

Written Answers to Questions

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 15 March 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Governance Review of Community Relations Council

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 10635/11-15, whether the invitation to tender for the Governance Review of Community Relations Council (CRC) was advertised publicly and open to all, or were a number of companies invited to tender from an already approved list within CRC.

(AQW 14454/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Community Relations Council has advised us that the governance review was publically advertised and open to all.

Executive Papers

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 13716/11-15 and AQW 13718/11-15, to explain how, and where, an issue of confidentiality arises in respect of the quantum and dates of circulated Executive papers.

(AQW 14952/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is open to any institution to classify the information in its possession in a way in which it considers will support the effective conduct of its business.

Executive Papers

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 13717/11-15, to explain how, and where, an issue of confidentiality arises in respect of the timeframe governing the circulation of Executive papers.

(AQW 14953/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer you to the answer we gave to AQW13716/11-15 on 28 September 2012.

Grievance Cases and Whistleblowing Complaints

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many (i) grievance cases have been taken; and (ii) whistleblowing complaints have been made, against (a) their Department; and (b) its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last five years; and at what cost to the public purse.

(AQW 16158/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

	(a) Department			(b) Arms Length Bodies		
	Grievance cases	Whistle blowing complaints	Costs incurred	Grievance cases	Whistle blowing complaints	Costs incurred
2007-2008	1	nil	nil	7	nil	nil
2008-2009	0	nil	nil	8	nil	nil
2009-2010	0	nil	nil	7	1	£26k + vat
2010-2011	1	nil	nil	13	2	£6500 +vat
2011-2012	0	nil	nil	6	nil	nil

European Funding

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what targeted work the Executive Office in Brussels is carrying out on behalf of the North West, with specific reference to Derry, in accessing European funding.

(AQW 17262/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The primary role of the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels is to further the aims of the Executive's Programme for Government through engagement with the European institutions in Brussels, for the benefit of the region as a whole, including the North West. The office assists departments to contribute to EU policy development and implementation in relation to their core business. For example, the office supports the Department of Finance and Personnel as the lead policy department in their contribution to the current Structural Funds negotiations (including those for PEACE IV) for the 2014 -2020 funding period. We will all benefit, including those in the North West, from the ensuing new programmes.

The office also facilitates contact between the EU institutions in Brussels and non governmental and local government sectors here which naturally includes the North West. For these sectors it has facilitated networking events and the showcasing of achievements arising out of EU funding. This work is important in helping secure future partners, enhancing the reputation of those sectors involved and ultimately enhances the chances of sectors, including those in the North West, securing future funding.

The work of the office has been enhanced with the recent appointment of four desk officers, part of whose role is to increase departmental engagement with elective European funding programmes. These funding programmes are open to all EU member States and are often targeted at sectors representing local interests.

Equality Law in Northern Ireland

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how current equality law in Northern Ireland, including the approach to categorisation of individuals under Fair Employment legislation, complies with the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies which was published by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities on 7 November 2012, including specifically the primacy of voluntary self-identification.

(AQW 17331/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, were published on 7 November to provide additional advice on Minority rights which complements current equality law here.

They should serve to strengthen the rights of the individual to choose to be treated as a member of a minority community or not. The concept of self-identification will increase an individual's freedom of

choice and will avoid assimilation against their will by the State or third parties. Clearly, we will take account of the Guidelines when considering the rights of any minorities that fall within their scope.

Ministerial Directions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 16624/11-15, whether they will specify the decisions made as a result of Ministerial Directions.

(AQW 17432/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Direction requested officials to retain ownership and minimise the running costs of the Shackleton site, rather than dispose of the site at that time.

We were not satisfied with the short timescales imposed by the Ministry of Defence or that the proposed selling price would maximise the return to government.

G8 Summit

Mr Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the potential benefits from hosting the G8 Summit in June 2013.

(AQO 2999/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This should raise our profile as a tourism and business destination in major economies across the world. Hosting the G8 may also provide opportunities to promote tourism in overseas markets.

With over 2,000 delegates and a similar number of media expected to attend, it is envisaged that there may also be a short-term economic stimulus for our local businesses, particularly those involved in accommodation, event management, catering and transport-related activities in either directly supplying the Summit, or as sub-contractors.

DETI, through Invest NI and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, will work closely with the Council and other local stakeholders to ensure the potential economic benefits to the local area are maximised in the longer term.

G8 Summit

Mr Newton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the long-term benefits after the G8 Summit has taken place in Co Fermanagh.

(AQO 3002/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This should raise our profile as a tourism and business destination in major economies across the world. Hosting the G8 may also provide opportunities to promote tourism in overseas markets.

With over 2,000 delegates and a similar number of media expected to attend, it is envisaged that there may also be a short-term economic stimulus for our local businesses, particularly those involved in accommodation, event management, catering and transport-related activities in either directly supplying the Summit, or as sub-contractors.

DETI, through Invest NI and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, will work closely with the Council and other local stakeholders to ensure the potential economic benefits to the local area are maximised in the longer term.

Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

(AQO 3120/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We remain committed to building a united and shared community by continuing to improve good relations across our society. Bringing forward a robust good relations strategy with a clear framework for action will be a critical part of achieving our vision of a better future for everyone.

We recognise the importance of translating the Executive's commitment into clear, meaningful action. The working group has concluded its current work and the resultant draft document, along with a small number of key issues requiring further consideration, have been sent to us for discussion with Party Leaders.

Trip to Shanghai in November 2012

Mr McDevitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how many public servants were funded to attend the trip to Shanghai in November 2012; (ii) what was the total cost of the trip; (iii) for a breakdown of these costs; (iv) how much public money was spent to support other agencies to be represented at the event; (v) why the event was planned to take place during the Once in a Generation power changing conference in Beijing; (vi) were the organisers aware that persons of economic and political significance in China were in Beijing attending the Communist Party conference; (vii) what measures have been used to evaluate the cost of the trip; and (viii) how many contacts were developed as a result of the trip.

(AQW 18466/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The visit to China in November was the first government led visit following invitations from Madame Lui Yandong and new President Xi Jinping.

- (i) The eight OFMDFM officials funded to attend the events in Shanghai were those with the remit to represent the policies across government departments, have the necessary international relations expertise and be able to support Ministers.
- (ii) Total costs for the visit and programme are not yet available.
- (iii) Costs included travel, hotel accommodation, subsistence, visit and protocol preparations.
- (iv) Other organisations attending events in China were funded through their own budgets and some were in receipt of support from Invest NI.
- (v) During their visits here in the spring 2012 Madam Lui Yandong and President Xi Jinping invited us to visit China before the end of the year. This return visit was also to have a significant economic focus by leading a major trade mission. During meetings with representatives of the Chinese government last September we were made aware of the potential dates for the National Congress but were also advised that an economic visit led by us would be received very positively by the Chinese leadership as setting out our commitment to a long term relationship with China.
- (vi) We also received advice from UK and Irish diplomatic and business representatives who confirmed the importance of relationship building visits to China and that we should also be seen to be supporting the efforts of Invest NI and the 40 organisations who were hoping to develop trade in China. This visit was an important economic and trade visit to China and was also used to launch the NI Connections Programme to build networks with our Diaspora abroad.
- (vii) Our support of the businesses on this mission helped to raise their profile with potential Chinese customers and we were able to meet with many of them during the visit at the reception we hosted in Shanghai which was attended by over 200 people.

In all our consultations we have been advised to invest time and effort in building relations with organisations in China. Obviously the ultimate measurement of success is in increased trade and growth for our economy which can only be achieved by accessing external markets.

- (viii) Measurements for success for the businesses are established by Invest NI and we have assisted these businesses in securing access to senior decision makers in their prospective customer organisations.

Sexual Orientation Strategy

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light the missed deadline of 31 December 2012 for the publication of the draft sexual orientation strategy, what is the new timeline to which their Department is working; and why the has slippage occurred.

(AQW 18687/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We remain committed to publishing a Sexual Orientation Strategy. A draft consultation document that will inform public consultation on the Sexual Orientation Strategy is currently under consideration within the Department and consultation will begin as soon as it is finalised. The responses received will inform the content of the Strategy which will be published as soon as possible.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what deprivation criteria will projects be required to meet for inclusion in Social Investment Fund funding.

(AQW 18949/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Projects proposed within the strategic area plans should outline priority issues, linked to the four strategic objectives of the Social Investment Fund, and identify local solutions on the basis of evidenced objective need.

It is not anticipated that all areas within a zone will benefit from the Fund but rather projects should be targeted at areas within the following eligibility criteria:

- areas within the top 10 per cent of most deprived Super Output Areas on the Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010
- areas within the top 20 per cent of most deprived Super Output Areas on the key indicators of income, employment, education and health
- areas which can provide independently verified and robust evidence of objective need linked to the four strategic objectives of the Social Investment Fund

All projects should be supported by clear evidence of objective need and supported by individual economic appraisals to Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure, Appraisal and Evaluation Standard (NIGEAE).

G8 Summit

Mr Wells asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what opportunities for the local economy are expected as a result of hosting the G8 summit this year.

(AQO 3235/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This should raise our profile as a tourism and business destination in major economies across the world. Hosting the G8 may also provide opportunities to promote tourism in overseas markets.

With over 2,000 delegates and a similar number of media expected to attend, it is envisaged that there may also be a short-term economic stimulus for our local businesses, particularly those involved in accommodation, event management, catering and transport-related activities in either directly supplying the summit, or as sub-contractors.

DETI, through Invest NI and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, will work closely with the Council and other local stakeholders to ensure the potential economic benefits to the local area are maximised in the longer term.

Single Education System

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether segregation, in housing and education, including an option of moving towards a single education system, will be addressed in the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQW 19137/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Work is continuing to develop a Good Relations Strategy. It would not be appropriate to discuss individual elements of that Strategy in advance of its publication.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what opportunity will be given to stakeholders from the community and voluntary sectors to have an input into the Cohesion Sharing and Integration Strategy (i) before; and (ii) after publication.

(AQW 19138/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The voluntary and community sectors have already inputted to the preparation of a new Good Relations Strategy, through their submissions to the consultation on the draft strategy.

We would expect voluntary and community groups to have an important role in driving forward change in our community where appropriate, with government support, as we seek to implement the actions arising from the finalised Strategy.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what level of consultation has been undertaken with each Department on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQW 19139/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: All government departments have been consulted during the drafting of the Good Relations Strategy to ensure that the aspirations and language used in the document accurately reflect other departments' priorities and policy positions.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the total resources used to date, including (i) cost; and (ii) staff hours, on the drafting of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

(AQW 19140/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We do not hold the information requested.

Play Exemplar Programme

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the funds available through the Play Exemplar Programme; and (ii) the amount each local council has received.

(AQW 19169/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the UK Government in December 1991, specifically recognises the importance of play and leisure activities for the child through Article 31.

The Executive published the Play and Leisure Policy Statement in 2008 to reflect the value that we place on play and leisure in the lives of children and young people in our society.

To deliver on the Executive's Play and Leisure Policy Statement, our Department identified a need to promote new and innovative play and leisure facilities in Northern Ireland. Recognising the active role of

District Councils in providing play and leisure facilities, the Department offered them the opportunity to develop such facilities within their local area, through the Play Exemplar Programme. Out of 26 district councils, seven applied to participate in the initiative.

£150k was initially made available for these play projects from the 2009/10 Play and Leisure Policy budget of £329k. This was, however, increased due to the high level of interest and the seven District Councils were subsequently awarded funding totalling £200k to take their projects forward. While the exact figures for each project are not readily available, each council was awarded between £20k - £35k.

In consultation with children and young people, a range of unique and forward thinking play and leisure facilities was successfully put in place in the following council areas; Armagh City & District, Banbridge, Cookstown, Derry City, Enniskillen, Larne Borough and Strabane.

A report on the seven exemplar projects can be found at http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/play_and_leisure_reporton_council_projects.doc

More recently OFMDFM offered District Councils up to £10k each in 2010/11 to set up Play and Leisure Partnerships and carry out audits of existing provision against need. Fourteen Councils availed of the offer and received a total contribution of £125,000 from OFMDFM. The councils were Antrim, Armagh, Banbridge, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Craigavon, Derry, Down, Fermanagh, Limavady, Newry and Mourne, Newtownabbey and Strabane.

The Department is reviewing progress on the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan and assessing further options for investment as a catalyst to promote delivery of new and innovative play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

Play and Leisure Strategy

Mr Beggs asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they are assisting local councils to implement the Play and Leisure Strategy.[R]

(AQW 19244/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Councils are critical to delivery of facilities and opportunities for play and leisure. We are working closely with Councils through the Play and Leisure Forum to review progress against the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan published in 2011, to identify barriers to delivery and actions to address these and to target resources to best effect.

We have progressed delivery of the plan, for example, by supporting Councils to establish 'play and leisure strategic partnerships'. We have provided resources to councils to carry out audits of existing provision against need. The information from these local audits has been brought together onto a regional mapping system, which makes best use of existing resources; assists those councils who do not have in-house Geographic Information System (GIS) expertise; facilitates cross-council partnerships and informs policy decisions at regional level.

A General Comment on Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in February 2013. Our Department is currently reviewing progress on the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan and assessing further options for investment as a catalyst to promote delivery of new and innovative play and leisure opportunities for children and young people. This will include continuing discussion with Councils on how we can best assist them and action where we are best placed to support them.

Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the issue of organ donation was not included in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 19545/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Programme for Government was developed as a strategic document that identifies and enables delivery of the Executive's priorities and is not an exhaustive list of programmes that will be undertaken by Departments.

Child Poverty Pilot

Mr Beggs asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the child poverty pilot study. (AQW 19574/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Child Poverty Reduction Pilot Study was put out to tender during summer 2012. The deadline for the receipt of bids was mid-September 2012. One tender bid was received. The tender panel met to evaluate this submission and the decision was taken to seek further clarification on the bid. The clarification meeting took place in November 2012 with the bidder then tasked with submitting the clarifications to the tender in writing by the end of November.

The clarified bid was received in December and is with tender evaluation members for consideration. A consensus decision by the tender evaluation panel is expected in the next few weeks.

Ilex: Vacancies of Chairperson and Chief Executive

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the current vacancies of Chairperson and Chief Executive at Ilex will be filled. (AQW 19905/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The competitions to fill the positions of Chairperson and Chief Executive are currently underway. The closing date for applications for the Chief Executive was the 8th February and the selection panel are currently engaged in the interview processes.

The competition to recruit a Chairperson and additional Board members to fill current and future vacancies on the Ilex Board was advertised on the 21st February with a closing date of the 15th March. We expect the interviews to be completed and recommendations for appointment to be given to us shortly thereafter.

Ethnic Minority Development Fund

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the current budget for the Ethnic Minority Development Fund; and what is the projected budget for 2013/14. (AQW 20195/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The current budget for the Minority Ethnic Development Fund is £1.1 million and the projected budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 is also £1.1 million.

In line with recommendations from an evaluation of the Fund, we have also agreed in principle that there should be a "crisis fund" element. This will be in addition to the £1.1million budget for 2013/14. The size of the crisis fund element is still to be decided. The crisis fund element will give the Minority Ethnic Development Fund a greater degree of flexibility and allow it to deal with emergency situations through, for example, small one-off payments.

The Fund will run from the beginning of the new financial year for two years. Advertisements inviting applications appeared in the press on 20 February 2013.

Child Poverty and Social Mobility

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why they decided to make no nomination to the UK Commission on Child Poverty and Social Mobility. (AQW 20231/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The extension of the role of the Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission to include devolved matters here would require the approval of the Assembly.

Under the terms of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 the remit and composition of the Child Poverty Commission were revised to include a role promoting social mobility. The statutory reforms also channelled the reporting by the Commission via the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions rather than Parliament.

Under the terms of the Child Poverty Act 2010, the Executive is required to produce a Strategy and report to the Assembly on progress towards contributing to the overall aim of eradicating poverty in the UK by 2020. The Strategy agreed by the Executive in 2011 focuses on a twin-pronged approach of improving family finances and parental employability in the short-term and improving the delivery of services to children which will help them to achieve their potential and avoid poverty in later life and, particularly, to address the potential risk of multi-generational poverty. This Strategy more accurately reflects local circumstances and needs and will help to alleviate poverty here, whilst contributing to the coalition government's targets in the UK. The scrutiny of the Strategy, and the work of departments in delivering reductions in child poverty, is undertaken by the Assembly Committees, including primarily the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Improving Children's Lives

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the £118 million which will be spent on improving children's lives by 2016.

(AQW 20275/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Delivering Social Change framework seeks not only to improve the health, wellbeing and life opportunities of our children and young people, but also aims to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages.

The recently established Delivering Social Change Fund is a consolidated, integrated fund comprising £80 million Social Investment Fund, £12 million Childcare Fund and £26 million for the initial phase of Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes.

Green Book Economic Appraisal

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Green Book economic appraisal will apply to all the projects agreed by Social Investment Fund steering groups; and whether all the projects will be subject to a full equality assessment.

(AQW 20348/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Steering Groups have submitted economic appraisals for all projects in the area plans to comply with the requirements set out in the Guide to Expenditure, Appraisal and Evaluation (formerly the Green Book). Equality considerations formed part of the appraisal process. In addition, Steering Groups consulted with Section 75 groups during the area planning process in the identification of priority needs under the objectives of the Fund.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when representatives from statutory bodies and the business community will be appointed to steering groups for each Social Investment Fund zone; and why representatives from statutory bodies and the business community are being appointed after the steering groups have set their priorities.

(AQW 20349/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The initial Steering Groups, comprising of membership from the voluntary/community and political sectors, have consulted widely across their social investment zones in the identification of priority needs including with the relevant statutory and business sector representatives. As part of the submission of area plans, steering groups have made recommendations on which organisations or sectors would be usefully part of the steering group. We will consider these as part of the appraisal of the plans and appoint remaining members prior to entering the implementation phase.

Education Bill

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will publish their plans for the constitution of, and terms of reference for, the tribunals in the Education Bill.

(AQW 20468/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Education Bill is currently at Committee Stage and is under scrutiny by the Education Committee.

Under the Bill, as introduced in the Assembly, OFMDFM would, by regulations, make provision for the establishment of a tribunal, which would issue determinations in cases where the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), had not approved a grant-aided school's employment or management scheme, or in certain circumstances where a scheme was referred to it by a Board of Governors. The Bill requires these regulations to be approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

We aim to ensure that draft regulations are consulted on, and submitted to the Assembly for approval, so that the tribunal can fulfil its functions under the Bill at the appropriate time.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 20475/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Since October 2012, our officials have been working alongside steering groups to ensure communities across all nine social investment zones are engaged in the process to identify objective needs and potential projects to tackle those needs. Steering groups have now submitted final area plans, encompassing prioritised projects aimed at addressing the key objectives of the Fund.

The final plans were received on 28th February and are now being subject to a quality assurance review, including the completion of the economic appraisal for each proposed project. This process will assess the individual projects within the plans against set criteria to ensure the most robust projects are recommended, to maximise impact on the ground.

Following appraisal, we will take decisions on the final projects to be funded and the most appropriate delivery mechanism, with a view to projects commencing in communities soon afterwards.

Play and Leisure Implementation Plan

Mr F McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on the importance of Article 31, which refers to Play and Leisure, what relevance this will have to their Play and Leisure Implementation Plan.

(AQO 3549/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware that the United Nations has adopted, on 1 February this year, a General Comment on Article 31 covering a child's right to play and to engage in other recreational activities.

At this stage, the text of the General Comment has not been made public and we are therefore not in a position to discuss it in detail. We do have a sense of the scope of the document through some of the draft proposals presented to the Committee and consider that it will be very important in terms of promoting a greater awareness of the importance of play and leisure and of giving a better understanding of the breadth of activities that play and leisure encompasses. We understand that it will also describe challenges to providing children and young people with adequate opportunities for play and leisure and advice on how these can be addressed for all children while also providing a focus on the needs of particular groups such as those who are in care or are disabled.

We are currently carrying out a review of progress of the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan and can assure you that we will take account of the content of the General Comment as part of that review.

Strategy for Children and Young People

Mr Maskey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have considered the report 'Still Vulnerable: The Impact of Early Childhood Experiences on Adolescent Suicide and Accidental Death' and, in particular Recommendation 5, about their Department having lead responsibility for addressing social exclusion and the ten-year strategy for children and young people.

(AQO 3554/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Suicide is a societal issue that no single government department can tackle alone. Any review which helps to draw together a body of knowledge that informs our understanding of why young people may feel overwhelmed, and suggests ways to address suicide risk must be paid attention to.

In respect of Recommendation 5 of the report, published by the NI Commissioner for Children & Young People last November, we fully accept the suggestion that, in terms of interventions to prevent adolescent suicide and accidental death, there is a need to understand more fully what works and in what circumstances for whom.

One of the merits of the new Delivering Social Change Framework and the Children and Young People's Early Actions paper is the recognition of the problems that can arise from transitions from one stage of life to another. These could be, for example, changing school or leaving home or might arise from family breakdown.

We also know that there needs to be careful consideration of how children and young people develop and the social and economic context in which they are growing up. Evidence shows there is a significantly higher rate of suicide in economically deprived areas as opposed to less deprived areas.

We endorse the sentiment in the report on the need to move towards a focus on outcomes to be achieved for young people and not just on outputs from different services.

In relation to the Ten-Year Strategy for Children and Young People, all of the six outcomes it identifies can contribute to wellbeing and emotional strength. As the Department with lead responsibility for this strategy, OFMDFM will drive its delivery through the Delivering Social Change Framework which will bring a collaborative effort across departments to achieve its outcomes.

Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following the announcement on the 5th February 2013, whether they have been consulted by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on proposals to maximise organ donation rates.

(AQO 3556/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Member will be aware from the statement on 5 February that we participated in the announcement of the consultation and indicated our support for the Minister's proposals.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any ongoing voluntary Bovine Viral Diarrhoea pilot schemes and whether her Department has plans to make testing compulsory in the near future, and to provide a timescale.

(AQW 19973/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): At farm level, production diseases such as BVD and Johne's Disease can have a significant impact on productivity. Such diseases are not subject to national control programmes and because their impacts are mainly at farm level, it is the responsibility of industry to take the lead in tackling them.

I therefore welcome the launch last year of Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI), which has been set up by industry to lead on the development and promotion of initiatives to tackle such diseases.

In support of this industry-led initiative I am pleased to announce that my Department will provide start-up funding to help Animal Health and Welfare NI deliver its BVD eradication programme and to develop a Johne's Disease control programme.

AHWNI hopes to make a case to my Department to move to mandatory BVD testing, subject to sufficient uptake by farmers of its voluntary BVD eradication programme. Any such case will also depend on AHWNI having sufficient industry funding to secure its on-going financial viability.

Any legislation to make BVD testing mandatory would be brought forward under the Assembly's subordinate legislation process and would also need to be considered by the EU.

Child Poverty

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the Programme for Government commitment to reduce child poverty; and how her Department's budget has been used to fulfil this commitment in each constituency, over the last two years.

(AQW 20334/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I believe that my Department has an important role to play in tackling the root causes of poverty and improving the future prospects of our children. We have a Programme for Government commitment to bring forward a package of measures worth £13 million over the budget period to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation. In addition, my Department has committed to targeting 5% of funding under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) towards projects supporting children and young people.

In February 2012, I launched the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework under which my Department is funding a range of projects to help support the most vulnerable people in our rural communities. In 2011/12 my Department spent £2.5 million on initiatives aimed at tackling poverty and isolation in a rural context and is on target to spend £4 million by 31 March 2013. Over 3,500 households have benefited from various forms of assistance, such as through the Maximising Access to Rural Areas project (MARA) which has helped rural dwellers in receiving grants, benefits and local and regional services to which they are entitled. Other projects include energy efficiency schemes and support for rural transport that can help tackle access poverty. Many of these interventions are targeted at vulnerable families which indirectly benefits children.

In addition by the end of January 2013, 90 of the projects completed under Axis 3 of the RDP were recorded as benefiting children and young people. Currently the total that has been paid to these projects over the period of the Programme is £2.6 million, representing 14.6% of grant paid to all completed projects. My Department does not hold a breakdown of information regarding the budget spend in each constituency.

To increase the number of projects in the RDP that focus on children and young people and also the involvement of young people in the Programme, a thematic group was established in November 2012 to look at best practice in delivery and engagement. In terms of active membership there are 15 members from 4 LAG areas including a health visitor, member of the NI Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership and an Area Manager for Early Years. The group is facilitated through the Rural Network NI.

Single Farm Payment Scheme: Review of Decisions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department offers to farmers who embark on the Single Farm Payment Scheme, Review of Decisions. **(AQW 20335/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: All Single Farm Payment decision letters issued notify the right to request a review of that decision. The letter also advises the farmer that, if they have any queries or wish to offer any additional information that they feel should have been taken into account, staff in Single Farm Payment Branch, Orchard House are available to discuss the decision.

If farmers wish to proceed with a review, they are sent an application form and accompanying letter, which include a summary of the decision concerned and the date by which an application must be received by the Department. They are also issued with an explanatory booklet. This booklet, which is also available on the DARD internet, outlines the Review of Decisions process and includes information on the stages of review, the Panel operation and what happens after the hearing.

On the Stage One application form, the farmer is asked to provide full details of their grounds for requesting a review. If further information is required, the Stage One Case Officer will contact the farmer by phone or in writing. Where requested by the farmer, the Case Officer is available to meet with the farmer to discuss the facts of the case. When all the necessary information has been gathered, the application is assessed and a decision is issued along with a report detailing the known facts, the legislation taken into account and how this has been applied to the case. The Stage One decision notice advises of the option to apply for a Stage Two review by an External Panel and the deadline for the submission of an application.

At Stage Two, farmers are provided with the name and contact details of the Case Officer reviewing the case. At any stage prior to the issue of the Stage Two Case Officer report, the farmer can contact the Case Officer to discuss their case.

The Case Officer report setting out the legislative references both the farmer's and the Department's positions along with any evidence provided or obtained as part of the Stage 2 investigation is issued to the farmer approximately four weeks prior to the Panel hearing and the farmer has the opportunity to comment on this. At the hearing, the farmer may bring a representative with them or nominate a representative to act on their behalf. Once the final decision is made, the farmer is advised in writing of this and provided with the Panel's recommendation and the Department's final position in relation to this.

Destruction of Hedges

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department has taken to investigate the destruction of two hedges, which was reported to the departmental office, in Coleraine on 27 February 2012.

(AQW 20440/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All farmers in receipt of direct agricultural support payments (including Single Farm Payment), must meet the Cross-Compliance requirements. One of these requirements is to retain field boundaries and prevent cutting during the bird nesting season. Removing a hedge without prior permission from DARD is considered to be a breach of Cross-Compliance. My Department may discover such breaches during farm inspections, or through whistleblower reports.

Whilst I am not able to comment on specific cases, I can provide reassurance that all cases reported to DARD Direct Offices, including the Coleraine office, are investigated according to my Department's procedures. My Department takes all reported suspected breaches of Cross-Compliance very seriously and each case is fully investigated and a report of the findings prepared. If a breach is not detected, no action is taken. If a breach is detected, the farmer is notified. A breach may have an impact on the farmer's payment.

Hedgerows

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department holds statistics on the total area which is covered by hedgerows; and what the figures were for each of the last five years.

(AQW 20446/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not hold statistics on the total area that is covered by hedgerows. The NI Countryside Survey is published by the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) and provides statistics on lengths of field boundaries, with the most recent published survey in 2007 estimating some 113648 km of hedgerow.

Additional Funding for Farmers

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development under what circumstances is additional funding made available to farmers when hedges are removed from their land; and to detail the funding available.

(AQW 20447/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not make funding available following the removal of hedges. In fact, removing a hedge without prior permission from DARD is considered to be a breach of Cross-Compliance and could potentially result in the loss or reduction of the Single Farm Payment and other direct payments. All farmers in receipt of direct agricultural support payments (including Single Farm Payment), must meet the Cross-Compliance requirements. One of these requirements is to retain field boundaries.

Hedgerows

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given the Executive's goal in the Programme for Government to halt the loss of biodiversity, what action has her Department has taken to preserve hedgerows.

(AQW 20448/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have outlined the main actions my Department takes to preserve hedgerows on an on-going basis.

- (i) **Restoring and maintaining hedges.** This is funded under DARD's agri- environment schemes which aim to enhance biodiversity. Over 12,000 farmers who take part in schemes restore and maintain hedgerows on their land as part of their management plan. These schemes include the NI Countryside Management Scheme, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme and the Countryside Management Scheme. Participants receive funding to restore and regenerate hedgerows by undertaking actions such as planting, laying and coppicing.
- (ii) **Retention of hedges.** This is a requirement under Cross-Compliance. Hedges are considered a landscape feature and therefore are eligible for payment under direct agricultural support payments (including Single Farm Payment). All farmers receiving these payments must meet Cross-Compliance requirements. One of these requirements is to retain field boundaries. Removing a hedge without prior permission from DARD is considered to be a breach of Cross-Compliance and could potentially result in the loss or reduction of the Single Farm Payment and other direct payments.
- (iii) **Providing information.** My Department provides advice on managing and preserving hedgerows for biodiversity in contact with Countryside Management Advisers, scheme booklets, training events, press articles and on the DARD website.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what strategic plans are in place to eradicate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea; and whether she intends to change the existing voluntary arrangements for testing.

(AQW 20550/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a production disease, which at farm level can have a significant impact on productivity. BVD is not a notifiable disease and is not therefore subject to national control programme.

I am pleased to advise that industry has set up Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI), a not-for-profit organisation that will lead on the development and promotion of initiatives to tackle production diseases such as BVD. AHWNI has already initiated a voluntary BVD programme of 'tag and testing', which began in January this year.

In support of this industry-led initiative, I recently announced start-up funding to AHWNI to help deliver its BVD eradication scheme and to develop a Johne's Disease control programme. In conjunction with AHWNI, my Department is also delivering a programme through the Rural Development Programme to raise awareness about BVD and how to tackle it, and the economic and welfare advantages of doing so.

AHWNI hopes to make a case to my Department to move to mandatory BVD testing. Industry will need to demonstrate sufficient uptake by farmers during the voluntary BVD testing phase. In addition AHWNI will have to prove that it has sufficient industry funding to secure its on-going financial viability.

Any future proposals to introduce mandatory BVD controls will be subject to consultation with both stakeholders and the ARD Committee, and will require the agreement of the EU Commission.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail what the Central Investigation Service was known as; and its functions, prior to 2002.

(AQW 20588/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Prior to 2002 the Central Investigation Service (CIS) known as the Fraud Investigation Unit (FIU). Its functions included legacy scheme investigations and a limited role in enforcement activity by providing expertise to assist DARD enforcement colleagues who did not have the capacity to prepare prosecution files.

Central Investigation Service: Suspected Fraud

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, if the Central Investigation Service detects a case of suspected fraud, whether it is reported to the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Comptroller and Auditor General in the first instance.

(AQW 20590/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department's Central Investigation Service (CIS) is a reactive unit that investigates incidences of suspected fraud referred by other business areas. When cases of suspected fraud are referred to the CIS for investigation they are registered on the CIS database and letters of notification are sent to DFP and the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what qualifications in investigative practices current employees of the Central Investigation Service hold.

(AQW 20591/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am unable to release this data as it is subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and, accordingly, its release would breach the first and second principles as set out in Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Illegal Horse Movements

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 19667/11-15, to outline the reason that caused the “prevention of movement of relevant consignments” and any resultant prosecution or penalty that resulted.

(AQW 20655/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2012, three consignments of horses were refused export from the north of Ireland due to non-compliances under the Horse Passport Regulations. As these were first time offenders a verbal warning was given.

A further horse transporter was refused export from the north of Ireland due to non-compliances with transport (welfare) documentation.

Central Investigation Service: Fraud Awareness Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons why her Department uses the Central Investigation Service for fraud awareness training as opposed to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

(AQW 20656/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: When meeting training needs, the Department is obliged to secure value for money. Therefore, when training can be delivered in-house by Subject Matter Experts (SME) this is the preferred option as it keeps costs to a minimum, ensures courses are specifically tailored for DARD and facilitates delivery at our regional locations. Fraud Awareness is not unique in this respect and the Department often uses SMEs to meet training needs.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Líofa's Birthday Party

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will publish the business case for the expenditure of £17,972 on Líofa's birthday party.

(AQW 15954/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Business Case for the Líofa birthday event will be published on the Department's website in January 2013.

Allocation of Grants to Sporting Organisations

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline (i) the financial oversight arrangements in place to ensure that the allocation of grants to sporting organisations is adequately monitored; and (ii) whether the accounts of sporting organisations that are grant-aided are inspected by, or on behalf of her Department, and, if so, by what process.

(AQW 17813/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department's funding to sporting organisations is largely allocated through Sport NI. Sport NI has procedures in place to ensure that the allocation of grants to sporting organisations is adequately monitored. These include the implementation of its monitoring policy requirements for all applicants prior to the award of grants, aligned also with its Business Case and Evaluation Policies. Projects in receipt of capital awards are also subject to further monitoring for a period of 5 years to ensure that achievement of project targets are met and to ensure that the financial, governance, technical and legal aspects of projects remain in place. All Sport NI grant recipients have their claims

vouched in line with the Sport NI Risk Management Policy with ratings for each grant based on governance and financial health checks and on information from the ongoing monitoring of the projects.

Prior to the award of grants Sport NI assess the running accounts of applicants and also historical accounts, to determine current solvency, any requirement for additionality and to highlight any concerns on viability. Such financial health checks focus on surpluses or deficits, the level of any reserves and any other income sources.

When funding to sporting organisations is provided directly by the Department, broadly the same monitoring controls will be applied.

Funding to Tyrone Gaelic Athletic Association

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding Tyrone Gaelic Athletic Association has received from her Department, or its arms length bodies, in each of the last 5 years. **(AQW 17816/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the past 5 financial years Tyrone County Board Gaelic Athletic Association has received a total of £9,616 exchequer funding from Sport NI's 'Awards for Sport' Programme. The details are as follows: -

Financial Year	Project Title	Grant Amount	Type
2009/10	1 Promoting and developing Gaelic Games at all levels within the County. 2 Enhancing the performance of our elite athletes	£7,300	Capital funding
2009/10	3 Promoting and developing Gaelic Games at all levels within the County. 4 Enhancing the performance of our elite athletes	£2,316	Revenue funding

Campaign Against Obesity

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, following her announcement that additional funding is being allocated to the Gaelic Athletic Association, whether there will be additional funding for football, rugby and cricket, to assist in the ongoing campaign against obesity and to increase participation in these sports,

(AQW 18683/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In November 2012, I announced that, over the next three financial years, my Department would be making additional funding available to the Gaelic Athletic Association, Irish Football Association and Ulster Rugby. My bid to the Executive for this funding was predicated around promoting equality and participation and targeting poverty and social exclusion rather than the ongoing campaign against obesity. However, inequalities clearly include ill-health. Consequently each of the governing bodies has been asked to bring forward projects and programmes that meet these objectives. With regard to cricket, the governing body, Cricket Ireland, has recently met with my officials and are currently in discussion with Sport NI regarding funding needs over the next four years. These discussions are ongoing.

Tyrone Gaelic Athletic Association's County Centre of Participation at Garvaghey

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, (i) what percentage of the funding for Tyrone Gaelic Athletic Association's County Centre of Participation at Garvaghey will come from her Department; and (ii) through what funding scheme will it be delivered.

(AQW 18742/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL through the Ulster Council of the GAA are providing a contribution of £500,000 towards the Tyrone GAA Centre of Participation at Garvaghey. This is subject to the normal budgetary approvals process. This represents approximately 7.25% of the overall cost of the Tyrone Gaelic Athletic Association's County Centre of Participation.

In relation to the funding scheme, the Executive endorsed my bid for £4.5m over a three year period, £1.5m to each of the Governing Bodies for Gaelic, Rugby and football to promote participation whilst tackling inequalities, ill health and social exclusion. The funding is from the Gaelic element of that Programme.

Funding for Gaelic, Football and Rugby

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, following her announcement of funding of £4.5 million for gaelic, football and rugby, can she detail (i) the allocation to each sport; and (ii) how the funding will be distributed.

(AQW 18802/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Executive endorsed my bid for £4.5m over a three year period, £1.5m to each of the three sports.

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

The governing bodies have put forward a number of projects and programmes for consideration and officials are working with each of the governing bodies to help refine these to ensure they are fully in line with the stated priorities of promoting participation while tackling inequalities and social exclusion.

The production and approval of Business Cases took place and this was followed by the issue of Letters of Offer to the three Governing Bodies and they will be tasked with taking forward the projects in line with normal budgetary and due diligence processes.

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the criteria used to assess applications for match funding from Foras na Gaeilge to promote the Irish language in a business context; (ii) all businesses which have received such funding from Foras na Gaeilge since the scheme was launched; and (iii) the total cost of the scheme since its launch.

(AQW 19043/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Foras na Gaeilge have provided the following information in respect of their 'Irish in Business' schemes available for match funding.

The criteria used to assess applications for match funding is available to commercial enterprises only.

This funding is awarded on a 50:

- (i) 50 match-funding basis between the applicant and Foras na Gaeilge. The applicant must have matching funding available. The maximum available under this scheme is €1,500/£1,250. This scheme is aimed at small and medium sized enterprises only (under 50 people). Foras na Gaeilge will not provide any funding in the case where such an initiative is already being funded by another state body (e.g. Údarás na Gaeltachta). A draft version of the bilingual/Irish language signage must accompany the application. Applicants must ensure that the translation to Irish on this draft version is accurate. The amount of funding awarded is entirely dependent on the amount and visibility of Irish on the signage. The deadline for applications for this current round is 28 June 2013 and signage must be on by 1 September 2013. As there is a limit to the numbers of applications that Foras na Gaeilge can accept, only one application per enterprise will be considered.
- (ii) All businesses which have received funding from Foras na Gaeilge are shown in the table below:

2012

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Deirdre Murray	297	Aonach Mhacha t.a Siopa Cultúr	750
Eden Blooms	297	Ariel Killick	600
Saffron	217	Donna Kelly t.a Dinky Dinos	632.94
Shamrock Superstore	475	Wigs & Wags	743
Swift's Centra	528		
Total	£ 1,814.00		£ 2,725.94
Grand Total 2012	£ 4,539.94		
Number of Businesses	9		

2011

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Caifé Tierna	300	Picture Framing Services	725
Browns Chippy	425	Siopa an Carn	180.50
Pádraig Ó Muirigh Solicitors	400	Míl Íocshláinte	750
Kelstar Express	1050	The Millcourt	747
Picture Framing Services	1200	Craic Theatre	337
Hot Stuff	135	An Cló Ceart	750
Yankee Star Grillhouse	1150		
Northern Property	1175		
Frescos	1000		
Debbies Delight	425		
Craic Theatre	465		
Casa Nostra	1150		
Wigs & Wags	744		
Total	£ 9,619.00		£ 3,489.50
Grand Total 2011	£ 13,108.50		
Number of Businesses	19		

2010

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Fáilte Restaurant	1000	Sólás	750
Mill All Natural Balms	1000	Mill All Natural Balms	750
Masquerade Jewellery	381.88	Yellowhill Graphics	375
Davey's Shop	175	Feed Café	300
Elegant UPVC Doors & Designs	381.88	Clóann Bheann Madagain	750
Gerard's Shop	175		
Beechmount Bargain Store	175		
The Village Chippy	600		
Metallic Memories	105.75		
Café Culture	152.75		
The Patchwork Goose	387.75		
Cairde Teo	360		
The Mattress Factory	325		
PC Meditech	1000		
Elegant Flowers	675		
Start Smart Day Care	325		
Barnes Fish & Chip Shop	875		
Glen Daragh Hurls	125		
Total	£ 8,220.01		£ 2,925.00
Grand Total 2010	£ 11,145.01		
Number of Businesses	23		

2008

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Flax	850.00	Bialann Rhia	750.00
Stiúideo Ealaíona Domhanda	750.00	KotÉire	750.00
Setanta Hurls	846.00	Clólan Bheann Mhadagáin Teo	750.00
AA Accountancy	303.00		
Mannings Cars & Commercial	1000.00		
Castle Cabs	1000.00		

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Shearer Meats	681.50		
Beauty by Eileen	400.00		
Solstice Art, Crafts & Multi	750.00		
Berries	50.00		
Solas Nua	1000.00		
Teach an Ghleanna	1000.00		
Total	£ 8,630.50		£ 2,250.00
Grand Total 2008	£ 10,880.50		
Number of Businesses	15		

2007

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
Newport Printing Company	265.00	Smaointe	680.00
Adman Publishing Ltd	995.00	Bialann Rhia	750.00
Hoops Barbers	20.00	Clólann Bheann Mhadagáin	750.00
Siopa Uí Fhearain	250.00		
Flowers are Us	20.00		
Michael Flanigan Solicitors	25.00		
Café Rhia	920.00		
West Belfast Partnership Boardscéim	750.00		
Nu Wave	550.00		
Busy Bee Fruit & Veg	484.69		
Decora Blinds	1000.00		
Teach an Fheirmeora	475.00		
An Teach Beag	1000.00		
Stiúideo Ealaíona Domhanda	800.00		
Oasis Hair and Beauty	850.00		
Classique Cabs	276.00		
Clólann Bheann Mhadagáin	1000.00		

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
The Pad	800.00		
Siopa Ghearóid	740.00		
Flax Street Stores	550.00		
Shamrock Sports	600.00		
The Day Today	550.00		
Ionad Teaghlaigh Ardmhonaigh	1000.00		
Total	£ 13,920.69		£ 2,180.00
Grand Total 2007	£ 16,100.69		
Number of Businesses	24		

2006

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
T Mc Cavigan Ltd	187.00	Nature Hug	572.50
Thinks Signs & ID Products	237.50	Gasta Search Networks	750.00
Manny's	40.00	Bean & Cream	750.00
Bean & Cream	994.50		
Pitta Italia	600.00		
Courtney's Hair & Beauty	600.00		
Pizza 'n Stuff	465.00		
Total	£ 3,124.00		£ 2,072.50
Grand Total 2006	£ 5,196.50		
Number of Businesses	8		

2005

Joint Funded Scheme	£	Materials Scheme	£
The Ogham Gallery & Craft Centre	797.50	Saol Fiáin	1,011
Teach Uí Cheallaigh	1,402.99	Peter Quinn Consultating Services	750
Siopa	895.52		
Total	£ 3,096.01		£ 1,761.00
Grand Total 2005	£ 4,857.01		
Number of Businesses	5		

*NB. The business support schemes were not open during 2009 and there were no funding awards made as a result

(iii) The scheme was launched in 2005 and the total cost to Foras na Gaeilge from 2005 to 2012 is £65,828.15

Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster Scots

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster Scots.

(AQW 19253/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) – Ulster Scots Academy provides advice on the strategic development of the Ulster-Scots sector and was tasked to build confidence within the sector by identifying and progressing projects under three streams of activity for the proposed Ulster-Scots Academy: Language and Literature; History, Heritage and Culture; and Education and Research.

Public consultation on a draft development and research strategy and associated grant scheme closed on 7 December 2012.

The responses received are being analysed and the outcome should be available by April 2013. Future options to progress an Ulster Scots Academy are also being developed and I expect to receive a business case for consideration during early summer 2013.

The MAG has been proactive in developing and implementing a range of projects costing £1.67m to support its interim development strategy.

The following examples demonstrate how projects that have been supported are providing learning opportunities, encouraging collaboration, outreach and community engagement, assisting language development and exploiting the potential cultural tourism of Ulster Scots:

- grants to ten Councils to research and develop local Ulster-Scots Heritage Tourism products, including tourism iApps;
- an Ulster-Scots archaeological survey involving three excavations is providing significant educational opportunities for schools and community engagement and valuable learning resources and research;
- an Ulster-Scots Music Scoping Study to baseline the sector at present and identify opportunities for growth; and
- Steps to progress standardisation of the Ulster-Scots language involving an Ulster-Scots Spelling Guide and Glossary, an Orthography Panel and a Literary Encyclopaedia Project.

Olympic Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether all the funding allocated for Olympic related events was spent.

(AQW 19255/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All funding provided by my Department in supporting the delivery of local Olympic and Paralympic events has been spent.

Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum: Vacant Position

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the process to fill a vacant position on the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum.

(AQW 19314/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are two processes used to fill a vacant position on the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum (SIFF).

The Process followed to replace a SIFF member representing a nominated body:

- (i) A letter is issued to the Head/Chief Executive of the organisation asking them to nominate a replacement to serve on the SIFF.
- (ii) An application pack including the application form, guide for applicants and equal opportunity monitoring form are issued with the letter, which the nominated representative must complete and return to DCAL Inland Fisheries Group.
- (iii) On receipt of the completed form, a letter is issued to the applicant confirming their position on the SIFF.
- (iv) The secretary to the SIFF informs the new SIFF member of details of the next meeting and enclosing any relevant documentation they need including the Terms of Reference.

The Process followed to replace a SIFF member representing publically advertised posts:

- (i) Inland Fisheries Group prepares an advertisement and press release which are submitted to Minister and Press Office for approval.
- (ii) Approved advertisement is submitted for publication in the appropriate newspapers.
- (iii) Press release is also emailed to all relevant interests including disability groups.
- (iv) Interested parties are advised in the advert to contact Inland Fisheries Group for application pack.
- (v) All applications received by the closing date are acknowledged.
- (vi) Interviews are arranged for the applicants.
- (vii) Letters are then issued to the successful and unsuccessful candidates.
- (viii) Secretary to the SIFF will contact new SIFF member with details of next SIFF meeting.

DCAL: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what was the total spend on hospitality by her Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19492/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department incurred a total spend of £31,608 on hospitality in 2011/12.

Rowing, Golf and Boxing Funding

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding her Department has provided for (i) rowing; (ii) golf; and (iii) boxing, over the last five years.

(AQW 19496/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, an arms length body of DCAL that distributes funding to sport in the north of Ireland, has awarded a total of £1,800,233 exchequer funding to the sports of rowing, golf and boxing over the last five financial years, up to 31 March 2012. During this period each sport was awarded the following: -

- Rowing - £765,021
- Golf - £430,365
- Boxing - £604,847

DCAL: Capital Spend

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail her Department's capital spend since May 2011, broken down by constituency area.

(AQW 19517/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the period May 2011 to December 2012, the Department made the following capital expenditure in the constituencies indicated:

2011/12 (MAY 2011 TO MARCH 2012)

Constituency	Amount (£)
Belfast East	79,611
Belfast South	18,267
North Antrim	494,255
Total	592,133

2012/13 (APRIL 2012 TO DECEMBER 2012)

Constituency	Amount (£)
Belfast East	3,377
North Antrim	31,060
South Down	93,113
Total	127,550

I hope that you find this information helpful.

Northern Ireland Civil Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline what information is distributed to the Northern Ireland Civil Service regarding initiatives or information on (i) Irish; and (ii) Ulster Scots. **(AQW 19605/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: The promotion of the Irish Language and Ulster-Scots issues are the responsibility of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency respectively. Information on initiatives relating to the Irish language and Ulster-Scots activities is distributed by Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency through their existing communication channels.

At present, my department distributes a monthly newsletter on the Líofo initiative across the whole NICS email network. Líofo is a Ministerial-led initiative, which aims to promote the use and fluency of the Irish language and to increase the number of Irish speakers.

The Ulster-Scots Agency has no plans to introduce a similar Ulster-Scots Newsletter for distribution through the NICS network.

Libraries NI: New Member Registration

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of a new member registration process being used by Libraries NI. **(AQW 19612/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI has informed me that it is not making any changes to the library membership or registration process.

However a data collection exercise is now underway. This is required to update records to support the implementation of the new E2 computer system. Libraries NI wishes to ensure that a member's details are accurate and current. With a member's permission, Libraries NI will contact them regarding forthcoming library events, new stock, service improvements and library updates. These initiatives should positively impact on a customer's experience of using their library.

Libraries NI: New Member Registration

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what processes are in place to ensure that any changes to library membership will not have an adverse affect on libraries that are currently under review, or on their targets to prove sustainability.

(AQW 19613/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI has informed me that it is not making any changes to the library membership or registration process.

The purpose of the current exercise is to update a members' record in advance of the introduction of a new computer system. If membership details are not captured prior to the transfer of data to the new system personal information will be validated on the member's next visit to the library.

In carrying out the strategic reviews of libraries the statistical information used related to active members, issues and visits. An active member is defined as a member who has used the library in the past 12 months. The data validation process will not change this method of calculation.

Funding for Irish League Football Clubs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the funding available to Irish League Football clubs for infrastructure improvements.

(AQW 19825/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As I have previously advised around £36million for football's strategic stadium needs at sub-regional level was endorsed by the Executive on 10 March 2011 on the basis that it should be taken forward as a priority area of spend in the next CSR period (2015).

The IFA, with the help of SportNI, have developed a draft Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to examine potential proposals for sub-regional development . Further work is currently being carried out to refine the SOC before it is submitted to DFP who will assess if the proposals merit the production of Outline Business Cases. These OBCs will be used to inform possible bids for funding in the next CSR period (2015).

I would stress that no funding is available in the current CSR period for sub-regional development for football. It is not anticipated that sub-regional funding will become available until 2015 at the earliest.

Grants Available to Purchase Musical Instruments

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available for bands, schools and community groups to purchase musical instruments.

(AQW 19870/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department's funding in support of bands to purchase musical instruments is disbursed through the Arts Council's Musical Instruments for Bands Programme. It provides grants from £500 to £5,000 and is available to bands based in the north of Ireland, which are formally constituted.

Funding up to £10,000 is also awarded by the Arts Council through its Lottery funded Small Grants Programme for band related activity (which includes equipment (such as music stands, rostra etc). It provides grants from £500 - £10,000 to voluntary and small professional groups in the north of Ireland for a wide range of community- based arts activities. Bands can get equipment or funds towards projects or tuition through the Small Grants Programme.

Funding for Events Commemorating The Great War

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that the centenary of the First World War will be marked in 2014, to detail the funding that her Department will make available for groups wishing to take part in events commemorating The Great War.

(AQW 19893/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The creative and cultural infrastructure and programmes already funded and supported by my Department will play a key role in telling the stories and different interpretations of the First World War and other important events from the Decade of Centenaries.

PRONI is planning an exhibition and lecture series and a range of Departmental Arm-length Bodies, such as Libraries NI and National Museums NI, are developing educational programmes, exhibitions, talks, book launches and online access to collections to help local groups and members of the public to explore this period in our history. These initiatives will also involve collaboration with other archives and museums in Ireland and Britain.

Overall, specific costs and allocations will be variable but their inclusion and prioritization within the work of the Department and its Arm-length Bodies recognises the importance of the Decade of Centenaries to promoting historical and cultural awareness, respectful remembrance and reconciliation.

In addition, NI Screen is supporting three productions so far, with combined funding of £335,000, that tie-in with the WW1 Centenary. These will include a factual drama serial, a feature film and a documentary.

The Community Festival Fund aims to improve the quality and capacity of community festivals. The Department allocates a total of £450,000 annually to local councils who match and administer the fund. Events remembering the past can be supported if in keeping with the Fund's guidelines which include inclusive approaches to commemoration.

Events Commemorating The Great War

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any events scheduled for 2014 that her Department is aware of to commemorate the outbreak of The Great War.

(AQW 19894/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The First World War is one of several major events and significant anniversaries from the 1912 - 1922 period. The creative and cultural infrastructure and programmes already funded and supported by my Department will play a key role in telling the stories and different interpretations of the First World War and other important events from this Decade of Centenaries.

For example, Libraries NI is developing a programme of exhibitions, talks and book launches to commemorate the start of the First World War. National Museums NI is planning online access to collections and an exhibition and programming at the Ulster Museum and Ulster Folk & Transport Museum. This will also involve co-operation with the National Museum of Ireland, and the Imperial War Museum and National Portrait Gallery in London.

PRONI is also planning an exhibition and a lecture series as well as collaboration with other archives and museums in Ireland and Britain.

The Somme Heritage Centre is developing a programme of work exploring significant anniversaries during the Decade of Centenaries and this will include a focus on the First World War.

Ministers of Foras na Gaeilge

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, as one of the sponsor Ministers of Foras na Gaeilge, whether she has had any discussion with the organisation in relation to possible redundancy payments being made to the staff of Gaelsceal, who are being made redundant at the end of the month when the contract of Torann na dTonn to publish the newspaper will be ended.

(AQW 19941/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have not had any such discussions.

Torann na dTonn is the employing organisation and is responsible for any personnel issues for staff in Gaelsceal.

Books Replacement Scheme

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why so many books are being removed from shelves of libraries as part of the Books Replacement Scheme and to detail the timetable for their replacement.

(AQW 20053/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Books in libraries are circulated between libraries or removed on an ongoing basis to ensure that a fresh and relevant collection of items is available for library users.

Branch libraries are replenished with new stock every week with the quantities determined by local demand and library budgets.

In addition to this routine cycling and refreshing of library stock, library staff have recently been working to remove stock which is past its useful life. This work is being carried out before the end of March before the introduction of a new library management system (as part of the E2 Project). This will ensure that these stock items are not physically tagged and transferred to the new system which would attract additional, unnecessary costs.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has considered the Maze Long Kesh site as a possible venue for hosting the opening ceremony of the World Police and Fire Games 2013.

(AQW 20084/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I can advise that during the overall assessment process, the Maze Long Kesh site was one of the early options considered for hosting the opening ceremony of the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

However, at its meeting on Wednesday 20 February 2013, the Board of the World Police and Fire Games Limited agreed that the preferred option for the opening ceremony would be the Kings Hall in Belfast.

Centres of Sporting Excellence

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding opportunities are available to a council that is seeking to establish a local centre of sporting excellence.

(AQO 3596/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for the provision of local sporting facilities rests not with me but with district councils. Any proposals for the development of local centres of excellence or participation would benefit from a co-ordinated approach involving councils, sports governing bodies, local communities and the schools estate. This will ensure the needs of all stakeholders are met in full. Such an approach would also help to address issues around equality, social inclusion, poverty and improving participation in sports and physical activity. Sport NI engages on an ongoing basis with district councils on their views on future priorities and can also provide advice and guidance on possible funding opportunities, either current or planned, that may be of assistance to councils in this regard.

Primary Schools: Physical Literacy

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions have taken place with the Department of Education to improve the level of physical literacy in primary schools.

(AQO 3595/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Discussions with the Department of Education (DE) on improving physical literacy levels in primary schools take place on an on-going basis as part of the implementation of my strategy for sport, Sport Matters. Within Sport Matters, improving physical literacy is identified as one of the key steps for success in the delivery of the strategy. As a member of the Sport Matters Monitoring Group, DE arranged for the IFA and GAA to give a presentation in November 2012 to me and Group members

on the Department's Curriculum Sports Programme, which is designed to develop the physical literacy skills of the youngest pupils in primary schools. In the 2011/12 school year, the programme was delivered by 61 GAA/IFA coaches in 567 schools to over 39,000 primary school children.

Obesity: Physical Activity

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what coordination exists between her Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to increase physical activity as a form of reducing obesity levels.

(AQO 3597/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) has in place a published and co-ordinated framework for preventing and addressing obesity entitled, 'A Fitter Future for All'. The 'Fitter Future for All' Framework recognises a key linkage with my Department's Sport Matters strategy and draws extensively on Sport Matters related research on participation in sport and physical activity. Both DCAL and SportNI are also identified as key delivery partners for the Framework and are represented on DHSSPS's Obesity Prevention Steering Group.

In addition, Sport Matters itself recognises the role that sport, as a form of physical activity, can play in helping to combat obesity. Sport Matters highlights the rising incidence of obesity across the north and quotes figures indicating that around 2,000 people here die every year as a result of being physically inactive. The strategy contains targets that are specifically designed to increase participation in sport and physical recreation across the population in line with Chief Medical Officer recommendations. To ensure these targets are delivered, a DCAL led Sport Matters Monitoring Group has been established to oversee the implementation of Sport Matters. The Group, which I chair, comprises senior representatives from a number of key stakeholder organisations including DHSSPS.

Football: Foyle Cup

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she would consider providing funding for the annual Foyle Cup football tournament.

(AQO 3598/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In 2010, the NI Executive agreed the transfer of responsibility for Government policy and funding for events, including sport events, from DCAL to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the NI Tourist Board. As a result, provision of support and funding to events, such as the Foyle Cup, is primarily a matter for DETI and the NI Tourist Board.

However, DCAL through Sport NI is already looking at ways in which it might also be in a position to support major sports events in the north in the future, including the Foyle Cup. As part of this process, consideration is currently being given to the development of a specific Sport NI run sports events support programme. This programme is still being developed but sports events, like the Foyle Cup, may be eligible for consideration particularly where they demonstrate potential to contribute to the delivery of my priorities of promoting equality and social inclusion, addressing poverty, improving participation and player athlete development.

Sport: Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of how the provisions in Part 4 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 about sport work in practice.

(AQO 3599/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The provisions contained in Part 4 of the Justice Act (NI) 2011 were developed by the Department of Justice in partnership with DCAL to complement my Department's safe sports grounds legislation, the Safety of Sports Grounds (NI) Order 2006. The aim of both these pieces of legislation is to ensure the safety of spectators at larger fixtures played in the north of Ireland and to promote spectator friendly viewing arrangements. The provisions in the Justice Act are intended to clarify what constitutes safe and responsible conduct amongst spectators and ensure that there are

powers in place to deal with individuals who engage in dangerous or disorderly conduct at regulated matches. These powers are ultimately vested in the PSNI and I understand that the PSNI are working with clubs and sports bodies to ensure that they are used to best effect and only where necessary. To that end, I understand that the PSNI will be meeting in the next few weeks with the Safety of Sports Grounds Overseeing Body, based at Sport NI, to review the operation of the Act to date and how its implementation may be further improved.

DCAL: Honours

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many people from the culture, arts and leisure sectors she has nominated for Honours since becoming Minister.

(AQO 3600/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have no role in the Honours process.

Department of Education

Fully Integrated Education System

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education to outline his commitment to a fully integrated education system rather than a shared education system.

(AQW 20160/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): My Department has statutory duty to facilitate integrated education. I take that duty very seriously.

As in the case of all education sectors, my Department responds to parental demand and funds integrated proposals that are robust, do not invoke unreasonable public expenditure and meet the specified criteria. It does not favour one education sector from another.

The Programme for Government commitment relates to Shared Education. I will take receipt of the Ministerial Advisory Group's Report on shared education by the end of the month.

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People Report "Still Vulnerable"

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People report Still Vulnerable - the impact of early childhood experiences on adolescent suicide and accidental death.

(AQW 20164/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A copy of the Report was received by my Department and was circulated for information. The report will provide a useful reference paper for my Department in the preparation of policy and evaluation of current policy.

Integrated Education: A Review of Policy and Research Evidence 1999-2012

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the UNESCO, University of Ulster, Children and Youth Programme report 'Integrated Education: a review of policy and research evidence 1999-2012'.

(AQW 20220/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I note the University of Ulster's UNESCO Centre Report (which was commissioned by the Integrated Education Fund) as an interesting contribution to the debate on advancing shared education.

However I believe the report would have benefited from an engagement with my Department before publication.

I am expecting the Ministerial Advisory Group to produce their report on shared education in the near future.

I have already publicly indicated my intention to use the report of the Shared Education Ministerial Advisory Group to commence a civic debate to take into account the views of all stakeholders and to test public opinion on this important issue. As part of that debate, I will ensure that the Department's statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education is taken into account.

Education and Library Boards: Maintenance and Minor Works

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 18560/11-15, to outline the expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each Education and Library Board area, broken down by sector.

(AQW 20240/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The expenditure on (i) maintenance, and (ii) minor works in each of the Education and Library Board areas in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012 broken down by sector is as follows:-

2010/11 (£000s)	Sector	BELB		WELB		NEELB		SEELB		SELB	
		Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works
	Controlled	2,840	4,616	2,299	1,461	4,388	2,908	4,415	2,635	2,964	2,402
	Controlled Integrated	146	17	7	0	179	0	369	133	46	25
	Irish Medium	160	66	21	225	13	0	27	88	33	0
	Roman Catholic Maintained	4,766	4,212	3,951	3,415	2,225	1,587	2,079	1,387	3,588	4,323
	Other Maintained	0	0	0	54	10	0	0	0	4	25
	Voluntary Grammar School	1	1,222	0	871	0	812	0	374	0	323
	Grant Maintained Integrated	18	31	3	206	0	131	0	647	0	195
	Special	731	469	278	219	226	0	429	342	223	789
	Youth	335	934	0	0	172	59	0	224	396	588
	Other	692	760	516	0	833	41	309	26	1,270	-57
	TOTAL	9,689	12,327	7,075	6,451	8,046	5,538	7,628	5,856	8,524	8,613

2011/12 (£000s)	Sector	BELB		WELB		NEELB		SEELB		SELB	
		Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works	Main-tenance	Minor Works
	Controlled	3,319	9,852	2,766	1,989	3,859	5,450	2,735	6,165	2,086	6,495
	Controlled Integrated	131	273	5	0	278	69	199	1,294	36	48
	Irish Medium	388	268	23	25	20	1	14	0	18	-124
	Roman Catholic Maintained	5,505	4,109	2,797	2,847	1,747	1,639	1,846	1,875	2,419	2,356
	Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	10	192
	Voluntary Grammar School	0	782	0	636	0	756	0	198	0	142
	Grant Maintained Integrated	0	28	0	179	0	204	0	344	0	233
	Special	763	1,028	222	391	166	0	355	908	100	695
	Youth	302	2,849	0	0	166	73	0	180	381	97
	Other	467	1,340	133	0	845	81	205	149	2,681	4
	TOTAL	10,875	20,529	5,946	6,067	7,089	8,275	5,354	11,113	7,731	10,138

2012/13 (1/4/12 -31/12/12) (£000s)	Sector	BELB		WELB		NEELB		SEELB		SELB	
		Main-tenance	Minor Works								
	Controlled	3,473	3,302	1,144	2,311	2,721	2,171	2,805	2,600	2,678	1,342
	Controlled Integrated	296	25	14	0	272	184	268	423	56	332
	Irish Medium	161	91	29	0	14	65	3	0	0	0
	Roman Catholic Maintained	6,218	3,333	1,921	3,113	1,160	1,863	1,892	2,866	2,683	1,390
	Other Maintained	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	17	57
	Voluntary Grammar School	5	810	0	1,062	0	490	0	1,411	0	357

2012/13 (1/4/12 -31/12/12) (£000s)		BELB		WELB		NEELB		SEELB		SELB	
	Sector	Main-tenance	Minor Works								
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1	36	0	9	0	22	0	436	0	103
	Special	899	1,012	161	412	71	0	404	169	135	818
	Youth	469	198	0	0	75	44	0	54	296	62
	Other	523	220	261	0	493	-6	545	2	1,310	0
	TOTAL	12,045	9,027	3,530	6,907	4,809	4,837	5,917	7,961	7,175	4,461

*Maintenance expenditure for Voluntary Grammar schools and Grant Maintained Integrated schools is primarily the responsibility of the schools themselves, with the costs being met from within the schools' recurrent budget. The Department does not hold this information in a readily available format. The figures included within the above table reflect minimal work carried out on their behalf by ELBs.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19134/11-15, which of the current functions undertaken by staff in the Education and Library Board procurement sections will transfer to Central Procurement Directorate.

(AQW 20241/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Central Procurement Directorate will be responsible for a range of procurement services, or functions. Key functions will include development of a procurement strategy for the education sector, market engagement, supplier selection and invitation to tender, evaluation of tenders and award of contracts and strategic contract management.

Educational Underachievement

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what measures or initiatives his Department is pursuing to tackle educational underachievement among working class boys.

(AQW 20250/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Evidence suggests that social background is the strongest factor impacting on attainment here and that disadvantage, as measured by entitlement to free school meals, has a stronger impact than gender or religion alone.

A key aim of the Executive is to address the challenges of disadvantage and inequality, including closing the gap in educational underachievement between those who are least and those who are most disadvantaged. Consequently, the work of a number of Departments is critical to creating the conditions to make better outcomes possible, particularly through integrating different services, aligning them with the work of schools, and helping schools reach into their communities.

As such my Department has a key role in working with other Departments to ensure a coherent approach to proactively tackling disadvantage and improving educational outcomes. This includes the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on a literacy and numeracy project to recruit 230 additional teachers. This project will have a positive impact on the raising-standards agenda by improving the educational outcomes for pupils most at risk of underachieving.

As Minister for Education my focus is on providing coherent, sustained and effective evidence based interventions that break the cycle of deprivation and educational underachievement wherever it exists.

The Programme for Government includes a stretching target to raise standards among school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds and a commitment to improve literacy and numeracy levels among all school leavers, with additional support targeted at underachieving pupils.

I have in place a coherent suite of policies to raise standards and tackle educational underachievement in schools. These policies include the school improvement policy, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum, entitlement framework, the framework for early years education and learning and the SEN and inclusion review.

However, more needs to be done, especially in areas of social deprivation, and the key now is to step up the pace of implementation and delivery of these policies and to maintain the focus on raising standards to ensure that every pupil is able to achieve to their full potential.

The continued use of academic selection by grammar schools is a barrier to addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities. It disadvantages children from those communities even further as evidenced by the disproportionately low number of pupils entitled to free school meals who attend grammar schools. It damages children's confidence, their motivation to learn, and lowers their expectations of themselves contributing to the high levels of underachievement we are seeking to tackle. That is why academic selection needs to end now and my Department is working to bring that about.

The Common Funding Formula provides all schools with additional core funding to help meet the educational needs of children from socially deprived backgrounds and those underperforming for their age. Sir Robert Salisbury's review of the Common Funding Scheme, which I commissioned, recommended increased levels of formula funding for pupils from deprived backgrounds through the introduction of a pupil premium. I will assess the impact of this recommendation, along with the others in the report, very carefully to inform my own proposals for change, which I intend to bring forward later in the year.

My Department also dedicates substantial resources to provide a range of assistance, programmes and services to ensure disadvantaged children have access to and can fully participate in school life, obtain formal qualifications, enhance their employment opportunities and ultimately provide a route out of poverty. These include the provision of Free School Meals and clothing allowances and a range of programmes targeted at socially deprived areas, including Sure Start, extended schools, full service provision, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures, Integrated Services for Children and Young People and nurture units.

We also need to raise parental aspirations and the value of education within our communities. That is why I launched the 'Education Works' advertising campaign in September 2012 to inform and engage all parents, but in particular those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more engaged in their child's education.. The aim of the advertising campaign is to convey the message that parental involvement and encouragement, no matter how small, can have a direct and long-lasting effect on a child's educational achievements.

Remuneration for Bodies Providing Advice on Education

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education which of the bodies that advise his Department on education are remunerated; and to detail the levels of remuneration.

(AQW 20366/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All bodies that advise my Department on education are detailed in the Public Bodies Annual Report. This information includes details of remuneration.

The latest copy of the Public Bodies Annual Report can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-bodies-annual-report-2011-2012.pdf>

Area Planning

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what lessons were learnt from the consultation on Area Planning.

(AQW 20367/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As I outlined in my statement to the Assembly on Tuesday 26 February, the post-primary consultation led by the Education and Library Boards demonstrated the desire for greater clarity on proposals, more opportunity for engagement and greater consistency across the plans, as well as more innovative ideas and exploration of cross sectoral solutions. I have requested that further work is carried out on the post-primary plans which will be informed by the work to be undertaken by the new area planning steering group. However, the time for protracted discussions is over and decisions are required.

The Boards will release the Primary Area Plans for consultation on 19 March, with an extended consultation period open until the end of June. This will allow for wide ranging discussion and engagement at local level which I expect will result in more practical and sustainable solutions on an area basis.

Nursery Provision

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 17794/11-15, how many of the 22537 places awarded were in North Down; and how many of the applications were from parents in North Down.

(AQW 20415/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: During the 2012/13 pre-school admissions process there were 865 funded pre-school places available in the North Down area. 837 applications were received for these places from parents with North Down addresses.

Curriculum Advisory and Support Services

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19841/11-15, how much the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service spent on (i) buildings maintenance; (ii) grounds maintenance; (iii) staffing costs; (iv) administration; (v) rent, rates and utilities; (vi) transportation; and (vii) catering; and (viii) provision of training to teachers.

(AQW 20481/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Pursuant to AQW 19841/11-15, the forecast spend by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service in the 2012/13 financial year in the areas specified is as follows:

	£000s
Buildings Maintenance	278
Grounds Maintenance	1
Staffing Costs	6,639
Administration	1,327
Rent, Rates and Utilities	633
Transportation	274
Catering	78
Provision of Training of Teachers	27
Total	9,257

DE: Overtime Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the total overtime payments made to staff in his Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20517/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The total overtime payments made to Department of Education staff for the last three financial years are detailed below.

2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
91,536	93,086	115,391

Capital Build Projects: South Down and Strangford Constituencies

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's investment in capital build projects in the (i) South Down; and (ii) Strangford constituencies since 1998.

(AQW 20526/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information provided relates to investment in Major Capital School Projects in both the South Down and Strangford constituencies since 1998 and is detailed in the table attached.

Major Capital School Projects in the South Down and Strangford Constituencies From 1998.

School Project	Parliamentary Constituency	Investment (million)
Drumadonnell Primary School, Banbridge	South Down	1.20
All Children's Controlled Integrated Primary School, Newcastle	South Down	1.32
Cumran Primary School, Clough	South Down	1.60
St Patrick's Primary School, Saul	South Down	1.50
Bronte Primary School, Banbridge	South Down	1.20
St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint	South Down	3.90
St Colman's Primary School, Saval	South Down	1.10
Carrick Primary School, Warrenpoint	South Down	3.32
St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle	South Down	3.45
St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan	South Down	9.07
Castle Gardens Primary School, Newtownards	Strangford	2.70
Victoria Primary School, Newtownards	Strangford	3.31
Dundonald Primary School	Strangford	5.25
Newtownards Model Primary School	Strangford	4.98
Victoria Primary School, Ballyhalbert	Strangford	1.50
Kircubbin Community Nursery School	Strangford	0.30
Nendrum College	Strangford	13.00
Saintfield High School	Strangford	3.40

School Project	Parliamentary Constituency	Investment (million)
Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards (Phase 1)	Strangford	5.22
Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards (Phase 2)	Strangford	7.90
Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch	Strangford	15.10

Cycling

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on encouraging children to take up cycling, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20533/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has been supportive of the Department of Regional Development's Travelwise NI Safer Routes to Schools (SRS) initiative which aims to tackle the impact of the "school run" by encouraging more pupils, parents and teachers to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share the journey to and from school. During the period 2007-12 additional capital funding was made available for any necessary infrastructure within school grounds such as cycle shelters, cycle paths and lockers to support this initiative. The spend during this period was

2011/12	£31,674.13
2010/11	£29,315.80
2009/10	£147,349.76
2008/09	£92,638.11
2007/08	£5,151.94
Total	£306,129.74

Schools may use their delegated budget to encourage pupils to cycle as there are a number of Areas of Learning within the curriculum which provide teachers with the opportunity to encourage children to take up cycling.

The revised curriculum is less prescriptive than before and the Department delegates as much funding and decision-making as possible to schools which are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils - the specifics of what is taught under each Area of Learning is a matter for each school. The Department does not therefore hold information on school spend in this area.

It is a matter for schools to decide on the resources they wish to use to support their delivery of the curriculum. However, the Department did facilitate work between the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and the Department for Regional Development to update the 'Best Foot Forward' educational resource for primary school pupils which aims to promote sustainable transport such as walking and cycling. This resource is available to all schools via the NI Curriculum website.

DE: Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how much has been paid to settle claims against his Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20551/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below sets out how much my Department has paid to claimants to settle claims against my Department, in each of the last three financial years.

Financial Year	Total £'000
2009-10	37
2010-11	21
2011-12	432

Visits to Schools

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education how many requests for visits to schools, in the East Londonderry constituency, he has received in the past 12 months.

(AQW 20553/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the past 12 months I have received 5 invitations to visit schools in this constituency.

School Places: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many spaces are available for year one pupils in the North Down area for the next school year.

(AQW 20653/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of P1 places available is defined by a primary school's admissions number. Across the North Down constituency there were 1,119 places available at the start of the 2013/14 primary admissions process. This process will conclude with the issue of placement letters to parents on 10 April 2013. On 11 March 2013 there were 136 places available to any applicants who may still require a P1 place in the North Down area for September 2013. This figure may change daily between now and September 2013.

My School Portal and SMS Texting Service

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education to outline the potential benefits of the forthcoming My School portal and SMS texting service for parents and schools; and when will this come into effect.

(AQW 20661/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The 'MySchool' learning portal will be the starting point for all users when they log in to the C2k service in school, at home or on a portable device. MySchool is ground breaking and unique as it can be accessed from a range of devices and is a personalised learning and working environment. It contains links to all the components of the C2k service that the user is entitled to access.

MySchool offers secure access to learning resources online 24 hours a day for staff and pupils. It is currently available to most post primary schools and will be made available to remaining schools at the end of March 2013.

Initially MySchool will provide access to Fronter which is the new Virtual Learning Environment that will replace Learning NI. Fronter, a regional Learning Environment, will offer users access to online courses, collaborative learning experiences and a library of educational resources. Subsequent phases of MySchool will provide increasing access to more online resources all accessed by a single sign on for the user. MySchool will be the single point of access for all C2k services, including software, apps, NI Newsdesk and email.

The MySchool texting service will be on offer and it will be up to schools to determine if they want to use this new service, which will attract relevant charges. If a school decides to avail of this service, then it will only be visible to nominated users in the school. The service will allow schools to send text messages to parents, guardians and staff who have agreed to participate. This service can be used in the event of an emergency school closure or as required by the school, and will be an effective way to improve communication between schools and parents. Such a service allows for important information to be fed quickly to both parents and other key organisations, however, it will be up to schools to decide

to avail of this service. It is anticipated that the SMS texting service will be available at the end of March 2013 for all schools.

New-Build Primary School: Inner-South Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education, given that he has pledged to tackle educational underachievement in working-class Protestant areas, whether he will give a commitment to providing a new-build primary school for inner-South Belfast.

(AQW 20679/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's strategy for capital investment for the coming years will be shaped by the outworking of the Area Planning process, with a focus supporting the development and delivery of a network of viable and sustainable schools in the years ahead.

The Belfast Education and Library Board, the managing authority for the controlled schools' estate in Belfast, published its draft primary area plan for consultation on 19 March 2013. The consultation period will end on 30 June and I would encourage you to respond to it and make your views known.

The draft plan outlines the Board's proposals for primary provision in inner south Belfast. Proposals which would result in a significant change to the schools' estate, such as amalgamations or closures, will require approved statutory development proposals.

To date, BELB has not brought forward any development proposals in relation to primary provision in inner South Belfast.

Post-Primary School Pupils: Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11006/11-15, (i) to detail the rate per thousand of post-primary school pupils who had less than 85 percent attendance in 2011/12, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what further action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism.

(AQW 20709/11-15)

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

Primary School Pupils: Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11006/11-15, (i) to detail the rate per thousand of primary school pupils who had less than 85 percent attendance in 2011/12, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what further action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism.

(AQW 20710/11-15)

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

15 to 17 Year Old Pupils: Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11004/11-15, (i) to detail the rate per thousand of 15 to 17 year old pupils who had less than 85 percent attendance in 2011/12, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what further action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism.

(AQW 20711/11-15)

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

Assimilated Schools

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to outline the process by which one school is assimilated by another school.

(AQW 20713/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The term 'assimilation' of one school by another is not one with which I am familiar.

I am aware that it was used in the North Eastern Education and Library Board's draft post-primary area plan published last July. However, the revised NEELB area plan, which is now available on the Board's website, no longer contains reference to this term.

In any case, any proposed significant change to a school requires the publication of a statutory development proposal. The intention of a Development Proposal should be clear and unambiguous. If the full implications are not thought to be readily apparent from the wording of the proposal, an explanatory statement should be provided. My consideration of a proposal includes assessing all the circumstances pertaining to the proposed change, including what is entailed and the potential impact on the pupils.

Sure Start Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how the Sure Start programme for North Down is progressing and meeting its targets.

(AQW 20727/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The new Sure Start programme for North Down is currently being developed. A draft Action Plan for the new programme for 2013/14 has been finalised by the Management Committee of the Bangor Sure Start project and has been submitted through the Eastern Childcare Partnership to my Department for consideration and approval.

Subject to approval of the draft Plan by DE, the Lead and Accountable Body will progress arrangements for the recruitment of key staff to the project. The Childcare Partnership will attend the next meeting of the Management Committee in April to outline areas of governance, structure and systems which the Committee will be required to adopt.

Schools: Craigavon

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, given that the results of the Area Planning consultation give a clear indication that a collegiate structure of education within the Craigavon area is not the desired form of delivery, what plans he has to retain the Dickson Plan.

(AQO 3607/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Area Planning is about providing strong, vibrant schools delivering high quality education by using the limited resources available efficiently and effectively.

In that context, it is my firm view that the Dickson plan is no longer fit for purpose.

The consultation process in regards area planning was not a ballot with results deciding the outcome of the process.

The returns from the consultation process will be taken into account alongside all other evidence and data, including departmental policy, when deciding the way forward.

The member will be aware that the Catholic education sector in Craigavon propose moving away from the Dickson Plan and academic selection.

I believe that the best course of action for the controlled sector is to do likewise for the educational benefit of all children and young people in that sector.

For example, if we examine what is happening in Lurgan.

Despite the best efforts of the Boards of Governors, Senior Management Team and staff in Craigavon Senior High School (Lurgan Campus) they are not in a position to deliver the Entitlement Framework.

I cannot ignore that fact and neither can the managing authority. A solution must be found. One such solution could be a single post primary school in Lurgan.

What that school is called and how it sets its admissions criteria would be a matter for the Board of Governors as set out in legislation.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education what financial contribution he is making to help ensure the retention of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQO 3608/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education will contribute £1.85 million in 2013/14 and £3.6 million each year from 2014/15 to the new Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme.

In addition, the Department will continue to provide additional resources of approximately £345,000 each year to help schools fund the costs associated with the administration of the scheme.

The Department's total funding for the EMA scheme, therefore, amounts to almost £2.2 million in 2013/14 and £3.95 million from 2014/15.

Through this funding the Department will ensure that the EMA Scheme continues to support young people in greatest need to remain in education, to achieve formal qualifications, break the cycle of poverty and low educational attainment and, in turn, enhance their lifetime opportunities.

Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus, Omagh

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus.

(AQO 3609/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: An Outline Business Case for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus has now been submitted to my Department, which shows that the provision of post-primary level education on the campus is economically the best way forward for Omagh. An outline planning application for the site has been submitted and I have previously detailed my intention to provide new accommodation for Arvalee School & Resource Centre at Lisanelly as soon as possible.

I set out the next steps on Area Planning in my statement to the Assembly on 26 February. Area Planning is about determining the future needs of an area and it allows for a new way of doing things. I have therefore announced that the most beneficial solution for young people in the Omagh area is a shared education campus at Lisanelly.

The project is a priority commitment within the Executive's Programme for Government. It also has widespread support from the local community, council and politicians. I intend to deliver on that support and on our commitment.

I will again confirm here today, for the avoidance of doubt, my future investments in the Omagh area will be on the Lisanelly site. The decision has been made: Lisanelly is the only show in town.

Further Education: Area-based Planning

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, since colleges of further education make a valuable contribution to the delivery of the Entitlement Framework, why are they not involved in the Area Based Planning consultation.

(AQO 3610/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Further and Higher Education Colleges are not the responsibility of my Department. However, educational provision at these facilities may have an impact on Area Planning at Post-primary level.

The consultation on the draft Post-primary area plans, led by the Boards, provided the opportunity for everyone with an interest in education to participate and present their views.

In addition, one of the objectives of the Terms of Reference for Area Planning is to take full account of appropriate and relevant FE sector provision for 14-19 year olds. As I stated in my statement to the Assembly on 26 February, the Post-primary plans provide the foundation on which to move forward and will be further developed to ensure they comply with the Terms of Reference.

Primary Schools: New Builds

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Education for his assessment of disparities in the capital investment in primary school new buildings across constituencies since 1999.

(AQO 3611/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My capital build programme will continue to be delivered on the basis of need regardless of the constituency.

Schools: Pupil-weighted Funding

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to outline what measures his Department is taking to redress the pupil weighted funding disparity between the primary and post-primary sectors.

(AQO 3612/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Members will be aware that I recently took receipt of the report from the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme. This involves consideration of the funding arrangements for pupils at all phases of education.

I am carefully considering their recommendations and will comment in due course.

Schools: Staffing

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education how Boards of Governors can make staffing decisions when schools have not yet been notified of their budget allocations for the next financial year.

(AQO 3613/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Delegated school budgets are determined annually by the Department using the Common Funding Formula (CFF). Over the last two years, all Funding Authorities and schools have received correspondence on a number of occasions outlining planned funding levels for the Aggregated Schools Budget and estimates of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit element. This data, combined with schools own knowledge and projections of pupil numbers will have enabled them to make informed judgements on their projected budgets and staffing needs. All schools were notified of their delegated CFF budgets for 2013-14 on Friday 1 March 2013.

Voluntary Education Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to ensure parity of esteem for the voluntary education sector.

(AQO 3614/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Voluntary schools include Irish-medium schools; Catholic maintained schools; and grammar schools (Catholic and non-denominational). The Education Bill will establish the Education and Skills Authority, which will discharge its functions in relation to these and other types of school on the basis of equality.

Department for Employment and Learning

Department Amalgamation

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what communication he has had with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister over the proposal to amalgamate sections of his Department with other Departments.

(AQW 20252/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): My views on this matter are known to the First Minister and deputy First Minister and are on public record.

I support a rationalisation of the current Departments in Northern Ireland from twelve to eight from the next mandate of the Assembly onwards. However, I consider that any reallocation of functions should be based around the creation of what are essentially new Departments, rather than existing Departments subsuming new functions into existing organisational cultures and departmental corporate or operational plans.

The current Department for Employment and Learning may have been created as an amalgamation of functions from different Departments. However, today it is a coherent organisation based around a unified agenda of promoting and addressing the skill needs of the people of Northern Ireland, and helping them to find and sustain employment. Much of the current synergy within DEL would be lost in the event that its functions were dispersed. Indeed, there would be a very real danger that the Executive's ability to grow and transform the local economy at a time of critical importance would be substantially damaged.

For these reasons, I consider that virtually all of the functions of the Department should remain together either within a single Department or as part of a wider Department of the Economy.

While there may be a superficially attractive option to have a single Department addressing education from nursery to higher education, the more compelling requirement is to ensure that further education and higher education are directly meeting the needs of the economy. The present interface between DEL and DE is managed today and can continue to be managed under any future arrangements.

Moving Up Project

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning in relation to the Moving Up Project delivered by Praxis, to detail (i) what expansion is planned to allow more people with learning disabilities to become engaged, particularly those leaving special needs education at nineteen who presently have little or no provision as highlighted by the post-19 lobby group; (ii) how he intends to develop and promote this project and make it more widely available; and (iii) whether he has met or intends to meet with representatives of the post-19 lobby group.

(AQW 20302/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Moving Up project is supported through the Department's European Social Fund 2007-2013. The project was originally funded for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014 but the department has recently offered the project an extension of one year until 31 March 2015.

In addition to the one year extension the project has also been offered an increase in funding from the 75% allocation of original application costs to 100% for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2015. This should allow for the expansion of this project and therefore afford additional places for participants.

I have not met recently with representatives of the post-19 lobby group but would be happy to consider any request for such a meeting.

Opportunities for Graduates in the Technology Sector

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he plans to take to better promote opportunities for graduates in the technology sector in order to combat the brain drain of students leaving Northern Ireland.

(AQW 20392/11-15)

Dr Farry: Raising the profile of the employment opportunities available within Northern Ireland and ensuring that these opportunities are attractive to graduates is important if we are to make better use of the talent graduating from our local universities.

Skills shortages within the IT and Advanced Manufacturing sectors have been identified yet, at the same time, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, 23% of those who gain employment after qualifying from full time courses in Computer Science and Engineering and Technology from Northern Ireland Higher Institutions left Northern Ireland in 2010/11.

This is a key issue identified within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Strategy, 'Success through STEM' which also indicates that employers have a key role to play in improving the attractiveness of the relevant sectors and highlighting and creating attractive opportunities that exist locally. Government and business are working together to implement the recommendations from the Strategy.

Career attractiveness campaigns such as 'Bring IT On' are also vital in encouraging our young people to consider studying IT from school to Higher Education and ultimately seek employment in the sector in Northern Ireland.

I chair working groups looking at how skills needs of both the ICT and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services sectors can be addressed. These groups consist of employers from the sector, representatives from the further education colleges, universities, employer bodies and other Departments. Career attractiveness and how this can be improved is a major theme across both of these groups.

Through the work of the ICT Working Group my Department has helped to facilitate non STEM graduates to work in the technology sector through initiatives such as the Public/Private Sector ICT Apprenticeship and the Higher Level Apprenticeship pilot in ICT. Furthermore, both Queen's University and the University of Ulster are now offering postgraduate MSc courses aimed at non-IT graduates.

In conjunction with the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment I recently launched a £6million UK wide bursary fund which will pay for new graduates and employees to study Masters (MSc) level degrees in aerospace engineering. My Department will provide funding for 20 bursaries for students wishing to study in Northern Ireland. A second cohort of the Software Testers Academy has also recently commenced. Together with Bridge to Employment this offers pre-employment training for graduates to enable them to compete for graduate-level jobs.

Graduates of Non-Vocational Courses

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the initiatives in place to help graduates of non-vocational courses to develop the skills needed for entering the workplace.

(AQW 20398/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's first higher education strategy for Northern Ireland, Graduating to Success, recognises the importance of ensuring that higher education learners gain the skills, experiences and attributes needed to succeed within employment. One of the projects emanating from the Strategy aims to enhance the employability prospects of graduates and, by 2014, the higher education institutions will have adopted the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), which will record the extracurricular skills, activities and experiences of students. Other initiatives include increasing the number of students undertaking a period of work or study in another country and enabling all students to have the opportunity to undertake a work placement.

In addition, my Department and the universities have taken forward a number of programmes aimed at helping unemployed graduates gain work experience and/or new skills, particularly in areas which are experiencing skills shortages. These initiatives include the University of Ulster's Professional Experience Programme, Queen's University Belfast's Employability Framework, and my Department's Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP), INTRO programme and Software Testers' Academy.

The Graduate Acceleration Programme provides graduates with relevant work experience placements which will assist them to compete more effectively for jobs in the current climate and to prepare them for future job opportunities which may arise. INTRO is a graduate level management development programme designed to provide well equipped managers for businesses in Northern Ireland through a salaried work placement and off-the-job training in essential management skills, including leadership and team building, managing people, finance, marketing, business excellence, and strategic planning. Through my Department's Software Testers' Academy, non-Information Technology (IT) graduates are given the skills to become software testing professionals.

In addition, graduates can avail of my Department's other initiatives such as Work Connect, which is a voluntary employment programme targeted at those clients in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB) or Employment and Support Allowance, and the Youth Employment Scheme (YES), which targets 18 to 24 year old working age benefit claimants.

Careers Strategy Steering Group

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the work of the Careers Strategy Steering Group.

(AQW 20425/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Careers Strategy Steering Group was established in 2009 to oversee the implementation of 'Preparing for Success', the joint Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and Department of Education (DE) Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy and Implementation Plan. The group is jointly chaired by DEL and DE and currently includes representation from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry, business interests, universities and further education colleges, the schools sector, the Northern Ireland Schools and Colleges Careers Association and the Education and Training Inspectorate. The group is working to ensure the full and continuing implementation of 'Preparing for Success' within the wider policy context.

Progress to date has been good and at the most recent meeting of the Group in December 2012, it was noted that twelve of the eighteen action points had been achieved, with six on target to be achieved during 2013.

Actions achieved include:

- the provision of a Map and Guide to develop holistic CEIAG programmes, which has been issued to all schools, FE colleges and training organisations;
- the development of employability and work-related learning initiatives;
- the establishment of a STEM Careers Action Plan which has been embedded into the work in schools;
- the creation of an 'Information Champion' and a 'Careers Information Hub' to develop the quality and improve the accessibility of labour market information;
- the recruitment of additional careers advisers;
- the enhancement of partnerships between schools, further education and training providers and the Careers Service;
- enhanced provision for young people and adults vulnerable to social exclusion;
- improved service delivery to adults which has resulted in an 81% increase in adult clients using the service from 2009/10-2011/12; and

- the achievement of a key quality standard for DEL's Careers Service, the matrix Quality Standard Award.

Actions in progress include:

- the establishment of a Business Engagement Working Group;
- the improvement of facilities for the delivery of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance to young people and adults;
- the development of a Guide for Parents/Guardians to assist them with their child's future career plans;
- the development of impact evidence;
- the Careers Service's commitment to continuous professional development; and
- plans to review the current strategy in 2014.

Further Education Colleges: South Belfast Constituency

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of students who studied (i) French; (ii) German; and (iii) Spanish to GCSE level in Further Education Colleges in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20492/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further Education student enrolments from the South Belfast Constituency for (i) French; (ii) German; and Spanish GCSE level in each of the past 3 years (for which full-year data is available) is detailed overleaf.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
French	10	5	10
German	5	5	5
Spanish	10	15	10

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Note: To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached tables are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0.

Further Education Colleges: South Belfast Constituency

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of students who studied (i) French; (ii) German; and (iii) Spanish to A level in Further Education Colleges in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20493/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further Education student enrolments from the South Belfast Constituency for (i) French; (ii) German; and Spanish to A level in each of the past 3 years (for which full-year data is available) is detailed overleaf.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
French	15	15	10
German	5	5	5
Spanish	10	15	10

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Note: To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached tables are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0.

DEL: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 19855/11-15, whether the spend included hospitality by his Department's arm's length bodies in 2011/12 and if not to provide the figures.

(AQW 20503/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department's response to AQW 19855/11-15 did not include arm's length bodies. The total spend on hospitality by the Department's arm's length bodies in 2011/12 was £7,980.

Cost of Translating Departmental Letters and Documents

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the cost of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20508/11-15)

Dr Farry: The cost of translations for (i) Irish and (ii) each other language are set out in the table below.

Language	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Irish	£494	£6,270*	£4,794*	£4,215*	£5,182*
Arabic	-	-	-	£75	-
Bulgarian	-	-	-	£40	£170
Cantonese	-	£84	£1,308	-	£867
Czech	£70	£70	-	£189	-
German	-	-	-	£109	-
Hindi	£80	-	-	-	£90
Hungarian	-	-	-	£40	-
Italian	-	-	£465	£512	-
Latvian	-	-	£1,263	£810	£248
Lithuanian	£60	£64	£4,017	£7,567	£2,087
Mandarin	-	£341	£490	-	£886
Polish	£60	£1,494	£16,925	£9,261	£14,835
Portuguese	-	£94	£1,411	£2,122	£2,325
Romanian	-	-	£84	-	£170
Russian	-	-	-	£465	£170
Spanish	-	-	£899	-	-
Slovakian	£70	£2,057	£950	£879	£1,476
Tetum	-	-	-	-	£205
Ulster Scots	£70	£371	£256	-	£632
Urdu	£80	-	-	-	-
Yoruba	-	-	£170	-	-

Language	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total	£984	£10,845	£33,032	£26,284	£29,343

* included in this figure is an annual payment to the Student Loans Company (SLC) to facilitate Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) application forms and guidance notes being translated and printed in Irish. There may also be costs associated with SLC for translations into other languages, however, a breakdown of these costs is not currently available.

The figures for 2012 /2013 will not be available until July 2013. Further and Higher Education Teaching Staff

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail whether further and higher education institutes are subject to fair employment legislation and monitoring in relation to teaching staff.

(AQW 20513/11-15)

Dr Farry: All Further Education colleges and Higher Education institutions in Northern Ireland are subject to fair employment legislation and monitoring requirements, in relation to all staff, including teaching staff.

Moving Up Project, Praxis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the Moving Up Project delivered by Praxis and to detail (i) how many staff are employed; (ii) how many participants have taken part; (iii) what accreditation is offered to those who take part; (iv) the subjects and/or topics that are covered; and (v) how much funding has been provided for the project's duration.

(AQW 20545/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Moving Up project currently employs 8 full time staff and is further assisted by others on an unpaid, voluntary basis. The project is designed to support adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues and particularly those with complex and challenging needs. For the period September 2011 to 31 March 2012, the most recent available data from the project, a total of 22 participants have taken part. The project offers accredited qualifications up to NVQ level 3 in catering, hospitality, horticulture and ICT. The total available funding to the project over the period 1 March 2011 to 31 March 2015 is £1,888,411 (£1,162,099 from the European Social Fund and £726,312 from the Department for Employment and Learning).

Duplicate Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 19735/11-15, whether he is aware of any incidents of duplicate funding.

(AQW 20592/11-15)

Dr Farry: I remain aware of the potential for duplication of funding within the Employer Support Programme (ESP), which has also been highlighted recently, by the investigation, conducted by KPMG, on behalf of South West College.

Nevertheless, whilst the report was not conclusive and did not confirm beyond doubt, occurrences of double funding, my Department has instigated a comprehensive assurance exercise, across all six colleges, to ensure compliance with the original Letter of Offer and identify if there are any areas of concern.

Magee Campus of the University of Ulster: Daycare Facilities

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the measures he is taking to prevent the closure of the crèche at the University of Ulster Magee campus.

(AQW 20628/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster is an autonomous body and as such decisions relating to the operation of student services at the University are rightly a matter for the management of the University. However, my officials have raised this issue with the University and have been advised that the decision to close the university managed childcare facilities at the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013, was taken because the childcare provision has continued to sustain a significant annual deficit of approximately £114k and is no longer considered economically viable by the university.

My officials have also received assurances from the University that it remains committed to providing its current levels of direct financial support, which is the format preferred by the majority of University of Ulster students with childcare needs, in order to avail of childcare facilities closer to their homes.

In addition, my Department makes available a means tested Childcare Grant to full-time students who have dependent children in registered or approved childcare. In addition, full time students with dependent children may also be entitled to a means tested parent's learning allowance.

My officials have also been in contact with the Western Health and Social Care Trust and were informed that there are 12 day nurseries situated within a 3 mile radius of the Magee Campus. The average cost of a full-time childcare place ranges between £120 to £140 per week, which is in line with that charged by the University. The Trust indicated that there are also a number of childminders registered within the area reporting that they have vacancies within their full registered numbers.

I appreciate that the closure may inconvenience a number of students. However, the financial support package available to students for childcare will remain unchanged and there is evidence of alternative provision being available locally at a cost similar to that charged by the University for its on-site facility.

While the provision and management of student facilities is a matter for the universities, my Department's strategy for widening participation in higher education Access to Success will require each higher education provider to produce a detailed annual Widening Access and Participation Plan, which will clearly set out its activities and expenditure to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The strategy seeks to put in place a student centred approach with tailored support mechanisms to ensure the successful retention and progression of students, including those with dependents. My officials will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the closure does not impact adversely on my Department's objectives to widen participation in higher education.

Student Finance NI

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he can take in relation to Student Finance NI's policy of only funding the final two years of a degree programme where students have already been funded for a two year HND course.

(AQW 20675/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is my Department's policy, and indeed UK Government policy that public funding for student support for higher education should be targeted, in the main, towards students entering higher education for the first time. The reason for applying previous study rules is to target already stretched resources more effectively at those students who have not yet experienced higher education, particularly those from lower income backgrounds.

Nevertheless an eligible student undertaking a three year degree programme, having already completed a two year HNC/HND course, will be eligible to apply for full funding for years 2 and 3 of the degree. In respect of year 1 of the degree, and in accordance with the Student Support Regulations (as amended) the student is eligible to apply for a maintenance loan only and supplementary grants, if applicable.

I can confirm I have no current plans to change this policy of targeting student support towards students entering higher education for the first time.

Magee Campus of the University of Ulster: Daycare Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 20257/11-15, (i) from which stream of European funding was the grant for constructing the daycare facility at the Magee campus; (ii) what was the application number; and (iii) to detail the terms of the grant, including for how long the building must be used for its intended purpose.

(AQW 20714/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The crèche at Magee Campus of the University of Ulster was supported under the Northern Ireland Single Document – European Regional Development Fund Training Infrastructure Measure.
- (ii) The award was based on an application made by the organisation dated the 24 May 1999.
- (iii) The letter of offer was a lengthy and detailed document covering many aspects of the agreement between the University of Ulster and T+EA. e.g. Project details, Definitions, Financial amount, Implementation, approvals, tendering, match funding, etc. In particular it stipulated, under Retention / Disposal of Assets, that the buildings were required to be maintained for the use, as detailed in the letter, for a 20 year period. Any proposed changes to the use of the premises within that period must therefore to be raised with this Department.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what arrangements have been put in place to ensure that students who attend Belfast Metropolitan College have immediate access to hardship loans.

(AQW 20921/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides funding to all further education colleges, through the Further Education Hardship Fund, to provide support to learners who are experiencing financial difficulty while enrolled on accredited professional and technical courses.

As colleges are often required to consider a large number of applications, my Department's guidance on the administration and application of the Hardship Fund allows for the provision of interim emergency loans in order to meet exceptional and urgent needs. Any such loan may be repayable when the full Hardship Fund application has been assessed.

Whilst my Department provides guidelines regarding eligibility and sets out the general parameters for hardship assistance, each college, including Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC), is responsible for the day to day administration of its own hardship fund and the use of this assistance is subject to normal audit scrutiny. My officials have confirmed with BMC that it offers hardship loans to students in line with my Department's guidance and that it actively promotes accessibility to all student support funds, including the Hardship Fund. This includes information provided in the College's Student Support Handbook and website, during the induction process for new students and internal promotion through posters and social media, including Facebook and the new Students Union website.

Regional Colleges: Student Numbers

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students were attending regional colleges in January 2013.

(AQO 3621/11-15)

Dr Farry: The latest provisional data at 8 February 2013 is around 95,500 students on both professional and technical courses and non-vocational courses at Northern Ireland's further education colleges in the 2012/13 academic year.

This figure includes almost 80,000 students on professional and technical enrolments, and of these:

- 17,765 had attended Belfast Metropolitan College;

- 12,170 had attended Northern Regional College;
- 11,855 had attended North West Regional College;
- 12,770 had attended South Eastern Regional College;
- 14,945 had attended Southern Regional College; and
- 10,345 had attended South West College.

I would also highlight the following in relation to the student profile in 2013:

- there were 29,395 students following broad STEM courses which represents 37% of students;
- male/female participation was 48% and 52% respectively;
- 46% of students were aged 19 and under;
- 26% of students were on full-time courses, with the remainder on part-time provision;
- 41% of students were on level 2 provision, 27% on Level 3 provision, and 11% on higher education provision delivered in colleges; and
- there were 17,570 Essential Skills enrolments.

I would ask you to note that this information is provisional, and has not been validated by the Department. Most of the Department's analysis of colleges' performance focuses on complete full-year validated data, which for the 2012/13 academic year will be available in November 2013.

I would also advise that detailed analysis of colleges' performance in the 2011/12 academic year, in terms of enrolments and learner retention and achievement, is available through two detailed statistical bulletins which were published on the Department's website on 6 December 2012.

PROGRESS Programme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why an application under the Progress programme, as part of the EU call for social policy experimentation, was not progressed.
(AQO 3622/11-15)

Dr Farry: PROGRESS is the European Union's employment and social solidarity programme working alongside the European Social Fund. It promotes networking and sharing of information to improve policy and practice throughout Member States.

A consortium led by Belfast City Council and consisting of GEMS, Upper Springvale Development Trust, the Belfast Area Partnership Boards, Belfast Metropolitan College and my Department together made preparations to submit an application to the European Commission under the PROGRESS programme's call for proposals regarding Social Policy Experimentations.

A total resource of €1 million was potentially available under the Moving Youth into Employment theme. It was intended that my Department would submit the joint application on behalf of the consortium. Under the proposals Belfast City Council would provide the work placements, the community groups would recruit and mentor the young people and the college would deliver the training element. The closing date for applications was 15 February 2013.

On 12 February, the lead partner, Belfast City Council, sought final clarification on eligible costs from the PROGRESS information point in the European Commission. The response, which followed a series of previous positive engagements, indicated that the costs for the apprentices' salaries could not be included in the application. This issue had not been previously identified in earlier discussions with the Commission. Given that this issue could not be resolved before the application deadline, Belfast City Council with agreement from the other partners decided not to proceed with the application.

I want to assure the House that my Department will continue to actively promote and assist the participation of Northern Ireland organisations involved in employment and training, whether public, private or third sector, in accessing funding and resources from European Union Programmes.

FG Wilson: European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on his discussions with the British Government on securing funds for FG Wilson workers through the European Globalisation Fund. **(AQO 3623/11-15)**

Dr Farry: I am aware that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a source of funding for Member States to help workers who have been made redundant as a result of globalisation or the current economic crisis.

To date my department has not availed of this fund as it would not have provided any additional support to workers made redundant in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the number of redundancies in any particular case has been lower than the 500 minimum required to trigger a bid to the fund.

I have been considering an application to the fund in respect of the FG Wilson redundancies. This has been the subject of ongoing discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions as applications to the fund have to be made through that Department. However, rather than waiting to achieve agreement on an application being submitted, my Department's Redundancy Service acted to put measures in place to help support affected workers immediately after the redundancies were announced. An application to the fund would not have provided any additional support to workers and would have taken substantially more time. Some months later, it is not yet clear whether the F G Wilson case would meet the eligibility criteria, so moving ahead to put in the necessary support ourselves has proven to be the right course of action.

EGF does not enjoy a discrete budget, and any call on it displaces other funding, with a consequential opportunity cost. In addition, we understand that the EU would require the production of a formal scheme and detailed monitoring, verification, reporting and audit arrangements. The administration costs could be significant. There may well be no net advantage to either the UK or Northern Ireland.

Nevertheless we continue to liaise with colleagues in Whitehall to improve our understanding of the opportunities.

Universities: Care-experienced Young People

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department plans to develop a strategy for universities to ensure that they give full access to care experienced young people.

(AQO 3624/11-15)

Dr Farry: "Access to Success", my Department's regional strategy to widen participation in higher education, has identified that young people leaving care in Northern Ireland are under-represented in higher education.

The strategy aims to develop improved mechanisms to gather more comprehensive and reliable data pertaining to access to, and participation in, higher education. This will make it easier to identify individuals from a disadvantaged background, including care leavers, and should improve the targeting of available resources to support those with greatest need.

The Strategy includes a centralised programme to raise awareness of the benefits of higher education among those who are under-represented. Additional "outreach" projects will expand the range of attainment-raising programmes in schools, colleges and the wider community. Additional support measures will also be developed to sustain the continuing participation of less advantaged students through targeted bursaries, fee waivers and other forms of direct support.

In addition, my Department encourages all Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions to seek the Buttle UK "Quality Mark for Care Leavers" accreditation. I am delighted that two of our Further Education Regional Colleges, as well as the University of Ulster, have achieved accredited status.

In academic year 2012-13 my Department is providing widening participation premium funding of almost £1.3m to Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland to assist with the additional costs of recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from a care background, and to encourage the retention of such students through the provision on-course support structures such as, mentoring and tutoring.

Steps 2 Success

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the review of the Steps to Success scheme.

(AQO 3625/11-15)

Dr Farry: Steps 2 Success is my Department's new employment programme which will commence in 2014, replacing the current Steps to Work programme.

There were over 80 responses from a range of organisations to the public consultation exercise which was undertaken from July to October 2012 to gather the views of interested parties. As might be expected, there was variation in the numbers agreeing and disagreeing with each of the Department's proposals.

While there has been broad support for many of the proposed elements of Steps 2 Success, there are key areas where further consideration has been necessary. These mainly concern the contract area, the number of contracts and the funding model. As a result, changes to the original programme proposals are being considered.

A detailed evaluation of the responses has been carried out by my officials and a final report has been produced. The report has been externally reviewed and validated by an independent organisation, to provide assurance that it accurately reflects the Department's assessment of the responses received. The evaluation report will be published on the Department's website in April 2013.

Further work is now ongoing to ensure that the final design of the programme will deliver the best outcome for participants, and ensure value for money. It is also important that the programme design provides a realistic and sustainable opportunity for the providers who will be contracted to deliver Steps 2 Success. The final design of the programme will be announced in May.

The proposed way forward demonstrates that the Department has listened to, and carefully considered, the feedback received from the consultation exercise. The revised proposals blend some of the successful elements of Steps to Work with the best of what is being delivered elsewhere. The Department believes that this unique hybrid will serve well all the unemployed of Northern Ireland.

Universities: Income from Local Businesses

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the income that universities generate from local businesses.

(AQO 3626/11-15)

Dr Farry: Co-operation between Northern Ireland's universities and businesses continues to have a significant impact on the local economy. A report published recently by my Department, based on survey data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, reveals that Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions generated income of £102 million from business and community interaction in 2010/11. This represents a record achievement for local institutions.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency estimates that, at a minimum, around £20 million of this income has been earned through direct engagement with businesses both large and small, and from both within and outside the region.

Local institutions have outperformed their UK peers in many key areas such as collaborative research, income from intellectual property and the number of sustainable spin-off companies.

This positive performance reflects well on programmes funded by my Department which seek to promote strong relationships between local universities and businesses. These include the Connected programme and the Higher Education Innovation Fund.

It is encouraging to note that, even in these difficult economic times, there is an increasing awareness amongst commercial business of the economic advantages that can be brought by closer engagement with our universities.

Youth Employment

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the numbers of young people who are unemployed.

(AQO 3627/11-15)

Dr Farry: The February Labour Market Report indicates that the unemployment rate for 18 to 24 year olds in Northern Ireland is 20.4%. This compares to the general unemployment rate of 7.8%. However, this does not mean that 1 in 5 young people are unemployed.

Many young people are students and are therefore gaining qualifications to help them secure employment in future. Having said this, in response to the unemployment rate for young people, I have put in place initiatives to help unemployed young people.

Members are aware of the Youth Employment Schemes and NEETS Strategy “Pathways to Success”.

As at 1 March, over 1,000 employer agreements have been signed to offer opportunities under the Youth Employment Scheme. To date there have been 1,300 opportunities secured with 328 young people availing of the scheme, of which 150 are in full-time employment. In addition we are funding up to 500 temporary employment opportunities under the Department’s ‘First Start’ initiative of which 281 have been filled.

I secured Executive endorsement to the ‘Pathways to Success’ Strategy, and a substantial funding package of just over £25 million is now in place to fund several new initiatives under the Strategy until 2015. These include:

- Collaboration and Innovation Fund to help disadvantaged 16 to 24 year olds improve their employability by gaining economically-relevant skills. Eligible participants will receive Pathways for Young People Education Maintenance Allowance;
- Community Family Support Programme to help the most disadvantaged families in targeted areas, by supporting parents and enabling all family members to re-engage with education, employment or training;
- Pathways Allowance to ensure that there is an effective incentive in place for eligible young people to participate in projects supported by the European Social Fund; and
- Community-Based Access Programme to support 16 to 18 year olds in progressing into further education or government-funded training.

Employment: High-tech Sector

Mr McAleer asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department encourages young people to embrace opportunities in the hi-tech sector.

(AQO 3628/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Government Strategy for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) contains recommendations to encourage more young people to study STEM subjects and pursue employment in hi-tech areas.

In support of this, careers advisers use labour market information to ensure that people receive the most up to date careers advice on suitable opportunities, including those in the hi-tech and other priority skills sectors.

I chair Working Groups in both Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services and ICT. These groups include employers, further education and university representatives and other Departments. In each case the purpose of the group is to agree a co-ordinated approach to addressing the skills needs of the sectors and put in place relevant interventions.

Career attractiveness campaigns such as 'Bring IT On', targeted at encouraging young people to consider a career in IT here, have a role to play in highlighting opportunities within the sector.

The Software Testers' Academy, aimed at converting unemployed non-IT graduates into software testing professionals, has had two cohorts of graduates through the 15 week Academy programme. As a result, 40 graduates are now in permanent employment in the IT sector.

In collaboration with several local ICT employers my officials have developed a pilot programme in Public/Private ICT apprenticeship which has recruited 32 people into ICT positions in various software and infrastructure roles.

A higher level ICT apprenticeship pilot commenced in October 2012 at the South West College. The aim is to raise the skill levels of apprentices and upon completion they may progress directly to higher education.

Furthermore, our colleges have outstanding facilities to support our young people. This includes the award winning STEM Centre at South West College, and the recently opened state of the art technology suite at the North West Regional College, with specialist workshops and project rooms for construction, engineering and ICT.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she will place a copy of the Ombudsman's report of December 2012, on her Department's oversight of the Presbyterian Mutual Society, in the Northern Ireland Assembly Library.

(AQW 19004/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The Assembly Ombudsman's final report on my Department's oversight of the Presbyterian Mutual Society was provided in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. The report remains confidential and therefore, it is not appropriate for it be placed in the Northern Ireland Assembly Library.

DETI Information Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many staff are employed in her Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20215/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Currently there are 4 information officers and 2 administrative staff who provide a public relations service to the Minister and the Department. The department's information service provides a wide range of communication services and support within DETI. This includes handling media queries, advertising, media monitoring, website management, event management and publicising the work of the department to an external audience through the media.

The total cost for staff in 2011/12 was £257,431.

Upper Bann Constituency Job Promotion

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs have been promoted in the Upper Bann constituency, as indicated in Programme for Government commitments, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 20330/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the number of new jobs promoted by Invest NI in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last two full financial years.

INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED IN UPPER BANN PCA (2010-11 TO 2011-12)

Year	New Jobs Promoted
2010-11	116
2011-12	142
Total	258

In addition, it is estimated that Invest NI promoted 101 jobs in 2010-11 and 86 in 2011-12 through the Enterprise Development Programme (which has since been replaced, in October 2012, by the Regional Start Initiative) delivered in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises: Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount and type of grant aid made available to small and medium-sized enterprises in the Upper Bann constituency, in each of the last two years.

(AQW 20331/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the amount of assistance Invest NI has offered to small and medium sized enterprises located in the Upper Bann Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in each of the last two full financial years. The assistance has been broken down by the type of activities that supported projects propose to undertake.

Invest NI Assistance Offered (£million) To SMEs in Upper Bann PCA (2010-11 to 2011-12)

Type of Project	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Employment Related Activities	0.91	0.72	1.63
Product Development	3.99	4.75	8.74
Skills and Leadership	0.41	0.18	0.58
Trade Development	0.08	0.07	0.15
Total	5.38	5.72	11.11

Notes:

- 1 SMEs are defined as companies with less than 250 employees. .
- 2 Totals may not add due to rounding.

Northern Ireland Tourism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 18863/11-15, to outline the priority markers for tourism to Northern Ireland and whether Tourism Ireland can adopt

a more flexible approach when sports opportunities arise that could act as a motivator for potential tourists.

(AQW 20362/11-15)

- Mrs Foster: Tourism Ireland's major promotional effort this year is focused on the four key markets for tourism to Northern Ireland - Great Britain, the United States, Germany and France. In addition, it is rolling out trade marketing and publicity campaigns in a further eighteen markets but with lower levels of resource and investment.
- Sports-related tourism has emerged as a very significant element of the global travel business in recent years. Tourism Ireland works closely with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and others to highlight key sporting events as a "hook" to attract potential visitors from overseas.
- The scale of Tourism Ireland's marketing activity around football fixtures such as the 2014 World Cup qualifiers depends on the location of the match, the potential size of the visitor market and availability of access links to Northern Ireland.

North West 200 and World Police and Fire Games 2013 Funding

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the funding allocated to the (i) North West 200; and (ii) World Police and Fire Games in 2013.

(AQW 20423/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), has offered £70,000 to the 2013 International North West 200; and
- (ii) Neither my Department nor NITB has allocated funding to the World Police & Fire Games 2013. This event is directly supported by The Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL).

North West 200 and World Police and Fire Games 2013 Funding

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reasons for the wide gap in funding allocated by her Department in 2013 to the (i) North West 200; and (ii) World Police and Fire Games, and whether it is departmental policy to provide funding for one off events.

(AQW 20424/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) The North West 200 applied for funding through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) International Tourism Events Scheme and was scored using the same criteria and scoring matrix impartially utilised for all applications. The North West 200 application was successful and received an award of £70,000.
- (ii) Neither my Department nor NITB has allocated funding to the World Police & Fire Games 2013. This event is directly supported by The Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL).

Air Passenger Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefit of the abolition of Air Passenger Duty to the tourism sector.

(AQW 20437/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The abolition of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on direct long haul flights has helped to retain the United Airlines Belfast/Newark service, our only direct link to the United States. This service provides important business linkages to the US and is also important in terms of in-bound tourism. The US continues to be one of the most important markets for tourism to Northern Ireland. American visitors stay longer, spend more than the average visitor and tour more extensively while they are here.

While final visitor numbers for 2012 are not currently available, provisional estimates for the January-September 2012 period indicate that the number visitors from North America to Northern Ireland grew by +18% when compared with the same period in 2011. The direct link to the US made possible by the Belfast/Newark service will undoubtedly have helped to contribute to this increase.

Direct air access to key markets is vital for Northern Ireland's competitiveness and direct air links benefit the promotion of business linkages, enterprise development and in-bound tourism. My Department is therefore considering what more can be done to improve our connectivity in terms of air access. This will involve looking at options that include both APD and non-APD measures. Obviously, under EU rules, the complete removal of Air Passenger Duty for Northern Ireland, in the absence of a similar move across all of the UK, would have material financial consequences for the Northern Ireland block grant, estimated to be £60 - £90 million per annum.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefits that the abolition of Air Passenger Duty would bring in terms of establishing new flight routes.
(AQW 20438/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The abolition of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on direct long haul flights has made Northern Ireland a viable option for many long haul airlines. My Department, through Tourism Ireland, is working with Belfast International Airport to maximise the opportunity presented by the elimination of direct long haul APD and to attract new long haul services. In particular, I believe the abolition of direct long haul APD makes the re-instatement of a direct service to Canada a real possibility.

Direct air access to key markets is vital for Northern Ireland's competitiveness and direct air links benefit the promotion of business linkages, enterprise development and in-bound tourism. My Department is therefore considering what more can be done to improve our connectivity in terms of air access. This will involve looking at options that include both APD and non-APD measures. Obviously, under EU rules, the complete removal of Air Passenger Duty for Northern Ireland, in the absence of a similar move across all of the UK, would have material financial consequences for the Northern Ireland block grant, estimated to be £60 - £90 million per annum.

Cost of Translating Departmental Letters and Documents

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the cost of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20455/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) DETI did not spend any money on translating departmental letters and documents into Irish during the last five years.
- (ii) The cost of translations into any other language in each of the last five years is outlined below.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Chinese	£272.75 (Net)	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0
Polish	£ 0	£50 (Net)	£145 (Net)	£ 40 (Net)	£ 0
Portugese	£ 0	£ 0	£ 35 (Net)		£ 0

Farm Safety Advertising Campaign

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 16385/11-15, for an update on the work of the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland on work to commission a farm safety advertising campaign.

(AQW 20458/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), as part of the Farm Safety Partnership, has been leading on the delivery of a new farm safety advertising campaign.

Campaign development is now nearing completion and it is due to be launched on 25th March 2013. It will be presented under the banner of Stop and Think SAFE. SAFE represents the four main dangers on farms - Slurry, Animals, Falls and Equipment.

The campaign aims to be thought-provoking, to get farmers to look at their behaviours in a new and motivating way, and to encourage them to adopt a safer approach to working on their farms. It is also aimed at those who can influence their behaviour - wives, daughters, sons, other relatives and friends.

However, the new campaign should be seen as part of the wider drive to combat the high death toll on Northern Ireland's farms. As part of this effort, HSENI's ongoing farm safety visits campaign, which was launched last November, is on target to visit more than 1,000 farms before the end of this month. Backed by the Farm Safety Partnership, the initiative is designed to help ensure that the farming community is fully aware of the dangers involved with farm work and of the latest safety guidance and support available on farm safety.

Happy Days International Beckett Festival 2012

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) whether an economic appraisal was carried out into the Happy Days International Beckett Festival in 2012; (ii) what the results showed; (iii) what other sources and quantities of public funding the event organisers secured; and (iv) what changes have been made for this year's festival.

(AQW 20496/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) In line with NITB's Events Fund procedures, a full economic appraisal is only undertaken when the NITB contribution sought is in excess of £100,000. As the level of NITB funding sought in this case falls below this threshold, a full economic appraisal was not carried out. However in accordance with Events Fund guidelines all applications are subjected to a rigorous assessment process whereby applications are scored against their ability to meet 10 key criteria.
- (ii) Not applicable - an economic appraisal was not carried out.
- (iii) As with all other applications, indicative information provided within the application process will not be confirmed until post-event evaluation information is received from the organisers.
- (iv) This information is not available to either my Department or The Northern Ireland Tourist Board at this time.

Foreign Direct Investment in North Antrim

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department has taken to increase foreign direct investment in North Antrim.

(AQW 20539/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI works closely with councils and other stakeholders to review the features and benefits of each local area in order to maximise opportunities for economic growth.

As noted by the Independent Review of Economic Policy, it is important to allow companies the scope to locate where they can operate most profitably. To do otherwise would be detrimental to the chances of securing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for Northern Ireland.

Globally, Northern Ireland competes for FDI against some much larger nation states. In order to maximise our presence in overseas markets, Invest NI focuses on selling Northern Ireland as a whole.

However my Department, including 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. Ultimately, the investor will make the decision as to where they locate based on their specific business needs and having weighed up the options available to them.

Invest NI has recently developed and 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. Including Ballymoney and Ballymena District Councils have been invited to participate in using this tool to input with a local proposition for their area.

Beds Available to Tourists: South Down Constituency

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many beds are currently available to tourists visiting the South Down constituency.

(AQW 20541/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

4087 beds are currently available to tourists in the Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Council areas collectively.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board does not hold this information on a constituency basis.

Runkerry Golf Course and Hotel

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following the announcement that Runkerry golf course and hotel complex is to proceed, for her assessment of the benefits that will result for tourism in the Causeway Coast area and Northern Ireland as a whole.

(AQW 20556/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The development will bring economic benefits and much needed jobs to the Causeway Coast and Glens destination and indeed throughout wider Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has invested significantly to develop the Causeway Coastal Route visitor experience while encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more.

A five star hotel and accompanying links golf course will attract tourists from all over the world, particularly from North America, which is a primary target market for resorts of this type. The development at Runkerry will significantly boost our reputation as a first class golf destination, building on the unprecedented success of last year's Irish Open at Royal Portrush

Underused European Funding

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) what her Department is doing to encourage the enhanced uptake of underused European funding streams; and (ii) what support structures are being established to (a) improve the capability of businesses to draw down such funding; and (b) maximise collaboration opportunities between suitable small and medium-sized enterprises.

(AQW 20569/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) My Department continues to encourage applications for the remaining funding available under the 7th Framework Programme and from its successor Horizon 2020. Both Invest NI's Collaborative R&D Support Service and InterTradeIreland raise awareness of existing opportunities and provide

advice, guidance, partner searching facilities and financial support to businesses wishing to participate.

- (ii) (a) My Department continues to take the lead in improving the support available to those who wish to participate in EU Innovation Programmes, with a continued focus on SMEs. The recently launched Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Action Plan outlines the steps that DETI will be taking during 2013 to develop and implement a new Horizon 2020 Network. The Network of Contact Points will be coordinated by the Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Manager, who is based in DETI. The Contact Points will be working directly with applicants, including those from SMEs, to develop and increase their capability and expertise as well as in the identification of collaborative opportunities. Invest NI's Collaborative R&D Support Service also includes a Brussels-based Executive who provides additional support to R&D stakeholders.

In terms of developing the capacity and capability of companies to participate in higher-level, strategic and competitive R&D programmes, Invest NI has a wide range of support mechanisms available, ranging from small interventions such as innovation vouchers right through to large Grant for R&D offers which includes higher levels of support for collaborative projects involving industrial research. In the years 2011-15 Invest NI will secure £764m investment in innovation and R&D by assisting businesses to move up the so-called innovation escalator.

Furthermore, Northern Ireland representation in Brussels has been enhanced with the appointment of four Barroso Desk Officers. The Barroso Taskforce Working Group focuses on four EU thematic priorities, Innovation and Technology, Competitiveness and Employment, Climate Change and Energy, and Social Cohesion. DETI has an interest in the first three of these priorities and is represented on the Working Groups established to take forward these themes.

- (b) Horizon 2020 aims to promote excellence across the European Research Area, with projects selected in open competition and following an independent evaluation process. To satisfy the "excellence" criteria, the most successful collaborations generally involve partnerships between academia or research organisations and businesses.

It should also be noted that a parallel priority must be to draw down all the Structural Funds currently allocated to Northern Ireland. I can confirm that the ERDF allocation of €306m under the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 will be fully utilised and drawn down by eligible projects in support of projects focused on enhancing the Northern Ireland economy and achieving Programme for Government objectives and targets.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the proposed dates and timescale of the Giro D'Italia 2014 in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 20597/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Grande Partenza or 'Big Start' of the Giro d'Italia, one of professional cycling's three Grand Tour events, will take place over three days from 10-12 May 2014.

The exact timings of each day are not yet finalised.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the areas in North Down that will be incorporated in the route of the Giro d'Italia 2014.

(AQW 20622/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Grande Partenza or 'Big Start' of the Giro d'Italia, one of professional cycling's three Grand Tour events will take place over three days from 10-12 May 2014.

The exact route has yet to be finalised. This is the remit of RCS Sport who will work with the teams to develop the route. RCS Sport has many years experience designing cycling routes that will be challenging for the cyclists and entertaining for the thousands of spectators and TV viewers to watch.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is of course keen that as much of Northern Ireland is showcased as is possible, depending on the feasibility as judged by RCS Sport.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether hydraulic fracturing will be permitted ahead of the publication of the final Environmental Protection Agency and Northern Ireland Environment Agency report.

(AQW 20644/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible for me to provide a definitive answer to this question as my Department is only one of the Regulatory Authorities involved in the permitting procedures related to applications for Hydraulic Fracturing for shale gas in Northern Ireland.

To date, DETI has not received any application involving hydraulic fracturing for shale gas in Northern Ireland. Should such an application be received, decisions by my Department would be based on the best scientific evidence available to officials at time of application. Proposed operations would be assessed within the context of international best practice and standards, including those that will emerge from the new Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil currently being established by the Department of Energy and Climate Change

Based on the current timeframe it is anticipated that, at the very least, the interim reports and main findings of the Environmental Protection Agency research programme would be available before any application to carry out hydraulic fracturing for shale gas would be submitted to the regulatory authorities in Northern Ireland.

Shale Gas Extraction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment at what stage of the granting of permission for shale gas extraction is the impact of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of extraction taken into account.

(AQW 20645/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible for me to provide a definitive answer to this question as my Department is only one of the Regulatory Authorities involved in the permitting procedures related to applications for shale gas extraction in Northern Ireland.

Whilst all Departments, including my own, have a collective responsibility for achieving the Northern Ireland Executive's agreed targets for carbon emissions reductions, the Department of the Environment has the lead role on climate change policy including Green House Gas emissions and air quality.

Restoration of Listed Buildings

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what grant aid is available from her Department, or its arm's-length bodies, for the restoration of listed buildings.

(AQW 20691/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI does not have any specific grant scheme for the restoration of listed buildings.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board provides funding support for tourism capital projects through the Tourism Development Scheme (TDS). If a promoter chose to use a listed building for a Tourism project then, potentially, restoration costs could attract funding as part of the overall project costs.

Invest NI may also be able to consider restoration costs as part of an investment or employment project located in a listed building.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, an Agency of the Department of the Environment, manage a grant scheme which is available for repairs of all types of secular listed buildings and also for churches at Grade B+ and above. Related professional fees can also be assisted and enhanced

grant may be applicable to owners of listed buildings in receipt of income based job seekers allowance, Income Support or Guaranteed Pension Credit.

Giro d'Italia 2014

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail whether a proposed route has been agreed for the Giro D'Italia 2014, and if it has been agreed, to provide details of the route.

(AQW 20772/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 20622/11-15.

Warmer Home Discount Scheme

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether he is considering introducing the Warmer Home Discount Scheme which exists in England; and when this will take place.

(AQW 20803/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Warm Homes Discount Scheme is covered by legislation which does not apply in Northern Ireland and there are currently no plans to introduce a similar scheme here.

The introduction of such a scheme is akin to a social tariff as energy companies in Northern Ireland would almost certainly be entitled to pass the cost of such a scheme on to other customers (as they are in Great Britain). As such, the full implications of introducing such a scheme in Northern Ireland would need to be endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive. Aside from requiring legislation, careful consideration would also have to be given to the proportion of customers to benefit from such a scheme and which customers would pay more as a result. There may also be issues around administration costs and data protection that would need to be explored.

Department of the Environment

National Parks

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment, given the large attendance at the public meeting in Ballycastle to protest against National Parks, how will this be factored into the consultation process.

(AQW 16871/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I have noted the press reports of the Ballycastle meeting and met with the UFU in early December to discuss the issue. In addition, I plan to continue with my programme of meetings with those individuals and organisations both for and against national parks. When I have considered the differing perspectives, I will reach a judgement on the way forward.

There are voices in favour and against the proposal for national parks. The model that I have been talking about is "Designation without further regulation". Some continue to portray this version of a national park – even when they have been advised otherwise – as coming with more regulation. That would not be the case, be it on planning, or livestock or crops etc.

I will continue to argue and advocate for rural development. With 64,000 out of work, with 84,000 on the far side of welfare reform, with Prime Minister Cameron's approach to Europe, I would be negligent if I did not "turn over every stone" to develop rural work opportunities.

My argument is that, around our heritage, jobs can grow. This is most evident in our rural areas and it is there that most opportunities exist. I will not give up on this argument. Others should be making the argument with me.

The views of all will be heard, including but not only those who attend public meetings. After my ongoing private meetings across the range of views, I will decide how best to proceed. Clearly, I will not bury my head. I will acknowledge the strong opposition, however that has come about, but also acknowledge the strong support.

National Parks

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his proposals for introducing National Parks.

(AQO 2923/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks . I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity?

I would be failing in my duty if I did not attempt to answer this question. What I have been talking about is ‘designation without regulation’, a model with no new planning, livestock, crop or other restrictions. It is unfortunate that while I have repeatedly said this, there are some who continue to wrongly tell people otherwise, creating unjustified fears.

I will continue to work to identify job and economic opportunities in the rural area. In talking with people I believe a good way forward can be found. I hope others will work with me so do. On the far side of this conversation, I will propose how to proceed, acknowledging the principle that there cannot be imposition of a National Park.

National Parks

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the scale of the opposition in the Causeway and Glens area to a national park in that area, as demonstrated at the public meeting in Ballycastle on 14 November 2012, whether he will now acknowledge that the proposition is untenable.

(AQW 17023/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks. I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity?

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I will continue to work to identify job and economic opportunities in the rural area. In talking with people I believe a good way forward can be found. I hope others will work with me so do. On the far side of this conversation, I will propose how to proceed, acknowledging the principle that there cannot be imposition of a National Park.

National Parks

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the plans for National Parks.

(AQO 2930/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks. I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of

the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity?

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National Parks

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will review his proposals on the development of National Parks.

(AQW 17539/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks. I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity?

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National Parks

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment should the current and second suggested region for a National Park not proceed, whether identification of another region will be considered.

(AQW 17845/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks. I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity?

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is unfortunate that while I have repeatedly said this, there are some who continue to wrongly tell people otherwise, creating unjustified fears.

I will continue to work to identify job and economic opportunities in the rural area. In talking with people I believe a good way forward can be found. I hope others will work with me so do. On the far side of this conversation, I will propose how to proceed, acknowledging the principle that there cannot be imposition of a National Park.

The issue is therefore about the principle and the practice. Whatever about the outcome of these matters, it is my firm view that the scale and beauty of the natural and built heritage in NI is unsurpassed on these island which demands of us the requirement to protect and positively develop.

Flying of the Union Flag

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he proposes to take to encourage councils, which fail to fly the Union flag, to review this policy in deference to the cultural affinity of the Unionist minority within their council area and to diminish their sense of exclusion.

(AQW 18034/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Councils are independent of central government and are accountable to their local electorate and ratepayers.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that all public authorities, including district councils, in carrying out their functions in Northern Ireland, shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between certain specified individuals and groups, and have desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and religious group.

All district councils are directly answerable to the Equality Commission in respect of their Section 75 Duties. I understand that the Equality Commission has written to Newry and Mourne district Council about its decision. I do not intend to intervene in this process.

I believe that the principles enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement need to be upheld, when it comes to political and cultural identities. This means that NI will look and feel differently than may have been the case previously. This is what respect for difference is about and it does not mean that any community should consider that they have won out or lost out or have a sense of exclusion. If this is the approach adopted issues of flags, emblems and symbols can be addressed – in the absence of this, it becomes very difficult.

If the right approach is deployed, it can mean that political and cultural affiliation can be addressed in an agreed balanced even generous way, not out of deference but out of respect. As I have said previously, if I believe that as Local Government Minister that I should act to move the situation forward, I will consider doing so.

National Parks

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the consultation on National Parks.
(AQO 3289/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks . I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity.

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I will continue to work to identify job and economic opportunities in the rural area. In talking with people I believe a good way forward can be found. I hope others will work with me so do. On the far side of this conversation, I will propose how to proceed, acknowledging the principle that there cannot be imposition of a National Park.

National Parks

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has now ended his consideration of National Park proposals.

(AQO 3293/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have said, and I repeat, that I am taking stock on National Parks . I am listening to the many voices for and those against, as well as to the undecided. I am holding a series of private meetings with a wide range of people and organisations to hear the full range of views. At the heart of the issue is this: our heritage – built, natural, archaeological and Christian – is a big part of the quality of our lives and has a big role to play in relation to jobs and tourism going forward. Unemployment is growing. On the far side of Welfare reform 20,000 more people may be officially out of work. The challenge to me and to all Ministers is to ask ourselves – what more can we do to help people who are out of work into work, giving them jobs and dignity.

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Planning Applications for Business Premises Extensions or Expansion

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for business premises extensions or expansion were (i) refused; and (ii) approved under (a) PPS 4; and (b) PPS 5 since June 2011, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 20233/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the period June 2011 to September 2012, 294 applications for extension or alterations to commercial premises have been decided, of which 98% were approved. Of the 6 refused, 2 of these were refused under PPS4 and 1 was refused under PPS5. This is broken down by Council district in table 1 below.

TABLE 1:THE NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSIONS/ALTERATIONS¹ THAT WERE DECIDED BETWEEN JUNE 2011 AND SEPTEMBER 2012²

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused			
		Number	Approval Rate (%)	Refusal reason ³			Total
				PPS 4	PPS 5	Other	
Antrim	3	3	100	0	0	0	0
Ards	14	14	100	0	0	0	0
Armagh	6	6	100	0	0	0	0

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused			
		Number	Approval Rate (%)	Refusal reason ³			Total
				PPS 4	PPS 5	Other	
Ballymena	20	20	100	0	0	0	0
Ballymoney	7	7	100	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	6	5	83	0	0	1	1
Belfast	31	29	94	0	0	2	2
Carrickfergus	5	4	80	1	0	0	1
Castlereagh	3	3	100	0	0	0	0
Coleraine	19	19	100	0	0	0	0
Cookstown	12	12	100	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	18	17	94	0	1	0	1
Derry	26	26	100	0	0	0	0
Down	13	12	92	1	0	0	1
Dungannon	11	11	100	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	14	14	100	0	0	0	0
Larne	2	2	100	0	0	0	0
Limavady	7	7	100	0	0	0	0
Lisburn	15	15	100	0	0	0	0
Magherafelt	7	7	100	0	0	0	0
Moyle	3	3	100	0	0	0	0
Newry And Mourne	18	18	100	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	10	10	100	0	0	0	0
North Down	16	16	100	0	0	0	0
Omagh	3	3	100	0	0	0	0
Strabane	5	5	100	0	0	0	0
Total	294	288	98	2	1	3	6

The information held on the Department's IT System does not include details of the policy context the approved applications were considered under. This would require a manual search of each of the 294 planning applications and would result in the diversion of staff from normal duties for an unreasonable period of time which would have an adverse impact on the Department's ability to provide the statutory public service for which it is obligated. I fully support this position.

These figures confirm a planning service that has turned corners.

Planning Applications: Rural Business Premises

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for rural business premises were (i) refused; and (ii) approved under PPS 21 since June 2011, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 20237/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The evidence of rural business applications strongly suggests that PPS21 is working well. To date, I have not received many representations to the contrary.

All applications in the countryside are assessed under PPS21. Depending on the type of proposal, the Department may consider other policy documents along with PPS21.

In the period June 2011 to September 2012, 18 applications for rural commercial businesses have been refused, 13 of which were considered contrary to PPS21 and for other reasons. In 13 of the 26 council areas, there has been a 100% approval, with 7 council's approval rate of 85% or more.

In the same period a total of 170 applications have been approved giving an approval rate of 90% which demonstrates the Department's commitment to supporting the rural economy through the planning process. All of these applications would have been assessed against the area plan for the area and all other material considerations including PPS21. This information is broken down by Council District in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER OF RURAL COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS THAT WERE DECIDED BETWEEN JUNE 2011 AND SEPTEMBER 2012

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused		
		Number	Approval Rate (%)	Refusal reason ²		Total
				PPS 21	Other	
Antrim	9	8	89	1	0	1
Ards	10	10	100	0	0	0
Armagh	11	10	91	1	0	1
Ballymena	11	11	100	0	0	0
Ballymoney	6	6	100	0	0	0
Banbridge	10	9	90	0	1	1
Belfast	1	1	100	0	0	0
Castlereagh	1	1	100	0	0	0
Coleraine	12	11	92	1	0	1
Cookstown	8	8	100	0	0	0
Craigavon	14	12	86	2	0	2
Derry	6	5	83	1	0	1
Down	14	11	79	2	1	3
Dungannon	11	11	100	0	0	0
Fermanagh	11	11	100	0	0	0
Larne	1	1	100	0	0	0
Limavady	3	3	100	0	0	0

	Total Decided	Approved		Refused		
		Number	Approval Rate (%)	Refusal reason ²		Total
				PPS 21	Other	
Lisburn	8	7	88	0	1	1
Magherafelt	7	6	86	1	0	1
Moyle	5	5	100	0	0	0
Newry And Mourne	21	16	76	3	2	5
Newtownabbey	2	2	100	0	0	0
Omagh	3	2	67	1	0	1
Strabane	3	3	100	0	0	0
Total	188	170	90	13	5	18

The operational review of PPS21 is ongoing and I will make a statement to the Assembly after Easter recess. I believe the review and the mechanisms in place around and arising from the review have contributed to the sound operation of the policy.

Business Enforcement Cases

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment how many enforcement cases his Department has taken against businesses since 2011, broken down by district council area; and how many and what value of fines were imposed as a result.

(AQW 20239/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Within the period 1 April 2011 to September 2012, 4008 enforcement cases across all categories of property were opened relating to a range of alleged breaches of planning control. This information, broken down by district council area is set out in the table below (Annex A). Data is not recorded on the Department's IT system in such a way as to enable cases relating to businesses to be easily identified. I have asked that our systems are reviewed to see how this can be rectified.

The vast majority of breaches of planning control are resolved through negotiation with the owner/occupier or through the submission and consideration of a retrospective planning application.

Of the 4008 cases opened, 25 resulted in fines being imposed to date with the value of fines totalling £19,200. In addition, some 2800 of these have been closed for a variety of reasons such as No Breach (1141), Remedied/Resolved (594) and Planning Permission Granted (325).

It is not acceptable for individuals and companies to deliberately flout planning regulations. In taking action, the impact of the breach and the public interest served by enforcement needs to be carefully considered. This involves a judgement call and proportionate response based on details of the case, the degree of harm and other consideration including the wider prevailing economic conditions where this is appropriate.

That said, I believe the flipside of good planning is proportionate enforcement. That is why far more urgent works notices have been served in 18 months than in the previous 38 years and the first completion notice ever was served (now on appeal to the PAC); why the resource and staffing in the Environmental Crime Unit has been increased and the reason for the Enforcement summit in June 2013. There is still work to do to have the robust proportionate enforcement that I believe is necessary.

Annex A

District Council	Number of Cases opened April 2011 – September 2012
Antrim	139
Ards	182
Armagh	122
Ballymena	134
Ballymoney	62
Banbridge	138
Belfast	428
Carrickfergus	63
Castlereagh	175
Coleraine	192
Cookstown	111
Craigavon	127
Derry	221
Downpatrick	263
Dungannon	132
Fermanagh	166
Larne	66
Limavady	104
Lisburn	224
Magherafelt	93
Moyle	76
Newry and Mourne	246
Newtownabbey	146
North Down	146
Omagh	138
Strabane	114

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many prosecutions have been pursued for breaches of taxi operator licences in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20246/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Taxi operator licensing came into effect on 1 September 2012. Since its introduction a number of taxi operators have been detected operating without operators' licences. However, there have been no prosecutions to date as these cases are still to progress through the court system.

Cars with High Intensity Discharge Headlamps

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is applying MOT test regulations on high intensity discharge headlamps in a different manner to the rest of the UK; and to outline the reasons for this position.

(AQW 20295/11-15)

Mr Attwood: High intensity discharge (HID) headlights have been fitted in certain motor vehicles for a number of years. Compared with the more common halogen headlights, HID headlights are more efficient, have a longer life and can be up to three times brighter. The benefit of this extra brightness is that it enables drivers using HID lights to see approximately 30% further than with halogen systems.

The downside of this extra brightness is the potential to cause excessive dazzle to oncoming traffic. Dazzle can be caused if the lamps are dirty or wrongly directed. Vehicles with HID headlights are therefore legally required to be fitted with headlamp washer and levelling system fitted before they are permitted to enter into service in Europe.

The assessment of the presence and operation of these headlamp cleaning and levelling devices was introduced into the annual vehicle test in compliance with European Roadworthiness Directive 2010/48/EU. This requirement was introduced into the annual vehicle test (MOT) in Northern Ireland on an advisory basis from 1 February 2012, and became a reason for failure from 1 May 2012. The use of vehicles on the road which do not have the washer or levelling system fitted to HID headlights is illegal and poses a potential road safety risk.

A vehicle will fail the test in Northern Ireland where a mandatory headlight washer or levelling device is missing, inoperative or otherwise obviously defective. The same assessment criteria are currently being applied in the South of Ireland. However these requirements have not been fully implemented in Britain, and their online testers' manual indicates that the test applies only to headlight washers where fitted ie the absence of a mandatory headlight washer and levelling system is not specified as a reason for test failure.

European Directive 2010/48/EU requires the operation of a mandatory headlight washer system to be assessed at the time of a vehicle's annual test, and my Department therefore considers the absence of a headlight washer or levelling system, where required, to be a reason for test failure.

Cars with High Intensity Discharge Headlamps

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many cars with high intensity discharge headlamps have failed the MOT test since 2010 because of a lack of headlight washers and because the lights are not self levelling.

(AQW 20297/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The European Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC was amended on 5 July 2010 by Directive 2010/48/EU, which introduced mandatory headlamp washers and levelling devices into the annual test for vehicles with high intensity discharge headlamps. In Northern Ireland these items were included within the annual test from 1 February 2012 to 30 April 2012 on an advisory basis. From 1 May 2012 the absence of mandatory headlamp washers and levelling systems and defects in such systems, where fitted, became reasons for failure. In total, 548 cars failed the MOT test for the reasons outlined above in the period from 1 May 2012 to 25 February 2013.

Cars with High Intensity Discharge Headlamps

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment why MOT test regulations on cars with high intensity discharge headlamps are being applied to cars which were manufactured before 2010 when the regulations were brought in.

(AQW 20299/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The European Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC was amended on 5 July 2010 by Directive 2010/48/EU. This introduced mandatory headlamp washers and levelling devices into the

annual test. However, the requirement to have headlamp washers and levelling devices fitted to high intensity discharge (HID) headlamps and light emitting diode (LED) headlamps has existed for a number of years under the type approval regulations.

In Northern Ireland these items were included within the annual test from 1 February 2012 to 30 April 2012 on an advisory basis, and from 1 May 2012 the absence of mandatory headlamp washers and levelling systems or defects in such systems became reasons for failure.

The technical requirements for HID and LED headlamps under type approval regulations are contained in United Nations (UNECE) Regulation 48.

Vehicles that enter into service for the first time in Northern Ireland require a type approval certificate or must undergo an individual vehicle approval (IVA) test. It has been a requirement of the IVA test in Northern Ireland since June 2001 for vehicles fitted with HID headlamps to have headlamp washer and levelling systems fitted. This test standard also applies in Britain.

Glorification of Terrorism

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 18041/11-15, what are the corporate implications for Newry and Mourne Council should it be found to have broken the law by glorifying terrorism.

(AQW 20345/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Where the Equality Commission decides to conduct an investigation into the activities of a public body, and that investigation finds that the public body has failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme, the Commission's report will outline the failure and, where relevant, set out recommendations to ensure compliance.

This report will be issued to the public authority concerned, the Secretary of State and the complainant (where there is a complainant). The Commission shall also, in the case of a report of an investigation under paragraph 11, send a copy of the report to the Assembly.

Where the recommended actions are not taken within a reasonable time, the Commission can refer the matter to the Secretary of State who can give directions to the public authority concerned. When taking this step, the Commission shall also notify the Assembly in writing.

Convictions for Dog Fouling Offences

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment how many successful prosecutions there have been for dog fouling in (i) Limavady Borough Council; and (ii) Coleraine Borough Council areas, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20360/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department requests statistical information on fixed penalty notices issued by district councils and also on the number of successful prosecutions in the courts after the end of each financial year. Information obtained from Coleraine and Limavady Borough Councils on the number of successful prosecutions in each of the last three financial years in respect of the offence of permitting dogs to foul is set out in the following table.

Council	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Coleraine	3	0	1
Limavady	0	0	0

Planning Applications

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what is the average time taken from the date that local council consultation on a planning application takes place until a decision is made on that

application; (ii) what is the average time taken in Lisburn City Council; and (iii) what plans he has to reduce this time.

(AQW 20379/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the first half of 2012/13 business year, 85% of decisions were issued within 2 weeks of last Council consultation and 92% were issued within 4 weeks. This compares with issue dates of 79% and 88% for the previous year.

For Lisburn Council only, in the same period of the 2012/13 Business Year 78% of decisions were issued within 2 weeks of last Council consultation and 83% were issued within 4 weeks.

To improve processing times generally, I have recently introduced an enhanced streamlined scheme, to which the majority of Councils have now agreed. This enhanced scheme incorporates all minor and intermediate applications, housing developments up to 25 units and office accommodation up to a maximum of 200 square metres. This will mean that approximately 75% of all applications could be streamlined. Processing times for these applications will be significantly reduced and this will have a positive impact generally.

I am also working on a number of fronts to reform and remodel the planning system so that it supports the future economic and social development needs of all users in Northern Ireland. Reforms designed to speed up the processing of applications include measures to ensure quicker responses from consultees and on a voluntary basis pre-application community consultation on key developments.

The Department's experience to date is that improved performance can only be achieved through working inclusively with all key stakeholders in the overall planning system.

I will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that planning delivers benefits to the economy in an efficient and timely manner and will continue to monitor performance.

Marine Division

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 17600/11-15, which divisions in his Department will face cuts in order to finance the proposed Marine Division; and to detail the proposed reduction in expenditure.

(AQW 20413/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A budget of nearly £2.5 million has been established for the new Marine Division for the financial year 2013-14. Budget reductions have not been necessary as the new Marine Division draws together existing policy, planning and scientific functions for marine environmental protection and management from across the Department.

Protected Rights of Minority Groups

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department will ensure that the rights of minority groups will be protected and promoted in any new local government arrangements which are devised under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 20431/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill, that I will shortly introduce in the Assembly, will provide for new governance arrangements for councils to ensure the protection of the rights of all people and also provide for fair, transparent and efficient decision-making.

The sharing of positions of responsibility across the political parties represented on councils will be a cornerstone of the new arrangements. I am proposing that councils will be able to select from either the d'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë divisor methods or Single Transferrable Voting to achieve this aim. Provision will also be made to ensure that, as far as practicable, the membership of committees will also reflect the political balance of the council.

The governance arrangements will also include the use of a call-in procedure to ensure a system of checks and balances is in place in relation to the decision-making process to provide protection for

the rights of minority groups. For example, a number of councillors who have an issue with a specific decision will be able to join together to request that the decision is reviewed. The call-in procedure may be used where an issue has been raised in relation to the procedures followed in making a decision or where there is an issue in relation to the protection of political minorities in the local government district. I am proposing that the trigger to initiate the call-in procedure should be 15% of the total council membership. For example, in a council with 40 members, a call-in would require the support of 6 councillors.

The introduction of qualified majority voting for specified strategic decisions, and as part of the call-in procedure, will also provide a further check and balance in relation to council decision-making. Rather than a system of cross-community voting (such as the one operated by the Northern Ireland Assembly), a straightforward threshold of 80% of council members present and voting will apply.

Strategic Planning Division Minerals Team

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW17637/11-15, whether the Strategic Planning Division Minerals Team that is carrying out the review is the same Minerals Team which was responsible for the errors in the Environmental Impact Assessment which led to the quashing of the Cavanacaw planning approvals; and what confidence he has in this review.

(AQW 20450/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I stated in my response to the Members recent question, the exercise to check that the screening for an Environmental Statement considered all the relevant issues was carried out by staff in the Strategic Planning Division's Minerals Team with assistance from the Development Management Guidance Team where required who advise on matters relating to best practice. There is only one Minerals Team in the Division.

I would stress that this was an exercise to check that EIA screening was done properly and was not a formal review. I am satisfied that the exercise was carried out in a thorough professional manner. Prior to issuing any decisions the EIA screening is checked for all mineral applications.

PPS 3 Parking Standards

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why PPS 3 Parking Standards, in relation to a planning application for a primary school, does not require that the number of pupils for which the school will cater to be taken into account for parking requirements; and what plans he has to bring the policy into line with that applicable to other types of schools.

(AQW 20470/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The precise amount of car parking for any application for a primary school will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the development and its location, having regard to PPS3 'Access, movement and parking' and its associated supplementary planning guidance 'Parking Standards'.

The provision of car parking at a primary school will also have to take account of the availability of public transport facilities; the accessibility of the development including the availability of on-street parking in the area; and the contents of the existing development plans and other planning policy publications. Any new development will therefore be considered on its own merits.

With respect to secondary schools and further education facilities, the Standards recommend a proportion of spaces for pupils/students over the lawful driving age. In relation to primary schools this is not a consideration and therefore a larger proportion of visitor car-parking is specified instead (one half of the total staff as opposed to one third for secondary or further education facilities).

I am content that the existing planning policy and supplementary planning guidance adequately address the parking requirements for any new primary school developments.

DOE: Overtime Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total overtime payments made to staff in his Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20518/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides the expenditure on overtime costs by Department excluding agencies, and for each agency for the last three years 2009/10 to 2011/12.

Business Area	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Department (excluding agencies)	71,230	36,680	79,027
Driver & Vehicle Agency	600,468	561,963	640,319
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	445,140	259,013	121,053
Total	1,116,838	857,656	840,399

The increase of £42,347 in Department overtime costs from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is due mainly to increased overtime work within the Planning Service to improve compliance and operational performance.

The increase of £78,356 in DVA overtime costs from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is due to the fact that DVA Testing operations had a significant number of vacancies at the beginning of 2011-12 therefore, it was necessary to work a higher level of overtime in order to meet customer demand.

I have asked for a detailed breakdown of the DVA figures, currently and year on year.

Statutory Transition Committees

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what legislative vehicle will be used to create the Statutory Transition Committees; and whether primary or secondary legislation will be used.

(AQW 20531/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I intend using the existing primary powers contained in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Act 2010 to make regulations, which is secondary legislation, to constitute the Statutory Transition Committees.

Statutory Transition Committees

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the timescale for the creation of the Statutory Transition Committees.

(AQW 20532/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I expect to lay the draft regulations in the Assembly in April. Subject to their passage through the Assembly process, this would enable Transition Committees to be placed on a statutory footing in June 2013.

To achieve this, I intend using the existing primary powers contained in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Act 2010. However, as part of the process to constitute the Statutory Transition Committees, the regulations must be considered firstly by the Environment Committee and then debated in a plenary session of the Assembly and approved by resolution of the Assembly before they can be made.

Theory Driving Test Pass Rate

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 19508/11-15, whether his Department has carried out any research into why the pass rate of the theory driving test has declined from 67.6 percent in 2007/08 to 61.0 percent in 2011/12.

(AQW 20535/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The theory test is delivered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) and in Britain by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) as a joint authority contract. The theory test question banks for car, motorcycle, LGV and PCV categories are managed by DSA on behalf of both authorities and all questions are common to customers in both jurisdictions.

Following the publication of the Learning to Drive consultation by the Department of the Environment (DOE) and by the Department for Transport (DfT) in May 2008, the authorities have implemented a number of initiatives to encourage learner drivers to develop their knowledge and understanding of safe driving theory through a more thorough preparation for the driving theory test.

Introduction of Case Studies

From 19 July 2010, five car and motorcycle multiple choice questions in each theory test have been delivered in the format of a case study. A case study presents a scenario upon which five questions are based and is designed to probe a learner's understanding and knowledge more thoroughly. The subject of the scenario focuses on real life examples and experiences that drivers could come across when driving.

Non-Publication of Live Theory Test Questions

The theory test multiple choice questions were previously published as training materials through licences procured from DSA in a format where questions, distracters and correct answers were shown together. The publication of the multiple choice items in this format encouraged candidates to memorise the questions and the positions of correct answers thereby reducing the assessment power of the theory test. This is inconsistent with the aim of learners achieving a thorough understanding of safe driving theory.

DVA, in conjunction with DSA, developed a phased programme to implement the cessation of the publication of live theory test questions and answers. This approach progressively migrated the live items away from the published materials to encouraging better learning strategies culminating in the non-publication of live theory test questions from 23 January 2012.

Randomisation of Distracters

The phased programme for the non-publication of live theory test questions, included a move to randomise the order of the correct answers and distracters presented in the live theory test so that they no longer matched the way the questions and answers were published in training materials. Randomisation of the question and answer options within the learner and rider theory tests was implemented on 03 May 2011, with the randomisation of the bus and lorry tests implemented on 23 January 2012 in conjunction with the final phase of the non-publication of live theory test questions.

As a result of these changes, which were introduced to better assess a candidate's understanding of safe driving and encourage learners to understand the material and not just learn by rote, there has been a fall in the pass rate, which has also been mirrored in Britain. DVA has not conducted any formal research into the decline in the pass rate for the driving theory test. However, the Agency does monitor the pass rates on a monthly basis in conjunction with DSA.

Breaches of Planning Policy: Malone Conservation Area

Mr Maskey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the breaches of planning policy that have occurred within the Malone Conservation Area in the past two years, including any enforcement action that has been taken.

(AQO 3536/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has investigated 52 complaints about breaches of planning control in Malone Conservation Area in the past 2 years. 23 of these related to building works, extensions and other alterations, eleven to advertisements, 9 to works to trees, 4 to changes of use and 5 to works carried out not in accordance with approved plans. 46 of the 52 cases have been closed and 6 are still being investigated or enforcement action is underway. Of the 46 cases closed, 21 were closed because no breach of planning was established, 12 because the breach was remedied, 6 because it was not considered expedient to take action, 4 because the development was immune from enforcement and 3 because planning permission for the development was subsequently granted.

Taxi Reforms

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the principal benefits, to both customers and others, of his ongoing taxi reforms.

(AQO 3537/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Taxi Reform Programme provides for a modern industry concerning taxi operators, vehicles, fares and drivers. This will provide a safe and fit for purpose taxi industry that will benefit customers and allow those working in it to make a living. This will have a number of benefits including:

- Increased customer confidence in the taxi industry
- It will be safer for the public as it will be more difficult for illegal taxis to operate
- It will be easier for enforcement because the industry will be better organised and there will be fewer illegal taxis

I am convinced that the benefits the modern regulatory framework will bring, in terms of improved customer confidence and passenger safety, make the process worthwhile. At the same time, I have been managing the rollout and implementation of the legislation that does not place unreasonable costs, administrates or other burdens on the industry, including for smaller or sole operators, not least in this continuing recession.

Central Government Functions

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment, in the context of the Review of Public Administration, whether he has identified any further Central Government functions which should be transferred to Local Government.

(AQO 3538/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The issue of which responsibilities and functions should transfer from central to local government is a key and significant element of local government reform. A decision is needed urgently to provide clarity and to address the anxiety which uncertainty brings. There is also necessary and detailed work to be done to ensure successful integration of staff and functions and to ensure that they are adequately financed. A decision is also needed to inform the discussions around the future organisational design of local councils.

In November 2011 the Executive acknowledged the case for revisiting the transfer package first identified by its predecessor in March 2008 and modified in September 2009. I wrote to Executive colleagues in December 2011 encouraging a bold and imaginative approach. Since then, I have had a number of related meetings with Ministers and have circulated a paper aimed at bringing the matter to a conclusion. The composition of the transfer package will be announced when the Executive reach a decision.

Planning Policy Statement

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the development of a single Planning Policy Statement.

(AQO 3539/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Preparations for the development of a single Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) are on-going. The purpose of the SPPS is to collate in one place planning policy, reduce the fragmentation, reduce the words but increase understanding.

The SPSS is required to be in place prior to the transfer of planning powers to Councils in 2015. It is my intention therefore to consult on a draft version of the SPPS later this year, with a view to publishing it in final form in 2014.

This is a further phase of the reform of planning – the most significant in a generation – that I am rolling out, to make planning fitter for purpose.

Local Government Reform Funding

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on any discussions he has had with the Department of Finance and Personnel on securing funding for local government reform.

(AQO 3540/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I made funding bids at each of the three 2012-13 monitoring rounds, to the Department of Finance and Personnel, to support the local government reform programme. The most recent bid, in the January Monitoring Round, was for £16.2 million.

However, none of these bids were accepted and I have made public my disappointment at the outcome.

In parallel I have been actively pursuing the issue of targeted reform funding in discussions and correspondence with Minister Wilson and other Executive colleagues, in particular, regarding those transition work streams which are considered inescapable and have no cash releasing benefits to the sector.

Executive colleagues have now accepted the view and have therefore agreed to fund the following transition elements of the programme: £13.8 million over the next two financial years to fund the new councils working in shadow form, a councillor severance scheme, capacity building (i.e. preparing local and central government staff and councillors for their new roles), change management, staff induction and the winding up of the current 26 councils.

The Executive has also committed up to £4 million to cover the cost of council borrowing in relation to ICT costs and systems convergence for the next two financial years.

There is also a further commitment of an estimated £30 million for rates convergence following the creation of the 11 new councils in April 2015. Essentially this will protect those whose rates bills may have experienced a significant increase as a result of merging with councils where rates are currently at a higher level.

This is a good news day for ratepayers. There has always been the fear that these costs may have been passed onto the ratepayer in the form of an unacceptable hike in rates. That has been avoided.

University of Ulster: Belfast Campus

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment when full planning approval for the University of Ulster's new Belfast campus will be given.

(AQO 3541/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I would refer to the recent AQ answered on 25 February 2013 (AQO 2).

It is anticipated that a Departmental opinion on the main university proposal and the Frederick Street proposal will be taken to the City Council meeting on 7 March 2013.

Departmental RPA Capacity Building Programme

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment whether a departmental RPA Capacity Building Programme will be developed in partnership with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, the Local Government Training Group and the National Association of Councillors.

(AQO 3543/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A broad capacity building programme is required to support implementation of local government reform and this has been recognised in the funding package agreed by the Executive. A scoping exercise will be taken forward by the Department through the Human Resource Working Group, which is part of the implementation structures I have set in place, and will build on work undertaken previously. It will look at the capacity building needs of local government officers, councillors and staff in central government departments. The overall capacity building programme will also draw on the experience of such bodies, work already done on capacity building (including that undertaken by the former Policy Development Panel C in the previous iteration of the Reform Programme), and more recent similar work being undertaken in various strands of the programme.

Bodies such as the Local Government Staff Commission, NILGA, SOLACE and the NAC have an important role to play in ensuring the right suite of capacity building measures is developed. They work together within the Local Government Training Group as a sub group formed to bring greater focus to the capacity building needs of elected members. I am meeting representatives on 8 April 2013 to discuss how they might work with the Department.

Transfer Planning Powers to the New Local Councils

Mr Newton asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the progress being made in transferring planning powers to the new local councils.

(AQO 3544/11-15)

Mr Attwood: While it is a challenging timescale to transfer planning powers to the new 11 councils on 1 April 2015, I am satisfied that sufficient progress is being made. The key piece of primary legislation needed to transfer planning (Planning Act (NI) 2011) is already in place and the rest of the work is being taken forward by the Department through a Project Board, Project Office and teams made up of staff from central and local government. They are addressing all of the key issues relating to transfer; for example, legislation, finance, HR and organisational design. This work, in turn, feeds into the local government reform structures.

The councils also need to fully recognise the scale of responsibilities that being “a planning authority” will bring. This carries difficulties but it creates great opportunities.

EU Infraction Proceedings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has been subject to any EU infraction proceedings for breaches of water quality.

(AQW 20605/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has not been subject to EU infraction proceedings for breaches of water quality in the last five years.

Quality of Local Beaches

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has been subject to any EU infraction proceedings as a result of the quality of local beaches.

(AQW 20606/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There are no ongoing infraction proceedings concerning the quality of bathing waters in Northern Ireland.

In 1997 the European Commission did initiate proceedings against the UK, and 9 other Member States, citing failure to achieve the required water quality standards in some of our bathing waters. This was followed by further infraction cases around the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, with respect to waste water treatment in some coastal areas. The extensive capital investment by Northern Ireland Water Ltd, particularly in the North Down area, has satisfied these concerns and this case is effectively closed.

Junction Improvement Scheme: Craigtlet Crossroads

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the junction improvement scheme at the Craigtlet crossroads.

(AQW 20624/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The planning application relating to this proposal is still under consideration by my officials. You will be aware that local residents have submitted for DRD Roads Service's consideration, a total of seven alternative options for the proposed junction improvement scheme. The residents consider these options to be viable and less visually intrusive alternatives to the proposed scheme. Roads Service officials are currently assessing the options and the final outcome of that assessment is expected before the end of April 2013. On completion of the assessment, Roads Service will advise the Department as to how they wish to proceed with the proposal.

Shale Gas Planning Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration will be given to the leakage of methane during shale gas extraction when making decisions on shale gas planning applications.

(AQW 20649/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have made very clear anyone seeking to extract shale gas by means of hydraulic fracturing will be required to identify all the potential impacts of the process and how the environment will be protected. This includes potential dangers to public health and safety and how these could be mitigated. Any planning application will therefore be required to be accompanied by a robust Environmental Statement. Indeed, this was an issue raised when I met the US EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) in Washington in March 2012, given that the issue around fracking above, not only below, ground level.

No planning permission will be granted unless all the relevant issues have been fully considered by the Department and a range of consultees.

Stop Notice at the Spring Road Site in Drumnakilly

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many working hours the people monitoring the stop notice at the Spring Road site in Drumnakilly have spent at the site since the stop notice was served.

(AQW 20651/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the time that the stop notice has been in place, planning officials have undertaken 16 site visits to monitor compliance with the terms of the notice. This equates to approximately four hours spent at the site.

School Children's Awareness of Road Safety

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what funding his Department provides for increasing school children's awareness of road safety.

(AQW 20729/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department of Environment's Road Safety Education Officer Service (RSEOS) consists of 3 Senior Education Officers and 10 Education Officers. It has an annual expenditure budget of £591k. This budget is used to provide age appropriate resources and schemes to enable school children to develop good road safety behaviours.

The Department follows Best Practice Guidelines in its approach to the delivery of road safety education. Best Practice Guidelines were produced by the Department for Transport in Britain following an extensive two-year research programme, which identified the teaching of road safety by teachers as the most effective approach. It is for this reason the RSEOS concentrates use of its budget on the provision of resources and schemes to assist teaching professionals in the delivery of road safety education.

The RSEOS service uses its budget in a varied and innovative way to meet the needs of both Primary and post-Primary school children. Some examples of how the budget is used are listed below:

- The development and production of the Road Safety Teaching Aid Calendar which is issued to every nursery and Primary school class in Northern Ireland.
- The provision of an annual issue of age appropriate road safety resources to children aged 3-6, via Primary schools and pre-school nurseries.
- Delivery of the Practical Child Pedestrian Safety Training Scheme which is aimed at children in Primaries 3 to 5 (ages 6 to 8). The scheme is a mix of classroom based teaching and practical road safety walks. It teaches children how to identify road safety hazards and cross the road safely.
- The delivery of and resources for the Cycling Proficiency Scheme focusing mainly on Primary 7 children but on occasions is delivered to Primary 5 and 6 with training on how to ride a bicycle safely, how to look after a bicycle, how to negotiate junctions and on the basic rules of the road.
- Theatre in Education provides an exciting way to deliver road safety messages, aimed at primary and post primary children.
- Support and the provision of resources for Motor Vehicle and Road Users Studies GCSE taught via a mix of theory and practical studies. It is aimed at pupils in Years 11 to 13 (ages 14 to 16) and provides pupils with valuable life skills and an improved awareness and knowledge of road safety issues.
- A range of road safety presentations and educational worksheets for all age groups are provided both online and in hard copy where appropriate.
- The RSEOS is developing a range of new, modern road safety teaching resources which address road safety concerns in Northern Ireland. One such example of an innovative new resource which has just completed its pilot stage and is about to issue is the 'Crashed Futures' education pack which will be used to promote and educate pre-drivers in the school environment and also within youth organisations. This resource links the Department's road safety campaigns with an educational tool to deliver the road safety message to vulnerable road users. Other such packs are currently in development.

In addition to the Road Safety Education Officer Service, the Department operates a Road Safety Grant Funding Scheme with an available annual budget of £160k. This grant funding scheme provides a facility whereby voluntary and community sector groups can apply for funding to organise local road safety activities to raise awareness of local road safety issues, many of which are targeted at school age children.

Shale Gas Development

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has agreed a method of measurement for greenhouse gas emissions leaked as a consequence of shale gas development; and to detail this method.

(AQW 20746/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No planning applications for the extraction of shale gas by hydraulic fracturing have been submitted to the Department. I have repeatedly stated that anyone seeking to extract shale gas by means of hydraulic fracturing will be required to identify all the potential impacts of the process and how the environment will be protected. This includes potential dangers to public health and safety and how these could be mitigated. Any planning application will therefore be required to be accompanied by

a robust Environmental Statement. Only when such information is made available and fully assessed will decisions be made on whether to allow this process to take place.

Clearly in making an assessment, there will be a need to apply best science and deploy best practice. This would include emissions measurement and, if this project was ever to proceed – and that is not currently the case – I will ensure that DOE has the internal capacity to ensure best practice and apply best science.

MOT Test Exemptions: Vintage Cars

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment when his Department will conclude its deliberations on MOT test exemptions for vintage cars.

(AQW 20797/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing, in line with the British Government's exemption which has been in place since 18 November 2012.

The Environment Committee has indicated that it is content with the Department's proposed way forward following the consultation, which is to make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles.

However on 13 July 2012, the European Commission published a 'Roadworthiness Package' which, amongst other things, addresses periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles, therein making changes to the rules that apply to historic vehicles; the proposals are expected to be introduced no earlier than August 2014.

If implemented as then drafted, these proposals would narrow the parameters within which the Department can provide for exemptions to historic vehicles, as the definition of a historical vehicle was more prescriptively described. While the Department's policy intentions remained the same; that is to make exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT regime, we had to be mindful of the changing legislative context, to ensure that any changes we make are not made redundant by incoming EC Regulations.

Following receipt of a further update on the EU negotiations regarding the roadworthiness package, one of the main amendments in which was a change to the definition of "historic vehicles" which allows vehicles that have not undergone "substantial" changes to be still classed as historic, I have instructed officials to proceed with legislative amendment to exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT test.

We have now resolved some outstanding issues with Departmental Solicitors, including provision for a voluntary MOT test for such vehicles (for purposes including cherished plate transfer; this is an area where Northern Ireland law differs from British law). The Department will now amend the relevant legislation to exempt pre-1960 motor and light goods vehicles from MOT testing and I anticipate the legislation will be in place by autumn 2013.

Unanswered Question: AQO 3289/11-15

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment why AQO 3289/11-15, which was due for oral answer on 4 February 2013, has not yet been answered.

(AQW 20859/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The response to AQO 3289/11-15 issued on 12 March 2013.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 17637/11-15, for a timeframe for completion of this review; and whether it will be made available to the public.

(AQW 20926/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As I stated in my response to the Member's recent question (AQW 20450/11-15), this was an exercise to check that EIA screening was done properly and was not a formal review. Prior to issuing any decisions the EIA screening is checked for all mineral applications.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Alleged Disciplinary Offences

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 18736/11-15, for a breakdown of the length of time that each staff member has been suspended; and whether the total salaries, pension and National Insurance contributions cover the 10 year period and all Departments. **(AQW 20094/11-15)**

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The information requested is provided in the table overleaf. The figures given are as at 23 January 2013 and for data protection purposes the periods have not been attributed to individual Departments.

Due to the fact that the total 10 year period is a mixture of paid and unpaid suspension, the total salaries, pension and National Insurance contributions only covers the paid part of this 10 year period and those Departments where an individual has been suspended on pay for all or part of their total suspension period.

Number of staff	Length of time suspended
1	1 day
1	11 days
1	6 weeks
2	2 months
1	2 months 1 week
5	3 months
1	3 months 2 weeks
1	5 months 2 weeks
1	5 months 2 weeks 3 days
1	6 months
1	8 months
1	10 months 3 weeks 2 days
1	1 year 2 months
1	3 years 8 months

Land and Property Service's Hardship Relief Scheme

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of businesses which applied to the Land and Property Service's Hardship Relief Scheme over the last two years, broken down by council area; (ii) the number of successful applications; and (iii) the grounds on which they were successful.

(AQW 20323/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There have been 20 hardship applications in the last two years – 10 for 2011/12 (1st April 2011-31st March 2012) and 10 for 2012/13 (1st April 2012-31st March 2013).

Council Area	2011/12	2012/13
Armagh	1	0
Belfast	3	4
Castlereagh	2	0
Cookstown	0	1
Dungannon & Sth Tyrone	0	2
Lisburn	2	1
Fermanagh	1	0
Newry & Mourne	0	2
Omagh	1	0
Total	10	10

There have been no successful applications.

Unemployed People

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people, who are registered as unemployed, have been out of work for more than (i) one year; and (ii) two years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 20364/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the LFS is a sample survey and the current numbers of unemployment by duration in each parliamentary constituency area are not sourced to the LFS because of the relatively large confidence intervals around the estimates. This is due to sample size constraints in the LFS.

The following table is sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons claiming unemployment related benefits at January 2013 for more than one year and more than two years, in each parliamentary constituency area.

TABLE 1 - CLAIMANT COUNT FOR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA BY DURATION FOR JANUARY 2013

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Claiming for more than one year	Claiming for more than two years
Belfast East	880	195
Belfast North	1,595	320
Belfast South	850	215
Belfast West	1,790	350
East Antrim	560	95
East Londonderry	940	120
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	750	145
Foyle	1,830	360

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Claiming for more than one year	Claiming for more than two years
Lagan Valley	565	100
Mid Ulster	585	90
Newry & Armagh	1,390	485
North Antrim	760	110
North Down	540	105
South Antrim	500	100
South Down	945	215
Strangford	665	125
Upper Bann	1,075	320
West Tyrone	1,030	225
Northern Ireland	17,250	3,675

Data rounded to nearest 5

Data may not sum due to rounding

Amateur Sporting Clubs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much revenue his Department raised in the last financial year from rates on amateur sporting clubs.

(AQW 20381/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The revenue raised from rates on amateur sporting clubs is not available.

Community Amateur Sports Club

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department raised from rates on registered Community Amateur Sports Club members, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20382/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The term Community Amateur Sports Club is a designation conferred by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Information on this designation is not held by Land & Property Services and as such, the rates revenue raised by registered Community Amateur Sports Club members is not available.

Court Action for Non-Payment of Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people have been the subject of court action for non-payment of rates for (i) domestic; and (ii) commercial properties over the last two financial years; and to detail the sums involved.

(AQW 20412/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of people that have been the subject of court action for non-payment of rates is not available. The number of occupancies for which a court decree was awarded for domestic and non-domestic properties in 2010/11 and 2011/12; and the amount of rating debt to which these relate is available and is given in the table below. An occupancy represents a liable ratepayer at a property at a given time.

Financial Year	Number of Occupancies		Rating Debt	
	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Domestic	Non-Domestic
2010/11	14,626	3,406	£17,085,235	£22,996,311
2011/12	15,553	3,933	£17,898,393	£26,709,295

Cost of Translating Departmental Letters and Documents

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20457/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The amount spent by the Department of Finance and Personnel on the translation of departmental letters and documents into Irish and each other language in each of the last five years is provided in the table overleaf.

Language	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £	2011-12 £	2012-13 to date £
Irish	811	1,383	1,045	252	20
Arabic				50	
Cantonese			1,049		
Czech			1,168		
Hungarian			1,089		
Italian			40		
Latvian			1,049		
Lithuanian			1,168	560	
Mandarin			1,049	100	
Polish			160		
Portugese			1,128		
Punjabi			1,049		
Romanian			1,049	46	
Russian			1,049		
Slovak			1,168		
Ulster-Scots	231	743	1,562		
Urdu			1,049		

Compensation by People with Pleural Plaques

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether compensation is available for people with pleural plaques who were employees of central heating firms which are now bankrupt.

(AQW 20489/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 amended the law in Northern Ireland to reinstate asymptomatic pleural plaques as an actionable condition under the law of negligence.

The handling of company liabilities where a company has ceased trading is a separate matter and the relevant rules are set out in company law, which does not fall within my Department's remit.

However, it is worth noting that, if the former employer was insured, it might be possible to trace the insurer through the Employers' Liability Tracing Office.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: National Statistics by the Office of National Statistics

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the estimates contained in the Net Fiscal Balance Report, published in November 2012, are recognised as National Statistics by the Office of National Statistics.

(AQW 20575/11-15)

Mr Wilson: No.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Communication between Departmental Officials

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the nature and frequency of the communication between his departmental officials and their counterparts in Scotland regarding the methodology employed in the Net Fiscal Balance Report that was published in November 2012.

(AQW 20576/11-15)

Mr Wilson: During the development of the latest Net Fiscal Balance Report, my officials were in contact with their Scottish counterparts on a number of occasions via telephone and e-mail to discuss methodological and data issues.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the nature and frequency of the communication that he has had with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth regarding the methodology employed in the Net Fiscal Balance Report that was published in November 2012.

(AQW 20577/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have had no specific communication with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth regarding the methodology employed in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012.

DFP: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 19628/11-15, (i) whether this figure includes the hospitality spend by departmental arm's-length bodies in 2011/12; and (ii) to detail the amount spent by the arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 20609/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The figures previously provided in response to AQW 19628/11-15 include the Department's arms-length bodies.

The amount of expenditure by arm's-length bodies was £541 in 2011/12.

Public Service Pensions Bill

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Public Service Pensions Bill will be subject to equality screening and an equality impact assessment.

(AQW 20640/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department has conducted an equality screening exercise in relation to the proposed Public Service Pensions Bill. The screening exercise concludes that a full equality impact assessment for the Bill is not required.

The document containing the findings of the screening exercise is available on the Department of Finance and Personnel website at: www.dfpni.gov.uk/public-service-pensions-bill-equality-screening-document.pdf

The screening exercise addresses the core provisions that will apply to all public service pension schemes. Consideration of the scheme-specific equality impacts will be undertaken separately by the relevant Departments with responsibility for implementing the agreed pension reform policy in secondary legislation.

Sporting Clubs

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration has been given to allowing sporting clubs a further reduction in their rates bill.

(AQW 20699/11-15)

Mr Wilson: You may recall that the issue of a review of rates relief for Community Amateur Sports Clubs was the subject of a 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.

I do believe however that 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 verses 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 has advised that it has just completed an exercise of engagement 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 alternatives ways of providing support.

Should it emerge that rate relief is DCAL's preferred option that will need to be looked at.

Officials within my Department have already arranged to meet with their counterparts in DCAL to discuss the outcome of the recent DCAL stakeholder engagement exercise and to offer advice before any case is put forward for consideration. We must remember 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.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Health and Social Care Trusts: Over Payments

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total amount in over payments that has been paid to (a) staff; and (b) suppliers; within (i) his Department; and (ii) departmental agencies in each of the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 18817/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The total amount in overpayments in each of the last three years can only be provided at disproportionate cost. The outstanding overpayments within the Department and its ALBs as at 31 January 2013 (latest information available) are as follows:

	Suppliers £	Staff £
DHSSPS	-	1,983
Northern HSC Trust	-	572,984
Southern HSC Trust	-	241,799
Belfast HSC Trust	11,418	359,658
South Eastern HSC Trust	23,154	117,832
Western HSC Trust	-	47,595
NIBTS	5,000	-
NIMDTA	625	-
BSO	1,944	-
PCC	11,025	-
NIFRS	-	568

Note: Nil for HSCB, PHA, NIAS, NIGALA, RQIA, NISCC and NIPEC.

When overpayments occur, the Department and its ALBs apply the guidance within Annex A.4.11 of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland in seeking recovery.

Magee Campus of the University of Ulster: Daycare Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Social Services in Derry was consulted about the proposed closure of the daycare facilities at the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster.

(AQW 20262/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department was not consulted, nor would it be expected to be consulted, about the closure of Daycare facilities at the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster.

Every childcare provider must register with the Early Years Teams in HSC Trusts. Trusts approve any changes to the registration of a childcare provider, and they must be notified that a provider is closing.

Daycare facilities are run as private businesses. Any decisions relating to the financial viability, or other business considerations, would be an internal management arrangement for the provider. It would be inappropriate for me to intervene in decisions of this type.

Young People with Learning Disabilities

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to ensure that young people with learning disabilities have personalised education plans, irrespective of whether they have a job placement.

(AQW 20277/11-15)

Mr Poots: One of the recommended actions from the Care Matters in Northern Ireland strategy, was the introduction of a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each and every Looked After Child or young person. The purpose of the PEP is to ensure the promotion of positive educational outcomes for the young person and also ensures close working between Health and Social Care, Education and the Voluntary sector.

It is intended that all Looked after Children and Young Persons will have a PEP in place by 1 June 2013. It is essential to ensure that the young person is able to participate in every aspect of the preparation and completion of the PEP. They must be given appropriate support to be fully involved regardless of time, their age or ability.

This was a very specific joint initiative for children in care and includes any children with a learning, or other, disability who are also looked after. There are no plans presently to extend PEPs to the wider learning disability population or other groups.

Slievemore House in Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what guarantee he can give that any proposals for Slievemore House in Derry are compliant with Article 8 of the Human Rights Act.

(AQW 20291/11-15)

Mr Poots: As result of a recent inspection, and subsequent report, by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, the Western HSCT has had to consider alternative options as to how and where the service currently provided at Slievemore Nursing Unit is to be delivered.

As Slievemore Nursing Unit was never intended to be a permanent placement for any patient, the Trust is working to engage with families to select suitable nursing home placements which will allow reasonable access for relatives and afford reasonable private family time. In addition the Trust will endeavour to promote a homely environment; encouraging relatives to personalise a patient's room by bringing in significant items from their life and experiences.

The WHSC Trust has advised that is satisfied that in providing placements which meet these criteria it will be promoting the principles of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act.

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the budget of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20292/11-15)

Mr Poots: The total income available to the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency, which includes the amounts provided by DHSSPS and income from other sources, in each of the last five years was as follows:

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total income/£k	45,274	49,529	53,404	54,099	53,502

Source: NIMDTA annual accounts

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what role the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency plays in patient safety.

(AQW 20293/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) has an important role to play in patient safety.

The General Medical Council (GMC) sets the overall standards for the delivery of postgraduate medical education and training. With regard to patient safety, the GMC requires that "the responsibilities, related duties, working hours and supervision of trainees must be consistent with the delivery of high quality patient care. There must be clear procedures to address immediately any concerns about patient safety arising from the training of doctors".

NIMDTA, as the Northern Ireland Deanery, is responsible for managing the quality of junior doctor training in Northern Ireland and works in partnership with the HSC Trusts and GP training practices to ensure compliance with the standards set by the GMC. NIMDTA has an educational contract in place with each of the five Trusts setting out how training should be managed and delivered effectively in accordance with the requirements laid down by the GMC. NIMDTA ensures that Trusts are meeting GMC standards through a number of mechanisms including: Deanery visits to Trusts; trainee and trainer surveys; twice yearly reports from Trusts; and regular meetings with the Trust Directors of Medical Education.

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many trainee doctors the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency has placed in the Causeway Hospital in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20294/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency has advised that the number of trainee doctors placed in Causeway Hospital in August of each of the last five years is as follows:

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Number of trainees	62	62	44	47	47

Residential and Nursing Care Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, when assessing the regional rate payable for funding of the residential and nursing care sector, how his Department and the Regional Health and Social Care Board assess what is fair and affordable; and what benchmarks or criteria inform this decision.

(AQW 20308/11-15)

Mr Poots: Circular HSC (ECCU) 1/2010 Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging guidance reminds the HSC of its overriding duty to procure quality services at a price which represents value for money. I should clarify, however, that beyond this, my Department has no role in establishing the rates paid for care. Each year the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) negotiate a regional rate with the independent sector for residential and nursing home care. The regional rate is a guide to what the HSC considers to be fair and affordable, not a fixed price for a care placement.

I am aware of the recent outcome of the Judicial Review sought by the Independent Health and Care Providers (IHCP), on the Regional Rate set by the HSCB. As the formal written judgement has not yet been made available, I do not regard it appropriate to comment further on this issue.

Geriatric Care in Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the estimated weekly cost of providing geriatric care for a patient in hospital; and what is the contribution made by Government towards such care in a nursing home.

(AQW 20309/11-15)

Mr Poots: Geriatric medicine is a speciality which involves the holistic assessment and care of elderly people. According to Trust Returns, the average cost per occupied inpatient week in the geriatric medicine specialty, i.e. under the care of a geriatric medicine consultant, in 2011/12 was £2,294. These costs include all costs relevant to the patient's time in that specialty, including accommodation and board, nursing and personal care costs, medical costs, pharmacy costs, the cost of procedures in theatre, diagnostics e.g. x-rays, input from allied health professionals e.g. physiotherapists, rehabilitation, depreciation and overheads. Not all older people in hospital are cared for in this specialty.

The cost of a nursing home place comprises accommodation and board, personal care and nursing care and does not include services such as physiotherapy which are provided free by the Trust; so the costs cited above are not comparable to the cost of a week in a nursing home. The needs of patients are also considerably different as hospital geriatric care is acute in nature – when significant new conditions arise patients may need to be admitted to hospital from a nursing home to allow assessment and management of the patient.

Placements in Nursing Homes are subject to individual assessments of need and will normally be subject to a means test. All nursing home placements do, however, attract a £100 p.w. statutory contribution to the cost of nursing care.

Residential and Nursing Care Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how far minimum wage increases, inflation and the cost of increasing administrative demands have been reflected in year on year increases in Government funding for the residential and nursing care sector; and how this can be demonstrated.

(AQW 20311/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has been responsible for setting the weekly regional rate for residential and nursing home care since 2010/11 and has typically consulted with the Social Care Joint Forum (comprising representatives of interested parties throughout the industry) when doing so. This has included consideration of new and existing cost pressures.

As this area is currently subject to Judicial consideration, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Water Fluoridation

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to proceed with water fluoridation; and whether he will commission any studies into the total fluoride intake of the population before a decision is made to ensure compliance with the 1994 World Health Organisation recommendation on fluoridation.

(AQW 20322/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am still considering my position on fluoridation of the water supply in Northern Ireland and continue to consult with Executive colleagues on the matter before I come to a decision.

If a proposal to fluoridate the water supplies is made, we are required under, The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to consult and ascertain public opinion. Should such a consultation proceed, the appropriate evidence from reputable scientific and medical sources will be considered, and we would welcome the views of all interested parties, at that time.

The 1994 WHO Technical Report 'Fluorides and Oral Health' makes 16 recommendations and none of these advise undertaking studies into the total fluoride intake of the population. However, Recommendation 7 specifically advises the introduction and maintenance of community water fluoridation which is considered to be safe and cost-effective.

Adults with Mental Health Issues

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the closure of the respite units at Ferone Drive in Omagh and Claire House in Enniskillen, what respite care is being provided in these areas for adults with mental health issues.

(AQW 20324/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Trust advises that respite services for carers in the area continue to be provided by the Respite Team, based in Omagh. The Respite Team utilise a variety of services including day trips/outings, evening groups, 1:1 support and practical support to carers.

The Team are currently developing a programme of respite for the next 6 months. This respite will consist of planned short breaks for clients with staff in attendance. It is hoped that this alternative way of providing respite will meet the needs of the clients and their family in a positive manner.

The Trust continues to utilise nursing/residential home placements for respite when appropriate and these can be used for emergency situations, if necessary. Respite has also been delivered by providing a carer in the client's home to allow the family a break – this can be discussed with client/family on an individual basis based on assessed need.

Further meetings have been scheduled with carers to discuss alternative suitable options.

Belfast City Hospital: Amalgamated Primary School

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the site at Belfast City Hospital is still available to the Department of Education for a new amalgamated primary school for inner-south Belfast.

(AQW 20325/11-15)

Mr Poots: The position in regard to the potential school site on part of the BCH site remains unchanged since my statement to you on 22 May 2012 i.e. the potential use of part of the BCH site for the proposed new primary school remains subject to the Trust's future requirements on the site and the normal public sector processes for the disposal of land. The Belfast HSC Trust is not yet in a position to declare the site surplus and neither the Trust nor the DHSSPS have ruled out the potential to use the site for a school.

Whilst officials from my department have yet to receive any formal indication from the Department of Education that they wish to progress the project, I acknowledge the merit in combining the three schools and accept that the BCH site may be a suitable one within the schools' catchment area. I will therefore ensure that my Department works collaboratively with the Department of Education to deliver the best solution for public services and the public purse.

GP Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why his Department declined to negotiate with the GP profession over the content of GPs' contracts this year, and instead tabled non-negotiable demands.

(AQW 20338/11-15)

Mr Poots: Each year there is an annual negotiation at national level of revisions to the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract involving the four Health Departments across the UK and the General Practitioners Committee (GPC). Unfortunately, however, it was not possible this year to reach an agreeable settlement at national level with the General Practitioners Committee regarding revisions to the GMS Contract for 2013/14 and each Health Department has therefore engaged separately with the GPC in their respective jurisdictions on proposed changes to the Contract.

My Department has not declined to negotiate with the GP profession on revisions to the Contract and remains ready to continue dialogue with GPC in Northern Ireland about proposed changes in an effort to reach an acceptable agreement. The proposals are currently out for consultation.

Quality and Outcomes Framework Targets

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on what basis can the demand for multiple 95 percent Quality and Outcomes Framework targets be met while sustaining sufficient funding for GPs.

(AQW 20339/11-15)

Mr Poots: The proposals for changes to the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) are with the aim of promoting improvements in the quality of care for patients. The funding that is allocated under the General Medical Services Contract through the QOF is based on the achievement by practices against

a range of indicators. There are currently some 140 indicators in the QOF and the proposals currently out for consultation are to increase the upper thresholds of six of them to 95%. The funding available to GP practices through the QOF is dependent on performances achieved across all of the indicators in the QOF.

Quality and Outcomes Framework Determinations

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why is there no recognition of contractor population index changes in his Department's Quality and Outcomes Framework determinations.

(AQW 20340/11-15)

Mr Poots: Contractor Population Index (CPI) is used to help determine QOF payments under the General Medical Services Contract. Changes in the CPI, which is based on the average list size of practices, are recognised and accounted for on an annual basis to reflect any population changes.

Quality and Outcomes Framework

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the recognition of upward population changes in his Department's Quality and Outcomes Framework determinations.

(AQW 20341/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Contractor Population Index (CPI), which is used to help determine Quality and Outcome Framework payments under the General Medical Services Contract, is based on the average list size of practices and is updated annually for the latest estimated population.

IVF Treatment

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the age requirements for eligibility for IVF treatment; and whether he has any plans to change these requirements.

(AQW 20351/11-15)

Mr Poots: Current access criteria in Northern Ireland for publically funded IVF Treatment, which were developed following public consultation in 2006 and 2009, give the following age related criteria:

- female partners using their own eggs may access publicly funded IVF treatment up to 39 years of age;
- women using donated eggs can access publicly funded fertility treatments if they are 49 years or younger, with due consideration given to the impact on any child born to older parents.

NICE has recently published revised guidelines on fertility, which is being considered by my Department for their applicability to Health and Social Care service provision in Northern Ireland. We will reach a view on this as soon as possible.

Cap on Care Payments

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of a cap on care payments, such as the £75,000 maximum proposed in England.

(AQW 20380/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am aware of the intention of the Coalition government to introduce, in 2017, a cap of £75,000 on individual contributions to the cost of any social care received. As social care is a devolved matter this cap will apply in England only.

However, I recognise that this is an issue about which people feel strongly and that is why I have committed to a three stage process of reform in Northern Ireland. As a first step, my Department is currently engaged in an extensive public consultation until 15 March on the discussion document,

“Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI”. The purpose of the consultation is to hear people’s views on key issues including the type of services we want to see in the future, who should provide them, and, crucially, how we should pay for them.

Once I have had the opportunity to consider the views and opinions of the people of Northern Ireland my Department will develop proposals for reform, which will include changes to how care and support is funded. Until then it would be inappropriate to comment on whether a cap should be implemented in Northern Ireland.

Ulster Hospital, Dundonald: MRI Scanner

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made on the provision of a second MRI Scanner at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald.

(AQW 20400/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am pleased to confirm that funding has been made available within this financial year for the purchase of a second MRI scanner within the Department of Radiology at the Ulster Hospital. It is expected that the scanner will be installed in late March 2013 and will be fully operational by early April.

Quality and Outcomes Framework Targets

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department assists in channeling health care towards GPs, as anticipated by Transforming Your Care, given that the funding of GPs is reduced by Quality and Outcomes Framework targets.

(AQW 20419/11-15)

Mr Poots: All parts of the Health and Social care sector, including General Practice will have a role to play in contributing to the implementation of Transforming Your Care to improve the quality of patient and client care.

The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) is one component of the General Medical Services Contract aimed at resourcing and rewarding quality care. It is through this work that GPs can help contribute to Transforming Your Care, specifically through the achievement of the Quality and Productivity Indicators which help to reduce hospital attendances and admissions, and through the achievement of the Clinical Indicators and the management of long term conditions which seek to ensure that patients are cared for in the most appropriate setting.

The proposals for changes to the Framework are with the aim of promoting further improvements for patients. The funding that is allocated under the Contract through the QOF is based on the achievement by practices against indicators and it is not necessarily the case that funding provided to GPs would reduce because of proposed changes to QOF.

Quality and Outcomes Framework Targets

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety by how much his Department anticipates that funding to GPs will reduce as a result of the 2013/14 Quality and Outcomes Framework proposals.

(AQW 20420/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) is an annual reward element of the General Medical Services Contract designed to remunerate General Practice for providing quality care to their patients. It is intended to reward good practice. The QOF measures achievement against a range of indicators, with funding to practices linked to the level of achievement. It is not necessarily the case that funding provided to GPs would reduce because of proposed changes to the QOF.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have signed the organ donor register in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20426/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer to the joint response to AQW 20046 / 11-15 and AQW 20048 / 11-15.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what campaigns his Department has used over the last ten years to encourage people to sign the organ donor register.

(AQW 20427/11-15)

Mr Poots: As responsibility for encouraging people to join the organ donor register (ODR) falls to the Public Health Agency (PHA) and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), my Department has not directly run or funded any campaigns on this issue.

Whilst the PHA has not run any campaigns, it has been involved in many other ways to encourage people to join the ODR, such as: public information announcements; encouraging people to join the ODR via social media; securing print features on observance days; promoting Transplant Awareness Week; being involved in the promotion of the Transplant Games; securing features with local TV channels; running information stands at events such as fresher fayres; and promoting organ donation through sport.

NHSBT promotes organ donation to the public across the UK and has run several campaigns over the years, which would also have had a local component built into them. Recently NHSBT has focussed its efforts to encourage people to join the ODR around exploring 'prompted choice' initiatives.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on encouraging people to sign the organ donor register, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20428/11-15)

Mr Poots: As responsibility for encouraging people to join the organ donor register (ODR) falls to the Public Health Agency (PHA) and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), my Department has not directly run or funded any campaigns on this issue.

Whilst the PHA has not run any campaigns, it has been involved in many other ways to encourage people to join the ODR, such as: public information announcements; encouraging people to join the ODR via social media; securing print features on observance days; promoting Transplant Awareness Week; being involved in the promotion of the Transplant Games; securing features with local TV channels; running information stands at events such as fresher fayres; and promoting organ donation through sport.

NHSBT promotes organ donation to the public across the UK and has run several campaigns over the years, which would also have had a local component built into them. Recently NHSBT has focussed its efforts to encourage people to join the ODR around exploring 'prompted choice' initiatives.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the anticipated cost of changing the law to a presumed consent opt-out system of organ donation.

(AQW 20429/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recently announced my intention to survey on attitudes towards organ donation, including the possibility of an opt-out system. The details and timings of this exercise are still being developed and will be announced in due course.

If a decision is made to move to an opt-out system of organ donation in the future, the possible costs to introduce such a system would be examined as part of the decision making process.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has held any discussions on organ donation with the Secretary of State for Health; and whether he plans to change the law to a presumed consent opt-out system.

(AQW 20430/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have had no direct discussions with the Secretary of State for Health on organ donation; however, my officials are in close contact with officials from the other UK Health Administrations on a regular basis concerning this issue.

I recently announced my intention to survey on public attitudes towards organ donation, including the possibility of an opt-out system. The details and timings of this exercise are being developed and will be announced in due course. Once the outcome of the survey is known, I will consider what the next steps should be to increase organ donation.

Cost of Translating Departmental Letters and Documents

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20456/11-15)

Mr Poots: The cost of translating departmental letters and documents into Irish and other languages, in each of the last five years, is set out in the table below.

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Irish	-	£40	-	£ 47	£3,942
Other Languages	£66	-	£1,860	£7,720	£ 610
Total	£66	£40	£1,860	£7,767	£4,552

Source: Account NI

A break-down of translation costs for each other language by year can only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, translation costs for other languages include Chinese (simplified), Chinese (Hong Kong), Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, and Tetum.

Regional Health Board: Funding

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the reasons why the Regional Health Board, which received a business case in 2011 from the British Heart Foundation supported by the Regional Medical Officer, has not yet granted essential funding which has prevented nurses from delivering community programmes in preventative care.

(AQW 20461/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has considered the business case for Community Resuscitation Development Officers based in the five Health and Social Care Trusts.

The Board has advised that this initiative will appear in the Commissioning Plan for 2013/14 and will feature as a potential candidate for funding should uncommitted funds become available. Some funding has been provided by the PHA to allow the current service to continue in the interim.

As you are aware I recently announced the proposed development of a community resuscitation strategy for Northern Ireland and I have asked that it is ready for consultation by October 2013.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Medical Equipment and Aids

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the medical equipment and aids that are provided to patients which are then disposed of; and for the estimated costs to each Health and Social Care Trust, in each the last three years.

(AQW 20464/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information is not available in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

“Medical equipment and aids” covers a vast range of products. In any consideration of recycling of equipment or aids by HSC Trusts, the safety and wellbeing of the patient, client and carer is of paramount importance.

In addition, HSC Trusts will take account of the cost-effective of reusing the equipment or aid, this would include, for example, the cost of decontamination in accordance with recognised standards.

Immunologists

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) number of immunologists; and (ii) average waiting time for an appointment with an immunologist, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 20465/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) A regional service for Immunology is provided by the Belfast HSC Trust. The number of Immunologists employed by Belfast HSC Trust is provided in the table below.

NUMBER OF MEDICAL STAFF SPECIALISING IN IMMUNOLOGY AT MARCH 2013

Grade	Headcount	Whole-time equivalent
Consultant	2	2.0
Specialist Registrar	2	2.0
Core Trainee CT 3	1	1.0

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

Notes:

- 1 A new Consultant for Immunology/Allergy has been appointed by the BHSCT and is expected to take up post in April pending all recruitment checks.
 - 2 This appointment will leave one Specialist Registrar in post. It is anticipated that a replacement Specialist Registrar will be recruited for August 2013.
 - 3 A core Trainee CT3, took up post in February for 6 months.
 - 4 It is expected that the BHSCT team of 3 Consultants & appropriate nursing staff will process the Immunology referral workload. The location and configuration of clinics are yet to be determined. Administration staff are required to provide reception cover at clinics and to type reports. BHSCT medical records and appointment staff facilitate the set up of clinics.
- (ii) I have been informed that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is the only Trust where an Immunology service is provided. The average waiting time, as of the 5th March 2013, for an appointment with an Immunologist was 11 weeks for the adult service and 6 weeks for the paediatric service.

Allergy Clinic

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) average waiting time for an appointment at an allergy clinic; and (ii) the full complement of staff at each clinic, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 20466/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The Belfast Health and Social Care HSC Trust is the only Trust that provides an adult allergy clinic service. The average waiting, as of the week beginning 4th March 2013, for an adult appointment at an allergy clinic was 8 weeks.

Allergy clinics for paediatrics/young people are provided at each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts. The average waiting time, as of the week beginning 4th March 2013, for a paediatric appointment at an allergy clinic in each HSC Trust is shown in the table below.

WAITING TIMES FOR PAEDIATRIC ALLERGY CLINICS

HSC Trust	Average Waiting Time (weeks)
Belfast	5
Northern	10
South Eastern	22
Southern	9
Western	18

- ii) Staffing Complement in each allergy clinic by HSC Trust

BELFAST HSC TRUST

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Independent sector Consultant	1	5 clinics per month, 7.5 hours per day
Independent sector Allergy Nurse	1	5 clinics per month, 7.5 hours per day
BHSCT Allergy nurse	1	5 clinics per month, 4 hours per day

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Consultant locum	1	One clinic per month, 8 hours per day
BHSCT Nursing staff	2	One clinic per month, 8 hours per day

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Consultant	1	As required

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Registrar ST3	1	As required
Allergy Nurse	1	As required
Out-patient nursing staff	Variable	Out-patient nursing staff work at a number and variety of clinics simultaneously. The clinics normally last for 4 hours.

BHSCT notes:

- 1 An Independent sector contract is currently in place which has processed the majority of adult allergy referrals during 2012 and to date. This contract finishes at end of March 2013. This contract allows one consultant & one allergy nurse to attend the Trust for one week per month offering 4.5 days of clinics.
- 2 One Locum Consultant visits the BHSCT and provides one full day of clinics per month for adult allergy referrals.
- 3 A new Consultant for Immunology/Allergy has been appointed by the BHSCT and is expected to take up post in April pending all recruitment checks.
- 4 A recruitment process is underway to recruit two part-time Allergy nurses.
- 5 It is expected that the BHSCT team of 3 Consultants & allergy nursing staff will then process the Allergy referral workload. The location and configuration of clinics are yet to be determined.
- 6 Administration staff are required to provide reception cover at clinics and typing of reports. BHSCT medical records and appointment staff facilitate the set up of clinics.

NORTHERN HSC TRUST

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Consultant	1	8
SHO or Registrar	1	8
Paediatric Dietitian	1	8
Dietetic Support Worker	1	4-8
Paediatric Staff Nurse	2	8

NHSCT notes:

- 1 The allergy clinic is a paediatric service.

SOUTH EASTERN HSC TRUST

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Consultant (Paediatrics)	1	12
Specialty Doctor (Paediatrics)	1	4
Specialist Nurse(Paediatrics)	1	20
Dietician (Paediatrics)	1	4

SEHSCT notes:

- 1 There are no dedicated allergy clinics for adults. Adults are assessed at Dermatology Clinics.

SOUTHERN HSC TRUST

Grade	Headcount	Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Fortnightly 3-hour clinic at Daisy Hill Hospital		
Consultant Paediatrician	1	3 hours per fortnight
Respiratory/Allergy Nurse Specialist	1	3 hours per fortnight
Paediatric Dietician	1	3 hours per fortnight

Weekly clinics at Craigavon Hospital	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Wednesday clinic (3.5 hours)		
Consultant Paediatrician	1	3.5
Junior Doctor	1	3.5
Respiratory/Allergy Nurse Specialist	1	3.5
Paediatric Dietician	1	3.5
Friday clinic (3.5 hours)		
Consultant Paediatrician	1	3.5
Respiratory/Allergy Nurse Specialist	1	3.5

SHSCT notes:

- 1 The allergy clinic staff work in Children & Young People's Services. SHSCT Acute (Adult) Services does not have an allergy clinic but does offer patch testing through the Dermatology Department.

WESTERN HSC TRUST

Grade	Headcount	Weekly Staff Hours provided to the clinic
Consultant	1	4 hours twice a month
Specialist Nurse Band 6	1	4 hours twice a month

WHST notes:

- 1 This is a paediatric clinic. In addition, there are other paediatric outpatient staff allocated to cover all clinics to record weight and heights and bloods if required.

Source: Health and Social Care Trusts

Quality and Outcomes Framework Targets

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on what evidence are his Department's proposals for Quality and Outcomes Framework targets in 2013/14 based.
(AQW 20469/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) was first introduced as part of the GMS Contract in 2004. The QOF measures achievement against a range of evidence-based indicators, as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The inclusion of indicators within QOF and their respective thresholds for achievement are normally negotiated each year as part of the annual GMS Contract negotiations involving the four Health Departments in the UK and the General Practitioners Committee (GPC). Thresholds are set on the basis of existing performances and an assessment of what is achievable with the purpose of enabling more patients to benefit, therefore improving health outcomes.

Quality and Outcomes Framework Targets

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department's Quality and Outcomes Framework targets for 2013/14 compare with those in the rest of the United Kingdom.

(AQW 20473/11-15)

Mr Poots: The inclusion of indicators within the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) and their respective thresholds is normally considered each year as part of the annual GMS contract negotiations involving the four Health Departments in the UK and the General Practitioners Committee (GPC). Unfortunately, it was not possible this year to reach an agreeable settlement with the GPC regarding the revisions to the GMS Contract for 2013/14. Each Department is therefore engaging separately with their respective GPC on proposed changes to the Contract.

The QOF indicators for which there are proposed increases in thresholds are broadly similar across the UK though there is some variation in levels proposed. However, decisions have not yet been made across all four Countries as yet so levels have not all been confirmed. The Northern Ireland consultation process is due to close on 22 March.

Hollywood and Tandragee Fluoridation Trials

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the details and conclusions of the study on the dental and any other health effects of fluoride in drinking water, as found in the Hollywood and Tandragee areas.

(AQW 20479/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department does not hold records on any such study on the dental or other health effects of fluoride in drinking water, in the Hollywood and Tandragee areas.

My officials have previously carried out an extensive search of Departmental records, including the archives of the Public Records Office to check for such records and none has been found.

Paramedics and Ambulance Service Staff: Inadequate Breaks and Excessive Workloads

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department is aware of concerns among paramedics and other ambulance service staff regarding inadequate breaks and excessive workloads during their working shifts in the Omagh area.

(AQW 20497/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department is not aware of a particular problem in the Omagh area. NIAS advise that it is not aware of any specific demands or pressures specific to the Omagh area. The trust is, however, fully aware of the regional increase in activity and the possible impact on all staff.

Given these noticeable increases in demand for ambulance services and the associated pressures likely to affect staff in maintaining the current level of response and performance, NIAS has been actively working through a number of issues in conjunction with trade union representatives.

These areas include ensuring the allocation of compensatory rest, allocation of meal breaks and rest periods as well as transfer opportunities.

Banbridge Health Centre: Mammogram Screenings

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Southern Health and Social Care Trust does not provide mammogram screenings at the Banbridge Health Centre; and what future plans there are to provide this service in Banbridge.

(AQW 20514/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Breast Screening Programme delivers the screening programme from both static and screening mobile units.

The Southern HSC Trust has two static breast screening units – one at Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry and one at Lurgan Hospital. They share a mobile unit with the Western HSC Trust. The mobile unit does not visit Banbridge Health Centre. The Southern HSC Trust provides breast screening for women in the Banbridge area from the static units.

In deciding the best sites to locate the mobile unit, the Trust takes a number of factors into consideration including the distance women have to travel for screening and an accessible location that will accommodate women from a number of GP surgeries.

A regional business case for the replacement of the current analogue mammography machines with digital x-ray machines is currently being finalised. When digital mammography is introduced the Southern HSC Trust plans to replace its two static units with mobile units to facilitate an improved service for women throughout the Southern HSC Trust area. This will give the Trust the capacity to provide the service locally at various Health Centres including the Banbridge area.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust MS Patients

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many MS patients were involved in the 2010 consultation, in conjunction with Multiple Sclerosis Society, in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area; (ii) to outline the conclusions of that engagement and (iii) to give the (a) average age and (b) age range of those who participated.

(AQW 20515/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) During 2010, four focus groups were held across the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area to explore the views of service users who require access to respite within the Northern Trust area. The table below provides details of the focus groups.

Date	Venue	Number of participants
4 April 2011	WS Tweed Room, Ballymoney	11
4 April 2011	Wilson House Day Centre, Broughshane	12
7 April 2011	Pavestone, Coleraine	20
13 April 2011	Antrim Day Centre, Antrim	26

- (ii) In response to the findings of the focus groups, the NHSCT has advised that in January 2012, a Community MS Specialist Nurse was appointed to provide advice and support to service users with a diagnosis of MS. In addition, she provides specialist guidance to Trust staff; raises awareness of MS; and attends several of the MS Support Groups throughout the Trust. She also attends the MS Clinics and liaises closely with neurologists and other MS nurses, and she participates in the Regional MS Forum.

- (iii) The Trust did not record the age of those who participated in the focus groups therefore the requested information is not available.

Health and Social Care Trusts' MS Patients

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether social workers, in the Health and Social Care Trusts, are being told not to promote actively the MS Unit at Dalriada, Ballycastle as a respite option to patients and only to consider it when requested by the patients.

(AQW 20516/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Trusts advise that this is not the case. Respite is based on a patient's assessed need and once this is identified, social workers provide information to the MS patient and their family on the range of available respite service options, including respite provision in Dalriada Hospital.

Fire Brigades Union: Pensions Reform

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with the Fire Brigades Union regarding proposed pensions reform.

(AQW 20524/11-15)

Mr Poots: When I met FBU officers on 26th February 2013 we discussed pensions among a range of issues. My officials keep me informed of the FBU's views on pension reform through their engagement with the FBU both bi-laterally and through a NIC/ICTU forum.

Independent Living Fund

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will publish his response to the consultation on the Independent Living Fund.

(AQW 20528/11-15)

Mr Poots: When the consultation was launched, I raised my concerns at the proposal to close the Independent Living Fund and have since written to the Minister for Disabled People, Esther McVey MP, further expressing my disappointment at the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) decision to close the fund from April 2015.

My officials are now taking forward a programme of work with colleagues in the health and social care sector in NI to help ensure that those disabled people who are most in need of care and support are not disadvantaged by DWP's decision.

Unlicensed Drugs

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether patients are receiving unlicensed drugs for certain conditions, such as Bendamustine for the treatment of Multiple Myeloma; and how these drugs are funded in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 20534/11-15)

Mr Poots: Unlicensed drugs/medicines are not routinely commissioned in Northern Ireland. If a specialist medicine is used in an unlicensed manner because of clinically exceptional circumstances, it may be funded by the Health and Social Care Board through the process for Individual Funding Requests (IFR), having first gained support from the particular Health and Social Care Trust's Internal Scrutiny Committee.

Other funding mechanisms that are available include patient/individual top-up schemes, pharmaceutical assistance/risk sharing/patient access schemes and clinical trials.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Advice to Families

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has for Health and Social Care Trusts (i) to distribute printed advice to families who suffer the death of a child, such as advice on coping with everyday life, including mental health issues; and (ii) to provide signposting to relevant departments within the Health Trusts.

(AQW 20554/11-15)

Mr Poots: Within the Health and Social Care Trusts, work is ongoing across the region to develop printed information for families who experience the death of a child. Each Trust currently has bereavement booklets that includes practical information and emotional support for bereaved people, including signposting to appropriate local mental health support.

Whilst not specific to the loss of a child, my Department's Strategy for Bereavement Care, which was published in 2009, promotes an integrated, consistent approach to all aspects of care across the public health and social care services in supporting individuals and families who have been bereaved.

My Department has also produced the following documents, which contain advice on bereavement support for families who have suffered the loss of a child, both before and after birth and are complemented by the Integrated Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathway, which was published by the Public Health Agency in December 2012:

- Careplan for women who experience a miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death; and
- A Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2018.

In addition, my Department is currently undertaking a review of paediatric services including palliative and end of life care. The review, which will be subject to public consultation in the near future, will contain information on bereavement care, including the provision of psychological support. It is anticipated that the final document will be published in early 2014.

New GP Contract

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he has taken to ensure that the new GP contract is introduced with the support of the British Medical Association.

(AQW 20571/11-15)

Mr Poots: Each year there is an negotiation at national level of revisions to the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract involving the four Health Departments across the UK and the BMA's General Practitioners Committee (GPC). Unfortunately, it was not possible this year to reach an agreeable settlement with the General Practitioners Committee regarding revisions to the GMS Contract for 2013/14 across the four parts of the united Kingdom. Each Health Department is therefore engaging separately with the respective GPC on proposed changes to the Contract.

My Department remains ready to continue dialogue with GPC in Northern Ireland about proposed changes in an effort to reach an acceptable agreement. The proposals are currently out for consultation.

Health Service Dental Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the consultation his Department has undertaken with patient groups and organisations, such as the British Dental Association, in relation to proposed changes to Health Service dental care.

(AQW 20583/11-15)

Mr Poots: In January 2013 my Department issued a consultation on proposals to change the treatments that are available through General Dental Services to a range of stakeholders including the British Dental Association, all registered dentists in Northern Ireland, the Patient and Client Council, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People along with other groups. These proposals were first shared with the British Dental Association in November 2011 and since then officials in my Department and the Health and Social Care Board have held a series of meetings with

the British Dental Association. I met with a delegation of dentists from the Northern Local Dental Committee in June 2012 and am meeting with the British Dental Association this month to discuss the proposals.

MRI Scanners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number and location of MRI scanners at hospitals.

(AQW 20585/11-15)

Mr Poots: The location and number of MRI scanners at HSC hospitals is provided in the following table:

Location	Number
Belfast City Hospital	2
Mater Hospital	1
Musgrave Park Hospital	2
Royal Victoria Hospital	2
Antrim Hospital	1
Ulster Hospital	2
Craigavon Hospital	1
Altnagelvin Hospital	1
South West Acute Hospital	1

Termination of Pregnancy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 203/11-15, for an update on the number of terminations of pregnancy carried out in Health and Social Care facilities to the latest point for which figures are available.

(AQW 20785/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 24th May 2012 the Department instructed the HSC Board to undertake an audit of the clinical coding related to abortions in Northern Ireland to assess the accuracy of the data produced. A statement was made by the Minister for Health Social Services and Public Safety to the Assembly detailing the findings of the audit on 22nd August 2012 and is published on the Department's website at the following link;

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/inpatients.htm

Information relating to termination of pregnancy is published annually on the Department's website at the following link;

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/inpatients.htm

The most recent year for which information is available is 2011/12.

Cushendall Fire Station

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQO 1081/11-15, at what stage is the business plan for the new fire station in Cushendall.

(AQW 20833/11-15)

Mr Poots: I understand that NIFRS has developed a working draft business case for the replacement of Cushendall fire station. However, the DHSSPS capital programme is constrained by the allocations set out in Budget 2010 and, in the longer term, by the indicative allocations set out in the Investment

Strategy for Northern Ireland. The highest priority projects are profiled in the current budget period, including a number of NIFRS projects. I do not have sufficient funding available to progress all of the identified projects. At this stage Cushendall Fire Station is not sufficiently high up the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service list of priorities to be funded in the current budget period. Until decisions are made on priorities for the next budget period, it is not possible to progress this business case any further.

Cushendall Fire Station

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when a decision will be made on the capital build programme for Cushendall Fire Station.

(AQW 20867/11-15)

Mr Poots: At this stage, I am unable to provide a timescale for the replacement of Cushendall Fire Station. As a result of a prioritisation exercise within NIFRS and taking account of budgetary constraints, it has not been possible to profile this project within the current Budget period. In planning for the next Budget period, NIFRS will be continuing to prioritise its needs within the available capital envelope and Cushendall will be considered as part of that exercise.

Department of Justice

Prisoner's Previous Convictions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether Prisoner A has served time in prison on charges related to dissident republican activity; (ii) what he was convicted of; (iii) when he was jailed; and (iv) what were the terms he was subject to (a) pre-release; and (b) post release.

(AQW 18105/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Data Protection Act 1998 gives individuals certain rights in relation to personal information held on them by public authorities; therefore the information requested cannot be provided as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Prisoner Release Scheme

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) whether Prisoner A was on a prisoner release scheme and/or parole, a requirement of which was that he attend with a supervisor or similar person; (ii) the full content of this requirement including how often he was required to attend and when it was ordered; (iii) how many times did he attended attend; (iv) whether all appointments were kept; and (v) whether were any breaches or missed appointments were reported for prosecution as defaulting on an order.

(AQW 18612/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Data Protection Act 1998 gives individuals certain rights in relation to personal information held on them by public authorities. The detailed information requested relating to specific licencing conditions cannot be provided as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act.

Cost of Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid from Legal Aid on very high cost cases in each of the last two years.

(AQW 20232/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total amount of expenditure on legal aid funding for very high cost cases in the past two years is:

- £12.480m in 2010/11
- £6.256m in 2011/12.

Prisoner Granted Temporary Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the procedures for a sentenced prisoner being granted temporary leave to attend a family wedding; (ii) what relation the person getting married has to be to the prisoner in order for release to be considered; (iii) the measures imposed to prevent absconding or re-offending; and (iv) whether it is necessary for a prisoner to be accompanied by a prison officer throughout the proceedings.

(AQW 20234/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) does not operate a scheme which allows for a prisoner to be granted temporary leave to attend a family wedding. Under the terms of the Compassionate Temporary Release (CTR) Scheme a sentenced prisoner can apply for temporary release only when a member of the immediate family is deemed by the medical authorities to be critically ill, or to attend the funeral of a member of the immediate family.

If the request falls outside the criteria of the CTR Scheme, NIPS will consider the application on its merits against the general provision of Rule 27(1&2) of the Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995. Consideration will also be given under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Prison Service must then determine whether the restrictions of freedom and a normal life, that are inevitably caused by imprisonment, warrant relaxation in the particular circumstances of the application.

A prisoner approaching the end of his or her sentence may apply for pre-release home leave which, if granted, may be taken to coincide with a family event including a wedding.

Unanswered Question: AQW 18612/11-15

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18612/11-15, why he is yet to provide an answer to this question, and when an answer can be expected.

(AQW 20235/11-15)

Mr Ford: With regard to AQW 18612/11-15, the Member will wish to note that a response issued on 11 March 2013.

Prison Officers: Recruitment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19303/11-15, how many of the 199 Custody Prison Officers recruited have been dismissed.

(AQW 20236/11-15)

Mr Ford: As less than five of those recently recruited to the role of Custody Prison Officer have been dismissed the exact number has been withheld. This is to protect the identity of those concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Sexual Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 16398/11-15, on what date was the charge of causing a person to engage in a sexual act added to the list of thirteen offences allegedly committed on 28 October 2012.

(AQW 20238/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr Douglas was charged by the PSNI with causing a person to engage in a sexual act on 29 October 2012.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17850/11-15, to detail (i) whether he will give an assurance that prison officers and others involved in the assessment, care, management and

control of prisoners at risk of self harm will have appropriate training to carry out this work; and (ii) the total number of prisoner officers and healthcare professionals who have received this training to date.

(AQW 20296/11-15)

Mr Ford: As part of their core function and role, Prison Officers are given appropriate training to supervise, assess, care, manage and control prisoners including those identified to be at risk of self harm.

Since its launch in December 2009, Supporting Prisoners at Risk training has been provided to over 900 members of staff.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service has a policy relating to just and legal compensation payments to those officers exonerated of breach of discipline for unqualified suspension from duty and related damage to health commensurate to incurred stress, without further loss to the public purse via recourse to High Court Litigation.

(AQW 20298/11-15)

Mr Ford: The occasions when suspension may be considered are contained within the Code of Conduct and Discipline (prison grades) and the Discipline Chapter of the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook (non prison grades). There is no requirement to provide compensation where staff are cleared of charges.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, whether sanctions that were imposed on senior officers were proportionate in severity to those imposed on junior ranking staff given their managerial and supervisory responsibilities.

(AQW 20303/11-15)

Mr Ford: The award of disciplinary sanctions, irrespective of grade, are considered on an individual basis and applied in accordance with the current Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19441/11-15, why there is a lack of records within the Northern Ireland Prison Service and how the Prison Service compares in this respect with other agencies or bodies under his Department's remit.

(AQW 20305/11-15)

Mr Ford: At the time of Prisoner at Risk training, the computerised system used by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to record training was not used to record awareness/briefing sessions.

The PSNI provide training in relation to vulnerable offenders based on the Safer Handling document, PACE (NI) Order and associated Codes of Practice. Staff working in the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) are provided with ASSIST training in dealing with young people who may have suicidal tendencies.

NIPS now record all training and I am content the recording of Prisoner at Risk training is not inferior to that of the PSNI or YJA.

Rehabilitation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to provide a breakdown of costs associated with the rehabilitation of Kenneth Douglas, particularly during his residence at the Prisoner Assessment Unit, including the cost of the therapy provided by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 20344/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18760/11-15, given that the Northern Ireland Prison Service has sole responsibility for the suspension and discipline of staff in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Discipline together with the statutory requirements in Schedule 1 of the Employment (NI) Order 2003 and the Labour Relations Agency Code of Practice on Disciplinary Procedures, to outline why his answer states that if a staff member is concerned about a recommendation by the Prisoner Ombudsman, that a complaint may be made to the Director of Operations directly or via an MLA to the Assembly Ombudsman or the member may challenge by way of Judicial Review.

(AQW 20350/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman does not make recommendations covering the suspension and/or dismissal of staff, but may recommend that the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) considers conducting an internal disciplinary investigation into a staff member's actions.

Anyone, Prison Officers included, can commence a public law challenge against any act, omission or decision of a public body.

In my response to AQW/18760/11-15, I explained that an individual officer who is concerned about a recommendation made by the Prisoner Ombudsman may make a complaint directly to the NIPS Director of Operations. If such complaints cannot be resolved internally then there is scope for a person to make a complaint via an MLA to the Assembly Ombudsman.

A recommendation of the Prisoner Ombudsman may also be open to judicial review.

Rehabilitation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to instigate a serious case review of Kenneth Douglas' rehabilitation and subsequent monitoring on release.

(AQW 20359/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service is currently conducting a review of the circumstances and decisions taken in relation to Kenneth Douglas.

Flying of the Union Flag

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 20184/11-15, given that G4S is tasked with supplying security services to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service under contract to his Department, whether an issue surrounding the flying of the Union flag has occurred at a court house including (i) the date; (ii) when and how it was reported; (iii) if a member of G4S staff has been suspended and on what grounds; (iv) the court house at which the incident occurred; and (v) when he was notified.

(AQW 20404/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 20 February 2013 Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) staff reported that G4S had failed to lower the Union flag at Antrim Courthouse. The Union flag had been raised on 19 February 2013, a designated flag flying day, and should have been lowered at sunset.

On 20 February 2013 G4S advised NICTS that they had commenced an investigation. Disciplinary action regarding the performance of duties by G4S employees is a matter for G4S.

I was notified of this incident on 25 February 2013.

Purpose 1 - Visual Images Used for Staff Disciplinary Matters

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the current departmental Data Protection Public Register, to detail (i) the date his Department entered Purpose 1 - Visual Images Used for Staff Disciplinary Matters; (ii) who authorised that it be entered; (iii) the reasons for inclusion; (iv) when the Information Commissioner's Office was notified; and (v) whether he will publish both the original and amended versions.

(AQW 20408/11-15)

Mr Ford: This Purpose has been entered since the creation of the Department of Justice (NI) on 12 April 2010. It is a standard Class under Purpose 1 – Staff Administration (“Appointments or removals, pay, discipline, superannuation, work management or other personnel matters in relation to the staff of the data controller”). The Register is reviewed annually ‘by exception’, that is it is circulated for review by all Information Asset Owners; it was not authorised by a particular individual. The Information Commissioner's Office was first notified on 14 April 2010, and the entry has been updated annually since then. The Information Commissioner's Office maintains the register as an online database, rather than a published document, and so it is not possible to access previous versions.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, to detail the number of (i) serious assaults on Northern Ireland Prison Service staff by prisoners; (ii) minor assaults on staff; and (iii) prisoners that had been punished in connection with an assault.

(AQW 20410/11-15)

Mr Ford: Details of the numbers of assaults on Prison Service staff and the number of prisoners who received an adjudication award in connection with these assaults are set out in the table below:

Year	Serious assaults on staff	Minor assaults on staff	Number of prisoners who received an adjudication award in connection with assaulting staff
2008	1	27	25
2009	1	38	28
2010	2	34	30
2011	2	48	29
2012	3	45	41
TOTAL	9	192	153

DOJ: Overtime Payments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, whether the costs include overtime payments to staff who had to operationally supplement the duties of those suspended.

(AQW 20411/11-15)

Mr Ford: The figures provided in my response to AQW/19382/11-15 represent the total cost incurred by the Northern Ireland Prison Service for associated salary costs of those staff suspended only.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19286/11-15, on what date in March 2011 his Department and the Prison Service were notified.

(AQW 20444/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that the Prisoner Ombudsman notified the Northern Ireland Prison Service on 4 March 2011 and my office on 14 March 2011 respectively.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, whether the Prisoner Ombudsman had input into the identification of the Senior Officers who became subject of investigation; and how many of the officers the Ombudsman helped to identify.

(AQW 20445/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Senior Officers were not identified from the Prisoner Ombudsman's Report.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19286/11-15, whether the Prison Service confirmed to the media the assertions of the Prisoner Ombudsman (i) that on the balance of probabilities a prison officer planted a note in a prisoner's cell; (ii) the conclusion that prison staff had leaked incorrect information to the press; and (iii) that there were reasonable grounds to indicate that one member of staff may have committed disciplinary and criminal offence.

(AQW 20452/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following receipt of the Ombudsman's Report in March 2011 the Prison Service issued the following statement, against enquiry, to the media:

"The Prisoner Ombudsman's Report highlights a number of issues which the Prison Service is taking very seriously. We have launched a disciplinary investigation into this matter which has been adjourned pending the outcome of a police investigation. A member of staff has been precautionarily suspended in accordance with our code of discipline. It would be inappropriate to make any further comment until the police investigation ends."

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, (i) who authorised this expenditure; (ii) whether he plans to investigate the use of £900k for this purpose; and (iii) whether the expenditure, on suspension alone, was kept under review and properly managed.

(AQW 20453/11-15)

Mr Ford: The authorisation to maintain salary during a period of suspension is taken by the Governor in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Discipline. I will not be investigating the use of £900,000 for this purpose as I am content this expenditure was properly authorised.

Universal AccessNI Certificate

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice whether he plans to create a universal AccessNI certificate to satisfy temporary jobs that require security clearance.

(AQW 20615/11-15)

Mr Ford: In August 2011 I published a report by Sunita Mason, the Independent Advisor for Criminality Information in England and Wales, on the criminal records regime in Northern Ireland. Recommendation 6 of that report said "I recommend that a system of portable disclosures and updated online checking be introduced as quickly as possible". This would enable an individual to obtain one AccessNI certificate and use it for a variety of job positions or volunteering opportunities.

On 14 December I issued a public consultation document in response to that report. In paragraph 1.11 of that document I accepted this recommendation and stated that I would seek to make the required legislative changes in the next Justice Bill.

My officials are currently working to put appropriate procedures in place and it is hope that 'portability' of certificates will be delivered in early 2014 within Northern Ireland.

Removal of Details from Various Criminal Record Databases

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice to detail all circumstances in which the removal of details from the various criminal record databases in Northern Ireland and Great Britain has occurred.

(AQW 20793/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am unable to comment in relation to criminal record databases held in Great Britain.

Criminal records in Northern Ireland are maintained by the Causeway Criminal History Database. Such records can only be amended or removed where the Criminal Justice Organisation that owns the information requests changes to be made. An example might be where an error in an individual record comes to light.

AccessNI, the criminal history disclosure unit, provides all information on an individual applicant held in criminal record databases in both Northern Ireland and Great Britain for Standard and Enhanced criminal record checks, except for cautions and other similar disposals. For Basic disclosures, AccessNI will, in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, not disclose any convictions regarded as "spent".

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19968/11-15, who or which agency or government body reported this matter to the PSNI for investigation.

(AQW 20823/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Ombudsman reported this matter to the PSNI for investigation as required under Prison Rule 79L (8).

Community Safety College at Desertcreat

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the new Community Safety College at Desertcreat, including revised projected timescales, cost and consultants fees to date.

(AQW 20844/11-15)

Mr Ford: Five bidders had been invited to submit tenders for delivery of the project, but when received these were substantially over the available budget. As the tenders contain commercially sensitive information it is not possible to provide detailed financial information.

Detailed investigations have been carried out on behalf of the Desertcreat Programme Board to identify what led to the significant differences between the anticipated costs and tenders received. Specific remedial actions have been identified and agreed with the Design Team Consultants.

Work is underway to identify options to reduce costs in areas which will not compromise the functionality of the College. Following completion of this work the Outline Business Case will be updated and consideration will then be given to the appointment of a preferred bidder.

The cost of consultancy for the project to date has been £350,000.

Department for Regional Development

Local Shop Mobility Schemes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development why his Department has withheld the fourth quarter payment to local shop mobility schemes.

(AQW 20265/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The Department normally withholds payment of fourth quarter grants from local shop mobility schemes until it receives audited accounts from the schemes for the financial year in question. Once these have been reviewed the fourth quarter grant will be released. In order to minimise any potential cash flow problems that the schemes might otherwise experience the Department does and will make advances where this is justified.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 19311/11-15, how many of the penalty charge notices in 2012 were from the three car parks that were previously free to use. **(AQW 20286/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Pay and Display charging was introduced in three car parks in Bangor during 2012. Enforcement commenced on 2 July 2012 and details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in the car parks, to the end of December 2012, are as follows:

Dufferin Avenue	Abbey Street West	Central Avenue
237	138	26

Bus Fleet Replacement

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the recent announcement that £6.7 million has been earmarked for bus fleet replacement, whether this opportunity will be used to provide audio visual information in order to make buses fully accessible to blind and partially sighted people. **(AQW 20287/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Last year my Department, in conjunction with Guide Dogs and Translink, completed a successful pilot of audio visual systems on a Metro route in Belfast using the existing Bus Trak system. The contract for the future provision of this service is planned to be re-tendered later this year. Most of the recently-announced funding is for buses for the Ulsterbus fleet, which does not currently have facilities for either real time or audio visual information.

Translink is planning to review the options for the provision of passenger information on Ulsterbus and this, together with the re-tendering of the Metro contract, will enable the Department and Translink to develop future plans for real time and audio visual information, subject to funding availability. As a result, at this stage it is not possible to determine what systems would be required to provide audio visual information on either the Metro or Ulsterbus fleet in the future.

Declan Gormley Case

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total costs incurred by his Department as a result of the decision taken by his predecessor to remove Declan Gormley from the post of Non-Executive Director of Northern Ireland Water in March 2010. **(AQW 20290/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My department does not yet have the details of the total legal fees. I would however emphasise that the terms of the settlement were an apology and payment of Mr Gormley's reasonable legal costs to date. There will be no damages or compensation.

The Plaintiff's solicitors will submit a note of their fees and outlay in due course. These will then be considered by my department in consultation with the Departmental Solicitor's Office, prior to agreement and payment.

Ministers with Responsibility for Transport

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has met with Ministers with responsibility for transport in other parts of United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland within the past year and to outline the conclusions of the meetings.

(AQW 20329/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Since 1 February 2012 to date I have met with Minister Varadakar, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport in the Republic of Ireland at the North, South Ministerial Council Transport Sectoral Meetings held on 20 April 2012 and 5 October 2012. The conclusions of these meetings are set out in the Joint Communiques of the meetings which can be accessed at the links below:

http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/index/publications/joint-communiques/sectoral-jc/transport_jc/transport_jc_20_april_2012.htm

http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/index/publications/joint-communiques/sectoral-jc/transport_jc/transport_jc_5_oct_2012.htm

In addition, I routinely correspond with the UK Transport Minister on a range of issues.

Declan Gormley Case

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total legal costs his Department has incurred in relation to the recently concluded Declan Gormley case.

(AQW 20361/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My department does not yet have the details of the total legal fees. I would however emphasise that the terms of the settlement were an apology and payment of Mr Gormley's reasonable legal costs to date. There will be no damages or compensation.

The Plaintiff's solicitors will submit a note of their fees and outlay in due course. These will then be considered by my department in consultation with the Departmental Solicitor's Office, prior to agreement and payment.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Penalty Charge Notices have been (i) appealed; (ii) overturned; and (iii) dropped at appeal stage, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20363/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is assumed the Member's question refers to formal appeals made to The Traffic Penalty Tribunal, rather than informal challenges and representations made to Roads Service. Details of the numbers of appeals processed and upheld are shown in the table below:

Year	Appeals Processed	Appeals Upheld	% of Appeals Upheld
2012/13 (to end Jan.)	232	52	22%
2011/12	289	70	24%
2010/11	281	74	26%
2009/10	258	72	30%
2008/09	314	58	18%

In 2012/13 (up to the end of January 2013), the number of appeals upheld, not contested by Roads Service, was 28; and the number of appeals withdrawn by the appellant was 24.

In 2011/12, the number of appeals upheld, not contested by Roads Service, was 29; and the number of appeals withdrawn by the appellant was 28.

Figures are not available for previous years. The most common reason for Roads Service not contesting cases is the provision of additional relevant information or evidence.

Lisburn City Council Roads Maintenance

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the spend in the Lisburn City Council area on roads maintenance in 2012/13 and 2013/14; and (ii) what percentage is earmarked for rural roads.

(AQW 20383/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Financial information relating to the current financial year, for my Department's Roads Service is not available at present. Details of 2012/13 expenditure, in any council area, will not be available until after the accounts have been scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and laid before the Assembly, which is unlikely to be before June 2013.

As the maintenance allocation process, for 2013/14, is still ongoing, unfortunately I am also currently unable to confirm what the initial allocations for each Section Office/Council area will be.

In general terms, the resources available for road maintenance during the 2013/14 financial year will be distributed to the four Roads Service Divisions on the basis of need, using a range of weighted indicators tailored to each maintenance activity, namely, resurfacing, patching, gully emptying and grass cutting. Officials use these indicators when apportioning budgets across Council areas to ensure, as far as possible, an equitable distribution of available funds across Northern Ireland.

Notwithstanding the above, Roads Service does not maintain financial information on the basis of an urban/rural split and therefore is unable to provide details of its planned spend on rural roads.

Footbridge and Subway Expenditure

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 17541/11-15, to detail the total expenditure on (i) footbridges; and (ii) subways, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20417/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of all new footbridge and subway projects completed during the last five years, including expenditure, are provided in the table below:

Scheme	Cost	Year of Construction
Fisher's Lane Footbridge, Comber	£51,000	2008
Ballystockart Footbridge, Comber	£35,000	2008
Swatragh Footbridge	£135,000	2009
City Hospital, Lisburn Station Footbridge Modifications (2009) - NIR Station DDA project	£794,900	2009
Ballinderry Footbridge	£200,000	2010
Newry Station and Park & Ride - New Footbridge	£5,680,000	2007 - 2011
Broadbridge Footbridge	£434,500	2011
Campsey Underpass	£748,000	2011
Fisherman's Walkway Footbridge	£138,000	2012
Pedestrian Underpass Lengthened at Madams Bank Road, Londonderry	£20,000	2012

Scheme	Cost	Year of Construction
Irishtown Footbridge, Omagh	£475,000	2012
Cherrymount Public Footbridge, Enniskillen	£150,000	2012
St Michael's College Footbridge, Enniskillen	£150,000	2012
Ballyrainey Footbridge, Comber	£87,200	2012
Creggan Footbridge (B30), Creggan, Newry	£177,000	2012
Ballymoney Station New Footbridge	£745,800	2008 - 2012
Titanic Quarter – Platform extension programme	£550,000	2012
Lurgan Station Footbridge Cladding	£27,300	2012
Maghera Park & Ride, subway provided using side span of existing bridge	£35,000	2012
Portadown Station Refurbishment - New Footbridge	£850,000	2013

Road Safety on the Gransha Road, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to provide ongoing monitoring of traffic and road safety on the Gransha Road, Bangor.

(AQW 20421/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service receives reports from the PSNI of all road traffic collisions that result in personal injury. Officials review this data with a view to identifying specific locations with poor roads safety records and bringing forward scheme proposals for sites, where it is evident the collisions have common contributory factors that could be addressed by engineering measures. Roads Service will continue to monitor Gransha Road and, if further intervention is deemed to be appropriate, consider the provision of additional measures.

I am, however, aware of public concern regarding road safety on the Gransha Road Roundabout and Roads Service will be commissioning consultants to carry out a feasibility study on the provision of a controlled pedestrian crossing facility at this location.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people are employed by Northern Ireland Water.

(AQW 20433/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that at 28 February 2013 it employs a total of 1,324 people, 8 of which are currently on career break and 6 of which are employed as Non-Executive Directors.

Northern Ireland Water's Transport Fleet

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many vehicles make up Northern Ireland Water's transport fleet.

(AQW 20434/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it currently has 571 vehicles in operational use.

Northern Ireland Water's Transport Fleet

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the annual fuel cost of Northern Ireland Water's transport fleet, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20435/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the annual fuel cost of its transport fleet in each of the last three financial years is as included in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
FUEL COST £ million	1.3	1.4	1.5

Sewage Pumping Stations

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of sewage pumping stations.

(AQW 20436/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has responsibility for 1,270 wastewater pumping stations across Northern Ireland. These are broken down by council area as follows:

North Down	46
Ards	85
Down	86
Craigavon	69
Ballymoney	25
Newry & Mourne	87
Larne	25
Limavady	43
Moyle	22
Omagh	34
Lisburn	57
Strabane	40
Fermanagh	87
Dungannon	77
Magherafelt	45
Newtownabbey	26
Belfast	24
Banbridge	39
Antrim	47
Castlereagh	16
Derry	63
Coleraine	62

Cookstown	41
Armagh	75
Carrickfergus	14
Ballymena	35

DRD: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the spend by his Department and its arm's length bodies on hospitality in 2011/12.

(AQW 20501/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The amount spent on hospitality by the Department and its Arm's Length Bodies in 2011/12, and previous years reflecting the information provided to you in response to AQWs 8070/11-15 and 9246/11-15, is detailed below:

Year	Department £'000	NITHC £'000	NI Water £'000	Total Cost £'000
2006 / 07	59	27*	62**	148
2007 / 08	81	27*	63	171
2008 / 09	59	26*	67	152
2009 / 10	44	27	53	125
2010 / 11	40	24	18	82
2011 / 12	33	31	19	83

* The NI Transport Holding Company (NITHC) is the parent company of Northern Ireland Railways, Metro and Ulsterbus all operating as Translink. Expenditure by the holding company is excluded as it transferred to a new accounting system in 2009/10, prior to which hospitality expenditure was not separately identifiable.

** NI Water costs for 2006/07 relate to its predecessor Water Service.

For completeness Translink has advised that there may also be occasions when executives and senior management provide working lunches at meetings which are paid for and claimed back through expenses. These come out of payroll and to extract such detail would involve disproportionate cost.

Cost of Translating Departmental Letters and Documents

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20509/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the costs of translating departmental letters and documents into (i) Irish; and (ii) each other language, in each of the last five years.

Period	Costs of translation into:				
	Irish £	Ulster Scots £	Portuguese £	Polish £	Spanish £
2008/2009	3684.55	91.00	70.50	69.00	0.00
2009/2010	3225.72	0.00	143.40	0.00	0.00
2010/2011	4889.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.00

Period	Costs of translation into:				
	Irish £	Ulster Scots £	Portuguese £	Polish £	Spanish £
2011/2012	937.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2012/2013 (up to 6/3/13)	298.92	185.52	0.00	0.00	0.00

DRD: Overtime Payments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total overtime payments made to staff in his Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20519/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The amount spent on overtime payments to staff in my Department in each of the last three financial years is detailed below.

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Overtime Spend (£000's)	3,586	2,560	2,693

DRD: Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been paid to settle claims against his Department, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 20558/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the amount which has been paid to settle claims against my Department, in each of the last three financial years, are shown in the table below.

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
(£000's)	2,034	2,641	2,435

Of the amounts paid to settle claims 93% relates to public liability claims for personal injury, vehicle damage, and property damage.

Resurface Public Car Parks in Millisle

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are plans to resurface the public car parks in Millisle.

(AQW 20601/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service inspects public car parks on a regular basis and any defects identified, that require remedial action, are dealt with on a prioritised basis in accordance with established maintenance standards.

Transport Northern Ireland

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development how Transport Northern Ireland will help to coordinate and improve the planning, management and delivery of transport across Departments.

(AQW 20613/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Transport NI will be responsible for planning, managing and regulating public transport service in Northern Ireland. This includes licensing of routes but operator licensing will remain with

the Department of Environment. Transport NI does not currently have any statutory or operational remit for the publicly funded passenger services provided by other Departments. Nonetheless, the Department for Regional Development has proactively organised and is currently working with the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and other organisations to explore the opportunities for improved integration and efficiency of services through a pilot project in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas. When the pilot project gets underway later this year it will be subject to a period of evaluation to assess the benefits and viability of the wider roll-out of such arrangements. The evaluation will help to determine the degree to which more integrated planning and delivery is possible and the timescales for implementation.

Upgrade Main Street and Footways in Clady Village, Co Tyrone

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) why Roads Service has postponed its planned works to upgrade the Main Street and footways in Clady village, Co Tyrone; (ii) when this work is likely to commence; and (iii) what other works by Roads Service which had been due to commence have also been postponed for the same reasons.

(AQW 20666/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I understand that the scheme to which you are referring is the planned resurfacing of the Urney Road, Clady. Unfortunately, these works have been postponed due to contractor resource issues. This has also impacted on the planned resurfacing of the B72 Upper Strabane Road, Castleterg, which had been scheduled to start on Monday 11 March.

Roads Service officials are working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible, and hope that both schemes can be re-programmed for the 2013/14 financial year.

Train Stations

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the ten busiest train stations in 2012; and for a comparison of passenger numbers at each station for the last three years.

(AQW 20682/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the attached table gives details of the 10 busiest rail station facilities on the NIR network.

It also provides information in relation to passenger flows at these locations.

NI RAILWAYS STATION PASSENGER FLOWS

	STATION	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
1	Great Victoria Street	3,863,661	3,795,766	3,831,643
2	Central	2,052,010	1,938,708	1,878,133
3	Bangor	1,662,540	1,605,843	1,587,508
4	Lisburn	1,271,649	1,201,590	1,179,860
5	Portadown	933,745	869,613	826,477
6	Lurgan	855,796	845,918	817,705
7	Botanic	827,896	805,976	756,460
8	Coleraine	699,802	669,403	590,840
9	Carrickfergus	695,592	659,349	649,030
10	Ballymena	525,001	484,303	452,057

Europa Great Victoria Street Station

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total number of (i) bus; and (ii) train passengers that have passed through Europa Great Victoria Street Station in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20683/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that the table below gives details of the total passenger flows at Great Victoria Street rail station and the Europa Bus Centre in each of the last three years.

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Great Victoria Street Rail Station	3.86m	3.79m	3.83m
Europa Bus Centre	3.74m	3.45m	3.37m

Funding for Shop Mobility in Cookstown

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding has been agreed for Shop Mobility in Cookstown; and how much has been provided to date.

(AQW 20701/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department has issued a Letter of Offer to Cookstown Shopmobility for £29,500 which covers the 2012/13 financial year. To date they have been paid £27,014.

Donaghadee Bus Station

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development to explain the rationale behind the decision to close the Donaghadee Bus Station without prior public consultation.

(AQW 20752/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised me that their proposal to close Donaghadee bus station followed a review of operations at that location. The review established that the proposal to relocate vehicles and drivers from this sub-depot to its 'home' depot of Newtownards, and potentially Bangor would generate savings and ultimately assist in making front-line bus services more financially sustainable and providing an improved maintenance service. Translink advise that there will be no reduction to services, although there may be some minor timetable changes to accommodate the new operational service patterns.

In week commencing 25 February 2013 Translink issued a communication to political representatives and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland in order to commence discussion with public representatives and other interested stakeholders. All were invited to contact Translink as part of the process. Local management will be organising a consultation session for bus users in Donaghadee bus station within the next few weeks and arrangements are also being made to attend Newtownards Borough Council to outline proposals. No final decisions will be made until this consultation is completed.

All Ireland Freight Forum and Steering Group Meeting

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the (i) All Ireland Freight Forum; and (ii) Steering Group Meeting on 13 March 2012, including new focus areas.

(AQW 20869/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the member to my statement in the Assembly on 16 October 2012 following the North-South Ministerial Transport Sectoral meeting of 5 October 2012. Minister Varadkar and I had agreed to conclude the work of the All Island Freight Forum as much of its work had finished and sufficient contacts had been made North and South for important issues to be carried forward on a bilateral basis.

Department for Social Development

Voluntary and Community Sector

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development what engagement he has had with key stakeholders in the voluntary and community sector, in the last six months.

(AQW 20256/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): In my role as Minister for Social Development I am continually meeting with key stakeholders within the voluntary and community sector. Within the last six months I have met with a whole range of groups and organisations. In illustration of this engagement a sample of my engagements has included meeting representatives of food banks, meeting with key sector representatives to discuss regional support for women in disadvantaged/rural areas, attending numerous meetings with volunteering organisations, addressing key regional meetings of sectoral organisations such as the Joint Forum and meetings to discuss key issues such as social enterprise.

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of Housing Executive (HE) properties; (ii) the number of HE properties with gas heating; (iii) the (a) number; and (b) percentage of properties with gas heating that were deemed 'no access'; (iv) the cost to the HE of gaining access to 'no access' properties; (v) the procedure for gaining access to these properties; (vi) the cost of each element of this procedure; and (vii) the (a) number; and (b) percentage of properties which the HE was unable to access for an annual gas survey in the last twelve months.

(AQW 20263/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has provided the information requested in relation to their properties as follows: In relation to (i) currently has 88,698 properties; (ii) 36,600 have gas heating; (iii) (a) During the last 12 months there were 3,527 reports of 'no access' to properties; (iii) (b) this represents 9.6% of stock which has gas heating; (iv) Specific costs incurred in relation to 'no access' costs consists of administration staff phoning tenants, sending out legal letters and where necessary issuing job requests to cut off gas supplies; however specific costs for this are not available; (v) The procedure for 'no access' calls are: -

- Contractors are issued with address for the annual service 60 days before the annual service is due, and it is they who are responsible for arranging access;
- Contractors notify the tenants in writing and will telephone the tenants to arrange a suitable date and time for the service to take place;
- If, after writing and telephoning tenants, no response is received from the tenant the contractors' engineers will call with the tenant to arrange access;
- If, after two attempts the contractor has not been able to obtain access, they will record a 'no access' against the annual service and refer the address back to the Housing Executive for action;
- All 'no access' addresses are referred to the Housing Executive's Customer Service Unit who will attempt to contact the tenant by telephone to arrange access. If there is no contact made, the tenants are notified in writing of their obligations under their tenancy agreement to allow access to Housing Executive contractors to carry out necessary checks and refusal may result in legal action being taken against the tenant. Tenants are given 7 days to respond;
- Where the District Office has exhausted all attempts to gain the co-operation of the tenant to complete the annual safety check, the District Manager will arrange for a works order to be issued to cut off the gas supply;
- In circumstances where the tenant informs the service engineer that they do not use the heating system, the District Office should obtain the consent of the tenant to cap the gas supply.

(vi) Specific costs associated with each element of the above procedures are not available. (vii) (a) Access has not been obtained to 205 dwelling of the initial 3,527 'no access' reports in the last

12 months (vii) (b) This represents 0.6% of the stock with gas heating, with the consequence that these addresses have either had their gas supply disconnected or legal proceedings have been instigated.

Unoccupied Housing Executive Properties: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Down are unoccupied.

(AQW 20282/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency.

However, the Housing Executive advises that at 31 January 2013 it had 69 vacant properties within their Bangor District Office area.

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.

Rehousing in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down require rehousing.

(AQW 20283/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the Housing Executive has advised that the numbers of people on the waiting list for their Bangor District Office is as follows:

Bangor District Waiting List: 1 February 2013			
Applicant Type	Housing Stress		Total
	Yes	No	
Applicant	1,179	1,202	2,381
Housing Executive Transfer	142	137	279
Housing Association Transfer	29	48	77
TOTAL	1,350	1,387	2,737

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Homeless People in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in North Down are homeless.

(AQW 20284/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the Housing Executive advises that the number of people presenting as homeless to their Bangor District Office at January 2013 is 313.

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Average Weekly Rent

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what was the average weekly rent in 2012 for (i) Housing Executive; and (ii) Housing Association (a) 1 bed; (b) 2 bed; and (c) 3 bed accommodation. **(AQW 20304/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: In relation to (i) the information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not provide an average weekly rent in relation to the number of bedrooms in their properties. However, they have provided the table below setting out a rent value based on the number of bed spaces in their properties for the year 2012/13:-

Property Type	Bed space		
	1	2	3
Detached House	£56.34	£58.00	£64.62
Semi-detached House	£51.37	£53.02	£59.65
Terrace	£49.71	£51.37	£58.00
Flat/Maisonette (2 storey or less)	£41.43	£43.08	£49.71
Flat/Maisonette (3 storey or more)	£36.45	£38.11	£44.74

In relation to (ii) as of 31 March 2012, the average weekly rent for Housing Association property is as follows (this is the latest information available): -

Type	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed
Average Rent	£51.98	£68.82	£79.32

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Social Housing Waiting List in South Belfast

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current social housing waiting list for the South Belfast constituency, broken down by neighbourhood. **(AQW 20317/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Social Housing applicants in housing stress (30 points or more) in the South Belfast Parliamentary Constituency total 1,657 households. Single households comprise the largest group representing 61% of the waiting list, followed by families (28%) and elderly households (11%)

Additional information regarding the Social Housing Development Programme is published on: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/services/housing_need.htm

Social Housing: South Belfast Constituency

Mr Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development what plans his Department has for meeting the social housing need in the South Belfast constituency. **(AQW 20318/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Social housing need in the South Belfast constituency is being addressed through the allocation of relets and the construction of new social homes. During the 2012 calendar year there were a total of 550 allocations and the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) includes plans for the delivery of 358 new social homes over the next 3 years.

Additional information regarding the Social Housing Development Programme is published on: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/services/housing_need.htm

Housing Executive Properties: Gas

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development in which areas of Bangor will mains gas be installed into Housing Executive properties in the next two years.

(AQW 20370/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that, in the next two financial years, it will replace 52 Economy 7 heating systems with gas central heating in the Rathgill and Willowbrook Estates; and will also replace 108 oil heating systems with gas central heating in Rathgill, Kilcooley and Loughview.

Housing Executive: Door Replacements

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans the Housing Executive has to replace the doors in its properties in North Down.

(AQW 20373/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that it does not have a specific external door replacement programme. However, it ensures that defective doors are being addressed through its External Cyclical Maintenance schemes, as well as through response maintenance schemes as the need is identified.

Double Glazing in Housing Executive Properties

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in North Down have yet to be double glazed.

(AQW 20374/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that it installed double glazing in 592 dwelling within their Bangor District Office area in 2012/13. There are approximately a further 300 properties that will be included in a new double glazing contract being introduced later this year which will see this work completed by March 2015.

One Bed Properties: Foyle Constituency

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of one bed properties available in the Foyle Constituency area.

(AQW 20375/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collect data by Parliamentary Constituency. However, the Housing Executive has advised that they have one bedroom properties as follows: -

- Waterside District Office area 176
- Waterloo Place District Office area 365 and 16 bedsits
- Collon Terrace District Office area 201

Housing Associations have advised that they have a total of 337 one bed properties in the Foyle Constituency. It should be noted however that this figure does not include Supported or Sheltered Housing Association's units of accommodation.

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DSD: New Builds

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of new builds his Department has planned (i) across Northern Ireland; and (ii) in the Foyle Constituency in 2013-15.
(AQW 20376/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Plans are to start a total of 3,275 new social homes across Northern Ireland over the two year period 2013/14 and 2014/15. This will complete the social housing element of the Programme for Government commitment to deliver 8,000 new social and affordable homes by 2015.

For the Foyle Constituency, the recently published Social Housing Development Programme for the three year period 2013/14 to 2015/16, proposes building 172 new social homes in 2013/14 and 334 new social homes in 2014/15. The individual schemes are published on the Housing Executive's website at http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/services/housing_need.htm

DSD: New Builds

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of new builds his Department delivered (i) across Northern Ireland; and (ii) in the Foyle Constituency in 2011-2012.
(AQW 20377/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In 2011/12, a total of 1,410 new social homes were delivered across Northern Ireland. Of those, 211 new social homes were located in the Foyle Constituency.

Housing Executive Tenants

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants are on the transfer list in the Foyle Constituency.
(AQW 20378/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information cannot be provided in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate data by Parliamentary constituency.

However, at 1 March 2013 there were 232 transfer cases for their Waterloo Place District Office, 144 cases for their Waterside District Office and 177 cases for their Collon Terrace District Office, giving a total of 553 transfer cases.

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Housing Executive: Under Occupancy Penalty

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the potential impact of the under occupancy penalty, whether the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has changed its policies and practices on property allocation.
(AQW 20441/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that it and Registered Housing Associations (as participating landlords in the Common Selection Scheme) recognise that a comprehensive approach to allocations and housing options is a key element in responding to the introduction of Housing benefit size restrictions for both existing and future tenants. As landlords, the Housing Executive seeks to allocate accommodation to applicants in line with the Housing Benefit size restriction policy to mitigate any adverse impacts on new tenants such as potential financial hardship and risk of arrears incurring when the changes are implemented.

They have identified a number of rules in the Housing Selection Scheme which require consideration in order to make the best use of housing stock in future allocations and the support of existing tenants affected by the changes. This includes: -

Minimum bedroom requirements for allocations

- Bringing the age criteria for children sharing bedrooms into line with Housing Benefit criteria
- Flexibility to allow allocations of an additional bedroom to parents with access to children
- Flexibility to allow allocations in difficult-to-let areas
- Overcrowding rules to bring the age criteria for sharing bedrooms into line with the proposed Housing Benefit size restriction
- Extending management transfer status to give priority to under occupying tenants who need to move to a smaller property
- Allow discretion for landlords to decline consent to a policy succession where the new tenant would be under occupying
- Allowing access to transfers and exchanges for those tenants who are under occupying and impacted by the proposed changes
- Removing the existing 12 month residence requirement for the creation of joint tenancies

The Housing Executive launched a consultation from 15 November 2012 to 24 January 2013 seeking views on these proposals. The consultation was circulated to over 800 groups in the community, voluntary, statutory and political groups as well as being published on the Housing Executive's website and social media pages.

Analysis of the responses to the consultation is being carried out and a report including a summary of response will be produced for the Housing Executive Board and my Department.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the proposed changes has been carried out and, subject to its outcome and approval by the Housing Executive Board and my Department, the intention is to implement the amendments to the Housing Section Scheme to coincide with the introduction of the size restriction in Housing Benefit.

DSD: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 19630/11-15, (i) whether this figure includes the hospitality spend by departmental arm's-length bodies in 2011/12; and (ii) if not, to provide the amount.

(AQW 20510/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The figure given in response to your previous question did not include the spend by arm's length bodies. Their spend on hospitality in the 2011-12 financial year amounted to £24,270.46

Bedroom Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department will meet the removal costs for people who are on low incomes and who may become subject to the bedroom tax, and forced to downsize as a result.

(AQW 20529/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Discretionary Housing Payments are administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive within a limited amount of funding each year.

The Housing Executive will therefore consider each claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment on its own merits. The claimant will be required to show that they are in need of further financial assistance in order to meet essential housing costs. While it may be possible to interpret housing costs as including lump sum payments such as removal costs, this would only be considered on an individual basis and in each case against a background of competing priorities for the limited funding available.

Universal Credit

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the introduction of Universal Credit, including to which household member the payment will be made and the frequency of the payment. **(AQW 20565/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Work is continuing to progress the implementation of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland from April 2014 and my officials are working closely with their counterparts in the Department for Work and Pensions.

The intention is that Universal Credit should reflect the world of work and we need to ensure the benefit system does not create barriers for people moving into employment. However, recognising the challenges brought about by the financial changes under Universal Credit, I have secured flexible payment arrangements, to protect the most vulnerable claimants in Northern Ireland.

Making payments to claimants on a monthly frequency will help smooth the transition into monthly paid work, encourage personal responsibility for finances and support claimants to budget on a monthly basis. In Great Britain 82% of employees are currently paid on a 4 weekly or monthly cycle whilst in Northern Ireland only 68% are paid on a 4 weekly or monthly cycle. Concerns have been raised about the frequency of payment of Universal Credit at various stages of consideration of the Welfare Reform Bill and therefore I am currently reviewing options and designing criteria for claimants to receive more frequent payments.

Under Universal Credit, couples living in the same household will make a joint claim for benefit and it will be for the couple to decide who should receive the Universal Credit payment and whether it should be paid into a joint account. However, I recognise that in certain situations a single payment may lead to finances being controlled by one member of the household who does not have responsibility for managing household finances, in particular, adequately providing for the needs of children. Therefore, I am also considering options in designing criteria for split payments.

I recognise that many in the community and voluntary sectors continue to have concerns about the payment of Universal Credit. In recognition of this I have instructed officials to continue to consult with representatives from the community and voluntary sector to identify possible options for the flexible payment of Universal Credit. This work will inform the development of 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. It is crucial that the criteria for flexibility can be constructed within the core information technology system for Universal Credit to facilitate accurate and timely payments and to minimise manual processing. Officials are also considering the operational details of how direct payments to landlords will be organised.

Welfare Reform Bill: Under Occupancy Penalty

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Social Development how many additional properties are estimated to be required to address the under occupancy penalty in the Welfare Reform Bill in the (i) Dungannon and South Tyrone District Council area; and (ii) Fermanagh District Council area. **(AQW 20667/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: An estimate of how many additional properties required to address under occupancy is dependent on a number of variables including the level of re-lets and the willingness of tenants to move. However, the Housing Executive estimates that the number of households that are likely to be affected by the new Housing Benefit under-occupancy rule/size restriction are as follows: -

- (i) Dungannon and South Tyrone District Council area - 715 social sector households.
- (ii) Fermanagh District Council area - 889 social sector households.

With Welfare Reform, I recognised the potential for under occupation within current housing stock and the need for additional one bed units. I instructed the Housing Executive, who manage the Social Housing Development Programme, to ensure that Housing Associations bring forward additional single units over the next three years. I also intend to put in place housing services that will provide

support and assistance for those impacted and I have tasked both the Housing Executive and Housing Association movement to bring forward an action plan to provide a range of support measures to mitigate and support those households affected.

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Social Housing

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has delivered on its commitment to reduce the number of dwellings failing to meet the agreed standard for social homes. **(AQO 3585/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Figures from the most recent 2011 House Condition Survey show that 96.3% of social housing stock meets the decent homes standard. Whilst the overall standard of social housing stock is among the best in the United Kingdom, it is unacceptable that there continues to be a long standing hard core of Housing Executive homes that fail the decent homes test. The Housing Executive is clearly failing its tenants on this most fundamental of rights.

My recently announced reform of the Housing Executive recognised that the current model is not able to make best use of scarce public resources. If we are to continue to deliver well maintained housing stock change was necessary. The Savills Stock Condition Survey on the Housing Executive's stock estimated that it will require some £5 billion to maintain all Housing Executive stock to decent homes standard for the next 30 years. The new social housing structures will allow for a sustainable financing model for social housing that provides access to private funds to allow for future investment.

Part of the immediate solution will involve transfer of some of the worst of the Housing Executive stock to housing associations for improvement. This has the potential to lever in significant levels of private finance. Alongside this we continue to invest in improving the energy efficiency of social housing, in particular, funding the double glazing of all Housing Executive homes by March 2015.

Welfare Reform: Underoccupancy Penalty

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact that the under-occupancy penalty, contained in the Welfare Reform Bill, will have on the individuals and families. **(AQO 3583/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: With your indulgence Mr Speaker, three of the questions tabled for answer today relate to the topic of under-occupancy raised by Mr Hussey, and I would propose that this answer would be taken for all three questions. The related questions are from Pat Ramsey (AQO 3583/11-15) and from Stephen Agnew (AQO 3586/11-15).

The Westminster policy intent behind the under occupancy provision within the draft Welfare Reform Bill is that those in receipt of such assistance should only receive costs essential to their household needs. While I may have some concerns around the details, I support that intent. Whilst it is, of course, reasonable to assist benefit recipients with Housing costs it should always be the case that that assistance is necessary. The taxpayer should not be subsidising individuals or households to live in accommodation which many working, low income households cannot afford and particularly when that accommodation may be bigger than is really required. .

I also support the second policy intent that in endeavouring to incentivise individuals to join or rejoin the labour market and to ensure that work always pays, social mobility is encouraged, and households should take decisions with regard to their accommodation based on their own particular needs and circumstances and taking account of what is reasonable for the Benefits system to pay.

With regard to the member's specific question as to the number of additional properties estimated to be needed to enable tenants to move to accommodation of an appropriate size as a result of the 'under occupancy' provision I can advise that work is ongoing in order to get an accurate picture of the difficulties this particular provision may pose. I would advise that it is estimated that some

32,500 Housing Benefit recipients may be impacted by this provision and that is the starting point for estimating what deficits exist in our existing housing stock and effectively how we address such deficit.

In relation to the Member for Foyle's question I would advise that it is difficult at this time to accurately assess the overall impact of the under occupancy provision. As I have already stated some 32,500 existing Housing Benefit recipients are thought to be impacted but work is ongoing to determine the characteristics and the precise make-up of that group. Members will be aware social security benefits are paid on entitlement which is assessed on an individual case by case basis and the Welfare Reform Bill and indeed existing social security legislation contains some protections e.g. for couples aged over state pension age and in receipt of Housing credit who would remain exempt from the under occupancy provisions. I can however advise Members that based on the introduction of this under occupancy provision in GB those considered to be under occupying properties by one bedroom may lose around £7 per week whilst those under occupying by 2 or more bedrooms may lose around £14 per week.

Turning to the Member for north Down's question as to how much revenue would be deducted from the block grant if the under occupancy provision were not implemented I would advise that ultimately it would be for HM Treasury to decide what, if any penalty were placed on the Northern Ireland Block if it were decided NOT to introduce this provision. Members will be aware of the 'parity' principle with regards to social security on which I have briefed this Assembly on several occasions in relation to the legislative passage of the Welfare Reform Bill. In practical terms 'parity' effectively dictates that an individual here in Northern Ireland receives the same level of social security benefits, subject to the same conditions as an individual elsewhere in GB. Therefore, whilst we may have minor operational flexibilities as to how we implement reform, Members should recognise that to break 'parity' on matters such as under occupancy would have potentially serious financial consequences for Northern Ireland block expenditure and thus jeopardise spending on other Executive priorities as well as incurring additional IT and administrative costs which we would have to fund. Initial estimates as to the 'potential' cost to the block taking current average rent levels, is thought to equate to approximately £17m per annum. This would be a recurring cost.

Homeowners: Major Repairs

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's progress on proposals to help home owners with major repairs.

(AQO 3582/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The need for a new approach to repair and improvement in the private housing sector was highlighted in the recent Housing Strategy. The current system of grants, each with its own conditions, can mean it is difficult for an individual home owner to meet the eligibility criteria. That is one of the reasons why the consultation "Reviewing Support for Repair and Improvement in the Private Rented Sector" which closed on 29 January 2013, proposes to deregulate the current grants scheme and replace it with a more flexible system of help. Replies to the consultation are currently being analysed, following which my Department's officials will bring forward detailed proposals for the new scheme.

Alcohol: Minimum Unit Price

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what progress has been made on introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol.

(AQO 3584/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Research has shown that alcohol is 67% more affordable than it was in 1980 and it is estimated that up to 80% of drinkers drink more than the recommended daily limits.

Given the strong evidence of the link between alcohol consumption and harm, Health Minister Poots and I consider that tackling the availability of cheap alcohol is an essential component of any long-term strategic approach to addressing alcohol misuse.

We have been working closely on commissioning research to model the likely impact of minimum unit pricing in Northern Ireland.

This research is essential as it will help inform our future decisions in this area and allow us to bring forward proposals that will have a proportionate and positive impact on physical and mental health well being in Northern Ireland.

Invitations to tender for this important research will be issued within the next few weeks.

Housing-led Regeneration

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the potential benefits arising from his housing led regeneration initiatives.

(AQO 3587/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing led regeneration initiatives can deliver significant benefits to local communities through reversing decline and blight within estates by refurbishment of derelict properties and improvement of infrastructure. By providing new housing on undeveloped land which is already in public ownership then housing need can be met in a manner which demonstrates best value use of limited resources.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Renewable Heat Sources in Parliament Buildings

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission whether it intends to install renewable heat sources in Parliament Buildings.

(AQW 20270/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): You will be aware that the Assembly Commission is currently planning a major refurbishment of the roof of Parliament Buildings.

While the major focus of this project is to provide a long lasting waterproof solution for ongoing water ingress problems, the Commission is also keen to include appropriate environmental design initiatives. This will include renewable heat sources if a practicable solution can be achieved within the constraints of the building.

The design team is currently working on the technical solution for the project and it is anticipated that the final scheme will be available for approval by early summer 2013 with a likely site start date of late 2013 or early 2014.

I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought and if you require anything further I would be happy to assist.

Mints Provided in the Assembly Chamber

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission what is the annual quantity and cost of the mints provided in the Assembly chamber.

(AQW 20416/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): From April 2009 to present, 1782 rolls of mints have been provided in the Assembly Chamber at a total cost of £980.10. The annual consumption per financial year is illustrated in the table below:

Period	Quantity (rolls)	Cost
Apr 09 Mar 10	524	£288.20
Apr 10 Mar 11	445	£244.75

Period	Quantity (rolls)	Cost
Apr 11 Mar 12	493	£271.15
Apr 12 Jan 13	320	£176.00
Total Consumption	1782	£980.10

Horse Meat within Parliament Buildings

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission (i) what discussions have taken place with Eurest in assessing whether any horse meat has been served within Parliament Buildings; (ii) what foods have been tested; (iii) the results of these tests; (iv) on what dates any contaminated foodstuffs were served; and (v) what measures have been put in place to protect building users from compromised processing standards.

(AQW 20495/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): As a result of the recent mislabelling of meat products within the European food chain, the Assembly Commission has recently sought and received further re-assurances that Compass-Eurest's current Ireland & UK suppliers comply with our required traceability, testing and hygiene processes for this contract. They have also verified that all of our meat products sold in Parliaments Buildings adhere to the required standards and specifications of the contract.

(i) In keeping with the open and transparent nature of the contract regular communication occurs between Compass-Eurest and the Commission. However, in light of the recent mislabelling of food products and the related media interest, this has been increased and several statements have been issued both internally and externally to confirm that no horse meat has ever been served within Parliament Buildings. The full statements are available from the Support Services Office.

(ii)(iii) The first product sent forward for DNA testing was the Rangeland 4oz Burger which was recalled from all Compass-Eurest sites on Monday 4 February 2013. This product referenced above is not used at Parliament Buildings.

- The DNA tests conducted returned a positive result for the presence of equine DNA
- Compass-Eurest subsequently notified the Food Safety Authorities and issued a media statement in relation to our findings
- The samples in question were also tested for BUTE (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for the short-term treatment of pain and fever in animals) and returned a negative result.

Compass-Eurest has now initiated a programme of regular DNA testing on all processed meat products (sausage rolls, meatballs, etc) supplied to Compass Group. The tests have all returned a negative result for equine DNA. It is important to note that, within the Northern Ireland Assembly contract, all burgers, meatballs and compound meat dishes are prepared using fresh meat produce.

In light of the results on the Rangeland product, O'Kanes (a Compass-Eurest approved supplier) conducted extensive DNA tests on all of their listed processed beef products – all test results returned a negative result for equine DNA (The Rangeland 4oz burger sold to Compass was sourced by O'Kanes from Rangeland Foods)

Pallas Foods (fresh beef supplier to Compass Foods) conducted DNA testing on all fresh beef products supplied to Compass and all samples tested negative for equine DNA. Pallas has also initiated a "Positive Release" protocol which states that all meat products will not be released to customers until DNA results are issued for the Product Batch. A "positive release" statement will also appear on all Pallas invoices to confirm that the product received has been DNA tested.

- (iv) No contaminated foodstuffs have been served within Parliament Buildings and please be assured that meats used within the contract are sourced from Compass Euresst approved suppliers. Meats are all Farm Quality assured by DARD. Again, all burgers, meatballs and compound meat dishes are prepared on site using fresh meat produce.
- (v) The Assembly Commission recurrently monitors the traceability of all food and produce sold in Parliament Buildings through its current Support Services contract which specifies that the service provider, Compass-Euresst, shall ensure that all foods supplied under the contract meet current UK laws governing the sale and consumption of food. The NIAC requires the Service Provider to adhere, where possible, to the following food certifications:
- Farm Assurance Schemes such as Red Tractor;
 - Fair-trade certification bodies' products are encouraged;
 - Fish from sustainable sources, as approved by the MSC and/or approved fish farm producers;
 - Poultry - to Grade 'A' quality standard;
 - Eggs, or products containing eggs - must be of Lion Quality 'Class A' or equivalent and fresh eggs must be from free range hens;
 - For beef and lamb – Product from Northern Ireland, any other UK or EU country. Originating from a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) scheme or higher which contains annual, independent farm and processor scheme inspections accredited to European EN45011 standards; and
 - For pork, bacon and gammon - Product from Northern Ireland, any other UK or EU country. Originating from a national or regional quality scheme recognised by the EU containing annual, independent farm and processor scheme inspections accredited to European EN45011 standards.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 15 March 2013

(AQW 18560/11-15)

The expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each of the education and library board areas in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012 is as follows:

		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
2010/11 (£000s)	(i) Maintenance	9,689	7,075	8,046	7,628	8,524
	(ii) Minor Works	12,327	6,451	5,538	5,856	8,613
2011/12 (£000s)	(i) Maintenance	10,875	5,946	7,089	5,354	7,731
	(ii) Minor Works	20,529	6,067	8,275	11,113	10,138
1 April to 31 December 2012	(i) Maintenance	12,045	3,530	4,809	5,917	7,175
	(ii) Minor Works	9,027	6,907	4,837	7,961	4,461
TOTAL	(i) Maintenance	32,609	16,551	19,944	18,899	23,430
	(ii) Minor Works	41,883	19,425	18,650	24,930	23,212

The estimate of anticipated expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each education and library board area in the 2012/13 financial year is as follows:

£000s	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
(i) Maintenance	14,160	8,188	8,516	6,882	9,482
(ii) Minor Works*	20,259	9,735	9,976	13,225	11,072

* Minor works figure does not include anticipated voluntary sector expenditure from 1 January to 31 March 2013. Funding will continue to be allocated as projects progress through planning stages up until 31 March 2013.

(AQW 18561/11-15)

The expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each of the education and library board areas in each of the last three years up to 31 December 2012 is as follows:

		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
2010/11 (£000s)	(iii) Maintenance	9,689	7,075	8,046	7,628	8,524
	(iv) Minor Works	12,327	6,451	5,538	5,856	8,613
2011/12 (£000s)	(iii) Maintenance	10,875	5,946	7,089	5,354	7,731
	(iv) Minor Works	20,529	6,067	8,275	11,113	10,138
1 April to 31 December 2012	(iii) Maintenance	12,045	3,530	4,809	5,917	7,175
	(iv) Minor Works	9,027	6,907	4,837	7,961	4,461

		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
TOTAL	(iii) Maintenance	32,609	16,551	19,944	18,899	23,430
	(iv) Minor Works	41,883	19,425	18,650	24,930	23,212

The estimate of anticipated expenditure on (i) maintenance; and (ii) minor works in each education and library board area in the 2012/13 financial year is as follows:

£000s	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB
(iii) Maintenance	14,160	8,188	8,516	6,882	9,482
(iv) Minor Works*	20,259	9,735	9,976	13,225	11,072

* Minor works figure does not include anticipated voluntary sector expenditure from 1 January to 31 March 2013. Funding will continue to be allocated as projects progress through planning stages up until 31 March 2013.



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