empty homes strategy and action plan which I expect to see finalised by 31 March 2013.

One of the aims of the Empty Homes Strategy and action plan will be the identification and location of empty homes. To this end my officials are working with colleagues in the Department of Finance & Personnel to ascertain the number of vacant residential properties in each Council area.

Applications for Disabled Facilities Grants

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) applications for disabled facilities grants in the Newry and Mourne area since 2010; and (ii) applications that were successful.

(AQW 19064/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants for the Newry and Mourne Council area since 2010. Preliminary enquiries are deemed to be the number of applications made and approvals are the number of successful applications.

	2010/11	2011/12	Apr – Dec12
Preliminary Enquiries	146	130	82
Approvals	105	79	71

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.

Business Improvement Districts

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development when businesses can apply to become part of the Business Improvement Districts.

(AQW 19089/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is not necessary for businesses and local councils to wait for the legislation before starting to develop ideas for a Business Improvement District. Nor do businesses need to apply to become part of a Business Improvement District (BID). Instead, interested groups of businesses can get together with their local council to develop a BID proposal for their area at any time. The proposals

are then put to a ballot and voted on by all businesses within the potential BID area to decide on whether or not to go ahead with the proposals and establish the BID.

Contracts for Providers of Volunteer Services

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development when he will be in a position to award contracts for providers of volunteer services.

(AQW 19107/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to ensuring effective infrastructure support for volunteering in order to successfully deliver on Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy. My Department is presently considering delivery options for such support and I expect new arrangements to be put in place later this year. In the interim period arrangements are being developed by my officials to ensure the continued support for volunteering.

Tenants in Private Properties

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development what legislation is in place to protect tenants in private properties when the property is in need of repairs and maintenance.

(AQW 19110/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 sets out, among other things, the law pertaining to disrepair and unfitness of properties in the private rented sector in Northern Ireland. This legislation is enforceable by local council Environmental Health Officers.

Since 1 April 2007 this legislation has also required the landlord to provide his tenant with a written statement of tenancy terms which must include the repair obligations of both the tenant and the landlord.

Supporting People Funding

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 18470/11-15 and given that 90 percent of the work done by The Northlands Addiction Treatment Centre is on a non-residential basis, whether supporting people funding could be allocated.

(AQW 19115/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Support Services Regulations (NI) 2003 article 3, clearly states that Registered Care Homes are excluded from Supporting People funding. If the organisation can demonstrate to the regulation Quality Improvement Agency (RQIA) that any part of this scheme could be de-registered then an application to NIHE for Supporting People funding may be appropriate.

Housing Associations

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Housing Associations; (ii) the number of employees in each Association; and (iii) the number of properties owned by each Housing Association.

(AQW 19119/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The details requested are as follows -

- (i) There are 30 Registered Housing Associations at present.
- (ii) The Department does not hold information on the number of employees in each association.
- (iii) The number of properties owned by each of the associations at 31 March 2012 is set out in the table below:-

Housing Association	Total Units
Abbeyfield	170

Housing Association	Total Units
Alpha	961
Apex	3394
Ark	318
Broadway	84
Clanmil	2985
Connswater	612
Covenanter	42
Craigowen	323
Filor	402
Flax	450
Fold	4872
Gosford	200
Grove	209
Habinteg	2055
Harmony	472
Hearth	96
Helm	5162
Newington	418
Nico-Ownwership	N/A
Oaklee	4705
Open Door	413
Rural	416
SHAC	833
South Ulster	1004
St Matthews	187
Triangle	544
Trinity	1948
Ulidia	1028
Wesley	144
Total	34,447

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Associations

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the total number of properties built and acquired by each Housing Association in each of the last ten years; and (ii) the amount of public money spent on Housing Associations in each of the last ten years.
(AQW 19120/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i), the number of starts by each Housing Association in each of the last ten years is detailed in Table 1 below.

In relation to (ii), the amount of public money (Housing Association Grant and Disabled Adaptation Grant) spent on Housing Associations in each of the last ten years is detailed in Table 2 below. It should be noted that the amount spent in 2002/03 is not available.

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TABLE 1

Housing Association	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Abbeyfield	11	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abode	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ark	23	15	0	4	7	0	4	26	26	3
Ballynafeigh	28	0	9	0	14	0	0	0	0	0
BCHA	4	5	3	40	49	42	47	10	25	0
Clanmil	52	196	35	321	53	116	124	283	325	145
Connswater	33	56	35	3	9	125	56	35	94	68
Corinthian	0	0	20	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Covenanter	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dungannon & Dist	4	0	10	5	0	49	0	77	0	0
Filor	9	0	0	23	2	1	0	1	22	0

Housing Association	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Flax	11	61	29	11	40	25	18	0	43	3
Fold	176	272	226	261	96	98	163	427	106	332
Gosford	0	3	14	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grove	41	18	0	10	0	3	3	11	12	0
Habinteg	46	24	97	88	88	120	78	79	16	10
Hearth	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	29	6	0
Helm	183	221	270	207	245	353	91	164	250	24
Newington	27	71	30	2	7	9	9	0	35	0
NIHE		35	5							
Oaklee	43	126	165	160	168	47	258	217	289	139
Open Door	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0
Presbyterian	0	0	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural	14	32	16	0	16	51	11	10	24	2
SHAC	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Ulster	1	38	23	12	7	89	56	52	82	66
St Matthews	3	2	4	15	3	2	9	1	2	0
Triangle	25	31	21	12	27	3	21	83	25	67
Trinity	20	48	35	80	52	33	76	124	63	38
Ulidia	0	89	117	65	19	135	11	13	206	30
Wesley	0	0	0	9	0	40	0	0	16	0

Housing Association	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total	900	1526	1317	1519	1032	1595	1136	1838	2418	1410

TABLE 2

Grant	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Housing Association Grant	69.1m	103.3m	119.6m	82.3m	172.2m	142.6m	155.3m	113.8m	87.3m
Disabled Adaptation Grant	2.9m	2.2m	2.5m	2.1m	2m	3m	2.7m	2.4m	1m
Total	72m	105.5m	122.1m	84.4m	174m	145.6m	158m	116.2m	88.3m

Housing Associations

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties have been transferred to the ownership of Housing Associations.

(AQW 19121/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's current stock transfer proposals were approved by the Board of the Housing Executive in September 2010. To date 232 properties have been transferred to Housing Associations to allow the necessary improvement works to be carried out, or to allow the relevant area regeneration strategy to be implemented and completed as planned.

Shantallow Community Benefits Office, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to close the Shantallow Community Benefits Office, Derry; and what criteria were used to make any decision.

(AQW 19122/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In addition to its regional network of 35 Jobs and Benefit Offices/Social Security Offices, the Social Security Agency also has three Community Benefit Offices located in Ballyclare, Crossmaglen and Londonderry. The Community Benefit Offices currently provide only a limited range of services which often require the claimant to subsequently attend a local Jobs and Benefits Office. In line with the Agency's commitment to deliver a modernised Welfare System to all customers, a review of these offices is currently underway. The outcome of the review is expected to be known shortly which will then be communicated to relevant stakeholders and staff.

The review has taken into consideration:

- The Agency's strategic direction in delivering a Reformed and Modernised Welfare System;
- The introduction of enhanced services through Customer First
- The Departments Accommodation Strategy;
- Health and Safety requirements for staff and claimants;
- Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and
- Known constraints within the current service provided in the Community Benefit Offices

The outcome of the review will be known shortly

Break-Ins and Burglaries in Housing Stock

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development whether Housing Executive District Officers have met with local PSNI Community Officers to ascertain the number of break-ins and burglaries in housing stock where the point of entry has been through panelled external doors.

(AQW 19124/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has not met with local PSNI Community Officers specifically to ascertain the number of break-ins and burglaries in its housing stock where the point of entry has been through paneled external doors. However, the Housing Executive has advised that it works in partnership with the PSNI and various agencies from both the voluntary and public sector across their network of District offices to deal with community safety issues and concerns about anti social behaviour. These partnerships include the implementation of initiatives to prevent and tackle community safety problems.

Break-Ins and Burglaries in Housing Stock

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive would consider surveying the external doors of tenants' properties to ensure that they meet a rigorous standard, in an effort to reduce burglaries and break-ins.

(AQW 19126/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have no plans to survey external doors. All new door sets that the Housing Executive has installed in their properties, through their planned and response maintenance programmes are to a standard which includes a Police "Secured by Design" licence. These doors are replaced on a condition basis or as part of the Housing Executive's fire door replacement programme which is mainly associated with their flats and maisonette stock.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development what additional resources his Department will receive to cover any additional costs from the G8 summit taking place in Fermanagh in June 2013 and from where the resources will be allocated.

(AQW 19149/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The G8 Summit in Fermanagh presents a unique opportunity to show-case the local area, region and Northern Ireland as a whole to the world and to world leaders. It is therefore very important that the area is presented in the best possible light. Indeed a "Town Centre Revitalisation scheme" amounting to £250,000 was approved for Enniskillen last December.

Indications are that Fermanagh District Council will be making further applications to my Department in relation to town centre improvements/regeneration ahead of the G8 Summit. These will be assessed against DSD's Regeneration objectives.

Payments from Main Contractors to Sub-Contractors

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the advice his Department provides to sub-contractors who have not received retention monies from their main contractor twelve months after practical completion; and (ii) the procedures currently in place to make sure this does not happen.

(AQW 19176/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within my department public procurement is principally undertaken and managed via a Centre of Procurement Expertise namely Central Procurement Directorate within the Department of Finance and Personnel. Consequently we do not generally provide direct procurement advice to sub-contractors.

Social Housing Developments

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) all new build social housing developments completed in the past 24 months; (ii) the name of each development; (iii) the name of main contractor; (iv) the date of practical completion; (v) the due date for release of full retention monies to each main contractor; (vi) the date of retention monies paid to each main contractor; and (vii) the reasons for withholding monies in cases where retention monies have not been paid.

(AQW 19181/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) the details requested are recorded in Tables 1 and 2 below. In relation to points (v), (vi) and (vii) the information is not available as Housing Associations release retentions to main contractors in accordance with the relevant conditions of construction contracts. Generally one half of the retention monies will be released in the payment made following Practical Completion. The remainder of the retention monies is released in the payment made following completion of the Maintenance Period, which normally has a twelve month duration from Practical Completion and is subject to the issue of the Making Good Defects Certificate. Therefore full

retention release will not be paid until the contract administrator is satisfied that all defects have been satisfactorily remedied.

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.

TABLE 1 - NEW BUILD COMPLETIONS IN 2010/11

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Dove Gardens, Phase 1, Londonderry (Transfer)	63	17-Aug-10	McGurran Construction
Travellers Sites, Monagh Road, Phase 1, Belfast	16	16-Apr-10	Wilson & Mawhinney
Hillview Rd/Crumlin Rd, Belfast	75	11-Mar-10	T A Kernoghan Ltd
233 Whitewell Road, Belfast	12	18-Nov-09	Wilson & Mawhinney
Jamaica Street, Phase 2, Belfast (Transfer)	16	08-Jul-10	Dixons Contractors
Travellers Site, Monagh Road, Ph2, Belfast	5	16-Apr-10	Wilson & Mawhinney
Seymour Street, Lisburn	48	31-Jan-11	Sean Devine Construction
Connswater, Phase 3, Belfast (T)	88	31-Mar-10	TAL Ltd
36A-38 Park Avenue, Belfast (ALP)	20	05-Aug-10	TAL Ltd
Lime Kiln Lane, Cookstown	5	14-Mar-07	Sean McGlone Ltd
Ballybone, Oldpark, Belfast (Transfer)	15	24-May-10	M J McBride Construction
Eden Orbits, Phase 3A, Carrickfergus (Transfer)	12	14-Oct-10	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
Roden Street, Phase 2, Belfast (Transfer)	43	03-Mar-11	Braidwater Ltd
Enniskillen EMI, Phase 1	30	21-Sep-10	Kelly Bros.
Phase 4 Crossmaglen (T)	18	18-Nov-10	Kelly Bros.
Ivan Street, Belfast	10	25-Nov-10	M J McBride Construction
Church Street, Strabane	19	12-Jan-11	Loueme Construction

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Old Warrenpoint Road, Newry	26	30-Sep-10	Kelly Bros.
98 Whitewell Road, Belfast	8	04-Aug-10	Andrew Bradley Ltd
St Patrick's PS, North Queen Street, Belfast (Transfer)	28	08-Dec-10	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
Mount Street/High Street, Bawnmore (T)	4	14-Dec-10	M J McBride Construction
1-3 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor	21	30-Nov-10	McGurran Construction
3&5 Ashgrove Road, Newry	16	14-Oct-10	McParland Bros.
28-32 Belfast Road, Bangor & 18 Inglewood Park, Bangor	37	28-Apr-10	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
2A Brookhill Avenue, Belfast	11	12-Oct-10	Polly Bros.
51 Main Street, Crumlin	5	24-Jun-10	Martin & Hamilton Ltd
Gleneagles Gardens, Ballybeen (T)	12	29-Jun-10	Polly Bros.
Rathgill Zone 1, Bangor (Transfer)	28	06-Jul-10	Dixons Contractors
6-12 Breda Park, Newtownbreda	34	22-Nov-10	Geda Construction
Gibson's Lane, Bangor	17	14-Mar-11	TAL Ltd
PSNI Site, Newcastle Road, Castlewellan	6	24-Jan-11	Moss Construction Ltd
Shaftesbury Road, Bangor	34	26-Apr-10	MMM Design & Build
Highway, Highfield Estate, Belfast (T)	1	4-Oct-10	Eden Contractors Ltd
St Gall's Site, Phase 2, Belfast (Transfer)	8	29-Apr-10	Moss Construction Ltd
PSNI Site, Moy/Beechgrove, Dromore/Hillside Pk, Gilford	7	22-Jun-09	Brown Bros Ltd
2 Beechfield Street, Belfast	8	26-May-10	Carson Developments

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Garryduff Gardens, Ballymena Road, Ballymoney	5	25-Mar-11	Henry Bros. (Magherafelt) Ltd
Church Street, Newtownards	20	16-Sep-10	J & K Campbell
70 Sunnyside Street, Belfast	12	21-Apr-10	TAL Ltd
Finaghy Road South, Belfast	12	25-Aug-10	J & K Campbell
Ladas Way, Belfast	16	07-Dec-10	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
38 Belfast Road, Comber	10	04-Aug-10	J & K Campbell
Stradreagh Challenging Behaviour Unit, Londonderry	18	21-Jun-10	QMAC Construction Ltd
21 Ashley Park, Dunmurry	8	28-Oct-10	O'Hanlon & Farrell
Ballymacoss Central, Phase 5, Lisburn	75	9-Dec-10	Brendan Loughran & Sons
Charter Youth Club, Sandy Row, Belfast (Transfer)	3	17-Nov-10	TAL Ltd
Total	985		

TABLE 2 – NEW BUILD COMPLETIONS IN 2011/12

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Weir Court, Comber	15	30-Nov-11	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
PSNI Site, Rosemount, Derry (Transfer)	17	16-Jun-11	McGurran Construction
Iona House, Phase 1, Strabane	12	14-Jun-11	Lowry Bros. Ltd
42-45 Fergleen Park, Derry (T)	6	06-Oct-11	McGuigan Copnstruction
Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8 (T)	4	12-Dec-11	Lowry Bros. Ltd
Site @ rear of Derrybeg Villas, Newry	2	11-Nov-11	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Martin's Lane, Newry	6	1-Feb-12	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Prospect Way, North Lurgan (T)	5	09-May-11	Desmond Magee & Sons

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Darkfort Drive, Phase 1, Portballintrae (T)	6	21-Jan-11	Connolly & Fee Ltd
Garvaghy Crescent, Phase 1, Portglenone (T)	16	05-Jan-12	Brendan Loughran & Sons
43 Whitewell Road, Belfast	15	30-May-11	TAL Ltd
Crew Hill Gardens, Ardglass (ALP) (T)	26	23-Nov-11	Kelly Bros.
Glen Road, Travellers, Belfast	6	15-Sep-05	Sean McCourt & Sons
100 Cliftonville Road, Belfast (ALP)	9	06-Jul-11	QMAC Construction Ltd
Killough Road, Downpatrick (T)	19	03-Nov-11	Glasgiven/Geda Construction Ltd
North Rugby Club, Phase 3, Belfast	42	18-Jan-12	T & A Kernaghan Ltd
155 Glen Road, Belfast	15	13-Feb-12	Dixons Contractors Ltd
Springfarm, Phase 1, Antrim (T)	19	13-Sep-11	QMAC Construction Ltd
Templepatrick Library Site	2	19-Jan-12	M J McBride Ltd
31-35 Donaghadee Road, Newtownards	40	14-Dec-11	Sky Developments
100 Holywood Road, Belfast	16	22-Oct-11	TAL Ltd
Ladbrook Drive, Belfast	1	03-Feb-12	Hugh J O'Boyle
Prospect Park, Belfast	2	03-Feb-12	Hugh J O'Boyle
Tesco Site, Broadway, Donegall Road, Belfast, Phase 1	40	29-Mar-10	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
West Bank, Derry	124	22-Sep-11	Braidwater Ltd
Council Site, Dunsy Way, Comber (T)	33	07-Jul-11	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Finniston Primary School (Torrens 3A), North Belfast (Transfer) (ALP)	112	02-Jun-11	Braidwater Ltd
Alliance Avenue, Belfast (T)	4	16-Mar-12	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
31 The Brae, Ballygowan	14	22-Jun-11	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Drumaness Road, Drumaness (ALP)	12	06-Oct-11	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
McAuley Street, Phase 3, Belfast	14	30-Oct-09	Dixons Contractors Ltd
1 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	13	21-Jun-11	Dixons Contractors Ltd
Boundary Way, Belfast	12	29-Jun-11	TAL Ltd
Newtowncloghogue (T)	22	16-Feb-12	Kelly Bros.
270-272 Falls Road, Belfast	10	10-Jun-11	Dixons Contractors Ltd
Carrick Hill/Library Street, Belfast (T)	11	18-Apr-11	Brendan Loughran & Sons
St Teresa's Site, Glen Road, Belfast	18	19-Aug-11	Geda Construction Ltd
Drumalla House, Carnlough	11	14-Apr-11	MSM Contractors
Carrowshee Park, Lisnaskea (T)	19	24-Oct-11	Donaghmore Construction
Gullion View, Meigh (T)	10	06-Sep-11	T & A Kernoghan Ltd
Loughrey Terrace, Drumquin (T)	2	01-Dec-11	Lowry Bros. Ltd
PSNI Station Melmount Road, Sion Mills	6	28-Mar-12	Lowry Bros. Ltd
Adrian Heights, Donagh	5	21-Feb-12	Lowry Bros. Ltd
Forthill Park, Newtownstewart (Transfer)	4	22-Feb-11	Dixons Contractors Ltd
Beechgrove, Dromore Phase 2 (T)	5	6-Dec-10	Kelly Bros.
Ennis Green, Lurgan (Transfer)	7	11-Apr-11	Kelly Bros.
Prince's Close/Street, Craigavon	4	19-Apr-11	Kelly Bros.
2A Cherryville Street, Belfast (T)	11	16-Feb-12	Dixons Contractors Ltd
Grove Street East, Belfast	17	20-Oct-11	J & K Campbell

Scheme Name	Units	Practical Completion Date	Main Contractor
Strand Avenue, Hollywood (T)	19	31-Aug-11	TAL Ltd
Derrybeg Small Sites, Newry (T)	11	16-Nov-11	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Greenfield Park, Newry (T)	2	9-Sep-11	O'Hanlon & Farrell Ltd
Ardmore Drive, Hilltown (T)	8	15-Mar-12	TAL Ltd
Woodside Road, Loughbrickland (T)	24	28-Nov-11	Kelly Bros.
Total	905		

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration his Department has given to expanding the Warm Homes Scheme to include seals, insulation or draught exclusion measures for doors and windows as a means of improving heating efficiency in homes and reducing fuel poverty.
(AQW 19189/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The current Warm Homes Scheme was tendered in 2009 with specific work content which did not include draft proofing measures. The Housing Executive, who manage the Warm Homes Scheme on behalf of the Department, cannot add additional works to the contract that were not included in the original tender documents. The Department will consider whether draught proofing measures should be a part of any future energy efficiency schemes.

Housing Arrangements

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the proposed changes to the Housing Executive, where responsibility will lie for Travellers' issues within the new housing arrangements.
(AQW 19215/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is envisaged that responsibility for Travellers issues will lie with the Regional Housing Body under the proposed new structures for Social Housing Reform.

Conformity with Equality Requirements

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has had any conversations with Lord Freud about flexibility regarding the recipient of Universal Credit, in particular in relation to recommendation 5 of the Report on Welfare Reform by the Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements.
(AQW 19217/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I announced on 22 October 2012 that I had secured payment flexibilities for Northern Ireland following detailed negotiations with Lord Freud. Subsequently I tasked officials to develop and consult public representatives and voluntary sector representatives on a set of guidelines for determining the circumstances when the universal credit payment should be made on a twice-monthly basis or split between household partners. Officials are also considering the operational details of how direct payments to landlords will be organised.

This work is currently underway and an Oversight Board has been established, chaired by the Department's Permanent Secretary with input from a cross section of representatives from the

community sector and academia. Two open forum events have taken place with members of the public and voluntary and community sector organisations to explore their views.

The Oversight Board is considering feedback from the discussion events alongside other research which will provide input to the Permanent Secretary's report. I expect to receive this report in April 2013.

Comprehensive Review of Housing Associations

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has considered a comprehensive review of housing associations, to include accountability, financial governance, rent levels and engagement with tenants.

(AQW 19218/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The main tool by which the Department holds Registered Housing Associations to account is the Housing Association Guide. The Guide covers aspects around development, finance, procurement, governance and housing management including engagement with tenants. The Departmental Inspection Team carries out a rolling programme of inspections to determine each Housing Association's compliance with all aspects of the Housing Association Guide therefore all associations are regularly reviewed through the inspection process. The Inspection team was strengthened in 2011 by the appointment of additional Inspectors. The Monitoring team also collects and reviews the board minutes, relevant financial information on a quarterly basis and information concerning each Registered Housing Association's stock on a yearly basis via the Annual Regulatory Return.

There are no plans for a comprehensive review at present.

Atos: ESA and DLA

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development whether Atos abides by, or follows guidelines, in relation to Employment and Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and approved by his Department, as well as the Disability Discrimination Act and Section 75 criteria, when dealing with persons being examined for work capability assessments or benefits adjustments and appeals.

(AQW 19232/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Atos Healthcare provides medical support services under contract on behalf of the Department for Social Development. Atos Healthcare is required to deliver the Medical Support Services in accordance with the terms of the contract which also details applicable Social Security benefit regulations and all applicable case law, and current and future legislation. Atos Healthcare is required under the contract to comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.

Homes in Negative Equity

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has reassessed the policy for vesting homes in negative equity, following the suggestion put forward by Lord Justice Sir Patrick Coghlin in the Lands Tribunal case that dealt with an owner-occupier who was left in such a predicament.

(AQW 19264/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In its judgement the Lands Tribunal acknowledged that government has recognised the need to support owner-occupiers in redevelopment areas as evidenced by my Department's policy on the matter.

The Tribunal has also suggested that because of the personal hardship revealed in the course of litigation, it might now be considered an appropriate time to review that aspect of the policy.

Prior to the judgement the Department had already been examining ways to assist owner-occupiers in redevelopment areas who find themselves in negative equity; possibly amending policy that would assist them to purchase an alternative home. However, any proposal to introduce such a policy requires detailed legal analysis and consultation with Ministers in the NI Executive; a task officials are currently undertaking.

People Living with a Disability

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his officials have had any discussions with their counterparts in the UK to discuss the possibility of exemptions for people living with a disability from the under occupancy penalty expected with the implementation of welfare reform. **(AQW 19271/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: I recognise that the under occupancy restriction is a serious issue for Northern Ireland and I recently had a very productive meeting with Lord Freud, the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

My officials are working with the Housing Executive to develop a range of support measures to complement those outlined in my housing strategy, which aim to mitigate under occupancy for those affected, support households through the transition and ensure that everyone has access to affordable housing.

Generally there will be no exceptions to the application of the size limit rules for tenants with a disability, although there will be certain cases such as those in supported housing where the restriction will not apply. The size criteria will allow a disabled claimant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer an extra room. If there is another reason that an extra room is necessary, help may be available through the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme.

Some claimants affected by this measure may live in significantly adapted accommodation due to someone in the household having a disability. It will not always be practical or cost effective for these people to move to different accommodation or they may have no other option for making up a shortfall in rent. In such cases it may be appropriate to use Discretionary Housing Payments to make up the shortfall in their rent.

Universal Credit

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 11838/11-15, whether he will reconsider his answer given the evidence available from (i) the Women's Budget Group; (ii) academics Ruth Lister and Fran Bennett; (iii) the publication 'Northern Ireland Economy: Women on the Edge'; and (iii) the research conducted on behalf of Refuge on this issue. **(AQW 19280/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: I am working towards achieving a welfare system for Northern Ireland based on the principles of protecting the vulnerable, helping people into employment, developing a system that is fair, and encouraging personal and social responsibility.

In this context, and as indicated in my earlier response, I support the principle that, where possible, Universal Credit payments should mirror salary payments. Many of the claimants for Universal Credit will be in work and will be well used to managing their money on a monthly basis and/or the wages being paid to the main earner. Most claimants and their partners will be able to work with this proposed arrangement because they either have joint bank accounts or are financially capable of managing their household budget. However for those that may have difficulties, there will be the flexibility to opt for either a split payment or a twice-monthly payment.

I have tasked officials to develop and consult public representatives and voluntary sector representatives on a set of guidelines for determining the circumstances when the universal credit payment should be made on a twice-monthly basis or split between household partners. Officials are also considering the operational details of how direct payments to landlords will be organised.

This work is currently underway and an Oversight Board has been established, chaired by the Department's Permanent Secretary, with input from a cross section of representatives from the community sector and academia. Two open forum events have already taken place with members of the public and voluntary and community sector organisations to explore their views. The Social Development Committee is also being consulted and I have been keeping my colleagues on the Executive Sub Committee informed on developments.

The Oversight Board is considering feedback from the discussion events alongside other research including that which the member has referenced in his question and this will provide input to the Permanent Secretary's report. I expect to receive this report in April 2013.

Conformity with Equality Requirements

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of recommendation 5 in the Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements, Welfare Reform Bill, in light of the evidence which shows that payments of universal credit to the female head of the household can have a positive impact on child's wellbeing.

(AQW 19281/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendation was that the Department for Social Development should make payment of benefits to the parent with care of dependent children its default position in identifying a nominated claimant, in order to minimise any potential adverse impacts on women and children.

I accept that for some households, a split payment may better serve their needs and this was one of the key reasons why I negotiated flexibilities on the frequency of Universal Credit payments, split payments within households and direct payment of housing allowance to landlords. I have tasked officials to develop and consult public representatives and voluntary sector representatives on the criteria for determining the circumstances when these types of universal credit payments should be made on a twice-monthly basis or split between household partners. Officials are also considering the operational details of how direct payments to landlords will be organised.

This work is currently underway and an Oversight Board has been established, chaired by the Department's Permanent Secretary with input from a cross section of representatives from the community sector and academia. Two open forum events have already taken place with members of the public and voluntary and community sector organisations to explore their views.

The Oversight Board is considering feedback from these events alongside other research and this will provide input to the Permanent Secretary's report. I expect to receive this report in April 2013.

DSD: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19293/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Special Adviser has not made any declarations of interest. Records of any declarations of interest are placed on an individual's personal file by the Department's HR Division, to whom such declarations must be made in accordance with the conduct provisions in the NICS HR Handbook. Declarations of interest are not open to public inspection, with the exception of those made by members of DSD's Departmental Management Board which are published in the Department's Annual Resource Accounts.

Social Housing in the East of Armagh City

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the availability of social housing in the east of Armagh City.

(AQW 19297/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Armagh City comprises the local housing areas of Armagh 1 and Armagh 2.

Armagh 2 covers the east of the city and includes the common landlord areas Alexander, Ardmore Drive, Ballinahone, Barrack Street, Barrack Hill, Gough Avenue, Beresford Court, Bridge Street, Folly, Lisanally Gardens, Lisanally Villas, Lonsdale Gardens, Orangefield and Victoria Park.

At September 2012, in Armagh 2, there were 48 applicants in housing stress. With an average of 32 allocations per annum from existing stock, there is therefore only a marginal residual need for new accommodation. This is being met through a new build scheme for 26 homes at Ardmore Road, which is currently on site.

Benefits Payments

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has saved in benefits payments due to emigration from North and East Antrim, in each of the last four years.
(AQW 19343/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available as the Department does not hold information on benefit claimants who have emigrated.

Benefits Payments

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has saved in benefits payments in each of the last four years due to emigration, broken down by council area.
(AQW 19344/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available as the Department does not hold information on benefit claimants who have emigrated.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has any plans to seek finance from the UK Green Investment Bank to tackle fuel poverty.
(AQW 19371/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have any current plans to seek finance from the UK Green Investment Bank to tackle fuel poverty. Officials from my Department have been working with colleagues from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to secure additional European funding for the Boiler Replacement Scheme.

Housing Executive's £27 Million Underspend

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what impact the Housing Executive's £27 million underspend will have on housing provision in the incoming year; and to explain the reasons for the underspend.
(AQW 19387/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I do not know how the member has arrived at a figure of £27 million underspend within the Housing Executive's budget.

At the October 2012 Monitoring Round an easement of £8 million was declared against the Social Housing Development Programme resulting from efficiency savings and changes to the delivery model for the Bamford programme. This funding was reallocated to the Co-Ownership Housing Association budget and will fund approximately an additional 180 properties. This will help bolster effective demand by assisting deposit-constrained first time buyers and those returning to the market who are struggling to purchase a home and also help the wider economy.

As the Housing Executive is expecting to deliver the agreed new build starts target within the revised budget available, this will result in an overall gain across the social and affordable housing programme for 2012/13.

At the January Monitoring Round the Housing Executive declared an easement of £7 million revenue funding which was due largely to procurement efficiencies and has therefore not impacted on their programmes.

I have asked NIHE to ensure that it maximises its budget spend to support services to tenants and ensure any under spends are kept to a minimum.

With regard to “housing provision for the incoming year” the Housing Executive is finalising its proposals for its 2013/14 budget which will be carefully considered by its Board before submission to my Department. As the budget has not yet been finalised, it is not possible to comment further.

Social Housing

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses were bought for use as social housing in each of the last three financial years, and in the current year to date.

(AQW 19390/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of properties that were bought for social housing in each of the last three years and in the current year to date.

Off the Shelf purchases are newly constructed properties bought from the open market. Existing Satisfactory Purchases are pre-owned dwellings purchased from the open market.

	Off the Shelf Purchases	Existing Satisfactory Purchases	Total
2009/10	467	76	543
2010/11	400	93	493
2011/12	275	109	384
2012/13	4	58	62

New Builds

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of new builds that have been classed as starts in each of the last three financial years; and how many of these are (i) paper starts; (ii) peg in the ground starts; and (iii) near completion.

(AQW 19393/11-15)

Mr McCausland: New build starts make up the majority of starts in the social housing programme. Other categories which make up annual starts totals include purchases of both new and pre-owned properties from the open market.

As requested, the table below details only the new build starts element for each of the last three financial years. The table also shows how many of those starts have already completed and the year in which the remainder are due to complete.

Year	New Build Units	Already Complete	Due to complete 2012/13	Due to complete 2013/14	Due to complete 2014/15
2009/10	1,243	948	214	47	34
2010/11	1,752	812	480	460	0
2011/12	984	41	195	723	25

All new build starts are counted as starts when a contractor has entered into a contract, has taken formal possession of the site and the contract period has commenced. At that point, all houses within the contract are deemed to have started.

Programme for Government Proposals

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for a break down of the proposed 8000 houses to be completed as part of the Programme for Government proposals, including social new build or those being built or bought by co-ownership.

(AQW 19395/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The breakdown of the 8,000 new homes to be delivered over the four year Programme for Government period 2011/12 to 2014/15 equates to approximately 6,000 social and 2,000 affordable homes. However, given the affordable side of the equation is demand led there is a need to be flexible around the eventual make up of the final 8,000 outturn figure.

Housing Benefit

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people in the North Belfast constituency in receipt of Housing Benefit, broken down by (i) community background; and (ii) housing sector.

(AQW 19410/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency and do not hold data on the community background of Housing Benefit claimants.

With regard to housing tenure, the Housing Executive has advised that, for their North Belfast, Newtownabbey 1 and Newtownabbey 2 District Office areas, there are a total of 18,078 Housing Benefit recipients, broken down as follows:-

- 8,013 Housing Executive tenants
- 3,562 Housing Association tenants
- 6,503 Private Sector tenants

Cold Weather Payments

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has instigated the mechanism for cold weather payments due to the recent cold snap.

(AQW 19414/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The cold weather payments are automatically triggered in Northern Ireland when the average temperature is, or forecast to be, zero degrees centigrade or below for 7 consecutive days from 1 November to 31 March. This information is supplied to the Social Security Agency by the Met Office based on recordings and forecasts at 7 separate weather stations located at Aldergrove, Castlederg, Glenanne, Katesbridge, Magilligan, Stormont and Thomastown, each of which cover a range of designated post code areas.

Gambling: Online Gaming Operators

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development what provisions will be made for online gaming operators in his Department's review of gambling.

(AQW 19415/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is currently discussing the issue of online (remote) gambling with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The European Commission is also carrying out work, aimed at ensuring compliance of national regulatory frameworks with EU law and enhancing administrative cooperation between Member States. The outcome of my discussions with the relevant Minister in GB and the outcome of the work by the European Commission will inform how online gambling, including its operators, will be regulated within Northern Ireland.

Community Asset Transfer

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report by Queen's University Belfast on Community Asset Transfer.

(AQW 19450/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My officials attended the launch of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded report "Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland" and have on previous occasions met with the authors of this report.

The findings and conclusions from this research form an important part of the evidence base for a Northern Ireland policy framework for Community Asset Transfer and I would expect the report to inform the work of the cross-departmental steering group which I have established to develop policy proposals.

Social Housing

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the locations of social housing purchased under co-ownership as a result of a Government grant, in each of the last three financial years and in this year to date.

(AQW 19465/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Co-Ownership Scheme is currently the Department's main mechanism for delivering affordable homes to first-time buyers who cannot do so without assistance; the homes supported through the Scheme are not social homes.

The number of homes purchased through the Scheme with the assistance of Housing Association Grant is outlined in the table below.

COUNCIL AREA	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2012/13	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2011/12	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2010/11	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2009/10
Derry City Council	36	8	12	13
Limavady Borough Council	12	8	8	6
Coleraine Borough Council	14	12	1	7
Ballymoney Borough Council	8	4	11	7
Moyle District Council	2	0	1	2
Larne Borough Council	11	7	2	0
Ballymena Borough Council	27	14	16	10
Magherafelt District Council	3	7	3	2
Cookstown District Council	7	7	8	4

COUNCIL AREA	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2012/13	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2011/12	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2010/11	Properties purchased using Housing Association Grant 2009/10
Strabane District Council	4	0	3	5
Omagh District Council	0	2	2	2
Fermanagh District Council	1	0	3	4
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	17	11	8	4
Craigavon Borough Council	65	53	51	37
Armagh City and District Council	4	10	1	0
Newry and Mourne District Council	25	17	10	8
Banbridge District Council	15	14	6	11
Down District Council	21	18	12	1
Lisburn City Council	118	91	87	70
Antrim Borough Council	46	29	16	16
Newtownabbey Borough Council	64	61	34	35
Carrickfergus Borough Council	12	8	10	6
North Down Borough Council	68	30	30	27
Ards Borough Council	39	31	25	17
Castlereagh Borough Council	32	18	37	21
Belfast City Council	120	96	72	63
TOTAL	771	556	469	378

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.

Universal Credit

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development who will administer the Universal Credit; and how the harmonisation of different functions, carried out by different agencies, involved in its implementation will be achieved.

(AQW 19485/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While the Department for Social Development is the lead department for the introduction of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland, a multi faceted Universal Credit Programme Team has been established to implement the new credit.

The Programme Team have been tasked to design new processes which incorporate all key aspects of Universal Credit. All relevant impacted organisations including the Department for Employment and Learning, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are involved in the Programme Team.

The Department is also working in partnership with key strategic partners in the voluntary and community sector and private sectors to deliver a service that meets the broad range of needs of Universal Credit claimants.

The Department for Social Development will be accountable for the Universal Credit service and the Department for Employment and Learning will be accountable for the employment aspects of the Universal Credit service.

DSD: Capital Spend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's capital spend since May 2011, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19519/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available by constituency area. The Department's capital spend between May 2011 and December 2012, broken down by the Business Areas where capital spend was incurred is shown in the table below.

Business area	Capital Spend May 2011 – December 2012
Core Department	£30,259
Child Maintenance & Enforcement	£44,720
Social Security Agency	£1,726,012
Urban Group	£3,576,281
Total	£5,377,272

Independent Living Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development how he will maintain the Independent Living Fund after its closure in Great Britain by 2015.

(AQW 19553/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Work & Pensions announced the result of a UK-wide consultation on the future of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) before Christmas, confirming that the ILF will close in 2015 with funding being devolved to Local Authorities in England and to the Devolved Administrations. The announcement also made clear that it would be for the Assembly in Northern Ireland to decide how current ILF users would be supported from April 2015.

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety will be responsible for the support of current ILF users from April 2015.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in East Belfast are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance; and for his assessment of this figure.

(AQW 19589/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As at August 2012, the number of people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance in East Belfast was 9,080.

Entitlement to Disability Living Allowance is based on an assessment of how much help someone needs with personal care and/or mobility needs because of their disability. Their place of residence in Northern Ireland does not therefore confer entitlement to Disability Living Allowance.

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.

Support for Owner-Occupiers in Redevelopment Areas

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his Department's policy review of support for owner-occupiers in redevelopment areas in relation to the issue of negative equity.

(AQW 19682/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In a recent judgement on this issue by the Lands Tribunal, it acknowledged that government has recognised the need to support owner-occupiers in redevelopment areas as evidenced by my Department's policy on the matter.

The Tribunal has also suggested that because of the personal hardship revealed in the course of litigation, it might now be considered an appropriate time to review that aspect of the policy.

Prior to the judgement the Department had already been examining ways to assist owner-occupiers in redevelopment areas who find themselves in negative equity; possibly amending policy that would assist them to purchase an alternative home. However, any proposal to introduce such a policy requires detailed legal analysis and consultation with Ministers in the NI Executive; a task officials are currently undertaking.

Housing Executive: Double Glazing

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the savings that are projected by the use of casement windows instead of reversible windows in double glazing replacement work by the Housing Executive.

(AQO 3363/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I asked the Housing Executive to research the specifications used in double glazing as I was concerned that the Housing Executive's specification for the supply and fitting of double glazing did not offer best value for money and also that the specification for hinges and handles was much higher than the industry standards for domestic properties.

In relation to savings, the use of casement hinges as opposed to fully reversible hinges has resulted in an estimated savings of £15.1m and is made up of:

- savings of approximately £9.6m since there is less need for redecoration grants and a further,
- £5.5m savings as a result of the procurement process. This figure includes approximately £0.5m savings realised by using the casement type hinge which cost £13 to £15 per pair as opposed to the fully reversible hinge costing £20.

Small Charitable Donations Act 2012

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development when local charities will benefit from the Small Charities Donations Bill.

(AQO 3364/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Small Charitable Donations Act 2012 received Royal Assent at Westminster on 19 December 2012. As the NI Assembly approved the extension of its provisions to Northern Ireland through a Legislative Consent Motion, local charities such as sporting and faith based organisations will be able to benefit from the new Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme and submit claims from 6 April 2013.

Starting this week, HMRC will be writing to all charities on their records to ensure they are aware of the new scheme and know where to find advice and guidance on how to avail of it.

Housing Executive: Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the double glazing schemes that will be funded by his Department in Housing Executive properties in Limavady during 2013.

(AQO 3365/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has two double glazing schemes for 266 properties programmed for the Limavady area in the 2013/14 financial year. These schemes are as follows:

- 154 properties at Kennaught/Roe Mill at an estimated cost of £346,000 and
- 112 properties at Greysteel at an estimated cost of £252,000

This means that all Housing Executive properties in the Limavady area will, on completion of these two schemes, be fully double glazed.

Welfare Reform Bill: Zero Earnings

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the zero earnings proposal contained in the Welfare Reform Bill as an incentive for people to work.

(AQO 3366/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I share the concerns about the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform proposals. I shall deal with the facts relating to the issue of zero earnings. The facts are that the Welfare Reform Bill does not contain any proposal for zero earnings. However, clause 11 enables Regulations to be made setting out the circumstances in which housing costs, including support for mortgage interest, may be paid.

The Coalition Government announced in the Autumn Statement on 5 December 2012 that under Universal Credit, an owner occupier who has any earned income during the assessment period will not be eligible for support with mortgage interest. We have not yet conducted any assessment of the impact of this decision.

The zero earnings rule should not be looked at in isolation. It needs to be considered in the round, taking account of the more generous disregards that will apply in Universal Credit.

Unless they are doing an extremely small number of hours at a low rate of pay, part-time workers will usually be better off in work than under the current system.

Welfare Reform Bill: Financial Penalty

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has received any indication from the Department of Work and Pensions of the financial penalty caused by the delay in the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQO 3367/11-15)

Mr McCausland: This year just over £5 billion of social security benefits will be met directly from HM Treasury outside of the NI Block DEL. HM Treasury will bear the direct risk of any increase which can be significant for example a one percent increase in social security spending is £50million.

This important funding arrangement is predicated on Northern Ireland maintaining the same social security policy as the rest of the United Kingdom.

I have not received any indication from the Department for Work and Pensions of any financial penalty caused by the delay in the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill. The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith has written to me on the financial implications under the Statement of Funding policy highlighting that the UK government reserves its position with regard to any increased costs to the Exchequer caused by the delay in the progression of the Bill and will review this when the Welfare Reform Bill has completed its passage through the Assembly.

Housing: Vacant or Repossessed Homes

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development whether the new Housing Association purchase scheme aimed at restoring vacant or repossessed homes will be used to provide new social housing or solely for homes to be sold on the private market.

(AQO 3368/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The homes that will be made available, this first year, through the £11.8 million additional funding to Housing Associations, followed by £7.2 million next year, secured as a result of the Get Britain Building funding from HM Treasury will be affordable homes for sale targeted at first-time buyers and those returning to the market, giving them an all important step onto the housing ladder and helping to promote economic growth, assisting the construction industry to create and maintain jobs during a period when the construction of private sector housing is in decline.

Queen's Parade, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Queens Parade project, Bangor.
(AQO 3369/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I refer the Member to my response to Assembly Written Question AQW 19022/11-15.

Mixed Housing

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to promote mixed housing and shared neighbourhoods.

(AQO 3370/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As outlined in my draft Housing Strategy "Facing the Future", my Department will:

- build on the success of the pilot Shared Neighbourhood Programme by developing a Shared Community Programme;
- work with the Housing Executive to pilot a Belfast City Centre social housing waiting list to support and protect the city centre as a shared space;
- work with the Housing Executive to amend social housing application forms to ask applicants if they are prepared to live in a shared housing area; and
- work with the Department of Justice, the Housing Executive and Housing Associations to support local communities who wish to remodel or remove peace walls and other interface structures.

Regeneration: Housing

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the housing led regeneration pilots. **(AQO 3371/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Housing led regeneration is one of the key themes in my new Housing Strategy. Proposals are to initially test this approach in four pilot areas. Officials are currently working up a formula for selection of the areas and I expect to be in a position to make an announcement before the end of the financial year.

Boiler Replacement Scheme: South Antrim

Ms Brown asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the uptake of the boiler replacement scheme in South Antrim. **(AQO 3372/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate information by Parliamentary constituency. The South Antrim constituency is largely comprised of Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council areas. The current update on the Boiler Replacement Scheme in the South Antrim area is as follows:

- 1,100 application forms have been issued;
- 566 of these applications have been returned to the Housing Executive's North East Area Grants Office;
- 509 boiler installation forms have been issued to these applicants;
- 264 boiler installation forms have been completed and returned;
- 247 approvals to commence with Boiler Replacement have been issued to applicants;
- 88 replacement boilers have been installed; and
- 56 payments have been made.

Housing Executive's Office at Waterloo Place, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how the renovation work in and around the Housing Executive's office at Waterloo Place, Derry has impacted on staff, service delivery and customers. **(AQW 19775/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that major refurbishment work is currently being undertaken in the building where their Waterloo Place District Office is located. Unfortunately the disruption has been more severe than originally anticipated. Therefore, it was decided to move the office on a temporary basis to another Housing Executive building at Richmond Chambers. This building is accessible to the public and is located within a short distance from Waterloo Place. Customers may either call at that office or contact staff through the normal telephone number.

The Housing Executive has apologised to their customers for any inconvenience caused and they will keep the public advised of any future changes to the office opening arrangements.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Stamped Envelopes

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission whether changes will be made to the stamped envelopes available to Members to enable them to be used for cross border post.

(AQW 19245/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Northern Ireland Assembly currently provides Members with 1st & 2nd class pre-paid envelopes (Guidance on the use of the pre-pays is available page 49 of the Member's handbook).

The contract to supply the Assembly with pre-paid envelopes was recently retendered and subsequently awarded (02/11/2012) to Royal Mail. This is a single tender contract as Royal Mail is the sole provider available and unfortunately it is unable to provide EU/overseas post-paid franking service.

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