

Written Answers to Questions

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 26 April 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Procurement and Commissioning Procedures

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the research project procurement and commissioning procedures for the (i) Early Intervention Services and Children, by RSM McClure Waters; (ii) Making better use of the schools estate to support childcare access and affordability, by RSM McClure Waters; (iii) Childcare sector and parental survey, by RSM McClure Waters; (iv) Departmental support to develop Child Poverty Outcomes Models, by the National Children's Bureau and C4EO; and (v) Childminding research exploring issues of practice and quality within child minding and the impact of the grouping of children of different ages within childcare, by the National Children's Bureau; and what procedures are in place to ensure that research projects are open, transparent and relevant.

(AQW 19706/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): In 2011 OFMDFM advertised an open call for research linked to the Department's Policy interests. This call resulted in a number of research projects being funded including:

- Early Intervention Services and Children, by RSM McClure Waters;
- Childcare sector and parental survey, by RSM McClure Waters;
- Childminding research exploring issues of practice and quality within child minding and the impact of the grouping of children of different ages within childcare, by the National Childrens' Bureau;

The project on 'Making better use of the schools estate to support childcare access and affordability, by RSM McClure Waters', while proposed under the open call was not agreed for funding by the Childcare Research Steering Group. This was primarily because the Department of Education had been engaged in work assessing the use of the schools estate and it was considered there could be duplication of effort.

In 2012 it became necessary to commission some additional research to address specific policy concerns. In total 9 such grants were awarded. In particular Government targets to eradicate child poverty by 2020, difficulties with this in the current economic climate and new innovation in terms of Results Based Accountability and Outcomes Based Analysis resulted in a research grant being awarded to National Childrens' Bureau to develop Child Poverty Outcome Models, by the National Childrens' Bureau and C4EO. As a research grant, this was not subject to procurement procedures.

In terms of procedures in place to ensure that research projects are open, transparent and relevant, all research projects are project managed by NISRA statisticians. Each research project also has an advisory group to draw from expertise in each area which stretches beyond the policy arena to academia both local and international. An overall programme board manages the complete set of projects.

Employment of Teachers and Staff

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have had any discussions with the Education Minister regarding the apparent contradiction between Clause 10(c) of the Heads of Agreement and Clause 3(1) of the Education Bill, in relation to the employment of teachers and staff.
(AQO 3406/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no contradiction. The Education Bill gives effect to both of the key requirements on employment matters within the Heads of Agreement. Firstly, it will establish the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) as the employer of all staff in all grant-aided schools. Secondly, it provides for the delegation of employment functions to schools. This will ensure that boards of governors can take all of the employment decisions within their schools if they wish.

Strategy for Children with Disabilities

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what specific actions are contained within the strategy for children with disabilities.
(AQW 21792/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The UN Conventions on children and disability place an obligation on all departments here to promote, protect and ensure equality. We are committed to implementing these conventions and we will meet this commitment through the frameworks of our 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People, the new disability strategy and our Delivering Social Change Programme. We support the Social Model of disability - it is not the disability that is limiting but the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers that society puts in the way of disabled people. It is these barriers that we need to remove.

We are responding to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendations by actions such as:

- developing a disability strategy that covers all age groups including children, young people and adults and all types of disability
- raising awareness on the rights, capabilities and contributions of people with disabilities by supporting a project to raise awareness of the UN Disability Convention amongst children and young people in schools and the development of a resource pack for teachers to help them teach about the rights of disabled people
- introducing Special Educational Needs Order (SENDO) legislation which protects the rights of children with disabilities in education and raising awareness of this legislation;
- taking action to improve speech and language therapy services and autism services for children and young people;
- introducing preventive initiatives through the child health promotion programme to enable optimum health to be reached.

The disability strategy sets out the key priorities that will be crucial in addressing the barriers that currently hinder disabled people's full participation in society. Our new disability strategy covers all types of disability and all ages – children, young people, adults and older people.

Through the Delivering Social Change Programme, we are encouraging the development of Action Plans with smaller numbers of cross-cutting and strategic objectives which can really make a difference and which are additional to existing work across government.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Staff Travel Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the cost to her Department of staff travel claims in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20190/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Staff Travel claims are a combination of Official Business Travel and the associated Subsistence Costs. The total costs for the Department and its Agencies for the last three years are as follows:

- 2009/10 - £3.25m
- 2010/11 - £2.96m
- 2011/12 - £3.16m

The Department currently employs 3,000 staff providing a vast array of services in a wide variety of sectors across the North. As part of the service delivery, staff are required to travel to various locations on a daily basis and are reimbursed for travel in line with Civil Service terms and conditions. These requirements represent the majority of cases reported in the answer provided.

The figures reflect both the large number of staff working in the Department as well as the need to deliver services to customers in all areas.

Single Farm Payment: Inaccurate Maps

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers, in the East Londonderry constituency, have been affected by inaccurate maps for Single Farm Payment; and what are the financial consequences for these farmers.

(AQW 20543/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There were 124 farm businesses with addresses in the East Derry constituency (defined as BT49, BT51, BT52, BT55, BT56) that were affected by fields missing from their new map. This was caused by a technical problem which affected a number of businesses, but which was rectified. All affected maps were available on-line or via the local DARD Direct offices by 22 February.

I asked that an additional 2 weeks be made available (to 8 March) to allow affected farmers to report any required map changes and to have the updated information pre-printed on their Single Application Form.

Farmers affected by the 'missing fields' problem will receive new maps around the time they receive their Single Application Form pack. To avoid any unnecessary delay in their Single Farm Payment they should ensure that the map reflects the situation on the ground and, if any required map changes were not made by the 8 March, that only the eligible area is claimed on their Single Application Form. Farmers will not be disadvantaged by the fact that they initially received a map with fields missing.

Errors on Farm Maps

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the 3,560 farm maps containing errors which were sent recently to farmers, to detail (i) the cost of posting; (ii) the cost of printing, including associated documentation; (iii) the administration costs of compiling these maps; and (iv) all costs associated with redistributing corrected maps to farmers.

(AQW 20662/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The following detail is available: -

The cost of posting 37,900 maps was £22,899.63 excluding VAT. There are no costs available for the subset of 3,560 maps as these were dispersed within the print runs. The cost of each individual pack is dependent on its weight.

The cost of printing, including associated documentation for 37,900 maps was £72,322. Again the detailed cost for the 3,560 maps cannot be accurately assessed.

The administration costs associated with the 3,560 maps are part of the overall production of 37,900 maps and cannot be separated.

The costs of re-distribution of maps with errors or changes are not yet known as this will occur around the time that Single Application Forms are issued.

Voisinage Agreement

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's understanding of the terms of the Voisinage Agreement.

(AQW 21364/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Voisinage Agreement has its roots in the London Fisheries Convention of 1964. This was a European agreement which established exclusive fisheries rights within six nautical miles for coastal states. The Convention also allowed for previous access by other states inside six miles to continue by way of voisinage arrangements. A Voisinage Agreement was made between the British and Irish governments in the form of an exchange of letters between officials in the Dublin and Belfast Departments of Agriculture in 1965. This allowed vessels from each jurisdiction to fish in each other's exclusive limits subject only to the regulations in force in each jurisdiction. The letter from the Irish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on 13 September 1965 stated, in keeping with the rules for south of Ireland vessels, that our vessels up to 75 feet overall length would have unrestricted access within the Irish inner six mile zone and any of our vessels that exceeded 75 and up to 90 feet would require a permit from the Irish authorities.

Retention and Protection of Rural Schools

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has a policy regarding the retention and protection of rural schools.

(AQW 21375/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The schools estate and education policy are a matter for the Minister of Education. I can advise that all Departments, including the Department of Education, have signed up to the policy on rural proofing which supports the fair and equitable treatment of rural communities in policy development by scrutinising proposed policies to ensure that the policy does not indirectly have a detrimental impact on rural dwellers and rural communities.

It is the responsibility of the Department for Education to rural proof their own policies, however my officials continue to make themselves available to provide support and guidance should it be required.

I have previously written to the Minister of Education on a number of occasions regarding the future of rural schools and highlighting the importance of rural schools in helping to sustain rural communities. In his response, the Minister of Education has reaffirmed his commitment to sustaining rural schools and outlining his Department's Sustainable Schools Policy. He has also confirmed that this policy was rural proofed prior to its publication in 2009 and that any decision to close or amalgamate a rural school is subject to an assessment using the criteria set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

Farmer Compensation

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the compensation process that will apply to farmers who have lost livestock due to snow.

(AQW 21383/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm.

The first element of these measures is that DARD is paying for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock that have died as a direct result of the snow storm. The second element will be a hardship scheme, which will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. This will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro per farmer, including the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals. Farmers, who have fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding.

The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers. I hope to release details of the scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

Unanswered Question: AQW 20208/11-15

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why AQW 20208/11-15, tabled on 21 February 2013, remains unanswered.

(AQW 21408/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This question was answered on the 8th April 2013.

Unanswered Question: AQW 20207/11-15

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why AQW 20207/11-15, tabled on 21 February 2013, remains unanswered.

(AQW 21409/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This question was answered on the 8th April 2013.

DARD Hotline

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, during the recent extreme weather conditions, how many calls left on the hotline, were responded to within 24 hours of the original call being made.

(AQW 21412/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: From 25 March the helpline has been staffed 24 hours a day to ensure the majority of calls are responded to upon receipt. If all lines were busy and a caller could not speak to someone, the call diverted to an answer machine and the call was returned shortly thereafter.

Farmers are also able to contact the Helpdesk using the email address published on the website and in press releases. There is dedicated resource in place to deal with email queries.

Rural Broadband Services

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what funds have been allocated for rural broadband.

(AQW 21414/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have agreed to commit £5m to the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) project being delivered by DETI to be used exclusively to target rural areas of high deprivation that currently have no fixed wire infrastructure to access broadband. These funds are in addition to the £2.5m my Department has already invested in the Next Generation Broadband project.

Rural Broadband Services

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any funds for rural broadband have been reallocated to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

(AQW 21415/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As part of a refocus of Axis 3 funds I have agreed to allocate £5m to the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) project being delivered by DETI, these funds are in addition to the £2.5m my Department has already invested in the Next Generation Broadband project.

Dairy Farm Sector

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that milk quotas will no longer pertain, what plans her Department has for the sustainability and development of the dairy farm sector over the next ten years.

(AQW 21423/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The dairy sector makes a very important contribution to the local agri-food industry and to ensure its future sustainability and development when milk quotas end in 2015 it is vital that it remains competitive and profitable. My Department's overall aim is therefore to help the dairy sector to improve its performance and grow its potential in the market-place. This has included joint support with Invest NI for an industry-led dairy competitiveness study whose aim was to help the sector plan for the future post milk quotas. The recommendations of the study are now being taking forward by the dairy industry.

I believe that a market-led strategy is vital for the dairy sector because when milk quotas end there will be no restraints on production. As a consequence future decisions on milk production will be taken by the dairy sector in the context of input costs and market returns. Therefore, to help ensure that the industry remains sustainable, my Department through CAFRE and AFBI will continue to provide education, training, technical support and research to help improve efficiency, competitiveness and innovation. In addition we will be reviewing the range of support measures available to the local agri-food industry, including the dairy sector, under the 2014 to 2020 Rural Development Programme.

The dairy sector has the potential to grow further and to exploit opportunities arising from the predicted expansion in world population. In this context I look forward to receipt of the report of the Agri-Food Strategy Board which the dairy sector has engaged positively with, and which will help shape the future growth of the sector over the coming years, particularly following the ending of milk quotas.

Cattle Market Infrastructure

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what proposals her Department has for assisting cattle market infrastructure, in terms of providing grants or other support to help it meet all EU animal health and welfare standards.

(AQW 21425/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Funding towards the improvement of infrastructure facilities at livestock markets is eligible under the EU Processing & Marketing Grant (PMG) Scheme, which is part of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

Under the current PMG Scheme, my Department has received and approved one funding application towards the construction of a new purpose built livestock market at Markethill, County Armagh.

However, funding is not normally available to assist market operators in meeting minimum legal standards in relation to EU requirements, including animal health and welfare requirements. To date, my Department has not provided financial assistance to cattle markets to enable them to undertake their statutory obligations in relation to animal health and welfare, and I have no immediate plans to do so.

Sika Deer in Ballypatrick Forest

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who owns the Sika deer in Ballypatrick Forest.

(AQW 21456/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Sika deer in Ballypatrick Forest are wild deer. Wild deer are owned by no-one and can roam freely, as can other wild animals such as badgers, hares and foxes.

Farmer Compensation

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she plans to ensure that compensation payments to farmers for animals lost in extreme weather conditions will not differentiate in any way because of postcode and will be provided to assist those worst affected wherever they live. (AQW 21462/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of and fully sympathise with the very difficult situation that farmers find themselves in at this time arising from the recent snow storm. I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm.

The first element of this is that DARD is paying for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock that have died as a direct result of the snow storm. So that those who were potentially hardest hit would have immediate help, a list of postcodes was identified from calls for urgent assistance to the DARD helpline, and all farmers in those areas will have their fallen stock collected and disposed of by approved renderers during the period 2nd – 19th April 2013. However, whether part of the published postcode list or not, any farmer who considers they have suffered livestock losses as a result of the snow storm may be eligible for this scheme. I appreciate that there are smaller discrete areas in other locations in the north of Ireland where farmers have been equally affected by the snow storm and I have made arrangements in my Department to confirm the eligibility of any farmer calling the DARD helpline and requesting that fallen stock are collected under these arrangements.

I also intend to bring to the Executive proposals for a hardship scheme, which will be the second element of the hardship measures. The hardship scheme will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. This will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro per farmer, including the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals. Farmers, who have fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding.

The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers. The hardship payment will be specifically for livestock losses. I hope to release details of the scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years. (AQW 21526/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £
NIL	NIL	NIL	180.00	611.00

Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 17631/11-15, to detail the nature of the £0.27m in assets that her Department has identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board, broken down by year. (AQW 21583/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The assets that my department identified to the Asset Management Unit were: approximately 20 hectares of land at Tullyhogue, Cookstown, and a small parcel of land (0.04 hectares) at Derrynoyd Forest. Both assets were listed for disposal during 2012/13.

0300 200 7852 Emergency Helpline

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail how many calls were received by the 0300 200 7852 emergency helpline, each day from 22 March 2013.

(AQW 21589/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At 16 April a total of 936 calls have been received by the helpline. Prior to the 25 March only one call had been recorded which related to flooding. The Helpline has been manned 24 hours a day since 25 March. A breakdown of calls received per day between the 25 March and 16 April is provided at the Annex.

ANNEX

Date	Number of calls received
25 March	47
26 March	48
27 March	43
28 March	69
29 March	99
30 March	35
31 March	8
1 April	35
2 April	65
3 April	80
4 April	64
5 April	55
6 April	11
7 April	7
8 April	66
9 April	40
10 April	41
11 April	51
12 April	31
13 April	6
14 April	0
15 April	27
16 April	8

Collection and Disposal Costs: Fallen Animals

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, further to her Department's announcement that it would meet collection and disposal costs in respect of fallen animals resulting

from the recent weather crisis, whether she intends to deduct such costs from any payment due to a farmer under the hardship scheme and to outline the reasons for this decision.

(AQW 21591/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm. The first element of this is that my Department will pay for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock from the farmers most severely affected. This relieves those farmers of a potential cost to their business and protects both the environment and animal health by encouraging the proper disposal of fallen stock.

I also intend to bring to the Executive proposals for a hardship scheme, which will be the second element of the hardship measures. The hardship scheme will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. Farmers, who have fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding. The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers.

Under the EU State Aid de minimis rules 7,500 euro is the maximum that can be granted to farmers. The costs of collection form part of the State Aid and must be taken into account when determining payments under the hardship funding measures.

Helicopter Support for Relief Effort

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what level of negotiations, including the dates of meetings discussion topics and outcomes, were entered into by her departmental officials with the (i) Royal Air Force; and (ii) Government of the Republic of Ireland, in relation to the provision of helicopter support for the relief effort for farmers affected by the recent severe weather.

(AQW 21595/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As part of the discussions on securing assistance in the relief effort, I made contact with a number of Ministers including the Secretary of State Theresa Villiers MP and the Justice Minister Alan Shatter TD. My departmental officials were in contact with the British Ministry of Defence (MOD) from Monday 25 to Friday 29 March regarding the provision of helicopter support from the Royal Air Force (RAF) for the relief effort for farmers affected by the recent severe weather. Daily meetings were held between the British MOD and DARD on 25, 26, 27 and 28 March to discuss operational and planning matters regarding feed drops. There was also significant direct contact between my officials and the British MOD and the RAF in advance of and during the operations to deliver feed. The cost issues of the feed drops were discussed with the MOD on 25 March.

After my direct contact with Alan Shatter TD, my officials were in contact with the Irish Department of Defence from Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 March. Contact with the Irish Air Corps at operational level commenced on Wednesday 27 March.

0300 200 7852 Emergency Helpline and Email

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the performance of the 0300 200 7852 emergency helpline and email, from 22 March 2013, in coping with the concerns of farmers caught up in the recent severe weather conditions and whether she is aware of the concerns raised by some farmers that an excessive number of calls were redirected.

(AQW 21596/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The helpline staff have been working intensely to ensure that issues raised by farmers are dealt with quickly. At the 14 April 902 calls, relating to the adverse weather conditions, had been received.

The DARD Helpline was staffed 24 hours a day from 25 March. It was staffed in Dundonald House from 8am to 10pm from Monday 25 March to Friday 29 March, and it has been staffed every day in

Dundonald House from 9am to 5pm from Saturday 30 March. Outside these hours the Helpline calls are diverted to my Department's staff at the Veterinary Service Belfast Portal office.

During the extremely busy periods, where a caller could not speak to someone, the call diverted to an answer machine and the call was returned thereafter. The answer machine is routinely checked throughout the day to make sure calls are returned as quickly as possible. Farmers are also able to contact the Helpdesk using the email address published on the website and in press releases.

Where the call cannot be dealt with by helpline staff, for instance if it relates to fallen animals outside the Published Postcode List, a dedicated team of Veterinary Service or CAFRE staff have provided the necessary support.

In this dynamic situation my officials have done their utmost to ensure the information provided to callers is correct. To date a complaint has not been received regarding an excessive numbers of calls being redirected.

Grants for Farmers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any grants are available to assist farmers effected by the recent heavy snow.

(AQW 21603/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am very aware of and fully sympathise with the very difficult situation that farmers face at this time arising from the recent snow storm.

I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm. The first element of this is that my Department will pay for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock from the farmers most severely affected. This relieves those farmers of a potential cost to their business and protects both the environment and animal health by encouraging the proper disposal of fallen stock.

I also intend to bring to the Executive proposals for a hardship scheme, which will be the second element of the hardship measures. The hardship scheme will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. This will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro per farmer, including the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals. Farmers, who have fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding. The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers.

The hardship payment will be specifically for livestock losses. I hope to release details of the scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

Compensation for Deceased Animals

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who farmers should contact to apply for compensation for deceased animals as a result of the recent heavy snowfall.

(AQW 21606/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm. The first element of this is that my Department will pay for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock from the farmers most severely affected. This relieves those farmers of a potential cost to their business and protects both the environment and animal health by encouraging the proper disposal of fallen stock.

I also intend to bring to the Executive proposals for a hardship scheme, which will be the second element of the hardship measures. The hardship scheme will be specifically for livestock losses and help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. This will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro

per farmer, including the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals. Farmers, who have fallen stock collected and disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers will be eligible for the hardship funding. The hardship scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers. I hope to release details of the scheme and how to apply as soon as possible.

Rural Communities Isolated Due to Severe Weather

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, what emergency procedures her Department has put in place to ensure that help for rural communities isolated due to severe weather, is provided as quickly and efficiently as possible.

(AQW 21623/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has existing plans in place to deal with a range of emergency situations. The recent severe weather necessitated a multi-agency response, managed under the Executive's central crisis management arrangements, and in which my Department fully participated. The multi-agency response quite rightly focused initially on very difficult humanitarian issues, including the needs of vulnerable people in rural areas. As it became clear that there were emerging animal welfare issues my Department's existing emergency management arrangements were utilised in addressing shortages of and access to animal feed, and the collection and disposal of dead animals.

Salmon Fishing in the River Faughan

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what follow up checks are made on the use of the tags issued for salmon fishing on the River Faughan.

(AQW 21657/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Loughs Agency staff are responsible for regulation of salmon tags in the Foyle area and carry out regular patrols on the River Faughan. Any angler identified by staff as having caught a salmon is checked to ensure that it is appropriately tagged and recorded in line with the appropriate regulations.

Salmon Fishing in the River Faughan

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action is being taken to ensure that salmon caught on the River Faughan is tagged and logged.

(AQW 21658/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Loughs Agency works in partnership with the River Faughan Anglers Limited and actively engages in educating adults and children through the Agency's interpretative centre and education programme.

Loughs Agency staff also patrol the River Faughan on a regular basis, to check that salmon are appropriately tagged and recorded.

Salmon Stocks in the River Faughan

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps are being taken to improve the measures to prevent the destruction of salmon stocks in the River Faughan.

(AQW 21659/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Loughs Agency is responsible for the conservation and protection of salmon in the Foyle system. The Agency is proactive in making and enforcing regulations for this purpose and for freshwater habitat management. All are underpinned by best scientific advice and reflect the resolutions and guidance from the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation.

The Loughs Agency are currently in the process of introducing new regulations which will include a reduction of the number of carcass tags issued to anglers in the Foyle and Carlingford area. This will impact on numbers of salmon taken.

It should be noted that the River Faughan salmon stocks have met their target population levels in the last four years.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many trees have been lost to Ash Dieback Disease.

(AQW 21677/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At 19 April 2013, destruction notices have been issued for an estimated 55,000 ash trees as a result of Ash Dieback.

Single Farm Payment

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the farm inspection process from the first point of contact with the farmer through to receipt of the Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 21680/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The farm inspection process for land eligibility inspections associated with claims under the Single Farm Payment Scheme is detailed in Annex A, a copy of which can be found in the assembly library, which illustrates a flow chart from submission of applications to the finalisation of claims.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she has taken to ensure that the draft Welfare Reform Bill has been rural proofed.

(AQW 21690/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: It is the responsibility of all Executive Departments to rural proof their own policies. The Welfare Reform Bill falls within the remit of the Minister for Social Development, therefore the responsibility to ensure that it is rural proofed falls to his Department.

My officials continue to make themselves available to provide support and guidance to all departments on rural proofing should it be required.

Ban on the Sale of Foie Gras

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has given consideration to introducing a ban on the sale of foie gras.

(AQW 21693/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: While the production of foie gras is banned here, the free movement of goods is a key principle in European Community law and is enshrined in Part III, Title I of the treaty establishing the European Community (TEC).

A unilateral ban on the import or sale of foie gras would contravene the provisions of the TEC and would result in proceedings being brought against us before the European Court of Justice.

As a result, I have no plans to ban the sale of foie gras here.

Equine Slaughter Plant, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 21070/11-15, whether the equine slaughter plant in Belfast operates to animal welfare standards and is regularly inspected by departmental veterinary staff.

(AQW 21719/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I refer to my previous answer provided in AQW 21070/11-15.

Joint Council Committees and Local Action Groups

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance she is providing to Joint Council Committees and Local Action Groups in relation to (i) assisting farmers affected by the recent severe weather conditions; and (ii) minimising the underspend in Rural Development funding.

(AQW 21727/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Development Programme, including Axis 3, cannot accommodate hardship payments to farmers as it is currently drafted.

The programme would require an amendment which would have to be justified and approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee and the EU Commission. This is a process which would take in the region of 6 months.

As regards underspend within Axis 3, I am pleased to note that following a number of initiatives to accelerate spend, the Programme has now spent £45m. In addition, the refocus of the programme that I announced at the end of 2011 has recently resulted in the issue of a further £17m in Letters of Offer to 31 projects. The 7 Clusters have also announced that they have achieved almost full commitment of the available funds and it is their intention to spend out their remaining funds over the next 2 years.

Relocation of Department's Headquarters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether a business case has been submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel for the relocation of her Department's headquarters.

(AQW 21730/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Business Case to consider the options for delivering the DARD headquarters on the Ballykelly site has not been submitted to DFP but is expected to be completed by Summer 2013.

Air Support

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons for withdrawing air support during the recent snow crisis.

(AQW 21735/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Following the helicopter flights on 28 March our technical and logistical assessment indicated that there were no outstanding requests for help that required aerial support. Intelligence from both farmers and DARD staff on the ground indicated that access to remote areas was improving and that priority fodder needs had been addressed. While helicopter support was stood down it was kept under review, and all of the farmers who had requested assistance to move fodder successfully received support via our ground support programme involving Forest Service soft track machines.

Staff continued to work with farmers to address any ongoing adverse weather related issues.

Public Procurement Contracts for Supplies, Services and Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the Programme for Government commitment to include social clauses in all public procurement contracts

for supplies, services and construction, how many contracts her Department has entered into since this commitment; and what where the social clauses included in these contracts.

(AQW 21737/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since publication of the PfG commitment to include social clauses in contracts, my Department has entered into 37 contracts over the value of £30k, all of which included social clauses. All 37 contracts included an Equality Clause, a Health and Safety Clause and an Early Payment Clause. 3 of the contracts also included other Social Clauses such as providing opportunities for the unemployed, apprentices and students; providing work experience or employment opportunities; and providing opportunities for employees to develop essential skills. I will continue to ensure social clauses are maximised in DARD contracts.

EU Council Directive 1999/74/EC: the Welfare of Laying Hens

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her departmental officials have obtained any evidence of non compliance with EU Council Directive 1999/74/EC: the Welfare of Laying Hens.

(AQW 21749/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU Council Directive 1999/74/EC: the Welfare of Laying Hens is enforced in NI through the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2012 (WOFAR). No notices have been served on laying hen premises under WOFAR, since the enactment of this legislation on 2nd April 2012.

818 inspections have been completed within the previous 12 months, visiting 100% of producers and evidence has been recorded of non-compliances in 0.9% of these cases. These are related to litter or range provision and have been followed up through the egg marketing regulations.

Death of Farm Animals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the number of farm animals who died as a result of the severe weather, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 21755/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: At 17 April 28,437 fallen animals had been collected. A table is provided at the Annex which details the number of animals collected per constituency.

ANNEX

BREAKDOWN BY CONSTITUENCY OF FALLEN ANIMALS COLLECTED AS A RESULT OF THE SEVERE WEATHER

Constituency	Total Animals Collected
Belfast North	3
East Antrim	8,244
East Londonderry	745
Lagan Valley	1,245
Mid Ulster	472
Newry & Armagh	527
North Antrim	7,140
South Antrim	879
South Down	8,616
Strangford	86

Constituency	Total Animals Collected
Upper Bann	93
West Tyrone	387
Total	28,437

Air Support

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the cost of the air support provided by the RAF during the recent severe weather; and (ii) whether this was the deciding factor when withdrawing the support.

(AQW 21871/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In line with standard procedure and Treasury protocols, the British Ministry of Defence expects to be reimbursed when it provides support to the civil authorities throughout Britain and the north of Ireland. The detail of the actual costs for the use of helicopters to drop supplies to farmers are still being worked out and have not yet been presented to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Irish Air Corps have indicated that there would be no charge for the aerial support provided by them to get supplies of fodder to livestock.

Cost was not the deciding factor in the decision to withdraw aerial support. Following helicopter flights on 28 March our technical and logistical assessment indicated that there were no outstanding requests for help that required aerial support. Intelligence from both farmers and DARD staff on the ground indicated that access to remote areas was improving and that priority fodder needs had been addressed. While helicopter support was stood down it was kept under review, and all of the farmers who had requested assistance to move fodder successfully received support via our ground support programme involving Forest Service soft track machines.

Staff continued to work with farmers to address any ongoing adverse weather related issues.

Financial Support for Farmers

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial support is available to farmers who need to replace their sheep breeding stock following the recent snow.

(AQW 21873/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have obtained Executive agreement to hardship funding measures to assist farmers worst affected by livestock losses arising from the recent snow storm. The first element of this is that my Department will pay for the costs of collection and disposal of fallen stock from the farmers most severely affected. This relieves those farmers of a potential cost to their business and protects both the environment and animal health by encouraging the proper disposal of fallen stock.

I also intend to bring to the Executive proposals for a hardship scheme, which will be the second element of the hardship measures. The hardship scheme will help to mitigate the costs of the livestock losses that have been sustained by farmers arising from the snow storm. This will be under the EU de minimis rules and capped at a maximum of 7,500 euro per farmer, including the collection and disposal costs of the fallen animals. Farmers, who have fallen stock disposed of during the period 2 April – 19 April 2013 by approved renderers, will be eligible for the hardship funding. The scheme will be framed in light of the information gathered on the extent and nature of losses, which we will build as farmers have stock removed and disposed of by the approved renderers.

GIS System Programme Malfunction

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if there is a problem with the Forest Service GIS computer programme and if so, to provide further details including the length of time there has been a problem and when it will be remedied.

(AQW 21882/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Forest Service Geographic Information System (GIS) was closed down for 12 working days on several occasions between 11 February and 11 April to repair a problem which had resulted in slow operation of the software. This was resolved and the Forest Service GIS became fully operational from 12 April.

GIS System Programme Malfunction

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why Forest Service cannot process grant applications as a result of a GIS system programme malfunction; and if this exercise and process can be conducted manually.

(AQW 21883/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service GIS is an integral part of the system to administer woodland grant applications. It is used when checking eligibility for support, environmental information and to provide data and maps to support grant approvals.

Manual processing is no longer considered an effective or sufficiently accurate means of assessing eligibility or mapping areas for grant support.

GIS System Programme Malfunction

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much new woodland planting has been delayed due to a GIS system programme malfunction.

(AQW 21884/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service officials have identified 7 applications for a total of 16 hectares which have been delayed beyond the target approval period of 8 weeks as a result of the close down of the Forest Service GIS for repair.

Forest Service GIS was repaired and operational on 12 April and 4 of these applications have since been processed with approvals issued. Site visits for the remaining 3 have been arranged and we estimate that approvals will be issued by the 3rd May 2013 subject to findings of the site visit.

Glenariff Forest Park

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) why the walks in Glenariff Forest Park are due to close; and (ii) for how long will they be closed.

(AQW 21901/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) The walks in Glenariff Forest Park had been closed to the public in the interest of public safety as there was widespread snow and wind damage that caused trees and branches to fall and block forest roads and walking trails.
- (ii) Work on clearing sections of recreation paths has been completed and public access to the Forest Park is now available.

It will take a considerable amount of specialised work to clear and repair one particular path to the Glenariff waterfalls. The timeframe for the re-opening of this trail will be dependent on the findings of a full engineering assessment outlining the necessary repair works required to make the trail safe for public use.

I am aware of the importance of Glenariff Forest Park as a tourist attraction and all trails affected by storm damage will be re-opened as soon as possible following their reinstatement.

Emergency Helpline: Typetalk Training

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether Typetalk training was provided to the staff that operated the Emergency Helpline during the snow crisis.

(AQW 21902/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Typetalk is used for communications between a textphone and a

standard telephone and is provided by an organisation called Text Relay. This is a fully automated service so, when required, relay assistants from within Text Relay provide a text-to-voice and voice-to-text translation service. Consequently there was no need for further training for the Helpline operators.

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise: Annual Tuition Fees

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons for the 3.26 per cent increase in annual tuition fees at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

(AQW 21930/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD's policy is to set its annual tuition fees for Higher Education courses at CAFRE in line with the tuition fees framework set by DEL. DEL operates a 2 tier fee regime, allowing students to be charged either a basic amount or a higher amount. These fees are increased annually in line with inflation, thus maintaining them constant in real terms. DARD charges the basic amount for Higher Education courses at CAFRE.

On 9 May 2012, DEL made a Statutory Rule which increased the basic fee from 1 September 2013 by 3.26%. In line with its policy, DARD made a Statutory Rule on 18 April 2013 replicating this increase for Higher Education courses at CAFRE, thus maintaining parity with the basic amount set by DEL.

Prehistoric Monuments

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance her Department offers rural dwellers who want to preserve and protect a prehistoric monument on their land.

(AQW 21969/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- 1 Funding has been available, and may still be available in some areas, under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-13 (Measure 3.6 - Conservation and Upgrading of the Rural Heritage).
- 2 Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme is being delivered by seven Joint Council Committees (JCC) working in partnership with their appointed Local Action Group. A full list of contacts is attached at Appendix A.
- 3 The aim of this Measure is to create opportunities to preserve and upgrade the rural heritage and to use the natural and built environment as the basis for sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

APPENDIX A

The 7 Council Clusters (Lead council in bold) delivering the programme are:

RDD NORTH AREA
Antrim, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus
Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne and Moyle

RDD NORTH AREA
Belfast, Castlereagh and Lisburn
RDD WEST AREA
Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh
Omagh, Strabane, Limavady, Derry
RDD SOUTH AREA
Ards, Banbridge, Down, North Down
Armagh, Craigavon, Newry and Mourne

Animal Health and and Welfare NI

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to Animal Health and and Welfare NI, to detail whether her Department (i) provides its staff; and (ii) assists it financially.
(AQW 22007/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) is a, not-for-profit, independent industry body established last year to lead on the development and promotion of initiatives to tackle production diseases. My Department does not provide AHWNI with any staff.

In support of this industry-led initiative my Department will provide start-up funding to the 31 March 2014 of up to £125,497 to help AHWNI deliver its bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) eradication programme and to develop a Johne's disease control programme.

Dog Licence

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if people with disabilities who require an assistance dog will be exempt from purchasing a dog licence.
(AQW 22042/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The control of dogs here is legislated for by the Dogs Order 1983, Article 3 of which makes it unlawful to own a dog without a licence. However, Article 5 of the Order creates a number of exemptions to the requirement for a licence.

In addition, the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 amended the Dogs Order to create an additional exemption from the licensing requirements so that a dog licence is not required for a dog kept and used by a disabled person (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) wholly or mainly for the purpose of assisting that person to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This new exemption came in to operation on 28 July 2011.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Eradication Programme

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the percentage of herd keepers who have participated in the voluntary phase of the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea eradication programme.
(AQW 22106/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) eradication programme is a voluntary programme developed and operated by Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) which is industry body, thus the farming industry has overall responsible for the programme. The information you requested is therefore held by AHWNI who have advised that good progress has been made to date with 894 herds now in the

programme. Over 40,500 cattle ear tags have been purchased and 13,535 tests have been carried out, of which 0.51% have tested positive for BVD.

Given the seasonal nature of calving here, which is focused both in spring and autumn, it is anticipated that the uptake by herd keepers will increase over the coming months.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Promoting Equality and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 20010/11-15, to detail the criteria used for any potential departmental Funding to be considered in the context of her Department's priority of promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

(AQW 20685/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): My Department's statutory duty, with regard to public funded sponsorship, must be discharged in accordance with relevant public law and public policy, with specific due regard to both the purposive and procedural needs to promote equality under S75(1) of the NI Act 1998.

With regard to specific criteria used for funding, Ministerial decisions, in the foregoing context, will be applied in relation to relevant factors, particularly timelines and targeting and clear, transparent and tangible outcomes which:

- Promote equality;
- Tackle poverty;
- Tackle social exclusion;
- Provide opportunities to deliver sustainable economic, social, and equality outcomes, and wider community returns;
- Provide opportunities to train and employ the long term unemployed; and
- Provide suicide prevention initiatives.

Department of Education

Nurture Units for Children

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education whether there is any provision within the current Nurture Units for children learning through Irish-Medium.

(AQW 20791/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Schools with established nurture units have developed this provision by acting on their own initiative. Funding for these units has been secured from a variety of other sources, mainly the Department of Social Development's Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund.

The Department's list of existing nurture units is based on information provided by the Education and Library Boards and this does not include any Irish Medium school with an established nurture unit. The Department is not aware of any particular reason for this position. However, it may be that, in the past, pupil numbers in P1/P2 were considered insufficient to sustain an intervention such as nurture group provision and to warrant the allocation of a distinct nurture room within existing accommodation. Until recently many Irish Medium schools have had small class sizes, making a nurture unit a less appropriate intervention, compared to other supports that may be available.

An additional 20 new nurture units will be created under the Delivering Social Change Signature Project. All primary schools were assessed against specific criteria, using objective measures of need

and a ranked list produced using the percentage of pupils with free school meals entitlement. This approach has identified 20 potential locations for the new nurture units. I hope to be in a position to formally announce the schools which will participate in the Signature Project shortly.

I have also recently agreed to provide funding to 10 schools with existing nurture group provision, to ensure this is maintained until June 2015. This time period coincides with the life span of the Delivering Social Change Signature Project and ensures that all aspects of nurture group provision can be evaluated with a view to informing future policy.

It is open to any other primary school, Irish Medium or otherwise, to consider whether nurture provision is an appropriate intervention to meet the needs of their pupils and to explore other sources of funding if self funding is not an option.

Role of Primary Schools within a Community

Mrs Dobson asked Minister of Education, in relation to the Area Planning proposals, how he will identify what role a primary school plays within its community, especially those in isolated rural communities; and what importance will be given to this role prior to making a final decision regarding a school's future.

(AQW 21380/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Area Planning is the mechanism for the delivery of the Sustainable Schools Policy, which provides a framework of criteria and indicators for assessing the range of factors which may affect a school's sustainability. This policy applies to all schools regardless of location.

The policy explicitly recognises the particular needs of rural communities. This is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools, the accessibility criterion and the strong links with the community criterion. This latter criterion lists indicators which allow the role the school plays within its own community to be assessed.

The policy was assessed against the Rural Development Council's rural proofing checklist set out in its report, *Striking the Balance*, before publication in 2009. No adverse impact was identified.

The Boards' draft Primary Area Plans have been released for public consultation and this provides the opportunity for rural communities and their representatives to put forward their views.

Future of Primary Schools

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what measures he will use to ensure that judgements are made fairly for school children and communities when decisions are taken on the future of primary schools, particularly those in rural communities.

(AQW 21382/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Area Planning is the mechanism for the delivery of the Sustainable Schools Policy, which provides a framework of criteria and indicators for assessing the range of factors which may affect a school's sustainability. This policy applies to all schools regardless of location.

The policy explicitly recognises the particular needs of rural communities. This is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools, the accessibility criterion and the strong links with the community criterion. This latter criterion lists indicators which allow the role the school plays within its own community to be assessed.

The policy was assessed against the Rural Development Council's rural proofing checklist set out in its report, *Striking the Balance*, before publication in 2009. No adverse impact was identified.

The Boards' draft Primary Area Plans have been released for public consultation and this provides the opportunity for rural communities and their representatives to put forward their views.

Children Changing Primary School

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education to detail any historical research that his Department has conducted into the impact on educational outcomes for children changing primary school; and any historical advice provided by his Department to the parents of children changing primary school.

(AQW 21386/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not commissioned research into the impact on educational outcomes for children changing primary schools, nor has it provided any historical advice to parents of children changing primary school.

Where children need to change schools because of a school closure, amalgamation or parental choice, the relevant Education and Library Board is responsible for providing support and information to enable parents to meet their preference, where possible, as to which primary school they wish their child (ren) to attend. This can include meeting with parents; providing details of schools with available places; information on how to apply for places, transport arrangements, open evenings; or arrangements for possible transition periods.

Taking Boys Seriously Report

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what action he plans to take in relation to the recommendations in the Taking Boys Seriously report.

(AQW 21399/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The report "Taking Boys Seriously – A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Male School-Life Experience in Northern Ireland" was an independent research project undertaken by the Centre for Young Men's Studies at the University of Ulster, for which both my Department and the Department of Justice provided funding. The Report was published in November 2012.

The Report provides some very useful research which has increased our understanding of factors that may contribute to male academic underachievement; how schools can become a more positive learning experience; male transitions through post-primary school and beyond; and how experiences of violence in a post-conflict society impact upon education and learning.

The research findings and recommendations make a very useful contribution to the evidence base which will influence thinking and future policy decisions in my Department and across government in relation to gender-specific issues affecting young people.

Education and Library Board Staff

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many staff in each Education and Library Board are employed on temporary contracts under vacancy control and are deemed to be at risk; and how many of these staff were employed before 31 July 2011.

(AQW 21416/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information:

	Staff employed on temporary contract under vacancy control and deemed at risk	Staff on temporary contract employed before 31 July 2011
BELB	21	7
WELB	25	15
NEELB	68	38
SEELB	151	54
SELB	27	24

Education and Library Board: Human Resources Departments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) whether the human resources departments within each Education and Library Board have begun a process to determine which of the posts at risk will be filled on a permanent basis; (ii) when this process began; (iii) when it will conclude; and (iv) when staff will be advised of the outcome.

(AQW 21417/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information:

	(i) & (ii)	(iii)	(iv)
BELB	December 2011	30 June 2013	When each case review is complete
WELB	February 2012	30 June 2013	When each case review is complete
NEELB	March 2012	30 June 2013	When each case review is complete
SEELB	January 2012	Establishment of ESA	When each case review is complete
SELB	May 2012	30 June 2013	When each case review is complete

Education and Library Board Meetings

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many meetings have taken place between the various human resources functions in each Education and Library Board and the temporary staff affected by vacancy control.

(AQW 21418/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that it is not possible to provide this information.

The management of vacancies in line with the Department's Vacancy Control Policy is discussed as part of regular staff briefings and meetings. There are no records of specific meetings between Human Resources staff and individual staff members.

Trade Union representatives have been kept informed of the progress of the vacancy control review through the normal consultative process.

DE Meetings with other Political Parties

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what formal meetings he has held in the last two years with other political parties to discuss (i) the Education and Skills Authority; (ii) academic selection; and (iii) Area Planning.

(AQW 21436/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have not had any formal meetings with other political parties to discuss the Education and Skills Authority, academic selection or Area Planning.

Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 17631/11-15, to detail the nature of the £4.46m in assets that his Department has identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board, broken down by year.

(AQW 21453/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education's asset disposal targets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 comprise of surplus assets identified through a joint undertaking by Education and Library Boards and the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board in early 2012. This exercise identified

potential surplus assets for disposal in the controlled sector incorporating both surplus school and youth properties.

These projections were based on valuations undertaken by Land and Property Services in early 2012, which are reviewed every 6 months.

Individual disposals depend on departmental schedules, economic appraisals and commercial considerations in terms of timing and expected price.

However achievement of targets is subject to fluctuations in market valuations and the prevailing property market conditions at the time of disposal.

Properties which are currently on the open market at April 2013 are:

Address	Town	Disposing Body
Former Ballypriormore Primary School	Larne	NEELB
Antiville Primary School, 39 Fairway Lane	Larne	NEELB
Ballee Primary School	Ballymena	NEELB
44 Ballylesson Road	Belfast	SEELB
Lower Ballinderry Primary School	Lisburn	SEELB
Kindle Integrated Primary School	Killough	SEELB
Ballycloughan Primary School	Saintfield	SEELB
Tullymacarette P S, 23 Upper Quilly Road	Loughbrickland	SELB
2 Station Road, Kesh	Fermanagh	WELB

Properties which are the subject of transfer negotiations to Housing Associations are:

Address	Town	Disposing Body
Killard Special School, Newtownards	Newtownards	SEELB
Land at Clifton Special School, Ballykillaire, Bangor	Bangor	SEELB
Land at Good Shepherd Rd, Lisburn	Lisburn	SEELB
Ballyduff Primary School, New Mossley	Newtownabbey	NEELB
St Mary's Primary School, Larne (two phases)	Larne	NEELB

The asset disposal targets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be continually monitored by the department in discussions with Asset Management Unit, the Education and Library Boards and Land and Property Services to ensure that the required receipts can be delivered in each financial year.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 20241/11-15, how many staff undertake this work in each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 21502/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Functions outlined in AQW 20141/11-15 which will transfer to the Central Procurement Directorate are within the Goods and Services Procurement sections within the Education and Library Boards. The transferring functions form only part of these individuals' day to day responsibilities. Staff numbers within these sections are set out in the table below.

	Staff numbers
BELB	4
WELB	4
NEELB	6
SEELB	4
SELB	3.5

Completion of School Buildings

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the average length of time taken to complete the building of (i) a primary school; and (ii) a post primary school following Ministerial approval.

(AQW 21504/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: When a major capital build project receives Ministerial approval to proceed in planning a considerable amount of time is needed to develop the project from initial conception through to actual build. All projects both primary and post-primary will have different issues to be addressed, many of which are outside the control of my Department. These include all statutory approvals including planning permission and building control. Therefore it is not possible to give a definitive timescale to complete a project. However, once all approvals/ tenders are in place a medium sized primary school on a greenfield site should be constructed in a 12-14 month period and a larger post-primary school would take on average 24-26 months. A new build project on an existing school site may take longer as a result of decanting issues.

Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the initiatives introduced by his Department in response to the 2004 Report from the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities; (ii) which initiatives currently focus on the issues raised in the 2004 report; and (iii) the results of any evaluations into initiatives designed to address the issues raised in this report.

(AQW 21601/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Renewing Communities Programme (RCP) was the then Government's response to the 2004 Report of the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities. This was a cross-departmental programme co-ordinated by DSD which included a range of education-linked pilot projects aimed at selected disadvantaged areas of Belfast. Funding for the majority of these projects ended at 31 March 2008; however in some cases funding was extended to 30 June 2008 and in others it was mainstreamed through DE or BELB. Details of the projects are set out below:

Project Title	Description	Funding from April 2008
Supporting SEN in schools & developing management standards.	Supported schools under pressure by providing teachers with necessary Professional Qualification.	Funded to 30 June 2008.
Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) – SEN Support Pilot	Provided specialist training in autism, dyslexia and behavioural issues.	Mainstreamed by BELB from April 2008

Project Title	Description	Funding from April 2008
Integrated Children's Services	Supported the delivery of integrated services to children in order to enhance early years provision and support other children's development and learning activities.	Mainstreamed by DE from April 2008
Healthy Schools Initiative	Promoted health and well-being in children including the development of active schools and food in schools programmes.	Funded to 30 June 2008
Full Service School Demonstration Project	To establish a Full Service School programme demonstrating how community access, full health and social services provision and childcare could come together.	Mainstreamed by DE from April 2008
Alternative Education Provision – Extension of Pathways Project	An extension of the Pathways Project, which supported young people who were excluded from or who are experiencing difficulty in mainstream education.	Mainstreamed by BELB
Strengthening Governance	Develop leadership potential within Protestant disadvantaged working class areas and encourage more people with appropriate skills to take up the role of governors in local schools.	Funded to March 2008.
Detached Youth Work Teams	Provided support to engage with disaffected youth in meaningful activities and divert them from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.	Funded to 30 June 2008.
Role Models and Mentoring	Project to bring successful local people into schools and youth clubs to encourage young people to aim high and raise aspirations.	Funded to 30 June 2008.
Summer Intervention Programmes	Involved groups working with young people across Belfast	Mainstreamed by DE from April 2008.

- (ii) The Taskforce identified the low level of educational attainment in some Protestant working class communities and the adverse impact this was having on the life chances of the young people concerned. The projects introduced through the RCP in DE were aimed primarily at addressing this. There is direct linkage between some the projects initiated under the RCP and the programmes and policies I am currently progressing to address educational underachievement and tackle disadvantage, wherever it exists, across the north of Ireland.

My Department currently dedicates substantial resources to provide a range of assistance, programmes, and services to ensure that all our disadvantaged children and young people, 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 and interventions targeted at socially deprived areas including Sure Start, extended schools, full service provision, Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures, provision for nurture units, continued progress in a number of areas which contribute to promoting health and health issues and provision for outreach and detached youth workers and youth intervention.

I recently announced additional funding of £4million to increase access to mainstream youth services in disadvantaged areas, with priority given to interface areas and, through outreach and detached youth work, to support the specific targeting of disadvantaged areas or communities of interest and those who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation because they experience a combination of barriers to learning. In 2013/14, just over £1.1million has been allocated to the BELB.

I am also providing additional funding to Education and Library Boards for youth intervention initiatives to engage young people in a range of diversionary activities. In 2013/14 £140k has been allocated to BELB. In previous years, DE has also distributed additional funding on behalf of OFMDFM for summer intervention programmes – a decision on funding for 2013/14 is awaited.

I will make additional funding of £500k available in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to establish a new Regional Governors' Support Service to deliver consistent, high quality training and support for school governors, which will include the development of leadership potential. The service will operate initially via the BELB and then under the proposed new Education and Skills Authority.

I launched the 'Education Works' advertising campaign in September 2012 to inform and engage all parents, but in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more engaged in their children's education.

I have committed £2 million a year over the next two years to encourage community based education initiatives with a very specific focus on education outcomes. The programme will aim to join up community based and school activity in a more coherent way through promoting partnerships of voluntary and community organisations and schools to provide educationally focused programmes in communities with particular concentrations of educational disadvantage. In addition, I have committed a further £1 million a year over the next two years to focus on standards of literacy and numeracy in schools.

My Department also has a key role in working with other Departments to ensure a coherent approach to proactively tackling disadvantage and improving educational outcomes. This includes, for example, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on a literacy and numeracy project to recruit 230 additional teachers.

- (iii) Evaluations have been undertaken on a number of the projects initiated through the RCP and related follow-on programmes. These are detailed in the following table:

Project	
Healthy Schools	The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluation of the Healthy Schools Initiative in 2008 found the results to be useful and worthwhile.
Extended Schools	The ETI published 'An Evaluation of Extended Schools 2010' and reported that 'In almost all cases where Extended Schools are serving disadvantaged communities effectively, significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal well-being of pupils'. The ETI evaluation report also includes examples of Good Practice Case Studies and is available to view in full at http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-primary/surveys-evaluations-primary-2010/an-evaluation-of-extended-schools-july-2010.pdf

Project	
Full Service project	<p>The independent evaluation (available in the Assembly library – FGS McClure Watters – Evaluation of the Full Service project – June 2008) carried out on the Full Service programme outlined a number of positive impacts on learning and achievement of pupils. The schools involved have also reported a range of wider social benefits such as greater parental involvement and community engagement. More detailed information is available from the individual programme website as follows:</p> <p>Full Service Schools – http://belfastbms.org/site/fses/</p>
Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures Programmes	<p>The ETI undertook ‘An Evaluation of the Early Progress of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry Bright Futures Programmes’ in May 2010. The report identified strengths and areas for improvement within each programme and highlighted the importance of all stakeholders having a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, taking ownership of targets and being accountable for the outcomes. The evaluation report is available at www.etini.gov.uk</p>
Youth Provision	<p>The ELBs and Youth Council are required to evaluate and report on their use of the additional outreach and detached funding provided annually since 2012/13. To date, feedback has shown that funding has been very successful in addressing the particular needs for which it set out to address.</p> <p>ELBs have built upon the learning from the initiatives conducted under the Renewing Communities Programme and have applied it as they continue to target efforts to raise levels of achievement for all young people.</p>

Southern Education and Library Board: Vice-Principal Posts

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many vice-principal posts in the Southern Education and Library Board have been filled without being publicly advertised, in each of the last five years.
(AQW 21636/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: In the Southern Education and Library Board 14 vice-principal posts have been filled over the last five years without being publicly advertised. It is not possible to provide the information requested broken down by calendar year as the small numbers involved would require a high level of suppression to prevent identification of an individual, in line with the confidentiality principle of the Statistics Authority’s Code of Practice on Official Statistics.

Principals and Vice-Principals: Redundancy Payments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many principals and vice-principals have received redundancy payments for reasons other than school closures, in each of the last three years.
(AQW 21637/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The number of principals and vice-principals who have received redundancy payments for reasons other than school closures is detailed in the table below.

Academic Year	Number
9/10	3
10/11	11

Academic Year	Number
11/12	19

New Secondary School in Carrickmore

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Education what proposals are in place to construct a new secondary school in Carrickmore as a replacement for the Dean Maguirc College.

(AQW 21654/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A major capital works project for Dean Maguirc College is one of a large number of proposals currently with the Department. There are a number of site and planning issues still to be resolved around the plans for a new build for the school.

I will continue to examine the case for capital investment and proposals for Dean Maguirc College will be considered together with other new build propositions as part of any future announcement.

Pre-School Places: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many pre-school places are available in the North Down area.

(AQW 21697/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information in the table below relates to Stage 1 of the 2013/14 pre-school admissions process:-

No. of funded pre-school places available in the North Down Borough Council area	898
No. of 1st preference applications to pre-school providers in North Down Borough Council area	887

Pre-School Places: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many applications were received for pre-school places in the North Down area.

(AQW 21698/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information in the table below relates to Stage 1 of the 2013/14 pre-school admissions process:-

No. of funded pre-school places available in the North Down Borough Council area	898
No. of 1st preference applications to pre-school providers in North Down Borough Council area	887

Pre-School Places: Criteria

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what is the criteria used to award pre-school places.

(AQW 21699/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Pre-School Education in Schools (Admissions Criteria) Regulations (NI) 1999, as amended by the Pre-School Education in Schools (Admissions Criteria) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2012, require statutory nursery settings to give priority to children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year. The term "child from socially disadvantaged circumstances" is defined as meaning "a child whose parent is in receipt of income support or income-

based jobseeker's allowance." Under the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) voluntary/private sector providers are also required to apply this criterion when allocating places.

Pre-school settings must then set their own criteria to select children down to the last available place when too many children apply to a provider. These may include a range of factors such as proximity to the school or the previous attendance of siblings. These criteria are entirely at the discretion of the Board of Governors or Management Committee of individual pre-school settings and are not determined by DE.

Pre-School Places: Cost

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what is the cost of a single pre-school place.
(AQW 21700/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings in receipt of funding under the Pre-School Education Programme.

The current cost of a funded place in each type of setting is as follows:

Nursery Schools	£2,941 (full-time)	£1,934 (part-time)
Nursery Units	£2,734 (full-time)	£1,813 (part-time)
Voluntary/Private settings	£1755 (all places are part-time)	

STEM Subjects

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education what arrangements exist within the Education and Skills Authority for the provision of specialist advice on STEM subjects, given that such provision within the Education and Library Boards is being reduced.

(AQW 21707/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will deliver all of the functions of the organisations that it will replace, including advice on STEM subjects. As with other services, the transformation to a single, streamlined organisation will ensure that this key service is delivered more efficiently and effectively. Decisions on the organisational arrangements for the delivery of the service have not yet been taken.

Pre-School Education

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made towards achieving the commitment in the Programme for Government to ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.

(AQW 21713/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Progress on the Programme for Government commitment in 2012/13 shows that 99.8% of children, whose parents engaged with the pre-school admissions process to the end, obtained a funded place for September 2012.

Out of a total of 23,134 applications received from target age children, 22,537 were offered a funded pre-school place; 542 parents did not continue with the process through to the end; and 55 children remained unplaced at the end of the process.

At the end of Stage 1 of this year's pre-school admissions process on 10 April 2013, some 95% of children whose parents applied on time have been allocated a place in a funded pre-school setting for September 2013. 1,030 children are unplaced. Stage 2 of the process is currently underway with some 2,290 places remaining available across the Board areas.

Public Procurement Contracts for Supplies, Services and Construction

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Education, in light of the Programme for Government commitment to include social clauses in all public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction, how many contracts his Department has entered into since this commitment; and what where the social clauses included in these contracts.

(AQW 21739/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department complies with procurement guidance provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel, Central Procurement Directorate. It should be noted that the Department does not procure schools' construction projects; these are procured by the education authorities such as the Education and Library Boards.

Current guidance may be located using the following link:

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_achieving_sustainability_in_construction_procurement/content_-_cpd_proposal_for_promoting_equality_and_sustainable_development.htm

To date no guidance has been endorsed by the Procurement Board regarding the use of social clauses in supplies and services contracts or the financial or labour trigger levels at which they should be implemented.

Since the publication of the PFG commitment in March 2012 the Department has entered into only four contracts. These goods and services contracts did not include social clauses.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what policies are in place to encourage schools to employ newly qualified teachers.

(AQW 21752/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not employ teachers but I acknowledge that, in the current economic climate, it can be difficult for many newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to find employment in schools. The same can be said of graduates in a wide range of professions. However, I have taken a number of significant steps to improve employment prospects of NQTs, including:

- urging employers to give preference to NQTs and experienced non-retired teachers when vacancies arise;
- providing guidance to schools about using the Substitute Teacher Register when booking substitute teachers, thus enabling schools to identify younger teachers;
- challenging schools and employing authorities as to why prematurely retired teachers are being re-employed in preference to NQTs or non-retired teachers;
- making schools liable for the total cost of employing prematurely retired teachers;
- restricting the pay of prematurely retired teachers who have received discretionary compensation ("added years") but who subsequently return to teaching.

In addition, over the last three years I have more than halved the number of days worked by retired teachers in providing substitute cover thus increasing opportunities for NQTs and non-retired teachers. I have also made a cut of 32% to the number of students entering initial teacher education courses which is designed to further reduce the pool of teachers seeking employment.

I welcome the announcement by the First and deputy First Ministers of investment in the employment of 230 graduate teachers not currently in employment, on a two year contract, to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of our young people. Not only does this provide employment opportunities for NQTs, it should also have a positive impact on my raising standards agenda by improving the educational outcomes of pupils who are most at risk of underachieving.

Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what issues have emerged since June 2012 as a result of internal audits undertaken in Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated schools by his Department's Internal Audit team.

(AQW 21783/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The programme of internal audits undertaken by the Department included visits to 15 voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools. While the audits provided generally satisfactory assurance about the level of compliance in these schools, some minor issues were identified and these have been followed up with, and are being addressed by, the relevant schools.

The only significant issue identified was, in some cases, a failure to retain evidence of pre-employment vetting checks. Urgent action was taken by the relevant schools to ensure vetting checks were completed.

As a further response to this issue, the Department took the decision to provide guidance to all voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools to remind Boards of Governors of the need to ensure that vetting checks were being appropriately completed and also the evidence that should be retained to demonstrate that these checks had been completed.

Financial Allocation

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the financial allocation to each (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) arm's-length body for the 2013/14 financial year.

(AQW 21784/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The resource financial allocation to each (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) arm's-length body for the 2013/14 financial year, is as follows:

(i) Education and Library Boards:

ELB	£'000
BELB	239,031
NEELB	306,231
SEELB	277,447
SELB	337,440
WELB	299,349
Total	1,459,498

(ii) Other Arm's-length bodies:

ALB	£'000
Staff Commission	339
CCMS*	3,328
CCEA*	21,446
Youth Council*	5,003
Total	30,116

* Includes small elements of non-cash

Notes:

- 1 The above figures are initial allocations and as such do not yet include all funding which may be allocated during the year when information to inform the level of funding etc. is provided.
- 2 The above figures do not include capital allocations.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the implications for the future of the Religious Education Certificate should the Education and Skills Authority become the single Employing Authority for teachers.

(AQW 21785/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is envisaged that the establishment of ESA as the single employing authority for teachers will not impinge on the ability of individual schools to make it a requirement for applicants to hold a recognised Religious Education Certificate on taking up a teaching post, or subsequently to obtain one. A Board of Governors of a school will have the option of undertaking its own recruitment and selection and setting the required qualifications and experience required for a post.

Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what action has been taken within his Department as a result of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme.

(AQW 21786/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have noted the findings of the NIAO report on the Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme over the Budget 2008-11 period. However for Budget 2011-15, rather than setting explicit efficiency targets (as was the case for Budget 2008-11) the Executive determined that it was a matter for each Minister to deliver their priorities from within the budget allocated to them. Clearly the Budget 2011-15 outcome produced major challenges for the Department, as the level of funding available was less than had previously been in place.

Savings areas were identified and taken forward in the Savings Delivery Plan. In agreeing these savings areas I sought to protect frontline services, such as Special Education, Extended Schools, Free Schools Meals Entitlement, Counselling, Youth and Early Years as far as possible and to drive out further inefficiencies, wherever feasible. However the actions that I have taken to remain within budget are largely about cost reductions rather than efficiency savings. Hence, the savings that I am currently achieving are being delivered on an entirely different basis from those reviewed by the NIAO.

I will continue to seek to drive up efficiency in the education sector and this will be an important role for ESA. I will of course take into account any relevant and appropriate recommendations in the NIAO report

Area Planning Coordinating Group

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for a list of attendees at the first meeting of the Area Planning Coordinating Group that was held on 8 April 2013.

(AQW 21787/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The attendees at the first Area Planning Steering Group comprised the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Council for Integrated Education, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and Department of Education officials. The table below sets out the Group attendees by sector.

Sector	Members
Controlled (Education and Library Boards)	Dr Clare Mangan, Belfast Mr Barry Mulholland, Western Mr Ray Gilbert, North Eastern (vice Mr Shane McCurdy) Mr Gregory Butler, South Eastern Mr Tony Murphy, Southern
Maintained (Council for Catholic Maintained Schools)	Mr Jim Clarke, Chief Executive Mr Gerry Lundy, Deputy Chief Executive
Integrated (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education)	Ms Noreen Campbell
Irish-medium (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta)	Dr Micheál Ó Duibh

Mr Gavin Boyd attended the meeting in his role of Chief Executive (Designate) of the Education and Skills Authority.

I attended for the first half of the meeting to discuss the way forward with members. John McGrath, the group chairman, also attended, with other Department of Education officials.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to provide details of the correspondence between his Department and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools, over the last three years, on the Certificate of Religious Education for applicants to maintained primary schools' teaching positions. **(AQW 21816/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: My officials routinely correspond with the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools on a range of issues including the Certificate of Religious Education.

With regard to the Certificate in particular, correspondence has been in relation to the following:

- Input to the Department's Review of Employment Opportunities for Teaching Staff;
- Consultation on the EQIA on the Certificate;
- Re-deployment of teachers facing redundancy;
- Accessing the Certificate; and
- Preparation for meetings to discuss the Certificate.

Board of the Education and Skills Authority

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education which sectoral groups will have a place on the board of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 21817/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education Bill provides that the membership of the Education and Skills Authority will comprise: a chairperson; 8 political representatives; 4 members representing the interests of transferors of controlled schools; 4 members representing the interests of trustees of maintained schools; and 4 other members who are representative of the community.

St Ita's Primary School, South Belfast

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education for an update on the number of places available for admissions at St Ita's Primary School, South Belfast in 2014/15.

(AQW 21825/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: On 17 April 2013 I approved a Development Proposal which increased the admissions number of St Ita's Primary School, Carryduff, from 75 to 82 from 1 September 2013. This increased number will also apply for 2014/15 and successive years.

Merge Belmont House School with Foyleview School

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education to detail the rationale behind the proposal to merge Belmont House School with Foyleview School.

(AQW 21828/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) has been in discussion with the Board of Governors of both Belmont House and Foyleview Schools regarding a proposal for a merger.

At the present time the Board is following the statutory process leading to the publication of a Development Proposal to support this intent. However, until a Development Proposal is published, the issues concerned are entirely a matter for the WELB to consider.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education (i) why teachers at Catholic maintained primary schools must have the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education (CCRE), including the requirement that teachers who have been made redundant will be accepted to these schools but will be required to obtain the CCRE over three years; (ii) who introduced the ruling of the CCRE requirement in Catholic maintained primary schools; (iii) when this ruling was made and accepted by the relevant Government body; and (iv) whether this ruling complies with equality legislation.

(AQW 21853/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Teachers' Certificate in Religious Education is a professional qualification, which is regarded by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Trustees of Catholic Schools as an essential measure of a teacher's commitment and suitability to work in a Catholic maintained primary or nursery school. It is regarded as a genuine occupational requirement in Catholic schools which seek to educate children within the framework of a distinctive philosophy and associated set of values.
- (ii)(iii) The requirement to hold this certificate predates the establishment of the CCMS and its origins can be traced back to the early establishment of Catholic Schools by the Trustees of those schools.
- (iv) Under the Fair Employment & Treatment Order 1998 there exists an exemption which potentially allows faith based schools, of any religious denomination, to discriminate on the grounds of religion. CCMS have advised that neither they nor the Trustees of Catholic schools have ever sought to apply this exemption, choosing instead to rely on the acquisition of the Teachers' Certificate in Religious Education which is available to all teachers.

Young People with Special Educational Needs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the occupational, speech and language and physiotherapy provision available for young people with special educational needs, broken down by (i) school; and (ii) Education and Library Board.

(AQW 21863/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Provision of occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, as allied health services, is the responsibility of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and is regularly delivered across both educational and health settings.

The type, level and frequency of such therapies is recommended by the relevant Education and Library Board (ELB), usually in consultation with the relevant Health Trust, based upon the individual learning needs of the child.

ELB Chief Executives have advised that listing the therapy provision currently provided to all pupils in all school settings would be cost prohibitive.

Service Level Agreement

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW16101/11-15, for an update on the situation.

(AQW 21864/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The draft report on the review of the DE Early Years Fund is currently being finalised. I plan to review this funding and its delivery to ensure that it aligns with DE's current aims and objectives. The set of recommendations in the review will be one of the elements that will inform my decision on the way forward.

Pre-School Placement Process

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many children in each Education and Library Board, have not been placed at the end of Stage 1 of the pre-school placement process for 2013-14.

(AQW 21865/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details the position at the end of Stage 1 of the 2013/14 pre-school admissions process:-

	No. of target age children placed at end of Stage 1	No. of target age children unplaced at end Stage 1	No. of funded places still available
BELB	3321	244	364
WELB	3649	158	445
NEELB	4882	139	494
SEELB	4591	220	418
SELB	5258	269	569
Total	21701	1030	2290

Armed Services' Children

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education how many Armed Services children are registered to attend primary school.

(AQW 21877/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Figures from the 2012/13 Annual school census record that there were 462 children of Armed Services personnel enrolled in primary schools and preparatory departments of grammar schools.

Academic Achievement of Armed Services Children

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education whether his Department collects any data on the academic achievement of Armed Services children in (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary school.

(AQW 21878/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The academic achievement of primary pupils is not currently available at an individual pupil level therefore it is not possible to produce analysis detailing the performance of pupils classified as Armed Services children. However for the 2012/13 academic year pupil level academic achievement will be available for primary school pupils that should allow such analysis to be produced.

The academic achievement of Armed Services children attending post primary schools is collected by the School Leavers Survey. In 2010/11 36 Armed Services pupils left mainstream grant aided post primary schools and of these 19 (53%) achieved at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents) including GCSE English and maths. The average achieving this standard in the north of Ireland is 60%.

Armed Services' Children

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education how many Armed Services children are registered to attend post-primary school.

(AQW 21879/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Figures from the 2012/13 Annual school census record that there were 187 children of Armed Services personnel enrolled in post-primary schools.

Consultation on the Area-based Planning Documents

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education who is responsible for leading the consultation on the Area-based Planning documents in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 21891/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board remains solely responsible for the consultations on its Area Plans. Board Officers are leading the consultation on the recently published NEELB Primary Area Plan.

The area plans for all 5 Board areas are available online from each of the Education and Library Board (ELB) websites, or on request from the relevant ELB. Links to the plans and the online consultation response facility are available on www.puttingpupilsfirst.info/. Replies may also be submitted by post to the relevant ELB. I would expect the Boards, working closely with CCMS and other sectors, to make themselves available to address any issues directly with the stakeholders.

Interested groups and organisations may find it useful to meet to discuss the proposals in the NEELB Area Plans affecting them, and conduct a consultation with their stakeholders to inform their responses. Schools may also choose to consult with their staff, parents, and pupils on proposals, and again this may be used to inform their responses to the NEELB consultation.

Consultation on the Area-based Planning Documents

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what mechanisms are in place to conduct the consultation exercises on Area-Based Planning.

(AQW 21892/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board remain solely responsible for the consultations on its Area Plans. Board Officers are leading the consultation on the recently published NEELB Primary Area Plan.

The area plans for all 5 Board areas are available online from each of the Education and Library Board (ELB) websites, or on request from the relevant ELB. Links to the plans and the online consultation response facility are available on www.puttingpupilsfirst.info/. Replies may also be submitted by post

to the relevant ELB. I would expect the Boards, working closely with CCMS and other sectors, to make themselves available to address any issues directly with the stakeholders.

Interested groups and organisations may find it useful to meet to discuss the proposals in the NEELB Area Plans affecting them, and conduct a consultation with their stakeholders to inform their responses. Schools may also choose to consult with their staff, parents, and pupils on proposals, and again this may be used to inform their responses to the NEELB consultation.

Consultation on the Area-based Planning Documents

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether anybody other than North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) can carry out an Area Based Planning consultation exercise in the NEELB area. **(AQW 21893/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board remains solely responsible for the consultations on its Area Plans. Board Officers are leading the consultation on the recently published NEELB Primary Area Plan.

The area plans for all 5 Board areas are available online from each of the Education and Library Board (ELB) websites, or on request from the relevant ELB. Links to the plans and the online consultation response facility are available on www.puttingpupilsfirst.info/. Replies may also be submitted by post to the relevant ELB. I would expect the Boards, working closely with CCMS and other sectors, to make themselves available to address any issues directly with the stakeholders.

Interested groups and organisations may find it useful to meet to discuss the proposals in the NEELB Area Plans affecting them, and conduct a consultation with their stakeholders to inform their responses. Schools may also choose to consult with their staff, parents, and pupils on proposals, and again this may be used to inform their responses to the NEELB consultation.

Consultation on the Area-based Planning Documents

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education under what circumstances a school would be asked to carry out a consultation exercise on behalf of the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) in the NEELB area. **(AQW 21894/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board remain solely responsible for the consultations on its Area Plans. Board Officers are leading the consultation on the recently published NEELB Primary Area Plan.

The area plans for all 5 Board areas are available online from each of the Education and Library Board (ELB) websites, or on request from the relevant ELB. Links to the plans and the online consultation response facility are available on www.puttingpupilsfirst.info/. Replies may also be submitted by post to the relevant ELB. I would expect the Boards, working closely with CCMS and other sectors, to make themselves available to address any issues directly with the stakeholders.

Interested groups and organisations may find it useful to meet to discuss the proposals in the NEELB Area Plans affecting them, and conduct a consultation with their stakeholders to inform their responses. Schools may also choose to consult with their staff, parents, and pupils on proposals, and again this may be used to inform their responses to the NEELB consultation.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education (i) whether the Certificate of Catholic Religious Education (CCRE) is required by teachers to apply for a job in an integrated primary school; (ii) when this became a requirement; (iii) whether this requirement is in line with the Equal Opportunities Employer status of integrated primary schools; and (iv) whether integrated primary schools will offer teachers the support to gain the CCRE, as is offered by schools in the Catholic maintained sector. **(AQW 21897/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: There has never been a requirement to possess the Certificate in Religious Education to work in Integrated Primary Schools. Some integrated primary schools may seek the Certificate in Religious Education as a job related criterion, such as for teachers whose responsibility it is to prepare pupils, in years 3, 4 and 7, for their sacraments may be required to hold the certificate.

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 prohibits discrimination by the government and public on the grounds of religious discrimination or political opinion in employment and training. Under the terms of Article 71 (1) (a) of this legislation this prohibition does not apply to teachers in all schools.

Integrated schools encourage all staff in their professional development, however, it is up to the individual Board of Governors to decide if they will provide support for any teacher wishing to obtain this certificate.

New School Builds

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education at what stage is each of the new school builds announced in June 2012.

(AQW 21903/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Progress as at April 2013 on the 18 capital build projects announced in June 2012 is shown in the table below:

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Victoria Park Primary School	August 2013	RIBA Stage D approved EA approved on 15 March 2013 Revised planning application submitted.
Eglinton Primary School	December 2013	Stage D approved March 2013 EA approved on 22 April 2013. PQQ to issue April 2013
Foyle College / Ebrington Primary School	January 2014	Stage D under consideration. EA revisions being re-drafted by WELB due to consideration of addition of 2 special needs classrooms.
Enniskillen Model	April 2015	Stage D under consideration. Revised EA currently under consideration.
Dromore Central	January 2014	Stage D under consideration. Revised EA currently under consideration Site acquired Planning approval in place.
St Clare's Ps Newry & St Colman's Abbey Primary School Newry	December 2013	Stage D approved. EA approved 15 April 13 Land transaction agreed and being completed. Planning approval delayed until July 13 due to 2nd bat survey required.

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
St Mary's Primary School Banbridge	February 2014	Stage D approval. EA approved 18 April 13 Outline planning approval in place.
Tannaghmore Primary School Lurgan	February 2014	Stage D approved. EA approved on 1 March 2013 Planning approval in place PQQ being prepared
St Teresa's Primary School Lurgan	October 2013	Stage D approval. EA approved on 12 March 13 PQQ being prepared Acquisition of additional land being progressed.
Colaiste Feirste	March 2014	Stage C approved. Stage D submission expected May 2013. Planning application to be submitted on approval of Stage D.
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	December 2013	Stage C approval. EA approved by DE on 3 March 13 Officials working with Planners, BCC, Roads Service on full planning application. PQQ being prepared.
Belmont House Special School -Derry	May 2016	WELB currently considering revised proposal to include merger between Belmont House and Foyleview Special Schools. This will change scope and size of project. Design team to be appointed to take forward.
Rossmar Special School Limavady	December 2015	Economic Appraisal expected with Department by end of April 2013.
Castletower Ballymena	Not yet known	Stage C Department continuing to liaise with NEELB to finalise EA.
St Joseph's Convent Primary School, Newry	December 2013	Stage D approved. EA approved 9 April. Planning approval in place. PQQ submissions returned and assessed. Tender expected to issue May 2013. Site purchase well advanced

School	Estimated Construction Start	Current Status
Arvalee Special School, Omagh	July 2014	EA for appointment of Consultants to undertake new-build business case approved. EA for main works expected June 2013
St Gerard's Resource Centre, Belfast	September 2013	Layout revisions agreed with the School. EA currently under consideration.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Provision in Schools

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education how his Department engages with past pupils to assess the outcomes of careers education, information, advice and guidance provided at schools.

(AQW 21917/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not engage in longitudinal studies of past pupils to assess outcomes of careers education, information, advice and guidance provided at schools. The Department does hold school leavers data which indicates the destinations of pupils on leaving school. The Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) into which the Department has inputted, specifically asks questions relating to the impact of CEIAG provided at schools by teachers and career advisors. These questions will be retained for the next survey.

Education Reform – A Human Rights Review Report

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Education (i) for his assessment of the Education Reform – A Human Rights Review report by the Human Rights Commission; and (ii) what priority his Department places on tackling the human rights abuses that are mentioned throughout the report on (a) academic selection; and (b) lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

(AQW 21936/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I attended the launch of the Human Rights Commission's Education Reform – A Human Rights Review and I welcome their report.

The Commission's recommendation on academic selection is consistent with my own view that academic selection is a barrier to addressing underachievement in disadvantaged communities and raising standards across the whole education system.

It is disappointing that some schools choose to put the needs of the institution ahead of the needs of the children they are there to serve through using unregulated tests for the purpose of admission. The resolution of this situation requires the agreement of the Executive and the Assembly. In the absence of political agreement, my Department will continue to work to persuade schools to move away from academic selection.

All students/pupils have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual, or perceived, sexual orientation.

My Department is working with the Council for the Curriculum Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) to produce revised guidance for schools on the delivery of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE).

The revised guidance will make it clear that all schools should ensure staff are supported in the teaching of issues associated with sexual orientation and consider how they can help teachers to address relevant issues within the context of RSE and Pastoral care policies. It is intended this guidance will be developed in 2013/14.

Bullying, in whatever form and for whatever reason, has no place in schools. All schools are required by law to have a discipline policy which includes anti-bullying measures. The Department recognises that it cannot tackle bullying alone and it is for this reason that it continues to fund and participate in the

local Anti-bullying Forum (NIABF), whose members include Cara-Friend/GLYNI and the Rainbow Project as members. The NIABF has a range of different Task Groups which focus on anti-bullying themes, including Homophobic and Transphobic bullying, putting into action work that is required to further develop the anti-bullying strategy. These operational groups are made up of Forum members and additional organisations with relevant expertise (linked to the group's theme), including representatives from SAIL – Transgender NI.

Shared Education

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education for his definition of shared education.
(AQW 21991/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Shared education means the organisation and delivery of education so that it:

- meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Unanswered Question: AQW 20791/11-15

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education why AQW 20791/11-15 has not been answered.
(AQW 21996/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The question has now been answered.

Integrated Primary Schools

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education how many nursery schools in South Belfast act as feeder schools to integrated primary schools.
(AQW 21999/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Nursery schools and playgroups serve a wide area and are not intended as feeders for any particular primary school. Accordingly, it is not possible for any primary school to guarantee a place to any child.

Each school is responsible for setting its own admissions criteria to admit children up to their approved admissions number. Department guidance contained in Circular 2012/12 "Open Enrolment in Primary Schools" at paragraph 70 specifically states that admissions criteria are not recommended to make reference to attendance at a specific nursery or pre-school setting. However, some schools do still use attendance at a nursery school as one of their priorities within their admissions criteria. In such cases it is the responsibility of the primary school to manage parents' expectations in terms of their likelihood, or otherwise, of obtaining a place at the school.

Integrated Primary Schools

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education how many parents in South Belfast have chosen integrated primary schools as their first choice; and whether there is a disparity between that number and the number of places available in the integrated sector.
(AQW 22000/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Applications to schools do not conform to constituency boundaries and the Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards, who administer the admissions process in the South Belfast area have advised me that they do not collate information on how many first preference applicants to integrated schools reside in South Belfast.

However, I can advise you that the 3 integrated primary schools in the South Belfast constituency – Forge IPS, Cranmore IPS and Lough View IPS have a combined total of 123 approved P1 places. There were 147 first preference applications for admission to the 3 schools in September 2013, of whom 134 have been allocated places after additional P1 places were approved by the Department. The 13 applicants who did not get their first preference choice may have been allocated an integrated place at their second or subsequent preference or at an integrated school outside of the South Belfast constituency.

Sub-Economic Tendering

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education to outline the prevalence of sub-economic tendering his Department has experienced with building contracts over the last three years; and what plans are in place to discourage this practice.

(AQW 22018/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: Building Contracts are not procured by the Department. School building projects are procured by the education sectors such as the Education and Library Boards.

The Department and its Arms Length Bodies to which procurement policy applies have to comply with procurement guidance endorsed by the Procurement Board. Procurement Guidance Note 02/19, Procedures and Principles for the Evaluation of Tenders is available from the following link:

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd-policy-and-legislation/content_-_cpd_-_policy_-_procurement_guidance_notes/content_-_cpd_procurement_guidance_notes_pgn_02_09/pgn_02_09_tender_evaluation_procedures_-_july_2010__minor_amendments_made_to_refer_to_pgn_01_10__pdf_version.pdf

This guidance states (page 15) that ‘Where an abnormally low tender is submitted, the evaluation panel should refer to the provisions detailed in Regulation 30 (6-8) of The Public Contracts Regulations’. Regulation 30 states that if an offer for a public contract is abnormally low the contracting authority may reject that offer but only if it has—

- (a) requested in writing an explanation of the offer or of those parts which it considers contribute to the offer being abnormally low;
- (b) taken account of the evidence provided in response to a request in writing; and
- (c) subsequently verified the offer or parts of the offer being abnormally low with the economic operator.

Primary 1 School Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils in each Education and Library Board area have yet to receive a Primary 1 school place.

(AQW 22059/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Education & Library Boards have advised me that the number of pupils in each of the Board areas who have yet to receive a Primary 1 place, as of 23 April 2013, are as provided in the table below.

Education & Library Board	Pupils Yet to Receive a Primary 1 Place
Belfast Education & Library Board	15
Western Education & Library Board	4
North Eastern Education & Library Board	8
South Eastern Education & Library Board	34
Southern Education & Library Board	18

The Education and Library Boards are responsible for administering the admissions process and Transfer Officers from the Boards will continue to work with parents to ensure all children are placed as soon as possible.

Department for Employment and Learning

Lisburn City Council's Spend

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 21335/11-15, what information his Department holds on the movement of trainees into employment, including the cost of each individual training position and the support provided to trainees wishing to start their own business.

(AQW 21362/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The Department does not hold the information as requested by the member in relation to Training for Success (TfS) and movement into employment. The aim of TfS is to give young people an opportunity to attain skills and qualifications they need to best equip themselves for the world of work; it is not an employment programme. Consequently, and in common with other education and training initiatives, primary data collection is concentrated on achievement of qualifications.

The programme is delivered across three strands;

- Skills for Your Life;
- Skills for Work and;
- Programme-Led Apprenticeships.

The costs of the first two strands range from £7,940 over 52 weeks training to £25,500 for trainees with a disability and training on the Skills for work Strand. The training entitlement here is 156 weeks.

Funding for Programme-Led Apprenticeships is based on the ApprenticeshipNI Funding model and ranges from £12,480 to £14,930 across six funding categories. An additional £1,560 is payable in respect of trainees with a disability.

For all strands the additional disability payment is paid to provide additional resource in terms of staff time and additional resource to ensure that trainees benefit fully from their training.

Information on the destinations of participants from the Training for Success programme is set out in the Training for Success Statistical Bulletin which was published for the first time in March 2013 and will be published quarterly from now on. This bulletin is available from the Department's website (<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/r-and-s-stats/tfs-and-programme-led-apprenticeships-statistical-bulletins/tfs-prog-led-apps-stats-sept07-oct12.htm>)

The Steps to Work (StW) programme is delivered by a network of 8 Lead Contractors spread over 10 contract areas throughout Northern Ireland. As a consequence of this delivery model statistical data on the StW programme performance is only available for Northern Ireland in its entirety or, for those leaving Step 2 provision, by Contract Management area.

Detailed information on the movement of participants into employment, inter alia, from the Steps to Work (StW) programme is set out in the Steps to Work Statistical Bulletin which is published bi-annually, in June and December, by my Department. In addition a factsheet with relevant statistical data is also produced in March and September. All of these publications are available from my Department's website.

(<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/statsandresearch/training-and-employment-stats/steps-to-work-statistics.htm>)

During the period September 2008 to June 2012 (the latest date for which statistics are available) 2,610 participants left Step 2 provision in the South Eastern Contract Area, which includes Lisburn City Council. Of these 2,610 leavers 825 (32%) moved to unsubsidised/subsidised employment. It should be noted that in addition to Lisburn City Council the South Eastern contract area also covers the Banbridge, Kilkeel, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle Job Centre/Jobs and Benefit Office areas.

Participants interested in starting their own business can avail of a phased approach to self-employment. Support ranges from basic awareness and participation in Invest NI's Regional Start programme through to the opportunity to participate in a period of supported self-employment to test their business, which may last for up to 26 weeks, before deciding if they wish to trade independently. Business mentoring support is provided throughout all phases of this provision. In addition participants in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) receive Benefit Based Training Allowance equivalent to their JSA plus a weekly top up of £15.38 while those on other work focussed benefits such as Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance receive the weekly top up of £15.38 in addition to their benefit.

The unit cost for the StW programme for the period September 2008 to March 2012 is £1,151.

Higher Education Institutions

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students with a disability have been enrolled in Higher Education Institutions over the last five years, broken down by disability type. **(AQW 21522/11-15)**

Dr Farry: I have placed the information requested in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

This table details the number of students at Northern Ireland (NI) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from 2007/08 to 2011/12 who declared having a disability, based upon their own self assessment, broken down by disability type.

Information on disability is collected on the basis of a student's own self assessment. Students are not obliged to report a disability and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) therefore advises that the figures reported based upon disability analyses may not be representative of the total student population.

It is important to note that HESA's disability coding frame changed in 2010/11, and this involved a change to the wording of the disability categories and the number of categories recorded. The universities' data collection methodologies also changed significantly in 2008/09, with the introduction of online admission systems and the switch from a paper disability questionnaire to an online questionnaire. There were also small differences between the Northern Ireland HE Institutions in the way that the HESA disability coding frame was presented to students in these new admission systems. There is no standard implementation guide for the disability questions across all HE institutions in the United Kingdom. The University of Ulster also highlighted some technical difficulties in the implementation of the new systems. As a result the figures below are not directly comparable on a year by year basis.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years. **(AQW 21530/11-15)**

Dr Farry: My Department cannot identify separately expenditure on translation services for visiting foreign nationals.

Employment of Visually Impaired People

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of visually impaired people who are (i) employed by the public bodies under the control of his Department; and (ii) enrolled on further or higher education courses.

(AQW 21534/11-15)

Dr Farry: There are currently 27 people employed by public bodies under the control of my Department, who are known to have a visual impairment.

In the 2011/12 academic year, the latest year for which validated data are available, there were 405 professional and technical enrolments at the NI Further Education (FE) Colleges who self-classified as 'blind/partially sighted'. In addition there were a further 100 enrolments on recreational courses at the FE Colleges who self-classified as 'blind/partially sighted'. In 2011/12 there were 85 enrolments at the NI Higher Education Institutions who had self-declared as 'blind/partially sighted/or having a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses'. Students are not obliged to report a disability and therefore the figures reported may not be representative of the total student population. The figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

European Social Fund Projects

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what funding has been offered to European Social Fund projects in Belfast for skills and employment training between 2011 and 2014.

(AQW 21592/11-15)

Dr Farry: 55 projects based in Belfast have been offered funding under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland Social Fund Programme 2007-2013, to provide employment skills and training over the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014. Of these projects, 38 operate exclusively within Belfast, and 17 deliver activities across Northern Ireland. A further 8 projects based in Belfast have recently been offered funding for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Of these, 5 operate exclusively within Belfast and 3 deliver activities across Northern Ireland.

Projects were offered 40% of project costs from the ESF Programme and 25% of costs by my Department. The remaining 35% of costs are independently sourced by the projects from other public match funders.

A list for each respective group of projects showing details of funding offered has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

European Social Fund Projects

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning which groups in Belfast were offered funding by the European Social Fund for skills and employment training from 2011 to 2014.

(AQW 21593/11-15)

Dr Farry: A total of 55 projects based in Belfast have been offered funding under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland Social Fund Programme 2007-2013, to provide employment skills and training over the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014. Of these projects, 38 operate exclusively within Belfast, and 17 deliver activities across Northern Ireland. A further 8 projects based in Belfast have recently been offered funding for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Of these, 5 operate exclusively within Belfast and 3 deliver activities across Northern Ireland. A list for each respective group of projects showing details of funding offered has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

European Social Fund Projects

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, for 2011 to 2014, to detail (i) what outputs were agreed with each training provider in relation to European Social Fund projects in Belfast

for skills and employment training; (ii) the arrangements for monitoring the outputs; and (iii) the actions applicable if these targets were not met

(AQW 21594/11-15)

Dr Farry: A total of 55 projects based in Belfast have been offered funding under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland Social Fund Programme 2007-2013, to provide employment skills and training over the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014. Of these projects, 38 operate exclusively within Belfast, and 17 deliver activities across Northern Ireland. A further 8 projects based in Belfast have recently been offered funding for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Of these projects, 5 operate exclusively within Belfast and 3 deliver activities across Northern Ireland.

A varied range of target outcomes has been agreed for individual projects, which include delivery of pre-vocational and vocational training, accredited and non accredited qualifications for employability, and tailored packages of employment focused training and development to meet the needs of individual participants. Each project has agreed a target of assisting a specific number of participants. A list for each respective group of projects showing details of funding offered has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>.

My Department's ESF Managing Authority monitors expenditure and outcomes throughout the duration of the projects, and may withdraw or reclaim funding from projects that fail to deliver outcomes.

Student Intake for 2013-14 and 2014-15

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the discussions that his Department has had with the Teacher Training Colleges and the Department of Education regarding the student intake for 2013-14 and 2014-15; and how this compares with 2011-12 and 2012-13.

(AQW 21669/11-15)

Dr Farry: The responsibility for the allocation of student intake numbers for initial teacher training is the responsibility of the Minister of Education. That said, the issue was raised at a meeting between my officials and those of the Department of Education in March. I will meet with the Minister of Education on 30 April to discuss a range of issues including intake numbers.

Number of Students in each Regional College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown of (i) Roman Catholic; and (ii) Protestant students attending each regional college.

(AQW 21717/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details the breakdown of (i) Catholic and (ii) Protestant student enrolments attending Professional and Technical courses at each Regional College for the 2011/12 academic year, the latest year for which data are available.

College	Catholic	Protestant
Belfast Metropolitan	8,375	7,515
Northern Regional	5,215	11,090
South Eastern Regional	4,770	9,825
Southern Regional	12,610	6,975
South West	12,450	5,390
North West Regional	12,310	3,585
Total	55,725	44,380

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Notes:

- 1 Religious Background for 28% of student enrolments was not stated or unknown in 2011/12 and therefore the figures cannot be assumed to be a true representation of the student population.
- 2 The figures relate to student enrolments and not actual student numbers. An individual student can have multiple enrolments.
- 3 Figures presented in the table are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0. Due to rounding the sum of numbers in each column may not add to the total shown.

Disabled Students' Allowance

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why the Disabled Students' Allowance is not available for mature students, who are not studying at Further Education Colleges or Higher Education Institutes, but paying for a qualification themselves from an alternative training provider and a private awarding business.

(AQW 21729/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise the member that Disabled Students' Allowances can be paid to students outside the Further Education College and Higher Education Institution environment, including alternative training providers and private institutions. However, the course must be an undergraduate course designated by my Department under Schedule 3 of the Education (Student Support) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) (as amended) and be validated by a United Kingdom degree awarding public body, such as a University.

Letters in Irish

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why a letter issued to students, signed by the head of HE Student Finance in his Department, included a version in Irish.

(AQW 21805/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise the member that the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme is jointly administered and financially supported by both my Department and the Department of Education. It is the Department of Education's policy that correspondence which is issued to all schools and parents of all school children should be published bilingually in English and Irish.

Skills Solutions Service

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many employers has the Skills Solutions Service contacted this year.

(AQW 21926/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of employers contacted by the Skills Solutions Service from 1 January 2013 until 18 April 2013 was 298.

Regional Colleges: Higher Education Places

Ms McGahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many higher education places are available in each of the Regional Colleges.

(AQW 22030/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have previously announced that the Maximum Student Number, or 'MaSN', allocation for full-time higher education across further education regional colleges will increase by a total of 140 additional places by 2015.

My Department is currently conducting a review of existing demand for higher education opportunities in further education colleges, to determine this year's allocation of the new places.

There are also around 6,000 part-time higher education enrolments in further education. My Department does not place a cap on part-time higher education places and therefore expansion of part-time provision within existing budgets offers colleges another route to increase higher education provision.

In the current academic year 2012/13 the Regional Colleges have the following allocations of full-time higher education places:

Belfast Metropolitan College	1463
Northern Regional College	266
South Eastern Regional College	533
Southern Regional College	539
South West College	420
North West Regional College	635
Total	3856

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

InvestNI

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, over the last three years, what role InvestNI has played, and what financial contribution it has made, in marketing the (i) University of Ulster at Magee; and (ii) Project Kelvin project in the North West.

(AQW 14189/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI does not make any financial contribution to the marketing of Project Kelvin or University of Ulster. Hibernia Atlantic, who won the DETI contract to deliver the project, is responsible for the marketing of Project Kelvin. Similarly the University of Ulster is responsible for marketing the university and each campus.

Invest NI, in its role of promoting Northern Ireland as a high-quality business location, promotes the key benefits of the region's digital infrastructure, and the skills availability and research expertise of both universities. In doing so, Invest NI presents the benefits of the Kelvin direct transatlantic link and the University of Ulster including the Magee campus, in both promotional materials and directly to potential inward investors.

Corporation Tax

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment at what stage the safe space away from public scrutiny will end, which her Department, InvestNI and HM Treasury claim they need to enable them to assess the merits of lower corporation tax.

(AQW 21449/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive is continuing to press for the power to set a lower rate of corporation tax in Northern Ireland. The case for doing so is strong and the merits of the case have been set out in a range of research already in the public domain, including that conducted by my Economic Advisory Group and research conducted by my Department into attracting high value FDI.

The First and deputy First Ministers met the Prime Minister on 26 March 2013 to press the case for devolving corporation tax powers to Northern Ireland. They have expressed their disappointment at the Prime Minister's indication that a decision will be delayed until Autumn 2014, after the Scottish independence referendum.

I remain committed to seeking this power as a means to rebalance our economy, create jobs and increase prosperity.

Access to Finance Strategy

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline, as a result of the Access to Finance Strategy (i) the number of new business start-ups; (ii) the number of jobs created; and (iii) the effect on exports.

(AQW 21515/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are two funds aimed at business start up. They are NISPO and the NI Small Business Loan Fund. The NISPO Fund does not have a job target, however, I can report that of NISPO's 23 investments to date, 21 are start ups. It has created 31 jobs to date. The NI Small Business Loan Fund has only recently been launched and as such has not yet started reporting.

To successfully attract support from the Funds, businesses must demonstrate significant growth potential, usually through the penetration of existing export markets and/or seeking new export markets. Therefore, over the life of each Fund it is anticipated that Invest NI intervention will have a positive export impact.

Job Creation: Access to Finance Strategy and the Finance Voucher Initiative

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the targets for job creation within (i) each of the five funds of the Access to Finance Strategy; and (ii) the Finance Voucher Initiative.

(AQW 21517/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Job creation from these Funds is long-term in nature and will be achieved over the full ten year life of each Fund. Information on the number of jobs created and safeguarded for each Fund will be collected during their periodic evaluations.

NISPO and Co-Fund do not have job targets. The three more recently launched Funds' targets are as follows:

Growth Loan Fund	2,100
NI Small Business Loan Fund	230
Development Fund	750

The key objective of the Finance Voucher scheme is to help SMEs with the cost of external consultants to prepare more robust applications for funding, primarily from banks. This is principally a programme that will enhance the knowledge and skills within SMEs. As such, it is not a job creation programme and job targets have not been put in place.

UK Wide Lending Schemes

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the uptake by Northern Ireland businesses of UK wide lending schemes over the last five years.

(AQW 21518/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold information on bank lending and would not be authorised to release such data. Indeed, in its report on the Review of Access to Finance for Northern Ireland Businesses published last month, the Economic Advisory Group has recommended that the British Banking Association and all banks with a presence in Northern Ireland work together to provide data on the scale of lending to Northern Ireland businesses.

Information on lending through the Government-backed Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme is in the public domain and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-finance-guarantee>

The EAG Access to Finance report (page 22) also includes further details of uptake of EFG by individual lenders over the last 5 years to December 2012:

<http://www.eagni.com/fs/doc/publications/eag-review-of-access-to-finance-for-ni-businesses-final-report.PDF>

In addition, the latest data on the Bank of England and HM Treasury Funding for Lending scheme was published in March 2013 and provides details on lending to businesses at a UK level. It is available at the following link:

<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/news/2013/044.aspx>.

Access to Finance Strategy

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reasons for the delay in establishing the £30 million Development Fund, which is part of the Access to Finance Strategy.

(AQW 21520/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A tender process in respect of the planned £30 million Development Fund managed by Central Procurement Directorate, was completed in April 2011. The resulting successful bidder was then responsible for raising £20 million in match funding from the private sector. Unfortunately it was unable to raise the necessary private sector funding. A new tender process was commenced in November 2012.

Invest NI is now in the process of evaluating the tenders received and any contract awards will be announced in due course.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21559/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI has not incurred any costs on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in any of the last five years.

Game of Thrones

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to detail (i) the amount of support provided by the Northern Ireland Executive to the producers of Game of Thrones each year since 2009; (ii) the number of full time equivalent jobs created as a result of production each year since 2009; (iii) these jobs by average length of appointment or contract; (iv) the number of full time equivalent jobs since 2009 filled by permanent local residents; and (v) the total amount of support available to the producers for the newly commissioned series and the estimated number of full time equivalent jobs which will be created.

(AQW 21577/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Screen Commission (NI Screen) is the lead organisation for developing the film and television industry in Northern Ireland. Invest NI is the largest funder of NI Screen, providing support of £43.4million for the period 1st April 2003 to 31st March 2013, including £7.9million in the last financial year. The following table provides the requested information related to funding of HBO's Game of Thrones production over the relevant period 2009 – 2013.

	Support Provided to GoT (£)	FTE's from Production of GoT¹	Average Length of Contract (Mths)	FTE's filled by Perm Local Residents
Pilot (2009)	1,600,000	30	n/a	30
Series 1 (2010)	1,600,000	190	6	190
Series 2 (2011)	2,850,000	221	6	221
Series 3 (2012)	3,200,000	250	6	250
Series 4 (2013)	1,600,000 ²	Not available	Not available	Not available
Total	9,250,000	691	691

The above data is related to FTE's only and does not include those employed on shorter term daily rates on an 'as and when required' basis. Neither does it include the number of cast members engaged on each production. The following table details the total number of people involved in the production of each series of Game of Thrones.

	Core Crew³	Dailies	Local Cast	Total
Pilot (2009)	155	100	202	457
Series 1 (2010)	316	113	1,010	1439
Series 2 (2011)	336	553	1,498	2387
Series 3 (2012)	261	151 ⁴	1,665	2077
Series 4 (2013)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

- 1 FTE's have been calculated by summing the periods of individual employment contracts and then converting to total years.
- 2 Reduced support negotiated as the Production will be able to avail of new High End TV Tax Credit
- 3 Includes NI resident permanent FTE's
- 4 Base estimation, Northern Ireland Screen expects this to be more in the region of 500 - 600

New Airline Routes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department is encouraging airlines to operate new routes.

(AQW 21607/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through Tourism Ireland, is in dialogue with Northern Ireland's airports on an ongoing basis to help bring new air services to Northern Ireland and to explore opportunities to promote, and drive demand for, existing services. The abolition of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on direct long haul flights since January 2013 has made Northern Ireland a viable option for many long haul airlines.

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

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan: Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what proposals her Department has to utilise the local enterprise network more effectively to promote and develop a stronger Small and Medium Enterprise sector outside the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQW 21610/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and Invest NI recognise the role of the local enterprise network in promoting and developing a stronger SME sector.

Invest NI has a contractual relationship with Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI). ENI is the membership body representing a number of Local Enterprise Agencies. The organisation delivers enterprise programmes on behalf of Invest NI, specifically, the Regional Start Initiative and the Social Entrepreneurship Programme. The local enterprise network is therefore involved in the delivery of these programmes throughout Northern Ireland.

ENI is also a subcontractor to the Ulster Community Investment Trust PLC for delivery of the Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund, insuring this initiative is promoted to the SME sector.

Invest NI will continue to work with these organisations, along with local Councils, Chambers and other stakeholders, to maximise opportunities and encourage enterprise.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of (i) Small and Medium Sized Enterprises; and (ii) their employees, based at each of the local enterprise companies, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 21611/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Local Enterprise Agency Network is entirely independent of my Department and, as such, my Department does not hold the information requested.

Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what proposals, in terms of capital investment support, her Department has to sustain and develop the range of tourist attraction facilities at the Ulster American Folk Park.

(AQW 21612/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Ulster American Folk Park is managed by National Museums Northern Ireland, the holding group funded by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure. The sustainability and development of the facility would therefore primarily be an issue for the DCAL Minister.

My Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), provided financial assistance of £150,000 to re-erect The Francis Rogan Plantation House at The Ulster American Folk Park under the Tourism Development Scheme 2008–11.

NITB is facilitating the local authorities within the Tyrone & Sperrins destination to progress the development of a destination plan which will engage the public, private and community sectors. Business Tourism Solutions (BTS) has recently been appointed consultants for this plan.

Future Power Cuts

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what procedures her Department can put in place to ensure that the possibility of a future power cut across the greater Belfast area, including the city centre, is diminished in any future periods of extreme weather.

(AQW 21622/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While it cannot be guaranteed that customers will never be disrupted by future severe weather, industry and government have well developed plans to deal with a range of events.

In line with Government's civil contingency commitments, DETI works with a broad range of partners to ensure that their business continuity arrangements for power disruption are robust, and in particular protect the most vulnerable in our society.

NIE responses to customers affected by the recent snow storm clearly show how close cooperation on ongoing planning can reduce the impact of such events. NIE has advised that 175,000 customers in the central and eastern districts of Belfast, who lost power on the night of Friday 22 March 2013, were reconnected within 20 minutes.

Motorhome Tourism

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, over the last three years, what correspondence her officials have had with their counterparts in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland on motorhome tourism.

(AQW 21640/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) works closely with the Caravan & Camping Forum for Northern Ireland which discusses a range of issues affecting the caravan, camping and motorhome sectors, and consists of:

- The British Graded Holiday Parks Scheme;
- The Caravan Club;
- The Camping and Caravanning Club;
- The British Holiday & Home Parks Association;
- The National Caravan Council; and
- Private caravan park operators.

NITB Officials met with Waterways Ireland, at the invitation of the Northern Ireland Motorhome Association, in Dublin on the 18 October 2012 to explore opportunities for partnership regarding motorhome tourism; such as working with marinas to provide motorhome facilities.

InvestNI: Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 20502/11-12, for a breakdown of how the £511,699 was spent.

(AQW 21647/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The £511,699 spend quoted in AQW 20502/11, comprised: -

£168,000 – sponsorship of events held in overseas markets, such as roundtable receptions, conferences, seminars, and specific business events in priority investment sectors to enable the Northern Ireland sales proposition to be presented to potential inward investors and support lead generation in order to secure new inward investment projects in support of the Executive's Programme for Government targets.

£177,000 – international expenditure at networking events for foreign owned companies and clients, which offered the opportunity to build relationships with key decision makers from potential investors, to present the benefits of investing in Northern Ireland and to outline the potential support available.

£167,000 – expenditure in Northern Ireland relating to the hosting of inward visits by potential investors, visiting stakeholders and dignitaries, such as Ambassadors, to enable them to gain a better understanding of the inward investment and trade development opportunities which exist with Northern Ireland. This included facilitating meetings between such visitors and both international and local companies in order to start to develop opportunities.

Renewable Sources

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the current percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources.

(AQW 21648/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the year ended 31 March 2013, the annual average percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources was 13.7%.

G8 Summit

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she had with the Tourist Board to ensure that reputational damage is minimised in the event of rioting or protests being broadcast globally during the 2013 G8 summit in Enniskillen.

(AQW 21696/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Planning for such an eventuality is one of a wide range of topics discussed at the monthly G8 Northern Ireland Executive Co-ordinating Group, which is chaired by my Department and attended by a cross-section of participants including representatives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and OFMDFM's Executive Information Service.

The hosting of the Summit provides an opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland on the world stage as a safe, secure and welcoming place to invest in, to do business with and as a beautiful, culturally rich tourism destination.

Investors Visiting each Constituency

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of inward investors visiting each constituency in the last three years; and (ii) the number of potential jobs that may have arisen as a result.

(AQW 21746/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays an important role within the Northern Ireland economy, and Invest NI has a very successful track record of attracting high quality investment, which benefits the entire region. Invest NI is building on this success by working closely with local stakeholders to maximise investment and employment opportunities in all areas.

Invest NI neither determines the locations for visits by a potential investor nor the location for an investment project. This decision is taken by the investor. However, Invest NI works closely with the company when preparing a draft visit programme to ensure that the locations to be visited meet their requirements, and also provide the best opportunity for Invest NI to sell the Northern Ireland proposition.

The table below shows an analysis by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) of the 513 inward-investment visits hosted by Invest NI during the financial years 2009-10 to 2011-12. These visits relate to potential inward investors with identifiable project proposals.

INWARD INVESTMENT VISITS BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA 2009-10 TO 2011-12

PCA	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Belfast East	34	47	51	132
Belfast North	17	22	25	64
Belfast South	48	54	62	164
Belfast West	12	7	7	26
East Antrim	9	19	14	42

PCA	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
East Londonderry	5	2	3	10
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	-	-	-	-
Foyle	13	10	7	30
Lagan Valley	3	7	1	11
Mid Ulster	-	-	1	1
Newry & Armagh	1	6	3	10
North Antrim	-	2	1	3
North Down	5	2	-	7
South Antrim	4	2	-	6
South Down	1	-	-	1
Strangford	2	1	1	4
Upper Bann	-	-	2	2
West Tyrone	-	-	-	-
Total	154	181	178	513

Notes:

- 1) In addition to the above listed visits, Invest NI has also facilitated a number of visits by other organisations e.g. influencers, overseas governments and trade bodies, which serve to strengthen FDI & Trade links in overseas markets.

Securing an inward investment project may span a considerable time period (18-24 months) and is the result of many factors, which may include an inward investment visit. A company may visit a number of different locations within Northern Ireland before making a decision about whether and where to invest. It may also visit on a number of different occasions. Furthermore, some inward investors may determine to create jobs without an inward visit having taken place, for example where an existing investor chooses to grow their operations.

It is therefore not possible to establish a direct relationship between individual visits and specific employment-related inward-investment projects, as sought in the second part of the question. It should also be recognised that employment opportunities resulting from inward investments are not be restricted to people living in the area in which it is located.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland Meetings

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of meetings which have taken place between the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland in the last three years; and (ii) the number of these meetings she attended.

(AQW 21748/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Boards of Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board meet jointly on an annual basis.

The Chairman of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board is also a member of Tourism Ireland's Board of Directors which meets eight times per year. I attended these meetings in October 2011 and May 2012.

At an executive level, officials across Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board meet and liaise closely on an ongoing and regular basis in relation to a range of operational matters. It is

not possible to quantify this engagement as the information is not readily available and may only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

400th Anniversary of the Granting of the Royal Charter

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support for tourism is available for towns and cities to celebrate the 400th anniversary of being granted their Royal Charter.

(AQW 21753/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The main support mechanism available for tourism events from my Department, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), is the Tourism Event Funding Programme, an annual funding programme designed to support International and National Tourism Events.

The Tourism Event Funding Programme for events occurring between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 has now closed.

Two events applied to the Tourism Event Funding Programme 2013/14 relating to towns and cities celebrating the 400th anniversary of being granted their Royal Charter. Both events were unsuccessful as they did not reach the minimum scoring criteria of the fund.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board will promote and market tourism events throughout the year on their consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com.

Advertising Spend by InvestNI

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the advertising spend by InvestNI in the United States of America, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 21801/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Presenting and promoting Northern Ireland as a great place to do business is key to Northern Ireland's success in attracting inward investment and encouraging exports.

The advertising spend for media placed in the US market over the last 3 years has been collated and is detailed below. The total is £819,990.

Financial Year	Advertising Placement (£)
2010-11	34,843
2011-12	366,171
2012-13	418,976
Grand Total	819,990

Advertising activity over the last 3 years has supported sales activity in-market and has been specifically aimed at raising the profile of Northern Ireland and promoting the region as a destination for inward investment and to highlight expertise in the region. Channels used include online, airport advertising and selected print publications.

Research has indicated that Northern Ireland does not enjoy a widespread positive high profile particularly in the more distant emerging markets. In some markets including the US there exists a level of supposed familiarity that requires augmented/adjusted – eg some people's awareness is confined to bad news stories they may have been exposed to and their perception of Northern Ireland may be based on outdated information about the region's stability. Research has also highlighted that people are sometimes unlikely to be able to differentiate between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Given that the biggest barrier is one of perception, this can be addressed by marketing and promotion and increased budget has been allocated to this over the last 2 years.

Belfast to Birkenhead Ferry Route

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) whether there has been an average 20 percent increase in HAULIER fares on the Belfast to Birkenhead ferry route and that in some individual sailings, the morning and weekend rates increased by up to 55 percent in 2011; ii) whether Stena Line has proposed a fare increase of 21 percent for hauliers effective throughout 2013; (iii) whether fare increases have occurred since September 2011 when Stena Line, with the approval of the Office of Fair Trading, officially took over the Belfast to Birkenhead route from DFDS Seaways; and (iv) whether fare increases by P&O on its Larne to Cairnryan route only increased by 3 percent for the same period.

(AQW 21914/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am aware of fluctuations in price for freight traffic on the Belfast to Birkenhead route and have requested a meeting with Stena Line to discuss this issue. However, the development and operation of ferry links, and the fares the operators charge, are entirely matters for commercial decision by individual sea carriers and the Northern Ireland and Great Britain ports.

Increase Trade with Brazil, China and India

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department is taking to increase trade with (i) Brazil; (ii) China; and (iii) India.

(AQW 21964/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI continues to target Brazil, China and India as part of its ongoing trade development activities.

A trade mission has recently returned from India, I will lead a mission to Brazil in May and a June mission is planned to China. As a measure of the importance of these countries further trade missions are planned for the latter part of this year. Invest NI will also have stands at the Hospitalar life sciences exhibition in Sao Paulo, Brazil and Food Hotel China food importers exhibition in Shanghai, China.

Invest NI has recently recruited a Head of Territory for Asia-Pacific who will have responsibility for further developing trade with China. Invest NI is also currently recruiting a Trade Business Development Director for North and South America. This position will also be located in-market.

I am delighted to report an increase in the value of exports to all three countries in 2012 – exports to Brazil increased by £12 million to £29 million on the previous year, China increased by £28 million to £81 million and India by £5 million to £27 million.

Department of the Environment

Planning Decisions: Review of Staff Actions

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to review the actions of his staff in relation to planning decisions R/1999/0147, R/2001/1526/F and R/2006/0841/F.

(AQW 19641/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I am advised that the applications referred to were properly processed in accordance with established process and procedure. In these circumstances and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I consider that there is not a basis to initiate a review.

Shale Gas Operations: Environmental Damage

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department accepts the recommendation by the European Parliament's Environment Committee to member states that it considers it appropriate, in the context of liability, to provide for the reversal of the burden of proof for shale gas operators, where, in view of the nature of the disturbance and its adverse effects, other possible causes and any

other circumstances, the balance of probability indicates that shale gas operations were the cause of the environmental damage; and whether he intends to take action to ensure compliance with this recommendation.

(AQW 21352/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have noted and will fully consider the comments of the European Parliament's Environment Committee. As I have made clear many times my focus is on ensuring that proposals for shale gas extraction are subject to the most rigorous assessment in terms of the potential impacts on the environment. Indeed, my view is not only a precautionary approach but an enhanced precautionary approach.

This is why the Department has been reviewing emerging research, studying case studies from other parts of the world and liaising with counterparts in other Environmental Agencies in Britain and Ireland and other EU countries where fracking is currently proposed or taking place to establish a broader evidence base to aid more effective decision making.

It is entirely proper that it is on the far side of the ongoing research and science that an assessment is made on fracking. That is the strong approach.

Normal or Uncontentious Planning Applications

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment what was the average time taken to process normal or uncontentious planning applications in (i) 2007; and (ii) 2012.

(AQW 21410/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Normal, uncontentious applications are taken as those applications where no letters/petitions of objection were received by the Department and the decision of the Department was to approve.

There has been significant improvement in the time taken to process normal, uncontentious planning applications over the last 5 years, particularly in the intermediate category of applications. This has been greatly assisted by the streamlined council consultation process.

In 2006/07, the overall average processing time for normal or uncontentious applications was 20 weeks, while in 2011/12 it was 18 weeks – an improvement of 2 weeks.

Given the direction of travel, I have asked senior management in planning to further review planning timeline targets to see how we can be further challenging.

Number of New Cars Registered

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of new cars registered in (i) 2011; and (ii) 2012; and how these figures compare with (a) England; (b) Scotland; and (c) Wales.

(AQW 21439/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The figures and comparisons requested are detailed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS

	2011	2012	Percentage Change 2011 to 2012
Northern Ireland	47,766	47,990	+0.5%
England	1,671,818	1,755,770	+5.0%
Scotland	167,764	182,525	+8.8%
Wales	67,727	72,438	+7.0%
Subtotal for Great Britain *	1,907,411	2,010,825	+5.4%

Notes: Figures for Northern Ireland were sourced from the Northern Ireland Department for Regional Development National Statistics Annual and Quarterly 'Northern Ireland Road and Rail Transport Statistics' publications, and includes exemptions and imports. Those for England, Scotland, Wales and Great Britain were sourced from Department for Transport Vehicle Licensing Statistics 2012, Table veh0254, published on 11 April 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-transport/series/vehicle-licensing-statistics>

- * Great Britain data include all cars newly registered with DVLA, so in fact will include small numbers of imported (or NI) vehicles which have been used before, and a small number of vehicles which cannot be assigned between England, Scotland and Wales.

Councillor Severance Package

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the proposed terms of the Councillor Severance package, when will qualifying councillors wishing to avail of the package be able to step down. **(AQW 21474/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The regulations will specify a prescribed period during which councillors who apply for a severance package must resign their seats. I want, to be fair to councillors – particularly the longest serving – with flexibility to decide when they wish to leave public office. The consultation which is currently underway proposes a prescribed period for the severance arrangements from the date the regulations come into operation (anticipated as August 2013) until 31 March 2015.

It is proposed to have two periods during which councillors can apply for severance. Both periods will be before the next local government elections in 2014.

The first application period would be from the date the regulations come into operation to 31 December 2013. Councillors who apply during this period will have to resign before 31 December 2013. The resultant vacancy may be filled by co-option.

The second application period would be from 1 January 2014, to the closing date for nominations to stand at the 2014 local government elections. Councillors who apply during this period will have to resign before 31 March 2015.

Clearly I will listen closely to the views expressed in the consultation around this issue.

Cavanacaw Gold Mine

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 14479/11-15, for a breakdown of the costs incurred by his Department in the recent civil action on the Cavanacaw Gold Mine. **(AQW 21513/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: A total of just under £50,000 has been incurred by DOE in the recent civil action on the Cavanacaw Gold Mine. A breakdown is as follows:

- £10,000 to each of the three complainants following an Assembly Ombudsman investigation; and
- £19,998 of legal fees relating to the Judicial Review Case.

Single Use Carrier Bag Levy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration was given to exempting retailers with fewer than ten employees from the single use carrier bag levy; and why he decided not to include such an exemption in the legislation.

(AQW 21535/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department carried out two public consultations and a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) on its proposals for a carrier bag levy; the RIA included an analysis of the potential impact on small businesses.

Having considered the responses to the consultations and the findings of the RIA, I took the decision that the levy should be applied consistently across all retail outlets. I believe that this is essential if we are to achieve significant and sustained change in consumer behaviour.

While the majority of bags are obviously issued by the major retailers, smaller premises, taken as a retail group, issue millions of bags each year. The availability of low cost or free bags at these premises would not generate the level of behavioural change required to substantially reduce carrier bag use. The exclusion of such premises would therefore be inconsistent with my main objective - to avoid the unnecessary use of bags.

I, of course, acknowledge that smaller businesses may find it more difficult – in the first instance at least - to adjust to the charging arrangements. It is for this reason that I have ensured that the record-keeping requirement is restricted to the absolute minimum needed to demonstrate compliance. There will also be a simple online process for registration and payment – payment will be made quarterly, and should only take a few minutes on each occasion.

I believe that once businesses - including small businesses - have adjusted to the new arrangements they will see real benefits – including financial savings generated by the purchase of fewer bags. I consider it was a good insight by the trade association for local newsagents which said at the time of the introduction of the levy, “The introduction of the Levy will lead to significant cost savings for our members which will greatly outweigh any administrative costs incurred as well as contributing to waste management and environmental strategies.”

This approach, together with the enthusiastic response to the levy across consumers and others, demonstrates the validity of the approach I have adopted.

River Samples

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in the creation of court appointed samplers and in recruiting and training lay people or members of River Trust Groups to help take samples from rivers.

(AQW 21557/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The possibility of using lay volunteers to take samples of pollution and of rivers is an issue which was first raised a number of years ago in a Public Accounts Committee Report. At that time the possibility of using volunteers for this work was explored in depth by the Department, including consideration of the legal issues, taking advice on the practical and volunteer safety issues, and discussing the wider practicalities with bodies such as the Ulster Anglers Federation.

The conclusion was that there were insurmountable legal difficulties in warranting non-professionals such as angling bailiffs and members of the public to do this work under current water pollution legislation; in addition the Department concluded there would be major health and safety implications in using lay people. Similarly, upon close consideration of the practicalities it became clear that a number of the proposed benefits of using lay people (for example the potential for samples to be taken more quickly) were in fact very unlikely to be realised in practice.

In summary therefore the possibility of using volunteers to collect river samples has already been carefully considered by the Department; but has been ruled out on practical, safety and, on legal grounds. However, NIEA met some time ago with the Ulster Angling Federation (UAF) to discuss the possibility of using Private Fishery Bailiffs to assist with pollution investigations in other ways. It was highlighted that, within the powers of the fisheries legislation under which they are appointed, these bailiffs have wide-ranging powers to help protect fisheries habitat and angling interests.

NIEA therefore proposed to the UAF that where these bailiffs witness any significant pollution incident, a witness statement or other statement of fact prepared by the bailiff would carry considerable weight as evidence in any subsequent enforcement action. However this proposal has not been taken up to any significant degree.

Nevertheless my Department, through the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), greatly values the key contribution made by members of the public and acknowledges that our work would be much harder but for the general public's help. In particular we value the public alerting NIEA to potential environmental problems by reporting pollution incidents through the Pollution Hotline, and in working directly to improve Northern Ireland's environment and river catchments through key initiatives such as the formation of Rivers Trusts and Catchment Management Groups.

However, there are a number of other avenues for the public to get directly involved in improving river quality. For example since 2011 NIEA has supported the Riverfly Monitoring Initiative. The initiative involves Angling groups or other interested stakeholders being trained by the UK Riverfly Partnership to carry out a simple biological assessment of river invertebrates. To date, 41 volunteers have been trained and currently 40 sites are monitored on a regular basis.

I would encourage anyone with an interest in getting directly involved in improving our rivers to contact NIEA to find how they can participate in the Riverfly Monitoring Initiative, take part in their local Catchment Stakeholder Group or establish a River Trust on their local river.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21558/11-15)

Mr Attwood: DOE has not incurred any expenditure on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

Collection of Recyclable Waste

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how much material collected as recyclable waste is exported on an annual basis; (ii) to what destinations; and (iii) what happens to it when it arrives at its destination.

(AQW 21580/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Under the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007 (as amended) all exports of waste from Northern Ireland to outside the UK must be accompanied by documentation, copies of which must be sent to the Department prior to shipment.

According to Departmental records during the calendar year 2012 just over 630,000 tonnes of waste was exported from Northern Ireland destined for recycling operations.

This waste was sent to the following countries:

Bangladesh, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, South Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.

The above countries are all signed up to the Basel Convention and as such are required to take the appropriate measures to ensure the availability of adequate facilities, for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes. When the material arrives at its destination it goes through a recycling operation which varies depending on the nature of the waste.

One of the challenges around all of this is to recycle more on the island of Ireland. For example, only 30% of plastics on the island are recycled with 70% of these plastics exported for recycling. I have met David Surplus – the recently appointed Chair of the North South Market development Steering Group – to help accelerate how we can recycle more on the island with recycled related jobs one of the results.

Review of Public Administration: Planning Procedures

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment what role MLAs will have in representing the views of constituents in the new planning procedures after the Review of Public Administration; and at what stage will MLAs have an input into the process.

(AQW 21620/11-15)

Mr Attwood: MLAs currently represent the views of constituents on planning procedures throughout the planning process through a number of avenues, such as correspondence cases, office meetings with planners, phone calls etc. It is envisaged that this will continue to be the case after the transfer of planning functions to councils.

Post transfer, MLAs will also still be able to influence the planning system through the Assembly legislative processes and the usual method of committee scrutiny. However, the planning function for the big majority of individual applications will pass to Councils in 2015 – as will the local development and community planning responsibility. This will be a fundamental shift in responsibility, a shift to Councils.

Oil and Gas Exploration Wells

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department was made aware of any incidents of environmental contamination or leaks from oil and gas exploration wells since 1998; and if so, to provide details.

(AQW 21625/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department is not aware of any incidents of environmental contamination or leaks from oil and gas exploration wells since 1998.

I have been advised that a total of sixteen wells have been drilled to date, the earliest of which dates back to 1965. Fifteen of the wells have been abandoned and one, on the North Antrim coast, is currently plugged.

Waste Management by District Councils

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of the Environment what proposals his Department has for waste management by district councils within the context of EU regulations and guidelines that relate to renewable energy objectives.

(AQW 21651/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The competent authorities in Northern Ireland for the preparation of plans setting out arrangements for the recovery, treatment or disposal of municipal waste are the 26 district councils. The three regional district council waste management groups (WMGs) are currently developing revised waste management plans (the plans) in tandem with the Department's draft revised waste management strategy.

The plans must take account of the draft revised strategy, which has been developed in the context of relevant EU Directives and moves the focus of waste management away from resource management towards resource efficiency with a greater emphasis on waste prevention and recycling. However, some residual waste has value in the form of recoverable energy and the draft revised strategy supports efficient energy recovery from residual waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy as this can deliver environmental benefits, reduce carbon impacts and provide economic opportunities. It also notes that alternative technologies such as anaerobic digestion can contribute to meeting our non-fossil fuel obligations and policies on renewable energies, and are eligible for financial support.

The Department has provided detailed guidance setting out key requirements of the plans and continues to work closely with the three WMGs in the development of their plans that will be assessed and determined by the Department later this year.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions the Driver and Vehicle Agency has lost passports and official documents during driving licence applications, over the last three years. **(AQW 21685/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) requires, in certain cases, the submission of a passport or other official document with an application for a driving licence to provide evidence of identity. These documents are returned by post once identity has been confirmed.

The Agency has agreed a process with Royal Mail to instigate a search for missing documents when a customer reports to DVA that a passport or other official identity document has not been delivered. DVA may reimburse the customer the full price of a replacement passport or other official document under certain conditions where it has been notified as lost or not delivered. Where a driving licence is reported lost the Agency may issue a free replacement licence.

The following table details for each of the last three financial years the number of occasions when the Agency issued a payment to cover the cost of a replacement passport or other identity document and details of the number of driving licences replaced by the Agency free of charge as the customer declared that they were not received.

	Financial Year		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of payments for replacement passports and other identity documents	36	26	29
Driving Licences replaced free of charge as declared lost in post	252	290	273
Total	288	316	302

In relation to passports and other documents reported not delivered these figures represent an average of approximately 0.02% of the total documentation returned to customers by Driver Licensing Division and the number of driving licences replaced free of charge represents approximately 0.13% of licences issued.

Driving Licence Applications

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of the Environment how many driving licence applications have been turned down over the last three years due to documents such as passports not being included. **(AQW 21686/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: Applications for a driving licence are checked for completeness on receipt in the Driver & Vehicle Agency. Incomplete applications are returned to the customer.

Applications may be rejected for a number of reasons, including the absence of the necessary identity documents. The Agency notes the driver record that an application has been received and returned but the reason for the return is not recorded.

I am not able, therefore, to provide information relating to the number of applications that have been rejected because the relevant identity documents were not submitted. I have advised the DVA to record the reason in future.

People with Special Needs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment to list the councils that (i) employ people with special needs; and (ii) offer work placements or work experience to people with special needs; and how many posts and placements are available in each council.

(AQW 21701/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information you have asked for is provided in the table below.

Council	Does the council employ people with special needs? Y/N	Does the council offer work placements or work experience to people with special needs? Y/N	If the response to Q2 is yes - How many posts and placements are available?
Antrim Borough Council	Yes	Yes	8 employees and 2 placements
Ards Borough Council	Yes	Yes	The council has given a commitment to provide 1 placement per year
Armagh City & District Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
Ballymena Borough Council	No	No	n/a
Ballymoney Borough Council	Yes	Yes	1 employee and 1 placement
Banbridge District Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
Belfast City Council	Yes	Yes	32 placements were facilitated in the 2012/ 2013 financial year; the council works closely with special schools and organisations to facilitate placements
Carrickfergus Borough Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
Castlereagh Borough Council	Yes	Yes	25 employees, 2 short term and 1 long term placement in the past 12 months
Coleraine Borough Council	Yes	Yes	1

Council	Does the council employ people with special needs? Y/N	Does the council offer work placements or work experience to people with special needs? Y/N	If the response to Q2 is yes - How many posts and placements are available?
Cookstown District Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis. Council pro-actively promote work placements/ experience to people with special needs.
Craigavon Borough Council	Yes	Yes	1 employee with 6 work placements accommodated per year
Derry City Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
Down District Council	Yes	Yes	Placements offered to students of all and mixed abilities
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	Yes	Yes	7 employees and 2 placements; all requests considered
Fermanagh District Council	No	Yes	4 people currently on work placement. All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis.
Larne Borough Council	Yes	Yes	2 employees and 1 placement
Limavady Borough Council	No	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis; 1 placement due to start in April 2013
Lisburn City Council	No	Yes	2 long term placements
Magherafelt District Council	Yes	Yes	6

Council	Does the council employ people with special needs? Y/N	Does the council offer work placements or work experience to people with special needs? Y/N	If the response to Q2 is yes - How many posts and placements are available?
Moyle District Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
Newry & Mourne District Council	Yes	Yes	3 currently although placements are available on request
Newtownabbey Borough Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis
North Down Borough Council	None at present	Yes	2 currently with opportunities for other placements available
Omagh District Council	Yes	Yes	13 employees and 2 placements
Strabane District Council	Yes	Yes	All requests for placements are considered on a case by case basis

Review of Public Administration: Transfer of Resources

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made in identifying the amount and methodology for transferring resources from central to local government for those areas that will move to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQO 3842/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A key and significant element of local government reform is the issue of which responsibilities and functions should transfer from central government to local councils. The Transfer of Functions Working Group is taking this issue forward. Discussions regarding which functions should transfer have been ongoing for a number of months and following the Executive Committee's decision on 11th April 2013, I am now able to bring some certainty to the process.

Now that the package of functions is agreed, it is important that we move swiftly to confirm the number of staff transferring and the quantum of funding. In confirming these details, Ministers will have regard to the principle agreed by the previous Executive. That is: functions which are to transfer from central to local government should be fit for purpose, sufficiently funded and cost neutral to the ratepayer at the point of transfer. This will require the transfer of resources from central to local government when the functions transfer. There will also be a requirement for Departments to commit adequate resources preparing for the functions to transfer. The Finance Working Group and DFP are currently addressing the methodology to be used for transferring resources from central to local government.

Ministerial colleagues have agreed to provide me with this information by 31st May 2013. This will enable Departments to provide certainty to staff and to draw up firm transfer plans to ensure that all functions are fit for purpose and properly financed. It will also enable councils to begin to plan new organisational structures and arrangements.

North/South Co-Operation: Road Safety

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the extent of North/South co-operation in the area of road safety.

(AQO 3844/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There is a great deal of co-operation between my Department and our Irish counterparts on road safety matters. It is an important element of our interaction through the North South Ministerial Council Transport Sectoral meetings, the latest of which was held on 17 April.

My officials and I liaise regularly with counterparts in Ireland to share experience and exchange information including, over the last few years, on the development of respective road safety strategies.

I recently attended the launch of Ireland's Road Safety Strategy 2020 in Dublin Castle where I welcomed the concentration on serious road traffic injuries along with a continued focus on reducing fatalities. Our strategies are complementary, with many of the same issues to be addressed, and both focusing on the principal causes of road traffic casualties.

The Department has established more structured arrangements at official level to progress mutual projects, support activities in one jurisdiction which impact on the other, and generally to ensure positive road safety benefits on both sides of the border. The most recent meeting with the Road Safety Authority was on 20 March 2013 when a range of areas of mutual interest were explored, including road safety strategies, EU legislative proposals, driver licensing issues, research plans and enforcement.

One example of significant progress has been towards the mutual recognition of penalty points across the island for speeding, drink/drug driving, non-wearing of seat belts and using a mobile phone when driving. This is a critical road safety measure which will help reduce death and serious injury on our roads. It will complement and strengthen the benefits already achieved through the mutual recognition of driving disqualifications, introduced in 2010. The Irish Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and I have agreed a date of 31 December 2014 for the legislation required for this groundbreaking work to be in place.

The Department's Driver and Vehicle Agency continues to work closely with the RSA in carrying out joint enforcement operations and this coordinated approach is working extremely well with non-compliant operators being detected and subjected to appropriate sanctions at the roadside.

Road safety counterparts will continue to share information on initiatives and measures and on the technical, logistical and public information aspects of implementing such measures. They will also consider further activities that would afford the possibility of raising the profile of the strong collaboration on road safety activities, including in enforcement operations and promotional campaigns.

At the North / South Transport Sectoral meeting in Armagh on 17 April 2013 Minister Varadkar, Minister Kennedy and I discussed road safety, particularly given the increase in road deaths, both North and South, to date in 2013, compared with the same period in 2012. This is clearly of concern. I advised the Sectoral meeting that I would be writing to the relevant Ministers in the Governments of the British Irish Council (BIC) requesting a meeting in the margins of the next BIC meeting to identify how we can create more cohesion around the law and practice of road safety.

Single Use Carrier Bag Levy

Ms Brown asked the Minister of the Environment how the exemptions detailed under Schedule 1 of the Single Use Carrier Bags Charge Regulations (NI) 2013 will work in practical terms.

(AQO 3846/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Regulations were drafted so as to ensure that free bags are only issued where the nature of the product requires that a bag should be supplied. This is consistent with the primary aim of the legislation, which is to achieve at least an 80% reduction in the number of carrier bags used in Northern Ireland each year.

This approach means specific exemptions from the levy on grounds such as patient confidentiality, hygiene and food safety and the protection of both goods and consumers.

For example, there are 3 categories of food-related exemptions; these are for unwrapped or partially wrapped food products, hot takeaway food and hot drinks, and packaged uncooked fish, meat or poultry. Bags containing prescription medicines are also exempted from the levy. Other exemptions relate to unpackaged seeds or bulbs or goods contaminated by soil, unpackaged axes, knives and blades and live aquatic creatures in water. Exemptions will also apply in the case of very small bags and mail order dispatch and courier bags.

It is also worth emphasising that the levy relates to single use carrier bags issued new. Previously used bags are therefore excluded from charging. Reusable bags are also excluded at this stage – although, subject to Assembly approval I propose to extend the levy to low cost reusable bags next year.

Departmental staff have been working with retailers to educate them on the requirements of the Regulations – including the provision for exemptions. Guidance which explains the legislative requirements – including practical examples - is available online. This includes a short video containing a section specifically on exemptions.

The very positive response to the carrier bag levy on its introduction on 8 April confirms that citizens and businesses want to address the waste challenge and climate threat and embrace interventions to do so.

Planning: Third-party Right of Appeal

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on progress on publishing a consultation paper on Third Party Right of Appeal.

(AQO 3847/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I do not intend to publish a consultation on a Third Party Right of Appeal. The scale of planning reform in the current Planning Bill, the change of transfer of planning to Councils, the need to press on with better timelines for decisions, the multiple planning challenges mean that attractive though I consider Third Party Right of Appeal, a better time and environment will emerge for the proposal.

Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of the Environment to detail all the elected representatives who responded (i) in favour of; and (ii) in opposition to the listing of buildings at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 22157/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The listing process for some of the buildings at the Maze/Long Kesh site was completed in 2005 following a holistic survey of the heritage interest of the whole site. This was commissioned by OFMDFM, on advice from Environment and Heritage Service (as NIEA was then known). This information contributed to final decisions to list 5 structures within the prison and to protect two Second World War aircraft hangers and associated defensive features as scheduled monuments.

The listing process was carried out in line with the legislative requirements for listing and Departmental policy. Article 42(3) of the Planning Order (NI) 1991 states that:

‘Before compiling or amending any list under this Article, the Department shall consult with the Historic Buildings Council and with the appropriate district council.’

These ‘statutory consultations’ were carried out. HBC agreed with the Department’s recommendation and Lisburn District Council noted the recommendation and did not object.

In addition, the owner of the site, OFMDFM, was notified in advance of the decision in line with the Agency’s standard procedure. No wider consultation is undertaken in regard to listing decisions.

The Department sought a response to the listing of the buildings at the Maze/long Kesh site from Lisburn District Council, as a statutory consultee in the process. The council's response in March 2005 was 'the Council decided to note' the consultation. This is not regarded as an objection (or opposition) to the proposal.

In addition, following the formal listing of the building, responses have been received from a number of elected representatives. These are detailed below.

- 1 Paul Butler MLA
- 2 Jim Alistair QC MEP
- 3 Cllr Tom Elliot MLA
- 4 George Savage MLA
- 5 David McNarry MLA

Department of Finance and Personnel

Coista Na N-larchimi

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what investigations have been conducted into Coista Na N-larchimi not complying with its legal obligations under company legislation, whilst in receipt of public funding; and what were the outcomes of any investigations.

(AQW 21365/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Coiste na n-larchimi is a sub-partner in a PEACE III project led by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). In December 2011 the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), PEACE III Managing Authority, was made aware that Coiste na n-larchimi had not properly filed its annual return and accounts to Companies House for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010. It had been struck off the Companies House register on 2 September 2011.

SEUPB immediately brought this to the attention of CFNI, who had responsibility for addressing the issue directly with Coiste na n-larchimi. SEUPB also suspended payments to CFNI in relation to the project. When the issue was raised with the project, the annual return and accounts for 2011 and the previous three years were promptly submitted.

Companies House issued a Restoration Notice on 16 December 2011, restoring the company to the register and stating that it was "deemed to have continued in existence as if it had not been dissolved or struck off the register".

Coista Na N-larchimi

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether their Department approved and paid funding to Coista Na N-larchimi while that organisation was not filing accounts, as required under company legislation; and what steps have been taken, or will be taken, to recover such funding.

(AQW 21366/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel does not provide funding to Coiste na n-larchimi.

Coista Na N-larchimi

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any funding has been offered to Coista Na N-larchimi since the discovery that it had not filed accounts and met its obligations under company legislation.

(AQW 21369/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Companies House issued a Restoration Notice to Coiste na n-Iarchimi on 16 December 2011, stating it would be restored to the register “as if it had not been dissolved or struck off the register”.

Since that date, two PEACE III Letters of Offer which identify Coiste na n-Iarchimi as a project partner have been issued to the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). The Letters of Offer awarded £343,442 and £438,035 to CFNI for allocation to Coiste na n-Iarchimi.

Coista Na N-Iarchimi

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel who approved and paid funding to Coista Na N-Iarchimi at a time when it was not filing accounts and meeting its obligations under company legislation.

(AQW 21370/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Coiste na n-Iarchimi is a sub-partner of a wider PEACE III project led by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). As the project lead partner, CFNI has responsibility for approving and paying project expenditure claims to sub-partners, including Coiste na n-Iarchimi.

Average Household Domestic Rate

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the average household domestic rate in 2013/14; and how this compares to the average council tax and water charges in England, Scotland and Wales.

(AQW 21471/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Taking inflationary increase in the regional and domestic rates into account the average domestic rates bill in NI will be approximately £816 for 2013/14.

Information on average council tax bills for 2013/14 is not available, however, for 2012/13 the average council tax bills, per chargeable dwelling in the rest of the UK ranges are:

- England £1,201
- Scotland £985
- Wales £1,036

Separate domestic water and sewerage charges are also levied in the rest of the UK and the averages for 2012/13 ranged from £324 to £376 for England, Scotland and Wales.

Average Non-Domestic Rate

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the average non-domestic rate in 2013/14; and how this compares to the average rate in England, Scotland and Wales.

(AQW 21472/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A direct comparison between the average non domestic rate in Northern Ireland and the uniform business rate in England, Scotland and Wales is not an indication of relative differences in non domestic rate bills. The reason for this is due to the fact that Northern Ireland rates are based on a much earlier revaluation date of 2003 compared to the UK' s 2010 revaluation. However, for your information the figures are as follows

Northern Ireland	58.034p*
England	47.1p
Wales	46.4p
Scotland	46.2p

* Based on an average district non-domestic rate of 25.014p

Garden Centres and Nurseries

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people are employed in garden centres and nurseries and whether there have been any job losses incurred as a consequence of the recent extreme weather.

(AQW 21481/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on whether there has been any job losses incurred as a consequence of the recent extreme weather. NISRA collect information on the number of jobs at a particular point in time from all relevant businesses registered on the Inter Departmental Business Register and therefore can only provide the net change between two points in time.

Table 1 overleaf provides information on the number of employee jobs for the years 2007, 2009 and 2011 as measured by the biennial Census of Employment.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF JOBS IN GARDEN CENTRES AND NURSERIES

Year	Number of Employee Jobs	Employee Job Change
2007	811	
2009	757	-54
2011	871	114

Garden Centres and Nurseries

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people were employed in garden centres and nurseries, in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 21482/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on the total number of jobs in garden centres and nurseries in each of the last 5 years as the Census of Employment is carried out biennially.

However, table 1 below provides information on the number of employee jobs for the years available.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF JOBS IN GARDEN CENTRES AND NURSERIES

Year	Number of Employee Jobs	Employee Job Change
2007	811	
2009	757	-54
2011	871	114

Projects Awaiting Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the projects approved for funding, including those awaiting departmental approval or Letter of Offer, under Priority One Sub Measure One, 1.1 - Building Positive Relations at a Local Level; and to detail (i) the funding allocated; (ii) the funding committed; and (iii) the expenditure on each of the projects to date in Euros.

(AQW 21484/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details (i) funding allocated; (ii) funding committed; and (iii) expenditure to date for each project approved by Steering Committee under PEACE III Theme 1.1, Building Positive Relations at the Local Level.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Re-imaging Communities Programme	2,038,962.02	2,038,962.02	0.00
Belfast City Council	Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	6,395,414.54	6,395,414.54	6,281,696.39
Belfast City Council	Belfast Local Action Plan - Phase II	6,011,023.55	6,011,023.55	815,526.12
Cavan County Council	Cavan Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	2,834,729.22	2,834,729.22	2,834,729.11
Cavan County Council	County Cavan Peace Partnership Peace & Reconciliation phase 2 Action Plan	3,127,807.00	3,127,807.00	1,405,179.55
CFNI / Abhaile Aris (Home Again)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	960,838.63	960,838.63	960,568.50
CFNI / Abhaile Aris (Home Again)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	300,418.94 *	300,418.94	0.00
CFNI / An Eochair (The Key Charter)	Prison to Peace II	35,234.15 *	35,234.15	0.00
CFNI / Cairde (Friends)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	186,313.02	186,313.02	189,515.92
CFNI / Cairde (Friends)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	68,255.11 *	68,255.11	30,773.80
CFNI / Charter	Prison to Peace II	70,628.48 *	70,628.48	0.00
CFNI / Coiste (Committee)	Prison to Peace II	29,205.72 *	29,205.72	0.00
CFNI / Coiste na n'Iarchimi (The Ex-Prisoners Committee)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	381,734.42 *	381,734.42	157,423.79
CFNI / Coiste na Niarchimi (The Ex-Prisoners Committee)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom up	1,641,300.85	1,641,300.85	1,653,115.37
CFNI / Eiri na Greine (The Rising of the Sun)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	4,450.76	4,450.76	4,334.62

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
CFNI / Eiri na Greine (The Rising of the Sun)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	73,815.57 *	73,815.57	0.00
CFNI / Epic Belfast	Prison to Peace II	53,960.08 *	53,960.08	0.00
CFNI / Epic North Ulster	Prison to Peace II	35,830.44 *	35,830.44	0.00
CFNI / Failte Abhaile (Welcome Home)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom UP	1,046,554.23	1,046,554.23	1,045,523.39
CFNI / Failte Abhaile (Welcome Home)	Conflict Transformation From Bottom Up II	298,013.04 *	298,013.04	0.00
CFNI / Failte cluain Eois (Welcome Clones)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	659,323.77	659,323.77	655,673.32
CFNI / Failte Cluain Eois (Welcome Clones)	Conflict Transformation from Bottom Up II	235,392.33 *	235,392.33	0.00
CFNI / Iar Chimi Ard Mhaca Theas (South Armagh Ex-Prisoners)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	339,810.98	339,810.98	339,637.45
CFNI / Iar Chimi Ard Mhaca Theas (South Armagh Ex-Prisoners)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	98,921.36 *	98,921.36	22,207.20
CFNI / Iar Chimi Doire Theas (South Derry Ex-Prisoners)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	168,799.42	168,799.42	169,447.19
CFNI / Iar Chimi Doire Theas (South Derry Ex-Prisoners)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	75,161.81*	75,161.81	33,111.77
CFNI / La Nua (A New Day)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	568,553.85	568,553.85	568,178.94
CFNI / La Nua (A New Day)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	156,369.41 *	156,369.41	0.00

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
CFNI / Lisburn PSP	Prison to Peace II	63,015.64 *	63,015.64	0.00
CFNI / North Belfast CD & Transition Group	Prison to Peace II	53,929.25 *	53,929.25	0.00
CFNI / North Down Community Association	Prison to Peace II	45,217.42 *	45,217.42	0.00
CFNI / Tar Abhaile (Come Home)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	398,490.55	398,490.55	402,439.24
CFNI / Tar Abhaile (Come Home)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	145,558.02 *	145,558.02	69,957.35
CFNI / Tar Anall (Come Over)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom up	459,036.75	459,036.75	466,798.37
CFNI / Tar Anall (Come Over)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	341,817.91 *	341,817.91	191,232.42
CFNI / Tar Isteach (Come In)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	1,002,951.22	1,002,951.22	1,015,226.79
CFNI / Tar Isteach (Come In)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	311,874.60*	311,874.60	168,988.48
CFNI / Teach na Failte (The Welcome House)	Prison to Peace II	79,166.58 *	79,166.58	0.00
CFNI / The Hubb	Prison to Peace II	36,834.58 *	36,834.58	0.00
CFNI / Tus Nua (A New Beginning)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	407,337.22	407,337.22	407,323.42
CFNI / Tus Nua (A New Beginning)	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up II	134,922.04 *	134,922.04	0.00
CFNI / West Belfast PIP	Prison to Peace II	66,067.42 *	66,067.42	0.00
Coleraine Borough Council	North East Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan	3,734,987.14	3,734,987.14	3,715,371.46

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Coleraine Borough Council	North East PEACE III Partnership	5,023,781.82	5,023,781.82	1,911,358.01
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up	407,847.10	407,847.10	404,612.12
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	From Prison to Peace: Building on Experience	3,569,197.83	3,569,197.83	3,517,687.12
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	South East Antrim - Resourcing from Conflict to Hope (SEARCH)	483,947.50	483,947.50	450,940.88
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	Prison to Peace Partnership: A Paradigm for Peacebuilding	120,617.68	120,617.68	0.00
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	Conflict Transformation from the Bottom Up 11	309,986.91*	309,986.91	59,567.36
Co-operation Ireland	Irish Peace Centres	2,999,099.00	2,999,099.00	2,988,443.84
Co-operation Ireland	Family and Community Engagement Programme - FACE	1,168,602.18	1,168,602.18	0.00
County Leitrim Peace III Partnership	County Leitrim Phase 2 Plan 2011 - 2013	2,060,683.00	2,060,683.00	393,055.52
County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership	Peace 3 Phase 2 Extension Plan	2,408,198.00	2,408,198.00	538,873.21
Derry City Council	North West Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan	5,186,452.71	5,186,452.71	5,194,320.59
Derry City Council	NW Cluster Phase II Action Plan	5,535,725.21	5,535,725.21	1,054,410.04
Donegal County Council	Donegal Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	4,637,285.70	4,637,285.70	4,637,285.70
Donegal County Council	Donegal Peace III Action Plan - Phase II	4,737,600.00	4,737,600.00	1,756,724.97

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
EDGEHILL THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE (of Queen's University Belfast)	Edgehill Theological College Reconciliation and Integration Partnership Project	342,758.42	342,758.42	339,430.20
Edgehill Theological College Reconciliation and Integration Partnership Project	Edgehill Theological College Reconciliation and Integration Partnership Project (ETC-RIPP)	462,371.35	462,371.35	119,176.80
Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland	Stepping Towards Reconciliation In Positive Engagement	1,058,476.46	1,058,476.46	298,006.63
Groundwork Northern Ireland	Reconciling Communities through Regeneration	1,156,600.97	1,156,600.97	1,175,829.08
Intercomm Ireland	Communities and Policing in Transition - Future Generations	404,447.69 *	404,447.69	0.00
Intercomm Ireland Ltd	Communities and Policing in Transition	1,260,855.83	1,260,855.83	1,265,566.37
Leitrim County Council	Leitrim peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	1,897,568.09	1,897,568.09	1,897,568.09
Lisburn City Council	Lisburn Peace & Reconciliation Local Action Plan	1,792,656.39	1,792,656.39	1,736,299.95
Lisburn/ Castlereagh Peace III Partnership	Lisburn/ Castlereagh Peace III Partnership Peace III Action Plan-Phase II	2,839,436.67	2,839,436.67	176,096.38
Louth County Council	Louth Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	2,702,878.76	2,702,878.76	2,497,694.73
Magherafelt District Council	South West Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan	3,617,639.31	3,617,639.31	3,553,555.54
Magherafelt District Council	Phase 2 Bid for SW PEACE III Cluster	4,162,399.41	4,162,399.41	526,014.47
Monaghan CDB Peace III Partnership	Phase II Action Plan - Monaghan	3,476,206.00	3,476,206.00	731,957.28

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Monaghan County Council	Monaghan Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	3,315,000.00	3,315,000.00	3,286,106.36
Newry and Mourne District Council	Southern Peace & Reconciliation Local Action Plan	4,947,688.46	4,947,688.46	4,923,618.52
Newry and Mourne District Council	Southern Peace III Strategy	5,857,958.96	5,857,958.96	1,847,409.85
Newtownabbey Borough Council	Newtownabbey Peace & Reconciliation Local Action Plan	2,029,930.79	2,029,930.79	1,969,920.08
Newtownabbey Borough Council	CAN Peace III Partnership Phase 2 2011-2013	2,972,609.47	2,972,609.47	702,908.19
North Down Borough Council	Phase II Peace III Action Plan for the North Down, Ards and Down Cluster	3,249,128.61	3,249,128.61	666,706.84
North Down District Council	North Down, Ards, Down Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	2,492,571.85	2,492,571.85	2,492,177.00
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Inter-Church Peace Programme - ICPP	1,558,073.70	1,558,073.70	0.00
Rural Community Network	The Rural Enabler	2,630,804.83	2,630,804.83	2,188,750.63
SELB (YESIP)	Children and Young People Building Positive Relations	3,769,567.54	3,769,567.54	3,512,964.83
Sligo County Council	Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan	1,871,867.94	1,871,867.94	1,871,867.94
Sligo County Council on behalf of Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Committee	Phase 2 Action Plan	2,155,977.00	2,155,977.00	231,096.56
TWN	Positive Relations Project	3,198,432.96	3,198,432.96	3,091,785.27
TWN	Extending Positive Relations	3,423,321.90	3,423,321.90	2,608,081.10

- * The allocations to these projects were reduced due to the level of funds available in Theme 1.1. Should sufficient funds become available, increased Letters of Offer will be issued.

Projects Awaiting Departmental Approval

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the projects approved for funding, including those awaiting departmental approval or Letter of Offer, under Priority One Sub Measure Two, 1.2 - Acknowledging the past; and to detail (i) the funding allocated; (ii) the funding committed; and (iii) the expenditure on each of the projects to date in Euros.

(AQW 21486/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details (i) funding allocated; (ii) funding committed; and (iii) expenditure to date for each project approved by Steering Committee under PEACE III Theme 1.2, Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
An Teach Bán: Centre for Peace Building	Remember and Change	529,324.20	529,324.20	158,556.95
Ashton Community Trust	Bridge Of Hope	455,026.41	455,026.41	460,039.31
Ashton Community Trust	Exploring the Past Together for a Better Future	476,378.17	476,378.17	27,394.77
Belfast Interface Project	Enabling Our Future	452,390.25	452,390.25	31,508.46
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	Citizenship and Fellowship Education [CAFE]	434,887.90	434,887.90	427,801.02
Best Cellars Music Collective	Peace Radio	179,532.49	179,532.49	177,179.53
BURC	DISC II	892,961.18	892,961.18	232,595.35
C.A.L.M.S	Gateways to Health	297,989.36	297,989.36	292,694.38
Calipo Theatre Co	Sharp Focus - Crossing the Divide	620,261.00	620,261.00	13,486.43
Cavan Family Resource Centre	Buandóchas (Eternal Hope) (B) Counselling	287,301.90	287,301.90	287,301.90
Communities Connect - Dundalk institute of Technology	Deepening the peace, Widening the web - working title	565,837.87	565,837.87	565,837.87
Community Dialogue	Securing Our Future: 3 Steps to Dialogue	347,271.83	347,271.83	345,472.18

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Community Workers Co-operative - Donegal Network	Harnessing Equality for Lasting Peace (HELP) Project	585,587.21	585,587.21	585,587.21
Community Workers Co-operative - Donegal Network	Collective Action for Positive Peace (CAPP) Project	486,335.00	486,335.00	112,366.63
Conflict trauma Resource centre	Beyond Conflict	471,582.71	471,582.71	346,057.56
Corpus Christi Services	Healing The Troubled Past	218,843.01	218,843.01	213,947.64
Creggan Neighbourhood Partnership	GOAL -	405,352.46	405,352.46	402,752.29
Crossfire Trust	restoring hope	319,835.48	319,835.48	320,754.32
Cunamh (Help)	Peace In Mind/ Suaimhneas Intinne	325,098.59	325,098.59	321,954.25
Curriculum Development Unit	Education for Reconciliation	567,915.86	567,915.86	567,915.86
Diversity Challenges	The Green and Blue Across the Thin Line	256,001.20	256,001.20	0.00
Diversity Challenges Ltd	'The Way We Were' - Uncovering our shared past.	112,554.25	112,554.25	110,245.52
Expac	Future Resolutions	378,525.00	378,525.00	117,359.88
Expac Ltd	Conflicts of Interest	509,369.33	509,369.33	509,369.33
Falls Community Council	Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium	965,964.69	965,964.69	962,545.51
Falls Community Council	Pieces of the Past	353,844.27	353,844.27	124,040.23
Falls Community Council	Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium	975,265.50	975,265.50	355,839.10
Falls Women's Centre	Training & Employment Project	180,920.86	180,920.86	177,453.52

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives	SACRED - Support and Active Carer Respite for Excluded Dependents	177,086.71	177,086.71	146,610.80
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives	Conflict Archive Project And Border Lands Experience (CAPABLE)	216,828.55	216,828.55	152,978.26
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Five Decades	155,188.32	155,188.32	47,281.81
Forward Learning	Knowing Me Knowing You - A historical and cultural adventure!	169,384.90	169,384.90	129,812.52
Gaslight Media Trust	Epilogues Facilitating Understanding of the Other	272,658.47	272,658.47	271,568.00
Gaslight Media Trust	'The Arc: Acknowledging the Past, Negotiating the Present & Facing the Future'	462,607.05	462,607.05	79,856.07
Healing Through Remembering	Whatever You Say Say Something	941,777.21	941,777.21	948,607.08
Healing Through Remembering	Voyager	634,357.44	634,357.44	159,130.60
Holy Trinity Centre	Out Of Hours Community Counselling Service	197,121.14	197,121.14	195,969.07
INCORE	Journeys Out	488,905.18	488,905.18	488,485.11
Inishowen Development Partnership	YOUTH 52 - Securing the Future	637,923.29	637,923.29	637,923.29
Inishowen Development Partnership	Engage Youth	565,565.27	565,565.27	45,573.28

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Institute for Counselling & Personal Development	RENEW-Community Challenge and change for peace & reconciliation	288,419.87	288,419.87	288,569.41
Ionad Forbartha Gnó Teo. t/a WESTBIC (Business Development Centre Ltd.)	Glórtha Aduaidh (Northern Voices)	653,513.00	653,513.00	68,146.65
Irish Football Association	Football For All Project	601,691.31	601,691.31	594,403.82
Irish Football Association	Football For All - 2012-2015 - Looking Back to Move Forward	644,135.72	644,135.72	141,205.35
Junior Achievement Ireland	Our World	594,148.00	594,148.00	267,611.23
Justice for Innocent Victims of Terrorism	Pathways to Justice	441,766.57	441,766.57	43,392.18
Latton Social Services and Development Ltd	Border Roads to Memories and Reconciliation	487,383.86	487,383.86	25,687.01
Monaghan Education Centre	Embracing Shared Communities	410,334.00	410,334.00	97,217.12
New Life Counselling	Victims and Survivors Counselling Project	244,277.68	244,277.68	242,506.83
North West Play Resource Centre	Theatre of Witness	552,488.35	552,488.35	113,196.18
North West Play Resource Centre (T/A The Playhouse)	Theatre of Witness	377,772.30	377,772.30	374,846.43
Northern Ireland Phoenix Organisation (NIPO)	Northern Ireland Phoenix Project	1,203,747.12	1,203,747.12	203,974.99

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC)	“Media Initiative for Rural Children Cross Borders” (Respecting Difference Programme)	498,192.70	498,192.70	10,756.22
Northern Ireland Trade Union Education and Social Centre	DISC- Development for Inclusion and Sustainable Communities	398,333.61	398,333.61	348,804.81
Pat Finucane Centre	Legacy Project	438,018.08	438,018.08	433,944.64
Peace and Reconciliation group	Dealing with Past, Shaping the Future (D.P.S.F.)	214,591.89	214,591.89	213,609.91
Queen Mary University of London	The Irish Peace Process: Layers of Recollection and Meaning	1,030,563.18	1,030,563.18	578,268.72
R.A.F.T. - Restorative Action Following the Troubles	Transcending Trauma	518,655.16	518,655.16	511,925.13
Relatives for Justice	Participative Transitional Support	634,940.25	634,940.25	632,474.17
Relatives for Justice	Transitional Legacies	290,088.45	290,088.45	0.00
SAVER/NAVER	Practical steps towards reconciliation	236,238.75	236,238.75	190,451.48
Seaview Enterprises Ltd	‘Mes Que Un Club’	504,604.28	504,604.28	127,476.93
Smashing Times Theatre Company	The Memory Project	522,934.00	522,934.00	0.00
South Armagh Rural Women’s Network	Behind the Masks	370,398.28	370,398.28	358,693.69
South East Fermanagh Foundation	The Phoenix Project	1,298,478.72	1,298,478.72	1,273,424.39
Survivors of Trauma	A Future Together	312,997.58	312,997.58	311,267.95

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
TARA CENTRE	Reconciliation: Individuals and Communities Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past	508,299.40	508,299.40	506,884.91
Taughmonagh community forum	Shared Futures	401,809.03	401,809.03	401,809.03
Taughmonagh community forum limited	Legacy	290,584.87	290,584.87	31,060.57
Teach Oscail (Open House)	Tullacmongan/ Cavanaleck Cross Border Youth Project	391,153.57	391,153.57	391,153.57
The Bytes Project	Foundation for Reconciliation	112,391.69	112,391.69	113,899.10
The Corrymeela Community	Corrymeela Facing the Future with NICRAS	190,418.85	190,418.85	190,374.50
The Ely Centre	Project Elohim	328,221.35	328,221.35	328,541.15
The Pat Finucane Centre Ltd	Recovery of Living Memory Archive	751,735.72	751,735.72	276,318.39
The Peace Factory	PA.Z. Peace Action Zone	346,740.63	346,740.63	343,409.66
Towards Understanding and Healing	Healing through Storytelling and Dialogue	268,267.61	268,267.61	268,291.82
Towards Understanding and Healing	Developing and Sustaining Storytelling and Dialogue Processes	416,970.57	416,970.57	53,106.87
Trademark	Consolidating the peace	299,003.27	299,003.27	298,350.41
Trauma Recovery Network	Connecting Head and Heart	260,567.77	260,567.77	245,949.53
Tyrone Donegal Partnership	Border Lives	496,532.70	496,532.70	46,449.94
Ulster Peoples College	THE PEOPLES HISTORY INITIATIVE	247,850.04	247,850.04	245,777.70
VERBAL ARTS CENTRE	Crows on the Wire	457,153.91	457,153.91	21,655.50

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Victims and Survivors Trust	3 Tiers Project - Creating pathways for inclusion through active participation	238,107.58	238,107.58	240,220.10
WAVE Trauma Centre	WAVE- The Trauma Training Learning Pathway	772,705.01	772,705.01	766,620.04
WAVE TRAUMA CENTRE	Back to the Future - Building Peace Programme	252,054.92	252,054.92	247,910.02
WAVE Trauma Centre	Breaking the Cycle of the Troubles Legacy for our future Generations	369,107.83	369,107.83	0.00
WAVE Trauma Centre	Learning from the Past to educate our Future	641,935.76	641,935.76	103,196.27
Youth Initiatives	Crosslinks Culture Connections (CLCC or Crosslinks)	382,685.54	382,685.54	373,600.87
YOUTH INITIATIVES	Crosslinks Legacy Project	456,817.98	456,817.98	125,459.00
Youth Link: NI	Community Capacity Building Strategies	489,594.38	489,594.38	487,706.76
Youth Link: NI	Building Positive Sustainable and Integrated Communities	497,163.85	497,163.85	160,929.00
YouthAction NI	Peace Dividend For Young People	577,653.73	577,653.73	574,463.50
YouthAction Northern Ireland	Reconciling communities - champions for change	494,048.54	494,048.54	69,638.52
INCORE	Accounts of the Conflict in Northern Ireland	1,349,036.42	0.00	0.00
National Musuems Northern Ireland	Facing the Past	2,227,990.04	0.00	0.00

Projects Approved for Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the projects approved for funding, including those awaiting departmental approval or Letter of Offer, under Priority Two Sub Measure One, 2.1 - Shared and Open Spaces; and to detail (i) the funding allocated; (ii) the funding committed; and (iii) the expenditure on each of the projects to date in Euros.

(AQW 21488/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details (i) funding allocated; (ii) funding committed; and (iii) expenditure to date for each project approved by Steering Committee under PEACE III Theme 2.1, Creating Shared Public Spaces.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Apex Housing Association	The Glen Community Complex (Bacon Factory) Redevelopment	4,182,767.32	4,182,767.32	441,496.95
Belfast City Council	Skatepark	471,017.25	471,017.25	412,089.41
Cavan County Council	Castlesanderson - All Ireland Scouting/ Jamboree Centre	3,675,345.00	3,675,345.00	3,645,642.82
Craigavon Borough Council	Shared Process and Community Engagment (SPACE)	6,469,880.24	6,469,880.24	0.00
Department for Social Development	Restoration of the SS Nomadic	2,815,798.91	2,815,798.91	2,443,460.53
Donegal County Council	Pettigo / Tullyhommon - The Termon Project	8,006,841.00	8,006,841.00	922,617.34
Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland	Orange Interpretive and Educational Resource	4,260,557.94	4,260,557.94	0.00
Groundwork Northern Ireland	Sharing Our Space	3,767,805.47	3,767,805.47	760,783.98
Ilex URC Ltd	River Foyle Foot and Cycle Bridge	16,427,953.88	16,427,953.88	14,333,226.94
Inner City Trust	City Centre Garden of Reflection	2,519,763.97	2,519,763.97	0.00

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Monaghan County Council	Clones Erne East Sports Partnership Project	7,803,451.00	7,803,451.00	1,059,544.81
Omagh District Council	OASIS - Omagh Accessible Shared Inclusive Space	5,145,185.21	5,145,185.21	123,895.46
Shankill Womens Centre	Small Wonders Childcare II	829,176.47	829,176.47	556,985.10
Skainos Ltd	The Skainos Project	7,127,763.31	7,127,763.31	7,148,166.42
The Trustees of the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall	Heroes of the Great Siege Shared History & Visitor Centre	2,640,031.30	2,640,031.30	0.00
Belfast City Council	The Girdwood Community Hub	11,353,688.71	0.00	0.00
Donegal County Council	Reconciliation Through The Riverine	6,067,248.00	0.00	0.00

Departmental Approval

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the projects approved for funding, including those awaiting departmental approval or Letter of Offer, under Priority Two Sub Measure Two, 2.2 - Key Institutional Capacities are developed for a shared society; and to detail (i) the funding allocated; (ii) the funding committed; and (iii) the expenditure on each of the projects to date in Euros. **(AQW 21490/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details (i) funding allocated; (ii) funding committed; and (iii) expenditure to date for each project approved by Steering Committee under PEACE III Theme 2.2, Key Institutional Capacities are Developed for a Shared Society.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Ashton Community Trust	Fab Lab	1,195,622.92	1,195,622.92	498,101.45
Belfast City Council	Growing a Shared City	365,737.23	365,737.23	319,867.25
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	Gender and Peacebuilding- Developing a Framework of Understanding	457,480.71	457,480.71	57,433.12

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Early Years - the organisation for young children	International Early Childhood Network on Peace Building and Reconciliation	687,027.01	687,027.01	673,588.45
Early Years the organisation for Young Children	Respecting Difference in the Education Sector	743,167.19	743,167.19	238,884.38
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives	EINSTEIN	28,778.00	28,778.00	0.00
Forward Learning Ltd	The Thin End of the Wedge	504,013.84	504,013.84	264,993.36
Groundwork NI	Democratising Governance in Transition	530,027.82	530,027.82	460,169.41
Institute of Spatial & Environmental Planning, Queen's University Belfast	Planning for Spatial Reconciliation	574,106.32	574,106.32	160,243.25
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Trade Unions & Post Conflict Society	284,593.45	284,593.45	103,788.12
Maze / Long Kesh Development Corporation	Peace building and Conflict Resolution Centre	21,423,703.03	21,423,703.03	454,920.92
Mediation Northern Ireland	The Most Project – International Dialogue for Civic Leadership	816,845.43	816,845.43	689,321.45
NICVA(Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action)	Vital Links	555,899.79	555,899.79	453,414.95
North West Play Resource Centre	ICAN	521,481.71	521,481.71	388,961.36
Northern Ireland Prison Service	Challenging Hate Crime	1,035,432.30	1,035,432.30	916,354.18
Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC)	Bric – Building Relationships in Communities	4,193,256.87	4,193,256.87	1,650,457.40

Lead Partner	Project Name	Funding allocated (€)	Funding committed (€)	Expenditure to date (€)
Sligo Vocational and Education Committee	Developing a Shared Society Through Youth Sport	693,000.00	693,000.00	692,342.77
The Nerve Centre	Teaching Divided Histories	559,951.39	559,951.39	122,876.42

Garden Centres and Nurseries

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the total rateable valuation of garden centres and nurseries.

(AQW 21497/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The total Net Annual Value (NAV) of properties recorded in the current Valuation List under garden centre and nurseries classification is £1,388,730.

Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Ltd

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with the Minister of Finance in Dublin about the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Ltd honouring the agreed severance terms for its 31 employees here and implementing a business plan for the liquidation process.

(AQW 21550/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have not yet had any discussions with the Irish Finance Minister on this matter however I will be meeting him in the near future to discuss a range of ongoing banking issues. I have advised Minister Noonan that I wish to discuss the impact Irish bank restructuring was having on Northern Ireland operations, including the liquidation of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation and the position of Northern Ireland based employees in the IBRC.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21560/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Expenditure on translation services by my Department in each of the last five years is provided in the following table. It is not possible to disaggregate the costs to distinguish whether the services provided were to visiting foreign nationals, tourists or UK residents.

Financial Year	Total Expenditure
2008/09	Nil
2009/10	£735
2010/11	£731
2011/12	£413
2012/13	£637

Rating of Empty Domestic Properties

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what impact the the introduction of rating on empty domestic properties has had on the number of empty properties.

(AQW 21675/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since the introduction of the Rating of Empty Homes policy on 1st October 2011 the rate liability for vacant domestic properties has been assessed at 100%. There is currently no requirement for ratepayers to inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant nor is there any financial advantage to doing so. As such, current information on the number of empty domestic properties may not be complete. Bearing this in mind, at the year-end before the introduction of Rating of Empty Homes (31st March 2011) a total of 50,494 or 6.6% of domestic properties were recorded as being vacant. The most recent year-end information available (31st March 2013) indicates that a total of 33,585 or 4.4% of domestic properties are recorded as being vacant. This is a 33.5% reduction in the recorded number of vacant domestic properties over this two year period.

National Asset Management Agency

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has held any discussions recently with the relevant bodies regarding the position of properties in Northern Ireland which come under the stewardship of the National Asset Management Agency in the Irish Republic.

(AQW 21678/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I regularly meet with senior officials from NAMA including the Chairman, Frank Daly, and members of the Agency's Northern Ireland Advisory Committee. Indeed, I recently met with Mr Daly and a number of his colleagues on 22 April 2013 when we discussed a broad range of issues in relation to NAMA's activities in Northern Ireland.

Regional Rate

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the total amount that will be raised from households in this financial year through the regional rate; and how much of this amount is notionally in respect of charges for water and sewerage.

(AQW 21694/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department has estimated that for 2013/14 the revenue attributable to the domestic aspect of the regional rate could be up to £310 million, although the exact figure will not be known until outturn is settled at the end of the financial year.

As you may be aware separate water charges are not currently in place and the Executive has taken the decision to defer introduction for the life of current Assembly. Decisions have not been made therefore, on the way in which any such charges would be calculated and collected and it is not possible to give a notional cost to households.

Rates are however an unhypothecated tax, meaning that it is not directly ring fenced to the provision or consumption of particular services. Revenue from rates funds a wide range of public services including health, education, economic development, water, main roads and council functions.

Special EU Programmes Body

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the Special EU Programmes Body website is not up to date in publishing Steering Committee minutes and Quarterly Progress reports for PEACE III and Interreg funding and PEACE III monitoring documentation.

(AQW 21709/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is currently undertaking a review of its publication scheme and website. The information referred to is included in that review and will be made available, as per the publication scheme, on the website when completed.

Independent of this review, SEUPB makes all Programme Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee documentation available upon request.

PEACE III: Capital Build Projects

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what are the funding consequences if approved capital build projects under PEACE III are not completed by 31 December 2015.

(AQW 21710/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Each project has an individual Letter of Offer specifying its end date. At that end date, funding from the programme—both European Regional Development Fund and national match—concludes. The final date for eligibility of expenditure within the programme is 31 December 2015.

At the time of submission of programme closure documents, the Member States will consider on a case-by-case basis any projects that remain incomplete, with a view to including project expenditure in the programme's final statement of expenditure should adequate justification exist.

Such inclusion would be conditional on the financial impact of the project justifying special treatment—the total cost of a project must be greater than €5 million, and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution must represent no more than 10 per cent of the total programme allocation.

In order for the EU expenditure to remain eligible, projects must complete within two years of the programme closure via an alternative source of funding.

Should any project remain incomplete after this point, the Member States must reimburse the ERDF contribution.

Emigration from County Antrim

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people in each District Council area in County Antrim have emigrated in search of employment over the last five years, broken down by age; and to which countries these people have emigrated.

(AQW 21767/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The tables overleaf show the estimates of out-migration from Northern Ireland to (a) Great Britain and (b) to all other countries for the years (i) mid-2006 to mid-2007, (ii) mid-2007 to mid-2008, (iii) mid-2008 to mid-2009, (iv) mid-2009 to mid-2010, and (v) mid-2010 to mid-2011. It is only possible to distinguish between out-migration to Great Britain and out-migration to all other countries. A summary table (vi) shows the total estimate of out-migration in each year for the period mid-2006 to mid-2011.

The tables are split into the eleven Local Government Districts (Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Craigavon, Larne, Lisburn, Moyle and Newtownabbey) which cover County Antrim and is broken down by broad age bands. There are no estimates made of the reason for out-migration.

(I) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2006-MID 2007

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Antrim	35	193	30	7	46	233	71	6
Ballymena	46	205	0	8	50	350	133	8
Ballymoney	12	95	17	0	17	57	16	8

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Belfast	256	1,447	363	60	201	2,510	109	20
Carrickfergus	26	197	28	14	24	64	46	2
Coleraine	29	262	52	10	75	480	59	12
Craigavon	12	265	25	15	106	366	82	15
Larne	24	190	48	7	19	34	20	0
Lisburn	216	650	90	21	130	311	85	17
Moyle	14	86	10	0	4	40	12	7
Newtownabbey	50	234	23	12	82	584	118	15
NI	1,454	8,340	1,093	241	1,571	7,769	1,678	314

(II) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2007-MID 2008

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Antrim	26	212	25	6	47	205	36	4
Ballymena	27	252	15	0	37	221	69	3
Ballymoney	8	107	16	3	10	37	12	0
Belfast	173	1,383	298	69	394	2,655	292	45
Carrickfergus	33	215	27	3	20	72	27	9
Coleraine	16	277	33	10	31	404	64	6
Craigavon	49	301	32	7	66	338	82	6
Larne	28	141	16	4	24	43	27	2
Lisburn	184	625	74	12	92	291	79	14
Moyle	8	101	7	1	10	31	3	6
Newtownabbey	44	267	41	6	60	469	46	16
NI	1,240	8,284	963	215	1,620	7,579	1,596	244

(III) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2008-MID 2009

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Antrim	26	206	34	2	53	210	46	7
Ballymena	25	249	23	4	26	239	66	6
Ballymoney	29	142	22	2	13	26	3	0
Belfast	163	1,344	267	35	402	2,652	382	74
Carrickfergus	24	205	27	3	26	74	29	6
Coleraine	23	286	39	9	29	435	56	10
Craigavon	44	273	23	7	95	320	96	8
Larne	20	151	22	2	14	27	6	0
Lisburn	128	603	76	9	142	267	103	15
Moyle	10	96	7	7	9	28	6	5
Newtownabbey	21	267	18	2	76	485	59	6
NI	934	8,144	956	164	1,772	7,609	1,598	250

(IV) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2009-MID 2010

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Antrim	46	233	36	2	47	221	38	1
Ballymena	27	242	43	9	40	220	63	1
Ballymoney	12	147	13	3	11	30	10	1
Belfast	210	1,235	231	43	360	3,016	391	50
Carrickfergus	19	185	30	8	9	52	19	2
Coleraine	38	360	38	10	38	561	50	8
Craigavon	42	345	34	5	96	332	62	9
Larne	14	176	24	8	1	22	7	5
Lisburn	161	618	87	7	134	278	95	11
Moyle	16	104	17	3	5	24	6	5
Newtownabbey	49	313	48	3	63	592	81	0
NI	1,213	8,704	1,156	206	1,525	7,918	1,601	218

(V) OUT MIGRATION ESTIMATES MID 2010-MID 2011

District	(a) Out Migration to Great Britain				(b) Out Migration to all other countries			
	Age				Age			
	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Antrim	37	231	38	9	35	231	55	4
Ballymena	31	265	40	9	39	260	53	5
Ballymoney	6	115	16	6	3	27	5	0
Belfast	200	1,102	228	60	414	4,317	488	93
Carrickfergus	16	201	42	8	21	85	34	4
Coleraine	42	353	29	7	41	511	49	8
Craigavon	45	360	50	8	107	350	87	12
Larne	25	176	25	6	10	23	17	3
Lisburn	166	604	64	9	167	385	100	11
Moyle	15	118	17	5	4	37	5	3
Newtownabbey	44	303	40	4	55	630	51	12
NI	1,189	8,580	1,124	228	1,813	9,869	1,860	282

(VI) OUT MIGRATION, 2006-7 TO 2010-11, ALL AGES, ALL COUNTRIES

District	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11
Antrim	621	561	584	624	640
Ballymena	800	624	638	645	702
Ballymoney	222	193	237	227	178
Belfast	4,966	5,309	5,319	5,536	6,902
Carrickfergus	401	406	394	324	411
Coleraine	979	841	887	1,103	1,040
Craigavon	886	881	866	925	1,019
Larne	342	285	242	257	285
Lisburn	1,520	1,371	1,343	1,391	1,506
Moyle	173	167	168	180	204
Newtownabbey	1,118	949	934	1,149	1,139
NI	22,460	21,741	21,427	22,541	24,945

National Assets Management Agency: Ramada Hotel, Portrush

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, following the decision by National Assets Management Agency (NAMA) to place the Ramada Hotel in Portrush into administration, what immediate potential consequences NAMA's action could have, not just in the Causeway Coast, but

throughout the property market given its extensive portfolio, and to outline what urgent action he will take to address such consequences

(AQW 21772/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I understand the concerns you have raised about the placing into administration of the Ramada Hotel in Portrush. Clearly this is a difficult time for all involved including the staff and those in the local business community with links to the hotel. While it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on the specifics of this particular case, it is my hope that the administrator will find a way to keep the business going and to protect the economic activity that is associated with that.

NAMA has acquired a significant amount of loans and assets in Northern Ireland and it is an added factor we have to deal with. However, it is important to also recognise that the creation of NAMA was a necessary step to restore liquidity and confidence in the Irish financial system. While I was initially concerned about the impact it would have locally, NAMA has kept to its commitments on avoiding a 'firesale' locally. Indeed I believe NAMA is playing a positive role in Northern Ireland in making finance available to debtors seeking to develop assets and for potential buyers of commercial property.

I will be meeting with the NAMA Chairman next week when I will be discussing with him the broad range of issues around the Agency's activities in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Office Staff

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline his position on Northern Ireland Office staff who were informed that they were Department of Finance and Personnel employees at the time of joining the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) but who were subsequently left out of the 2009 Equal Pay settlement on the grounds that they did not qualify as NICS staff.

(AQW 21778/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Staff seconded to the NIO were lawfully excluded from the terms of the NICS equal pay settlement because the NIO, not the NICS, was responsible for determining their pay. The position in terms of eligibility has been clear from the outset of the equal pay settlement and this has now been upheld in the County Court, which found that the settlement applied only to periods of service in the 11 NICS departments and did not apply to bodies such as the NIO, who had lawfully received delegation for pay matters, which was still in effect during the relevant time period.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the proportion of other taxes and royalties in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 21794/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in the Net Fiscal Balance report, the methodology applied is generally consistent with that designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) report, however, there are some instances where there are minor technical variations in how certain specific elements of the individual estimates are derived.

My previous response to AQW 18531/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK other taxes and royalties.

There is a minor technical difference with respect to the renewable energy obligations element of the overall other taxes and royalties revenue estimate, where my department's report apportions this on the basis of NI's share of UK electricity consumption. GERS uses figures provided directly by ONS.

I would re-iterate that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional

data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution. At an aggregate level the minor technical variations referred to above are not considered to have any material bearing on the Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance position.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Interest and Dividends

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the proportion of interest and dividends in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 21795/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in the Net Fiscal Balance report, the methodology applied is generally consistent with that designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) report, however, there are some instances where there are minor technical variations in how certain specific elements of the individual estimates are derived.

My previous response to AQW 18845/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK interest and dividend revenue.

There is a minor technical difference with respect to the central government and local government elements of the overall interest and dividend revenue estimate, where my department's report apportions these on the basis of NI's share of UK public sector GVA. GERS apportions central and local government interest and dividends based on Scotland's share of UK population.

I would re-iterate that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution. At an aggregate level the minor technical variations referred to above are not considered to have any material bearing on the Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance position.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Gross Operating Surplus and Rent

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any distinctions between the methodology employed by his officials to identify the proportion of gross operating surplus and rent and other current transfers in the Net Fiscal Balance Report published in November 2012 and the new Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland methodology used in the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland report published in 2012.

(AQW 21796/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As stated in the Net Fiscal Balance report, the methodology applied is generally consistent with that designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) report, however, there are some instances where there are minor technical variations in how certain specific elements of the individual estimates are derived.

My previous response to AQW 18847/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK gross operating surplus, while my response to AQW 18848/11-15 outlined the methodology used to estimate NI's share of UK rent and other current transfers – which are all apportioned according to NI's share of UK public sector GVA.

GERS takes a more disaggregated approach and apportions the various components of gross operating surplus and rent and other current transfers individually using a variety of other methods. These include on the basis of Scotland's share of overall UK GVA, Non-Market Capital Consumption and land

area. These are detailed in full in its methodology note, which is available on the Scottish Government website.

I would re-iterate that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution. At an aggregate level the minor technical variations referred to above are not considered to have any material bearing on the Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance position.

Barnett Formula

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration he has given to approaching the Treasury with a view to reviewing the Barnett formula.

(AQW 21797/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Statement of Funding Policy which sets out the spending framework for all Devolved Administrations is reviewed concurrently with the UK Government's Spending Reviews. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury has therefore written to the Devolved Administrations clarifying his intention not to review the Statement of Funding Policy for the 2015-16 single year Spending Round in June. This allows time for it to be comprehensively reviewed at the next formal Spending Review in two years time.

It will be for the Finance Minister, acting on behalf of the Executive to negotiate any changes to the Statement of Funding Policy at that stage.

Number of Live Births

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the change in the number of live births, by mothers whose origin is from outside Northern Ireland, between 2007 and 2012.

(AQW 21818/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details the number of births registered in Northern Ireland, broken down by mother's country of birth, for the registration years 2007 to 2011.

Figures for 2012 will not be available until publication of Births in Northern Ireland, 2012 in May 2013.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF BIRTHS BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF MOTHER, 2007 TO 2011

Regis- tration Year	All Births	Country of Birth of Mother					
		Northern Ireland	Other UK countries (including Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	Republic of Ireland (including Ireland, part not specified)	A8 countries ¹	All other countries	Not stated
2007	24,451	20,325	1,456	723	775	1,170	2
2008	25,631	21,095	1,410	779	1,080	1,267	-
2009	24,910	20,539	1,364	689	1,113	1,205	-
2010	25,315	20,805	1,323	714	1,235	1,238	-
2011	25,273	20,808	1,296	692	1,210	1,267	-

- 1 The A8 countries are the eight countries from Eastern Europe that joined the European Union in May 2004. They are Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Number of Deaths from Cancer

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of deaths from cancer in each District Electoral Area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21888/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland, where cancer¹ has been recorded as the primary cause of death, for 2007 to 2011.

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes C00-C97

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM CANCER¹ REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA, 2007-2011

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Antrim					
Antrim North West	28	20	23	42	20
Antrim South East	39	34	32	29	34
Antrim Town	37	44	33	33	44
Ards					
Ards East	48	51	53	45	51
Ards Peninsula	46	42	50	46	49
Ards West	43	39	31	48	39
Newtownards	48	36	50	50	45
Armagh					
Armagh City	43	40	39	40	32
Crossmore	23	21	26	32	19
Cusher	24	33	36	33	36
The Orchard	24	24	32	24	25
Ballymena					
Ballymena North	38	37	39	37	47
Ballymena South	32	36	33	37	42
Bannside	34	33	25	28	36
Braid	20	24	33	39	36
Ballymoney					
Ballymoney Town	31	21	25	31	27
Bann Valley	21	23	26	19	20
Bushvale	19	15	17	17	17

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Banbridge					
Banbridge Town	20	37	32	36	25
Dromore	22	29	19	27	29
Knockiveagh	18	39	32	26	36
Belfast					
Balmoral	75	70	82	62	88
Castle	74	75	73	101	85
Court	95	97	81	83	88
Laganbank	78	60	50	64	58
Lower Falls	78	87	64	69	68
Oldpark	80	104	99	81	94
Pottinger	84	100	74	87	99
Upper Falls	98	88	76	80	86
Victoria	109	120	107	117	97
Carrickfergus					
Carrick Castle	33	22	25	32	25
Kilroot	49	34	32	40	35
Knockagh Monument	41	29	22	31	37

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM CANCER¹ REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA, 2007-2011 (CONTINUED)

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Castlereagh					
Castlereagh Central	40	46	48	43	44
Castlereagh East	63	62	61	59	62
Castlereagh South	30	30	24	30	30
Castlereagh West	41	35	32	41	45
Coleraine					
Bann	39	43	32	41	30
Coleraine Central	33	37	35	36	40
Coleraine East	22	24	31	29	21
The Skerries	24	20	37	38	38
Cookstown					

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Ballinderry	27	24	26	30	17
Cookstown Central	16	28	22	21	23
Drum Manor	17	16	19	21	13
Craigavon					
Central	47	48	67	49	50
Loughside	38	47	50	39	47
Lurgan	43	54	65	46	47
Portadown	38	37	56	44	45
Derry					
Cityside	35	34	33	20	38
Northland	53	46	47	53	62
Rural	35	31	43	51	48
Shantallow	27	31	30	41	46
Waterside	53	45	51	53	57
Down					
Ballynahinch	38	25	23	36	29
Downpatrick	43	36	51	41	62
Newcastle	49	36	41	35	44
Rowallane	28	41	22	34	33
Dungannon					
Blackwater	22	22	22	25	19
Clogher Valley	33	26	22	18	33
Dungannon Town	21	22	28	30	33
Torrent	12	45	38	39	26
Fermanagh					
Enniskillen	51	41	41	43	52
Erne East	28	31	36	36	27
Erne North	29	34	24	21	29
Erne West	30	26	34	24	17
Larne					
Coast Road	24	27	20	31	18
Larne Lough	18	36	25	23	25
Larne Town	26	32	36	39	27

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM CANCER¹ REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA, 2007-2011 (CONTINUED)

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Limavady					
Bellarena	24	37	23	21	24
Benbradagh	13	19	16	14	19
Limavady Town	16	17	22	26	18
Lisburn					
Killultagh	36	27	32	35	41
Downshire	36	34	37	33	32
Dunmurry Cross	49	50	57	75	62
Lisburn Town North	51	49	52	62	54
Lisburn Town South	49	47	48	47	46
Magherafelt					
Magherafelt Town	22	29	34	19	33
Moyola	25	15	24	26	29
Sperrin	33	27	29	26	24
Moyle					
Ballycastle	10	13	14	16	20
Giant's Causeway	7	15	12	12	6
The Glens	16	12	16	15	18
Newry & Mourne					
Crotlieve	52	46	45	54	45
Newry Town	50	56	45	46	50
Slieve Gullion	25	29	26	37	27
The Fews	28	27	32	37	39
The Mournes	35	37	34	26	29
Newtownabbey					
Antrim Line	50	54	38	51	63
Ballyclare	27	44	32	48	37
Macedon	52	62	67	55	52
University	49	54	51	55	52
North Down					
Abbey	36	57	45	47	47
Ballyholme and Groomsport	51	52	53	54	63

District Electoral Area Name	Registration Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bangor West	66	61	43	54	60
Holywood	43	41	43	39	50
Omagh					
Mid Tyrone	30	32	30	24	36
Omagh Town	38	31	38	37	30
West Tyrone	40	25	32	28	29
Strabane					
Derg	22	32	17	25	25
Glenelly	33	19	22	26	23
Mourne	31	39	33	22	30
Northern Ireland	3,870	3,971	3,885	4,018	4,059

- 1 Cancer deaths were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C00-C97.

DHSSPS: Resources

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the allocation of resources from his Department to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

(AQO 3869/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The DHSSPS received the most generous budget settlement to any department for the 2011-15 budget period. However, there are limitations on how the Executive can respond to the growing pressures and demands on our health and care system. The Health Minister is seeking to manage these through the Transforming Your Care programme, to ensure this happens in a way that secures best outcomes for health provision. I fully support the Health Minister in how he is addressing these challenges and welcome his determination to deliver projects as soon as possible, thus delivering the key components of the reform of health and social care. I believe that the Health Minister's proposals on the Transforming Your

Care programme offer us the opportunity to make changes and improve outcomes across the Health and Care system in Northern Ireland which are safe, sustainable and resilient into the future.

Budget: June Spending Round

Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the strategy for engaging with the Treasury regarding the announcement on 20 March that the budget could be adjusted in June.

(AQO 3870/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In his 20th March Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that there would be a 2015-16 Spending Round process, the outcome of which would be announced in June 2013.

My officials are in the process of agreeing the appropriate budget baselines with HM Treasury, however because the Devolved Administrations are funded through the Statement of Funding Policy once baselines are agreed there is no further direct involvement in the UK Spending Round process.

After the UK Spending Round process has concluded in June, Devolved Administrations will then receive a Barnett consequential share of any additions or reduction applied to comparable programmes in England.

It will then be for the Devolved Administrations to factor these Barnett changes into their own internal budget-setting processes for 2015-16.

Fiscal Powers

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the announcement on delaying the decision on devolving Corporation Tax, to outline the Executive's priorities and strategy for devolution of additional fiscal powers.

(AQO 3871/11-15)

Mr Wilson: While we are obviously very disappointed that the Prime Minister does not intend to make a decision on the devolution of corporation tax until after the referendum on Scottish independence in autumn 2014, the Executive remains committed to securing these powers. This remains our number one priority and officials are examining the actions that could be taken forward now, so that a devolved rate could be implemented as soon as possible after a positive decision by the UK Government.

I personally would be reluctant to seek additional fiscal powers that required a block grant reduction while the possibility of securing corporation tax powers remains.

Welfare Reform: Rate Rebate Replacement

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any initial findings from the responses to the consultation on the Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements.

(AQO 3872/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The preliminary consultation process officially closed on the 10th April, however, my Department extended the deadline for a week or so to afford those organisations that had met with my officials, a little more time to write up their formal responses.

All these responses will be presented in full on the Department's website in a few days time and a summary report will also be published shortly.

Given the short period since the consultation closed it is too early to report findings. What I can say, however, is that the responses themselves broadly fell within two polarised camps.

The first advocating a consolidation or rationalisation of the existing range of rate support measures, as a means of preserving as much as possible the current coverage of the main rate rebate scheme.

The second – put forward reluctantly as the 'least worst' option - advocates a flat rate cut in entitlement to rate rebate across the board without cutting other support measures.

It is clear that the choices facing the Executive will not be easy ones.

My Department is modelling a range of options for me to present to the Executive to help Ministers decide on the preferred solution or solutions. This will then need to go out to a further round of public consultation, accompanied by an initial integrated impact assessment before final decisions are made in the Autumn.

Pension Reforms

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the cost to the block grant of not implementing pension reforms.

(AQO 3873/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The overall projected cost of not implementing pension reform in the devolved public service pension schemes is estimated in excess of £262m per year. Costs for each of the main public service schemes are: Teachers - £62m; Police - £18m; Civil Service - £60m; Fire fighters - £23m; Health - £100m.

These figures are estimates based on the Government Actuary's Department calculations to establish the recurring annual cost of reduced public service pension liabilities if schemes were not reformed.

Members should be in no doubt that HM Treasury would employ an equivalent calculation to reduce our block funding if we failed to deliver the required reforms. A penalty will be applied proportionately for each and every day of any slippage in reforming our public service schemes to the timescales required by HM Treasury. The scale of these costs would have serious impacts for Departmental budgets and the delivery of public services.

The Executive has already agreed to implement these pension reforms on 8 March 2012. In the current economic climate there can be no justification for any further delay. We need to move quickly and minimise as far as possible the financial risks. I expect all members of this Assembly to lend their full support to the smooth passage of the Public Service Pensions Bill which I will introduce in June.

Budget: A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what impact the court decision of 8 April on the A5 Western Transport Corridor will have on the 2013/14 and 2014/15 budget discussions.
(AQO 3874/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It will be for the Regional Development Minister to assess the implications of the Court decision for his budget and update the Executive on the consequences of that, including returning any reduced requirements for reallocation by the Executive.

Once the Regional Development Minister updates the Executive on the position, a decision will be taken on how any additional capital is utilised across the remainder of the Budget period.

Budget: Financial Process Review

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the Review of the Financial Process.
(AQO 3875/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In February 2011 the Executive commissioned a Review of the Financial Process in Northern Ireland to be carried out by my officials. Following consultation with key stakeholders, including this Assembly, I circulated a paper to the Executive in March 2012 reporting the outcome of that Review. To date, no agreement has been reached by the Executive on the report recommendations.

The remaining hurdle is the intransigence of the DE Minister who refuses to agree procedures that would allow the Executive to have some comfort that he was not diverting genuine reduced requirements – which should come back to the Executive – into other DE areas.

He might portray this as not being prepared to be accountable to DFP but this is not what this is about. It is about being accountable to the Executive and the Assembly. The Monitoring process succeeds because the Executive has confidence that Ministers bring forward Reduced Requirements for reallocation to other priority areas. The DE Minister wants to remove himself from this collegiate approach.

This is an opportunity for this Executive to deliver a significant, positive reform and failure to agree this report will be to the detriment of financial transparency for this Assembly.

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in the event that the power to set the rate of Corporation Tax is devolved, what was the cost agreed with the UK government for reducing it to 12.5%.
(AQO 3876/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A final cost for the devolution of Corporation Tax has not yet been agreed with the Government. There are still a number of outstanding issues to be resolved in this regard.

Pensions

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the move from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index for pension increases and the effect that this will have on the purchasing power of pensioners in the longer term.

(AQO 3877/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are a number of reasons why the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is considered a more suitable inflation measure to use for pension uprating than the Retail Price Index (RPI). CPI takes better account of how behaviour changes in response to changes in prices and more accurately represents the inflation experience of pensioners and benefit recipients – RPI excludes low income households including pensioners who receive a significant proportion of their income from the State. Furthermore CPI is less volatile than RPI, which by way of illustration, was actually negative during 2009.

The UK Government also met its commitment to restore the earnings link for the basic State Pension, and has also given a “triple guarantee” that the basic State Pension will increase by the highest of the growth in average earnings, price increases or 2.5 per cent, which going forward, will help prevent the erosion in the value of the basic state pension.

Budget 2013

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what are the implications of the Budget 2013.

(AQO 3878/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In its March Budget the UK Government has continued to ‘protect’ the delivery of education and health services in England. This means that these sectors, on which Northern Ireland has full Barnett comparability, have been exempted from the full rigour of the one per cent Resource DEL (RDEL) reductions imposed on Whitehall departments.

However there were still some £38.2 million of Resource DEL Barnett reduction consequentials applied to Northern Ireland over the next two years as a result of the Budget. The profile of these Barnett reductions is £20.7 million in 2013-14; and £17.5 million in 2014-15.

There were also £93.7 million of Capital DEL Barnett consequentials allocated to Northern Ireland over the next two years. However, with the exception of £0.3 million in 2013-14 and £4.0 million in 2014-15, these score as a financial transaction and can only be used to offer loans or equity investment.

In addition to the funding implications there were some other measures announced which should have a positive impact on the Northern Ireland economy:

- **Employment Allowance** – A £2,000 per annum National Insurance Contribution offset for businesses to be applied from 2014-15.
- **Personal Income Tax** – The personal Income Tax allowance is to be extended to £10,000 from April 2014.
- **Childcare Relief** – Working families will get 20% of childcare costs for each child under 12. This measure will support 80,000 families in Northern Ireland.
- **Corporation Tax** – The rate of Corporation Tax is to be reduced to 20% ensuring a single rate for businesses in April 2015.
- **Carbon Price Floor** – Confirmation of the exemption for Northern Ireland energy producers.

The Chancellor’s announcement of a cancellation in the planned rise in fuel duty is to be particularly welcomed, especially in Northern Ireland where we pay some of the highest prices. This will greatly assist motorists and hauliers at a time when many are struggling to cope with the high cost of fuel.

Net Fiscal Balance Report: Accurate Revenue Data

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what additional mechanisms are being developed to address the absence of accurate revenue data sources within the Net Fiscal Balance Report.

(AQO 3681/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My officials are not taking any specific steps to develop additional mechanisms to address the absence of accurate revenue data sources in the Net Fiscal Balance Report. Where actual data for Northern Ireland is readily available we will use it. However in most cases regional tax data is not routinely published by HMRC and their systems are not designed to produce this. Therefore, and in keeping with the methodology originally designed to produce the "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland" (GERS) publication, apportionments are made based on reasoned assumptions.

I would re-iterate to the Member that the purpose of the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 is to provide an overview of public sector finances in Northern Ireland for the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11. It is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual expenditure or revenue items. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Continuing Care

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been assessed as requiring continuing care in each year since 2006.

(AQW 21356/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): This information is not collected centrally.

However, information on the number of completed care management assessments, for which a main form of care was recommended, i.e. residential care, nursing care or domiciliary care, can be found in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Care Management Assessments Completed with a Main Form of Care Recommended	6,921	6,897	7,626	5,806	5,272	5,236	5,620

Source: CC4 Return, Community Information Branch - DHSSPS

These figures only include assessments that were completed during the year for adults aged 18 and over.

Continuing Care

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people, assessed as requiring continuing care, are having their needs met in a nursing home; and whether these costs are met by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 21357/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not collected centrally.

Information on the number of care management assessments completed, for which nursing home care was the main form of care recommended, is available. During quarter ending 31 December 2012, 4261 care management assessments recommended nursing home care.

Information on the number of individuals who are in receipt of a nursing home care package is available. The latest information available on the number of individuals whose main form of care is in a nursing home, as recommended following a care management assessment, refers to 31 December 2012. At this date, there were 8,3282 nursing home care packages in effect.

The current charging policy for nursing home care is based on the principle that help should be given to those who cannot afford to help themselves. The Health and Personal Social Services (Assessment of Resources) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 prescribe that capital limits are used to determine how much a person should contribute to the cost of their nursing home care. Therefore, responsibility for these care home costs will be determined on an individual, case by case basis.

All nursing home placements do, however, attract a £100 per week statutory contribution to the cost of nursing care.

Mental Health

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the £13 million to be invested in mental health, through Transforming Your Care, will be in addition to other funding; and how the investment will be used.

(AQW 21360/11-15)

Mr Poots: The £13m investment in adult mental health services referred to in my statement on 19 March 2013 is additional funding which has been made available for the continued implementation of the Bamford Action Plan. This is phased investment between 2012 and 2015, across a broad range of adult mental health services to support the resettlement of people with mental health conditions, currently residing in hospitals, the development of community services to support earlier intervention and increased use of psychological therapies to promote better outcomes for individuals.

Registered Day Nurseries in the Foyle Constituency

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the name and capacity of the registered day nurseries in the Foyle constituency; (ii) the waiting lists for each nursery over the last three years; and (iii) the average cost per year of daycare in the Foyle constituency.

(AQW 21389/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently 14 day nurseries registered in the Foyle constituency, with 530 places. The location and maximum number of places at each nursery is listed in the table at Annex A.

My Department has no role in monitoring attendance at, or price of, day nurseries and does not hold information about their waiting lists or costs.

My Department is considering measures to enable providers of childcare to provide parents with information on their services, including on vacancies and costs, through the family support website, www.familysupportni.gov.uk

ANNEX A

DAY NURSERIES AND REGISTERED PLACES IN THE FOYLE CONSTITUENCY

Name	Post Code	Places
Stepping Stones Day Nursery	BT48 9XD	38
Happy Days Child Care Centre	BT48 0LY	28
Hilltop Day Nursery	BT48 8IY	41

Name	Post Code	Places
Hollybush Day Nursery	BT48 8JL	42
Kiddi-Kare Day Nursery	BT47 3DW	38
Rascals (NI) Ltd	BT47 6FE	50
Small World Day Nursery	BT48 0LZ	30
Stepping Stones	BT47 6BA	33
Wee Bears Day Nursery	BT48 0LB	36
Foyle Day Care Ltd	BT48 6RF	45
Foyle Day Care Ltd	BT47 2TA	29
Foyle Day Care Ltd	BT47 6DB	33
Magee Day Nursery	BT48 7JL	34
Kids Montessori	BT47 3DN	53
	Total	530

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the development of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre has drawn on global models of best operational practice.

(AQW 21430/11-15)

Mr Poots: A SARC Project Steering Group oversaw the development of the Rowan. Research was undertaken on evidence-based SARC service frameworks and other sexual assault services primarily across the UK. A review of evidence-informed research papers on SARCs in the UK and Sexual Assault Treatment Units in the Republic of Ireland was also carried out. Visits were arranged to SARCs in the UK including a visit to the SARC at St Mary's Manchester. Established in 1986 and the first Centre of its kind in the UK, the St Mary's SARC delivers training to and assists in the establishment of SARCs around the world. In developing the Rowan, St Mary's SARC have continued to provide valuable on-going support to the Project Steering Group.

The Rowan is an established member of the SARC Forum in the UK where best practice is shared both online (E-Forum) and at National Conferences.

The Rowan, a bespoke model, has been developed from best practice elements from a number of SARCs whilst being cognisant of and sensitive to the needs of the local population and in the context of the integrated Health and Social Care system in Northern Ireland.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre will offer a self-referral style system for first-time access to services; and whether staff will develop an action plan, in conjunction with the victim, which will specifically meet their individual needs.

(AQW 21431/11-15)

Mr Poots: Any victim of sexual violence will be able to self refer to the Rowan.

A victim who is referred to or attends the Rowan will be offered a range of services including a comprehensive assessment of their needs and depending upon those assessed needs, various support/ agreed care pathways will be followed. The emotional needs and psychological wellbeing of the victim will be considered as part of the consultation. For those adult victims who self refer into

the Rowan, staff will support the victim in making a report to the PSNI regarding the crime, where they choose to do so.

This process will enable the victim to make informed choices about what they might require to meet their specific needs at a given time. An individual care plan will be agreed with the victim and/or family, where appropriate.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the provisional operational hours of the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

(AQW 21432/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Rowan will provide 24 hour care and support, 365 days a year to victims of sexual crime. Initially, the Rowan will be open each week day from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, with an on-call response service from 5pm to 9am and 24/7 at weekends and bank holidays.

The Rowan service model may change as the service develops to reflect the needs of victims as they emerge.

Chairperson of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Chairperson of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust was dismissed.

(AQW 21437/11-15)

Mr Poots: Against a background of very serious and unresolved issues with the performance of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on emergency care, I needed to be sure that the leadership team were all working together to resolve these.

I considered it highly inappropriate for the former Chairperson, Mr Stewart, to comment on these issues as he did in a media interview on Monday, 10 December. His statement was very damaging to the reputation of the Trust and confirmed that Mr Stewart does not share my view that much better performance against the 12-hour standard for A&E Departments is both possible and essential.

I firmly believe that public service values must be at the core of Health and Social Care. Non-executive members who are appointed to the boards of HSC bodies are placed in positions of responsibility, and as such, must demonstrate the highest standards of corporate and personal conduct based on recognition that patients and clients always come first. Regrettably, in addition to a number of performance issues at the Northern HSC Trust, upon which the Chair was challenged by my Department, Mr Stewart fell short of these high standards in the days prior to his position being terminated. I took all factors into account and decided that in the interests of the organisation that his position as Chair should be terminated.

Fire and Rescue Service: Stolen Parts

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 20837/11-15, why his Department paid compensation for the stolen car parts; and to whom the compensation was paid.

(AQW 21464/11-15)

Mr Poots: A condition of the supply of the deregistered cars which were no longer roadworthy was a fixed amount for their delivery and collection once NIFRS had ceased using them for training purposes on the basis that there was an inherent value in the returned vehicles for parts and scrap. Consequently, when those parts were stolen, the company sought compensation for the value of the stolen parts. The compensation was paid to Two Trees Recovery Services.

Health and Social Care Trust: Infection Control

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 21151/11-15, how each Health and Social Care Trust is actively improving infection control and the safety of patients and hospital visitors.

(AQW 21476/11-15)

Mr Poots: Each Trust's approach to tackling healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) comprises a range of measures such as promoting good hand hygiene on the part of staff, visitors and patients; good clinical practice including the use of high-impact interventions – also known as care bundles – to prevent surgical site infections, ventilator-associated pneumonias and other infections; implementation of the regional dress code including the use of personal protective equipment; improving environmental cleanliness and hygiene, and using the Regional Healthcare Hygiene and Cleanliness Audit Tool to assess environmental cleanliness and hygiene within the Trust; prudent prescribing of antibiotics, to reduce the risk of *Clostridium difficile* infection and to address the global problem of antimicrobial resistance; diarrhoea risk assessment and the isolation of patients where necessary; water management plans, to reduce the risk of infection by water-borne organisms such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Legionella*; the use of HCAI surveillance; training and continuous professional development in respect of infection prevention and control (IPC), including the use of the online Regional Infection Prevention and Control Manual; restrictions on visiting; the targeted use of MRSA screening and the isolation of patients; the use of escalation procedures for a potential or identified outbreak, including cohort nursing and the isolation of patients; improving communications with patients and carers; and board-to-ward assurance processes for ensuring compliance with and implementation of the Trust's IPC policies.

Using these and other measures the Trusts have achieved significant reductions in HCAs. Since 2006/07 MRSA bloodstream infections in in-patients have been reduced by 72%, and since 2008/09 cases of *Clostridium difficile* infection in in-patients aged 2 years and over have been reduced by 65%. Since 2006/07 cases of *Clostridium difficile* infection in in-patients aged 65 and over have been reduced by 67%.

While I welcome this progress, which should reassure patients, their families and the general public, the culture in the health service has to be zero tolerance of preventable infections, and the service still has some way to go. In the near future I will set new HCAI reduction targets for 2013/14, taking into account the Trusts' performance in 2012/13 and the performance of the best comparable trusts in England.

A core principle of Changing the Culture 2010 is that infection prevention and control is everyone's business. It is not just a matter for doctors, nurses, cleaners and managers, but for everyone involved in the planning and delivery of healthcare. Visitors to hospitals and patients themselves have their part to play in preventing infections.

My answer to AQW 21151/11-15 referred to "Changing the Culture 2012". This should have read "Changing the Culture 2010".

Health Service Dental Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the proposed changes to Health Service dental care, for his assessment of the impact on public health of removing 3 and 6 month descaling, especially on levels of kidney disease; and the likelihood of a requirement for periodontal treatments resulting from this decision.

(AQW 21477/11-15)

Mr Poots: In order to address the pressures on the General Dental Services budget, my Department has consulted on a number of proposed changes to General Dental Services which were chosen because they would help reduce the pressures on the General Dental Services whilst minimising the impact on patient's oral health and the ability of practices to provide ongoing care and treatment in the Health Service. These included changing the proposed timescales for providing scale and polish

treatments from 3 to 9 months for most patients. The consultation on these proposals has recently finished and my Department is analysing the responses. I will consider all the information provided before making decisions on the way forward.

An international review of the evidence base for routine scale and polish at different time intervals concluded that the effects on periodontal (gum) health were unclear. Treatment for patients with chronic periodontal disease, or other health conditions, would continue to be available through the Health Service, as required.

Health Service Dental Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the proposed changes to Health Service dental care, whether his proposals to cut 10 percent from the dental budget will result in the closure of practises and knock-on additional costs to the Health Service.

(AQW 21478/11-15)

Mr Poots: As set out in the tables below, my Department has made considerable investments in General Dental Services since 2007 and further increases are planned until 2014/15.

GENERAL DENTAL SERVICES BUDGET 2007/08 – 2011/12

	2007-08 £m	2008-09 £m	2009-10 £m	2010-11 £m	2011-12 £m
Initial GDS budget allocation	73.1	73	83.9	86.9	89.2

INDICATIVE GENERAL DENTAL SERVICES BUDGET ALLOCATION 2012/13 – 2014/15

	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
General Dental Services Budget	89.4	91.7	94.2

These figures are net of income from patient contributions which are retained by dental practitioners

The proposed changes to General Dental Services did not include a 10 percent cut in the dental budget but instead included a number of proposals to help mitigate the pressures on the budget and so help ensure the best use of the available resources across the Health and Social Care sector. My Department has consulted on these changes which were chosen because they would help reduce the pressures whilst minimising the impact on patient's oral health and on the ability of practices to provide ongoing care and treatment in the Health Service. The consultation on these proposals has recently finished and my Department is currently analysing the responses.

I am aware of concerns over the potential viability of dental practices in Northern Ireland raised during the consultation and these will be considered as part of the consultation analysis.

Health Service Dental Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the proposed changes to Health Service dental care, for his assessment of the concerns of dental practices that patients will be required to pay privately for treatments currently available on the Health Service; and the impact this may have on those practices that currently receive the higher practice allowance.

(AQW 21479/11-15)

Mr Poots: In order to address the anticipated pressures on the General Dental Services budget, my Department has consulted on a number of proposed changes to General Dental Services which were chosen because they would help reduce the pressures on General Dental Services whilst minimising the impact on patient's oral health, and on the ability of practices to provide ongoing care and

treatment in the Health Service. The consultation on these proposals has recently finished and my Department is analysing the responses.

Where clinically necessary, all treatments will remain available to patients under the Health Service. My Department is currently assessing as part of the analysis of the consultation responses the concerns raised about the potential impact on claims for the higher level of practice allowance. As the Departmental consultation document explained, the intention remains to reward those practices with a clear Health Service commitment.

Mental Health Treatment

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) male; and (ii) female prisoners were transferred out of prison for mental health treatment in 2012.

(AQW 21539/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is set out in the table below.

	Male	Female
Prisoners transferred out of prison for mental health treatment	23	2

Life Expectancy Rates

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to reduce the difference in life expectancy rates between people who live in more deprived areas and people who live in less deprived areas.

(AQW 21542/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and wellbeing are influenced by a range of complex and inter-related socio-economic and environmental influences on daily life, as well as factors such as age, sex, hereditary factors and lifestyle.

Improving health and wellbeing, and in particular reducing health inequalities – the gap in health status between more affluent and disadvantaged communities and population groups – therefore requires collective and sustained effort across government and all sectors, including the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors.

Improving health and reducing health inequalities continues to be a key priority for my Department and its agencies – I have committed in the Programme for Government to increasing the overall percentage of the health allocation to public health, and the PHA, Trusts and others are working with other sectors, and with disadvantaged communities at local level, to invest in building capacity and in the design and delivery of targeted programmes.

In addition the new strategic framework for public health, currently being finalised, will seek to re-invigorate and strengthen collaboration and co-ordinated efforts across all levels of society to improve health and wellbeing and reduce differences in health outcomes between population groups and areas.

Vitamin D Intake

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will take steps to issue advice on Vitamin D intake, particularly aimed at people who may be prone to bone related conditions.

(AQW 21543/11-15)

Mr Poots: Advice on vitamin D intake was issued to Health Professionals by the Chief Medical Officer's in the UK in February 2012. This advice reminded health professionals of the significant difference to people's health they could make by raising awareness of the risk of vitamin D deficiency, particularly by ensuring that those most of risk are aware of how important it is to get enough vitamin D and how they can get access to these important daily supplements.

The advice also included information about prescribing and recommending vitamin D supplements to those groups of the population most at risk including all pregnant and breastfeeding women, all infants and young children aged 6 months to 5 years and older people aged 65 years and over who are not exposed to much sun.

In addition the Public Health Agency is training childcare providers in essential nutrition information which includes vitamin D and is developing initiatives aimed at addressing nutrition in older people where vitamin D supplementation is a key issue.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the operational roles of (i) Independent Sexual Violence Advisors; and (ii) Independent Domestic Violence Advisors within the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

(AQW 21552/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department recognises the importance of advocacy in making a real difference to people in their daily lives and in May 2012 I published a guidance document 'Developing Advocacy Services: A Policy Guide for Commissioners'.

Where sexual violence occurs within a domestic setting, victims presenting to the Rowan who are considered to be at high risk of domestic violence, will be referred through to the MARAC Process to receive the appropriate support.

Work has been ongoing with my Department, the Department of Justice and the Police Service for Northern Ireland to define and develop the roles of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service and the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service. The business case for the IDVA service has recently been approved and it is anticipated that a service provider will be appointed by the end of 2013.

It is expected that the IDVA and ISVA roles will evolve as the Rowan becomes more embedded within Northern Ireland.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department will work with the voluntary sector in the day-to-day running of the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

(AQW 21553/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Rowan will be hosted and directly managed by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The Rowan, as a regional service, will work with voluntary sector service providers through developed protocols and pathways, referring victims to relevant support services when required and with the victim's consent.

The Rowan is a collaborative service which will continue to make good the working relationships in place to promote the best outcomes for victims and their families, where applicable.

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the consultation process which was followed during the development of the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

(AQW 21554/11-15)

Mr Poots: A draft strategy for addressing sexual violence in Northern Ireland "Hidden Crimes, Secret Pain" was issued for public consultation in 2007 and made a number of wide ranging proposals including the setting up of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) to deliver co-ordinated services for victims of sexual violence in Northern Ireland. There was overwhelming support from the responses to the consultation on "Hidden Crimes, Secret Pain" for the provision of a SARC for Northern Ireland.

A multiagency SARC Project Steering Group was established in 2007 to oversee the establishment of the Rowan. The facility has been developed from best practice elements from a number of SARCs whilst being cognisant of and sensitive to the needs of the local population and in the context of the integrated Health and Social Care system in Northern Ireland.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21561/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the cost to this Department and Health and Social Care organisations for translation services for visiting foreign nationals is not recorded and therefore is not available.

However, the total cost to this Department and Health and Social Care organisations in Northern Ireland for translation services, in each of the last five years, was as follows:

2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
£2,048,030	£1,926,285	£1,754,105	£1,300,186	£1,191,964

New Hospital in Omagh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are (i) planned for; and (ii) confirmed at the new hospital in Omagh.

(AQW 21564/11-15)

Mr Poots: The new hospital in Omagh is designed to accommodate all clinical services planned and confirmed in the approved business case. These include inpatient beds for intermediate care, palliative care and cardiac assessment; renal dialysis services; outpatients; day surgery; endoscopy suite; urgent care; imaging including CT scanning; children's centre; woman's health unit; cardiac investigations; specialist care; rapid response service; chronic disease management; pharmacy; ophthalmology; physiotherapy; chiropody; and occupational therapy. There will also be a new Hospital Sterilisation and Disinfection Unit for instrument sterilisation.

The facility will also accommodate all services currently delivered from Omagh Health Centre including four GP practices; treatment room; community dental; community paediatrics; district nursing and health visiting. Community mental health teams will also move to the new facility.

Children in Residential Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of children in residential care; and (ii) the total cost to his Department of providing care for these children, in each month of the last five years.

(AQW 21566/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information on the number of children in residential care is not centrally available monthly. Table A below contains the number of children in residential care at 31 March for each of the last five years. This information can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics 2011/12' on the Department's website at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

Costs of providing residential care are also not centrally available monthly. Costs for each of the last five years are set out in Table A below.

TABLE A: THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE AT 31 MARCH 2007/08 – 2011/12 AND COST OF PROVIDING THIS CARE.

Year	*Number of Children in Residential Care	**Total Cost of Providing Care £m
2007/08	319	£23.4m
2008/09	308	£25.7m
2009/10	287	£26.6m
2010/11	239	£25.8m
2011/12	231	£26.7m

Source: *Community Information Branch, DHSSPSNI

** Health & Social Care Trusts

Children in Foster Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of children in foster care; and (ii) the total cost to his Department of providing care for these children, in each month of the last five years.

(AQW 21568/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of children in foster care is not held centrally by month. Table A below contains the number of children in foster care at 31 March for each of the last five years. This information can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics 2011/12' on the Department's website at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

Costs of providing Foster Care are also not centrally available monthly. Costs for each of the last five years are set out in Table A below

TABLE A: THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE AT 31 MARCH 2007/08 – 2011/12 AND COSTS OF PROVIDING THIS CARE.

Year	*The Number of Children in Foster Care	**Total Cost of providing Foster Care
2007/08	1,376	£25.7m
2008/09	1,607	£25.6m
2009/10	1,687	£28.9m
2010/11	1,862	£29.5m
2011/12	1,946	£32.0m

Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether an information sharing agreement with relevant voluntary organisations will be operational for the opening of the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

(AQW 21582/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Rowan has commenced drafting an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA). The Rowan will seek guidance from the Information Commissioner to ensure the ISA developed is robust and meets the required information governance standards as would be expected from any HSC body.

Due to the very extent and nature of the work and number of agencies that the Rowan will potentially liaise with, this work will be on-going and will not be completed before the first phase of the service goes live on 7 May 2013. However, the Rowan will follow best practice in respect of information sharing and will obtain consent from a victim for referral onto other services if required. All referral forms will differ according to each agency/service and these will be completed with and signed off by the victim where appropriate. Only information that is essential will be shared with the receiving agency.

Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the initiatives introduced by his Department in response to the 2004 Report from the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities; (ii) which initiatives currently focus on the issues raised in the 2004 report; and (iii) the results of any evaluations into initiatives designed to address the issues raised in this report.

(AQW 21600/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Renewing Communities was issued in 2006 as a response to the issues raised by the Taskforce Report. The response contained an action plan with more than 60 actions 9 of which related to my Department. These actions related to: additional speech and language therapists; expansion of the Community in School Programme and Parenting Support Programme; an employability initiative in Health and Social Services; extension of part-time nursing training; youth mentoring and support; a walk-in crisis centre; the New Strategic Direction to Combat Drug and Alcohol Misuse; and Mental Health Investment through the provision of trauma and counselling services.
- (ii) The Taskforce report identified specific health issues relating to mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide and self harming, poor diet, obesity, speech and language problems, teenage pregnancy, and sexual health. The main vehicle for addressing such health inequalities at a strategic and cross cutting level is the public health strategy Investing for Health 2002–2012 which can be viewed on the Department's website at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/showconsultations?txtid=10415>. This is underpinned by a wide range of individual strategies which address the specific issues.
- (iii) A review of Investing for Health was published in 2010 and can be viewed on the Department's website at - http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/health_development-final_report_-_september_2010.pdf.

Following a consultation exercise in 2012 an updated strategic public health framework is currently being finalised - <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/fit-and-well-consultation-document.pdf> . Key aims of the new framework will be to strengthen collaboration at strategic, regional and local levels, to improve health and wellbeing overall, and to reduce differences in health outcomes between population groups and areas, which result from a wide range of social determinants.

Ambulances in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many ambulances are based in Ballymena; and whether these ambulances are equipped to deal with a full range of medical emergencies.

(AQW 21602/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service provides a range of ambulance cover based in Ballymena. This is as follows:

Accident and Emergency Fleet

There are five A&E ambulances and one rapid response vehicle (RRV) equipped to deal with the full range of medical emergencies and non-emergency calls. The RRV does not transport patients.

Patient Care Service (Non-Emergency) Fleet

One sitting case vehicle, one intermediate care vehicle and one bariatric vehicle provide transport for non-emergency patients and do not respond to 999 emergencies.

It is important to bear in mind that the nearest ambulance resource is assigned to an incident, irrespective of incident location; therefore an emergency response to the Ballymena area may not necessarily be attended by a vehicle based in that area.

Carlisle House, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the criteria for admittance to Carlisle House, Belfast.

(AQW 21604/11-15)

Mr Poots: Carlisle House is an independent provider and, therefore, they set the criteria for admission to the service. Details can be found on their website: <http://www.carlislehouse.org/index.php>.

Both the Belfast and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts commission services from Carlisle House – and both Trusts have agreed referral pathways in place to clients to access the service. This means that if a person lives within the Belfast Trust area, an application form can be requested directly from Carlisle House, or referral can be made through the local Community Addiction Team. If resident within the Northern Trust area, individuals will need to contact the local Community Addiction Teams based at either Parkmore Avenue in Ballymena, or Railway Street in Ballymena, who can refer clients on to Carlisle House. Normally, clients will have been referred to their local Community Addiction Teams by their General Practitioner.

Individuals residing in other Trust areas can self-refer privately – this can be done by completing an application form available on request or online, and by sending it to Carlisle House.

Facilities Available for People with Addictions

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what ‘drying out’ facilities are available for people who have an addiction to alcohol or drugs.

(AQW 21605/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health & Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency commissions a full range of detoxification and stabilisation programmes in each Health and Social Care Trust area. These services are normally provided or managed by the local Community Addiction Teams.

In line with guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, detoxification programmes can often be delivered within the community (i.e. in an individual’s own home or within a family environment) as part of a shared care partnership arrangement with the individual’s own GP. Admission to an inpatient facility can also be arranged in instances where detoxification cannot be provided safely in a community setting, or where previous community-based attempts to provide such care have failed. The exact provider/unit, however, will depend upon individual specific needs – it may in the first instance be more appropriate to initiate detoxification within a medical inpatient facility, e.g. if there are significant medical issues (risk of seizure/epilepsy or other co-existing medical conditions).

Drug and Alcohol Strategy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many steering groups have been set up by Health and Social Care Trusts to implement the Drug and Alcohol strategy;

(ii) to outline the process by which people are appointed to the steering groups; and (iii) what role the Public Health Agency plays.

(AQW 21608/11-15)

Mr Poots: I launched the revised strategy to prevent and address the harm related to alcohol and drugs, known as the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD) Phase 2, in January 2012. Implementation of the non-Departmental outcomes in the strategy is led by the Public Health Agency (PHA).

In terms of local implementation, the PHA has established five Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams (DACTs) to drive forward action at the local level – the Trusts have not been asked to establish any formal structures in respect of the NSD Phase 2. Membership of the DACTs is broadly drawn from the following groups but reflects local needs:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| ■ Health and Social Care Trusts | ■ PHA |
| ■ PSNI | ■ HSCB |
| ■ Local Government | ■ NIHE |
| ■ Education and Library Boards | ■ PBNI |
| ■ Voluntary and Community Sector | ■ Service Users |

Each DACT is also supported by an independent sector forum that represents the views of local community and voluntary sector organisations that are involved in addressing substance misuse. Any organisation or individual, who wishes to be involved in the work of their local DACT or independent sector forum, should contact their local PHA office in the first instance (<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/offices>).

A number of regional groups are also in place to oversee policy development and implementation.

People with Drug and Alcohol Addictions

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has under the Fit and Well - Changing Lives strategy to help people who have an addiction to alcohol or drugs.

(AQW 21609/11-15)

Mr Poots: The intention of the new strategic framework for public health, currently being finalised, is to provide overarching strategic direction to strengthen co-ordinated effort across society to tackle the wide range of factors that influence health and inequalities in health and wellbeing, thereby creating the conditions to support improved population health. The public health framework will continue to be underpinned by strategies that focus on specific issues such as alcohol and drug misuse; suicide and self-harm prevention; and mental health promotion.

In 2012, I launched the revised cross-departmental strategy to prevent and address the harm related to alcohol and drugs, known as the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2. Approximately £8 million is allocated to its implementation each year, and additional funding is provided through the mental health budget for the provision of treatment and support services.

This Strategy seeks to direct action across five pillars: education, prevention and early intervention; harm reduction; treatment and support; law and criminal justice; and monitoring, evaluation and research. It also contains a number of priority areas for action including: developing a regional commissioning framework for alcohol and drug services; tackling drug-related anti-social behaviour; targeting those at risk and vulnerable; reducing the availability of illicit drugs; and addressing local community issues.

In addition, the link between alcohol, drugs and suicide is well established, and in 2012 I also launched the refreshed Protect Life suicide prevention strategy which identifies drugs and alcohol misuse

as a key target area in its revised action plan. Protect Life funding supports counselling for those experiencing emotional distress and suicidal thoughts due to problems with addiction.

Alcohol Misuse Among Young People

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans are in place to tackle alcohol misuse among vulnerable adults and young people.

(AQW 21619/11-15)

Mr Poots: Preventing and addressing the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse is a key priority for my Department. To tackle this issue, I launched the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2 in January 2012.

This Strategy recognises the need to take a universal preventative approach to addressing substance misuse, but also acknowledges the need to target particular actions and support at those who are at risk and vulnerable – including young people. This includes the provision of information, education, life skills and early interventions.

In addition, the Public Health Agency commissions a range of local alcohol and drug counselling and mentoring services for children and young people across Northern Ireland. A Regional Initial Assessment Tool has also been developed allowing non-specialist workers to screen and assess a young person's alcohol and drug misuse, provide initial intervention, and signpost those who require additional support into the correct service. Recently, a "one-stop-shop" initiative to support young people around substance misuse and other health issues was successfully piloted and is now being rolled out across Northern Ireland.

At the local level, Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams develop local action plans and commission a range of services to meet the needs of their local populations – as part of this work they are specifically tasked with identifying, and putting in place services to support those at risk or vulnerable to substance misuse.

Fluoride Added to Drinking Water

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will undertake a study to assess the intake of fluoride by the population in advance of any decision on introducing fluoride to the drinking water.

(AQW 21629/11-15)

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. Given the resource implications of such an assessment, it would be inappropriate to make a commitment at this time however, should such a consultation proceed, appropriate scientific and medical evidence will also be gathered and considered at that stage.

New Local Prescribing Formula for Drugs

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that a formula for prescribing drugs was designed in the Lothian area of Scotland, (i) why the Health and Social Care Board is designing a new local prescribing formula for drugs; (ii) to outline the purpose of the new pharmacy software; (iii) how much has been spent on the new prescribing formula, including the cost of the new software; (iv) how long the process has taken.

(AQW 21662/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) My Department requested in Priorities for Action 2010/11, that the Health and Social Care Board should establish a formulary for Primary and Secondary Care by the end of March 2011.

Formularies from other areas of the UK, including Lothian, were reviewed and consideration was given to adopting them for use in Northern Ireland. However, it was noted that this may not lead to local engagement with the formulary; may not provide for delivery or consistent outcomes and ultimately could lead to legal or clinical challenge. The Board, therefore, developed and consulted on a local process which is considered to be robust, transparent and will withstand scrutiny from various interested parties.

- (ii) The Northern Ireland formulary will be presented on the internet and will be designed to enable its use by prescribing clinicians.
- (iii) My Department allocated £80k per year, to the Board, on a non-recurrent basis in 2012/13 and 2013/14 for staff and other expenses to establish the formulary. A separate IT project has been initiated to enable the use of the formulary via a website. To date no money has been spent on this.
- (iv) Between November 2011 and March 2013 individual therapeutic chapters were developed and published. The establishment of a Northern Ireland formulary for Primary and Secondary Care is largely complete and the focus for future work will be on review, refinement and monitoring of the formulary

Business Services Organisation: Cost of Processing Paper Prescriptions

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much is spent annually by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) on processing paper prescriptions; (ii) why the process has not been computerised; and (iii) how the BSO plans to ensure that quality and safe prescribing is not compromised.

(AQW 21663/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I have been advised by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) that the annual amount associated with processing prescriptions is £1.4million.
- (ii) Much of the actual processing of prescription forms by the BSO is automated and in recent years the organisation has invested heavily in further automation of the process. I have been advised that the computerisation of prescription submission remains an aspiration of the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board.
- (iii) The BSO is commissioned by the HSC Board to pay Pharmaceutical Contractors accurately and promptly for the prescriptions they dispense. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure safety and quality in prescribing and the Board monitors this through its contracts with GP practices and other prescribers.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of rapid response vehicles that are operational through the 24hr cycle in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 21671/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) rapid response vehicles (RRVs) are deployed on the basis of its divisional areas which are broadly coterminous with Health and Social Care Trust areas. RRVs operate between 0800hours and midnight and are currently deployed as follows:

Health & Social Care Trust	Belfast	South Eastern	Western	Northern	Southern	Total
0800-1400hrs	3.5	4	3.5	3.5	3	17.5
1400-2000hrs	7	8	7	7	6	35
2000-Midnight	3.5	4	3.5	3.5	3	17.5

Note: Where a figure indicates a half, this illustrates daily variability ie alternating between 3 and 4 vehicles.

It is important to bear in mind that the nearest available emergency resource is assigned to an incident, irrespective of incident location; therefore, an emergency response to a particular area may not necessarily be attended by a vehicle based in that area.

Hip Replacement Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area that were assessed as needing hip replacement surgery in each of the last three years.

(AQW 21673/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not readily available on the number of people in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area that were assessed as needing hip replacement surgery.

However, information is available on the number of patients on the waiting list for hip replacement surgery for those patients who reside in the Northern Local Commissioning Group (NLCG) area. The table below details the number of patients waiting at 31st December 2012, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, and at the end of the same quarter in each of the two years previous.

Quarter Ending	Total Number of Patients from the NLCG Waiting
December 2010	189
December 2011	371
December 2012	346

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

In addition, information is available on the number of hip replacement procedures carried out in HSC Hospitals in Northern Ireland for those patients who reside in the Northern Local Commissioning Group area, in each of the last three years.

Year	Number of Procedures Completed for Patients Residing in the NLCG	
	Elective	Non-elective
2009/10	515	255
2010/11	488	275
2011/12	542	282

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

It should be noted that hip replacement procedures were identified using the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys tabular list of operations and procedures (OPCS-4) codes W37, W38, W39, W46, W47, W48, W93, W94 and W95. The figures in the answer refer to operations carried out in the primary procedural position only.

Hip Replacement Surgery

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail for each Health and Social Care Trust the (i) average; and (ii) longest waiting time for hip replacement surgery, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 21674/11-15)

Mr Poots: Hip replacement surgery, in the T & O specialty, is only provided in the Belfast, Southern and Western HSC Trusts.

My Department collects waiting time information on the basis of how long patients are currently waiting for inpatient admission and not the completed length of time they waited before admission. Information relates to patients still waiting for inpatient admission at the end of each quarter.

- (i) The average number of weeks waiting for hip replacement surgery in the T & O specialty in each HSC Trust, at 31st December 2012, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, and the position at the end of the same quarter in each of the two years previous, is detailed in the table below.

Quarter Ending	Average Waiting Time (Weeks Waiting), by HSC Trust		
	Belfast	Southern	Western
December 2010	10.0	12.0	27.0
December 2011	17.6	18.2	20.2
December 2012	14.2	16.3	22.4

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

- (ii) The table below presents information on the longest waiting time position of those patients still on the waiting list for hip replacement surgery, during each of the last three years.

Year	Longest Waiting Time Position (Weeks Waiting), by HSC Trust		
	Belfast	Southern	Western
2010	72.9	51.6	63.2
2011	44.1	48.5	67.2
2012	72.1	29.2	61.5

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

It should be noted that hip replacement procedures were identified using the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys tabular list of operations and procedures (OPCS-4) codes W37, W38, W39, W46, W47, W48, W93, W94 and W95. The figures in the answer refer to operations carried out in the primary procedural position only.

National Pensioners Convention's Dignity Code

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made on the implementation of the National Pensioners Convention's Dignity Code.

(AQW 21679/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Dignity Code, developed by the National Pensioners Convention, is an excellent piece of work which looks to uphold the rights and dignity of our elderly population.

I put great importance on maintaining the dignity of our elderly population, and the work done by organisations such as the National Pensioners Convention will be invaluable in ensuring this is achieved.

I forwarded the Dignity Code in September last year, and again on April 18th of this year, to the Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Board, with a request that the code be publicised throughout the HSC sector.

Audiology Clinics

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail current levels of administrative support for each audiology clinic.

(AQW 21681/11-15)

Mr Poots: The staffing levels requested are shown in the tables below. These figures were obtained from the Health and Social Care Trusts and have not been validated by the Department.

AQW 21681/11-15

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF IN AUDIOLOGY CLINICS AT APRIL 2013

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE
Belfast HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	0.38
	Band 3 Admin	2	1.2
	Band 2 Admin (agency)	3	2.0
Northern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	2	1.6
	Band 3 Admin	2	2.0
Southern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	2	0.9
	Band 3 Admin	4	3
	Band 4 Admin	1	1
South Eastern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	1
	Band 8a Audiology Manager	1	0.8
Western HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	0.5

AQW 21682/11-15

Audiology clinic staffing at April 2013

Abbreviations- Assistant Technical Officer (ATO); Medical Technical Officer (MTO); Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP)

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE/Clinic Hours
Belfast HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO (NHSP)	7	4.05
	Band 5 MTO	8	7.5
	Band 5 MTO (Agency)	5	5.0
	Band 6 MTO	4	3.6
	Band 7 MTO	2	1.8
	Band 8A MTO	2	2.0
	Band 8B MTO	1	1.0

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE/Clinic Hours
Northern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	1	0.6
	Band 3 ATO (NHSP)	8	4.39
	Band 5 MTO	9	6.96
	Band 6 MTO	1	1.0
	Band 7 NHSP Co-ordinator (MTO)	1	0.8
	Band 7 MTO	2	2.0
	Band 8 MTO	1	1.0
Southern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO (NHSP)	7	3.5
	Band 4 ATO	3	2
	Band 5 MTO	1	1
	Band 6 MTO	8	7
	Band 7 MTO	4	4 (inc. 0.5 dedicated to NHSP)
	Band 8a MTO	1	1
	Locum Audiologists*	2 (plus 1 'as and when required')	0.4 (plus 'as a when required')
South-Eastern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	2	1.06
	Band 5 MTO	5	4.54
	Band 6 MTO	3	2.63
	Band 8a MTO	1	0.2
Western HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	1	0.42
	Band 3 ATO	1	1.0
	Band 5 MTO	4	3.33
	Band 6 MTO	6	5.5
	Band 8a MTO	2	1.88

*The Southern HSC Trust employ two locums working one day a week, and a third on an "as-and-when" basis in order to reduce waiting list time.

Audiology Staffing

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current level of audiology staffing in each Health and Social Care Trust, including locum support.
(AQW 21682/11-15)

Mr Poots: The staffing levels requested are shown in the tables below. These figures were obtained from the Health and Social Care Trusts and have not been validated by the Department.

AQW 21681/11-15

Administrative support staff in Audiology clinics at April 2013

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE
Belfast HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	0.38
	Band 3 Admin	2	1.2
	Band 2 Admin (agency)	3	2.0
Northern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	2	1.6
	Band 3 Admin	2	2.0
Southern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	2	0.9
	Band 3 Admin	4	3
	Band 4 Admin	1	1
South Eastern HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	1
	Band 8a Audiology Manager	1	0.8
Western HSC Trust	Band 2 Admin	1	0.5

AQW 21682/11-15

Audiology clinic staffing at April 2013

Abbreviations- Assistant Technical Officer (ATO); Medical Technical Officer (MTO); Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP)

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE/Clinic Hours
Belfast HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO (NHSP)	7	4.05
	Band 5 MTO	8	7.5
	Band 5 MTO (Agency)	5	5.0
	Band 6 MTO	4	3.6
	Band 7 MTO	2	1.8
	Band 8A MTO	2	2.0
	Band 8B MTO	1	1.0
Northern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	1	0.6
	Band 3 ATO (NHSP)	8	4.39
	Band 5 MTO	9	6.96
	Band 6 MTO	1	1.0
	Band 7 NHSP Co-ordinator (MTO)	1	0.8
	Band 7 MTO	2	2.0
	Band 8 MTO	1	1.0

Trust	Grade	Headcount	WTE/Clinic Hours
Southern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO (NHSP)	7	3.5
	Band 4 ATO	3	2
	Band 5 MTO	1	1
	Band 6 MTO	8	7
	Band 7 MTO	4	4 (inc. 0.5 dedicated to NHSP)
	Band 8a MTO	1	1
	Locum Audiologists*	2 (plus 1 'as and when required')	0.4 (plus 'as a when required')
South-Eastern HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	2	1.06
	Band 5 MTO	5	4.54
	Band 6 MTO	3	2.63
	Band 8a MTO	1	0.2
Western HSC Trust	Band 2 ATO	1	0.42
	Band 3 ATO	1	1.0
	Band 5 MTO	4	3.33
	Band 6 MTO	6	5.5
	Band 8a MTO	2	1.88

*The Southern HSC Trust employ two locums working one day a week, and a third on an "as-and-when" basis in order to reduce waiting list time.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Audiology Staff

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when recruitment will take place for audiology staff in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 21683/11-15)

Mr Poots: Recruitment is a matter for individual Health and Social Care Trusts based on service needs and available resources. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has confirmed that a recruitment exercise in Audiology is underway at present with posts currently advertised on the HSC Recruit website (as of 16/04/2013).

Royal Victoria Hospital: Audiology Clinic

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the audiology clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast will be relocated; and if so, what the timeline is for the relocation.
(AQW 21684/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that it has no plans to relocate the audiology clinic based at the Royal Victoria Hospital. However the Trust has also advised that it will be undertaking the installation of sound-proof booths in the audiology rooms to improve the quality of the hearing testing environment in order to meet quality standards with regards to soundproofing.

Children in Foster Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the percentage; and (ii) the total number of children placed with a foster carer from an independent provider, in each of the last five years; and (iii) the total cost of providing this care, broken down by each provider.

(AQW 21702/11-15)

Mr Poots: (i) and (ii)

Table A below sets out the number and percentage of children placed with an independent foster care provider at 31 March. Information is only available centrally for 2011 and 2012.

TABLE A NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN PLACED WITH INDEPENDENT FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS AT 31 MARCH*

	31 March 2011	31 March 2012
Number of children placed with independent foster care provider	25	81
Number of children placed in foster care	1,862	1,946
Percentage of fostered children placed with independent foster care provider	1%	4%

Source: HSCB Delegated Statutory Functions Corporate Parenting Returns

* Please note that this covers the number of children in care at one point in time and not the total number of children during the year.

(iii) Table B shows the total cost of funding provided by the Department to Independent Foster Care Providers in each of the last five years. As a result of reconfiguration of systems and financial records under the Review of Public Administration some Trusts are unable to provide a breakdown or an analysis over 5 years in the time available.

TABLE B COST OF FUNDING TO INDEPENDENT FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS

Independent Provider	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Action for Children	n/a	n/a	n/a	£621,084	£739,269
Barnardos	£732,060	£829,648	£717,111	£888,634	£867,971
Foster Care Associates/ Core Assets	£518,572	£897,874	£1,290,850	£3,057,360	£3,196,935
Kindercare Fostering	£52,578	£108,669	£281,124	£562,500	£498,547
Perpetual Fostering	n/a	n/a	n/a	£59,279	£6,731
Total	£1,303,210	£1,836,191	£2,289,085	£5,188,857	£5,309,453

Source: HSC Trusts

Foster Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have undertaken foster care, in each month of the last five years; and to detail (i) the number; and (ii) the

percentage of foster carers who provided care to children at no cost to the Department during that period.

(AQW 21703/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people who have undertaken foster care in each month of the last five years is not centrally available. Table A sets out the number of registered foster carers in each month from April 2010.

TABLE A NUMBER OF REGISTERED FOSTER CARERS¹, APRIL 2010 TO FEBRUARY 2013

	Number or registered foster carers			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
January		1,960	2,004	2,105
February		1,973	2,019	2,119
March		1,969	2,010	
April	1,938	1,955	2,016	
May	1,966	1,977	2,033	
June	1,991	1,981	2,036	
July	1,953	1,967	2,046	
August	1,944	1,976	2,073	
September	1,976	1,977	2,076	
October	1,949	1,981	2,083	
November	1,942	1,995	2,093	
December	1,937	2,003	2,089	

Source: Priority 5 monitoring, Health Social Care Board

- 1 Foster carers may or may not have a child or children placed with them at each point in time.
- (i) (ii) All registered foster carers, including kinship foster carers, in Northern Ireland receive a maintenance allowance for those children placed with them under the Model Payment Scheme. The Scheme was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2006.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment has been made of the percentage of children who have not been given the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. **(AQW 21733/11-15)**

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland, the percentage of children who had not received the first dose of MMR vaccine by the age of five years was about 3% in each of the last three years. In 2012, we were the first UK country to achieve 95% uptake by 2 years of age for the first dose. The percentage of children here who had not received the second dose of MMR vaccine by the age of five was under 10% in each of the last three years.

This high uptake and the resulting good herd immunity means that, although there are some unimmunised or incompletely immunised children, even if sporadic cases of measles occur, any resulting outbreaks are likely to be small and readily contained.

MMR can be given to individuals of any age. I would encourage parents of children who have not been given the MMR to contact their GP to ensure their children are given the best protection against these serious diseases.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to increase the uptake amongst children of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine.

(AQW 21734/11-15)

Mr Poots: Increasing the uptake rate of MMR vaccine has been given priority for many years in Northern Ireland and by doing so we have consistently achieved uptake rates above the UK average. In 2012 NI became the first UK country to achieve 95% uptake by 2 years of age for the first dose.

Measures that have contributed to these high rates include:

- providing high quality information and training to those health professionals who are dealing directly with parents so that they can educate them and answer their concerns;
- providing information for parents, ranging from leaflets to detailed question-and-answer briefings so that parents can choose the level of information they require;
- issuing press statements to counter misinformation, reassure parents and provide information about the vaccine and about measles, mumps and rubella;
- giving GPs, health visitors and other nurses feedback on their uptake rates, in order to help those who encounter lower rates to find ways to raise them including visiting practices with comparatively low rates and discussing ways of improving; and
- running workshops for areas with comparatively low rates.

The Public Health Agency closely monitors the number of cases of measles in Northern Ireland and takes appropriate action where necessary.

People with Eating Disorders

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what specialised (i) services; (ii) facilities; and (iii) staff are available for treating people with eating disorders, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 21744/11-15)

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

Since 2010 adult inpatient treatment for eating disorders has been provided in each Trust area. These beds are managed by specially trained medical/psychiatric staff, supported on an in-reach basis by staff from community based eating disorder teams.

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

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

Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia Nervosa

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in each Health and Social Care Trust area have been diagnosed with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa, in

each of the last five years; and how the most recent annual figure available compares to (i) 10; and (ii) 20 years ago.

(AQW 21745/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available centrally on the number of people diagnosed with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa.

However information is available on the number of admissions to a HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland with a diagnosis of either anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa in each of the last five years.

HSC Trust	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Belfast	19	36	27	22	31
South Eastern	17	21	22	35	25
Northern	15	19	12	20	21
Southern	3	10	11	10	17
Western	16	12	14	27	19
NI Total	70	98	86	114	113

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System

Note that the figures shown above exclude anyone admitted under a mental health specialty.

It is possible to compare the number of admissions to hospital with a diagnosis of either anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa in 2011/12 to the number admitted in 2001/02. However information is not available for the 1991/92 year.

HSC Trust	2001/02	2011/12
Belfast	25	31
South Eastern	10	25
Northern	28	21
Southern	18	17
Western	6	19
NI Total	87	113

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System

Note that the figures shown above exclude anyone admitted under a mental health specialty.

The following International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision (ICD10) codes were used to identify admissions with a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa, in any diagnostic position:-

F50.0 – Anorexia Nervosa

F50.2 – Bulimia Nervosa

Children and Young Persons' Plans

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he ensures that all young people and their families receive the appropriate support under looked after children and young persons plans.

(AQW 21754/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are a number of mechanisms already in place by which my Department ensures that all looked after children and young people and their families receive appropriate support. These include a statutory process of review of all children looked after by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, voluntary organisations or in a privately run registered children's homes. In addition, a Scheme for the Delegation of Statutory Functions is in place. Under that Scheme, HSC Trusts are required to report to the Health and Social Care Board on their performance in respect of all of their statutory functions, including those functions which relate to looked after children. In turn, the HSC Board is required to report to the Department on an annual basis on the HSC Trusts' performance of its statutory functions.

We are in the process of strengthening current arrangements by way of the development of standards and regulations; including Minimum Standards for Children's Homes and Fostering Services Standards and Regulations. It is also intended that the Adoption and Children Bill, scheduled for introduction in the Assembly next year, will include provision which will place the current system of looked after children care planning on a statutory basis.

Finally, my Department's Commissioning Plan Direction to the HSC Board requires it to ensure that statutory responsibility to assess the needs, safeguard, protect and support vulnerable groups will be met. It also requires that the Board's Commissioning Plan demonstrates how the HSC Trusts, as corporate parents, will be expected to meet the specific needs of looked after children by providing high quality enduring placements for them and supporting their transition out of care and into adult life.

Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Services

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will make an announcement on the future of paediatric congenital cardiac services in Belfast.

(AQW 21773/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following public consultation the Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Surgical services (PCCS) Working Group, established by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), produced a post-consultation framework which identified 8 options for the future commissioning of PCCS for Northern Ireland. The Working Group has been asked to consider these options and recommend to the HSCB a preferred way forward (PWF) for the future commissioning of this service. It is expected that the HSCB will receive the recommended PWF later this month and if it is approved by the Board it will be forwarded to my Department for consideration by me. I am aiming to announce my final decision on the arrangements for the future commissioning of PCCS services shortly after receiving the Board's recommendation.

Cancelled Surgical Appointments

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the cost to the public purse of surgical appointments being cancelled at short notice, through no fault of the patients; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that Health and Social Care Trusts improve their performance in this regard and that patients will no longer be inconvenienced by short notice cancellations.

(AQW 21798/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is currently not possible to quantify the cost to the public purse of outpatient appointments cancelled by hospitals as not all clinics recorded as being cancelled result in a loss of capacity.

The Integrated Elective Access Protocol (IEAP) requires consultants to give at least six weeks notice of planned annual or study leave. Compliance with the protocol reduces the likelihood of hospital cancellations at short notice as Trusts can be confident that planned clinics will take place. It should be noted however, that there will always be occasions when short notice hospital cancellations are unavoidable if, for example, a consultant becomes unavailable due to sickness, bereavement etc.

The position in relation to the number of outpatient appointments cancelled by hospitals has improved over the last four years, from 12.5% in 2008/09 to 10.8% in 2011/12 which indicates measures are having a positive impact.

Foster Care

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list each independent foster carer provider which his Department has funded; and for a breakdown of the funding provided in each month of the last five years.

(AQW 21800/11-15)

Mr Poots: Independent foster care providers funded by Health and Social Care Trusts over the last five years are:

Independent Provider	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Action for Children	n/a	n/a	n/a	£621,084	£739,269
Barnardos	£732,060	£829,648	£717,111	£888,634	£867,971
Foster Care Associates/Core Assets	£518,572	£897,874	£1,290,850	£3,057,360	£3,196,935
Kindercare Fostering	£52,578	£108,669	£281,124	£562,500	£498,547
Perpetual Fostering	n/a	n/a	n/a	£59,279	£6,731

Where relevant, a breakdown of the funding provided on a monthly basis over the last five years is attached separately. As a result of reconfiguration of systems and financial records under the Review of Public Administration, some Trusts are unable to provide a detailed breakdown or an analysis over 5 years in the time available.

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
April	£0	£0	£0	£6,351	£42,053
May	£0	£0	£0	£0	£66,976
June	£0	£0	£0	£72,758	£62,222
July	£0	£0	£0	£24,876	£72,864
Aug	£0	£0	£0	£19,124	£52,790
Sept	£0	£0	£0	£62,896	£53,179
Oct	£0	£0	£0	£52,094	£90,315
Nov	£0	£0	£0	£143,582	£75,702
Dec	£0	£0	£0	£49,069	£42,125
Jan	£0	£0	£0	£95,085	£68,299
Feb	£0	£0	£0	£50,199	£54,422
Mar	£0	£0	£0	£45,051	£58,322
Total	£0	£0	£0	£621,084	£739,269

BARNARDOS

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
April	£61,486	£64,410	£57,036	£68,015	£62,883
May	£51,808	£11,351	£58,742	£83,742	£75,414
June	£92,782	£89,251	£59,602	£66,724	£71,821
July	£60,634	£45,677	£58,813	£80,861	£74,726
Aug	£78,158	£46,583	£59,029	£63,582	£82,626
Sept	£25,156	£171,193	£60,176	£99,504	£71,810
Oct	£72,506	£59,383	£64,035	£74,917	£70,473
Nov	£70,317	£54,548	£61,540	£79,856	£72,008
Dec	£145,829	£105,393	£63,667	£63,791	£73,941
Jan	£50,915	£45,806	£58,921	£73,372	£73,941
Feb	£14,236	£54,741	£59,156	£8,469	£64,336
Mar	£8,233	£81,312	£56,394	£125,802	£73,992
Total	£732,060	£829,648	£717,111	£888,634	£867,971

FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATES/CORE ASSETS

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
April	£90	£4,819	£2,235	£177,256	£133,261
May	£93	£52	£158,865	£193,080	£309,109
June	£15,918	£0	£118,441	£186,304	£216,904
July	£9,393	£55,974	£118,337	£215,887	£230,601
Aug	£9,172	£4,949	£45,072	£178,913	£218,014
Sept	£5,309	£14,411	£167,228	£180,198	£188,688
Oct	£0	£5,088	£133,246	£191,181	£186,864
Nov	£4,984	£83,608	£14,267	£193,639	£314,907
Dec	£5,903	£48,197	£199,100	£178,477	£210,186
Jan	£4,911	£59,978	£72,905	£363,024	£200,780
Feb	£9,949	£54,285	£103,230	£135,339	£222,964
Mar	£97	£92,904	£54,761	£271,791	£289,251
Sub Total	£65,817	£424,266	£1,187,687	£2,465,088	£2,721,529
	£452,755*	£455,608*	£103,163*	£592,272*	£475,406*
Total	£518,572	£879,874	£1,290,850	£3,057,360	£3,196,935

* Figures cannot be broken down by month.

KINDERCARE FOSTERING

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
April	£0	£60	£12,706	£25,463	£38,414
May	£0	£0	£13,145	£36,046	£63,634
June	£0	£6,129	£33,641	£63,478	£51,191
July	£0	£18,572	£13,599	£45,236	£48,684
Aug	£0	£0	£20,677	£60,802	£55,100
Sept	£0	£18,555	£27,572	£76,027	£4,441
Oct	£0	£0	£23,657	£2,997	£67,832
Nov	£297	£277	£16,693	£39,529	£34,816
Dec	£6,592	£12,711	£30,824	£22,537	£28,379
Jan	£989	£12,504	£27,319	£99,410	£51,031
Feb	£6,129	£18,756	£32,191	£4,922	£36,182
Mar	£5,734	£12,009	£27,323	£86,053	£17,278
Sub Total	£19,741	£99,574	£279,345	£447,765	£496,984
	£32,837*	£9,095*	£1,779*	£0	£1,563*
Total	£52,578	£108,669	£281,124	£562,500	£498,547

* Figures cannot be broken down by month

PERPETUAL FOSTERING LTD

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
April	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
May	£0	£0	£0	£0	£6,713
June	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
July	£0	£0	£0	£6,514	£0
Aug	£0	£0	£0	£6,713	£0
Sept	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Oct	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Nov	£0	£0	£0	£19,977	£0
Dec	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Jan	£0	£0	£0	£13,246	£0
Feb	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Mar	£0	£0	£0	£12,811	£0
Total	£0	£0	£0	£59,279	£6,731

Alzheimers Society Low Expectations Report

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the findings of the February 2013 Alzheimers Society Low Expectations report, whether he will consider advising care homes in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to use 'This is Me' as a means of supporting people with dementia to live well while resident in care homes in all the Health and Social Care Trusts. **(AQW 21806/11-15)**

Mr Poots: You will be aware that I published the regional Dementia Strategy in November 2011. The importance of providing care for the whole person, with awareness of the person's background, history and personal preferences, is acknowledged within the strategy.

The Alzheimer's Society has representation on the Dementia Strategy Implementation Group, which is co-chaired by the HSCB and PHA, and which is tasked with implementing the actions from the regional Dementia Strategy.

The Alzheimer's Society is ideally placed to bring tools, such as "This is me" forward for consideration by the Group as they work towards improving the care and support provided to people living with dementia.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the introduction of the abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programme in June 2012 for men aged 65 and over, to outline the early results of the tests. **(AQW 21820/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The aim of the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening programme is to reduce AAA-related mortality by providing a systematic population-based screening programme for men in the year they turn 65 and, on request, for men over 65. Research shows that screening men aged 65, using an ultrasound scan, will reduce the death rate from ruptured AAAs by around 50%.

Since the introduction of the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme in June 2012, just over 6,000 men have been screened, giving an uptake rate of 82%. Eighty six men have been detected with an AAA. Aneurysms only require treatment when they reach 5.5cms. Twelve of the aneurysms identified have been 5.5 cm and over. Men with an AAA less than 5.5 cm are kept under surveillance by the programme.

Stroke Lysis Treatment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times, in the last twelve months, a patient at the (i) Causeway Hospital; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital, who suffered a stroke, did not receive stroke lysis treatment despite being in the hospital within the three hour time frame required for treatment. **(AQW 21822/11-15)**

Mr Poots:

- (i) For the twelve months April 2012 – March 2013 42 patients presented at Causeway Hospital within the 3 hour timeframe required for stroke lysis treatment but did not receive stroke lysis treatment. All of the patients had been assessed for their suitability for stroke lysis treatment but were deemed unsuitable due to contraindications.
- (ii) For the twelve months April 2012 – March 2013 72 patients presented at Antrim Area Hospital within the 3 hour timeframe required for stroke lysis treatment but did not receive stroke lysis treatment. All of the patients had been assessed for their suitability for stroke lysis treatment but were deemed unsuitable due to contraindications.

Serious Adverse Incidents

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how many occasions in the last twelve months a Serious Adverse Incident was deemed to have occurred at the (i) Causeway Hospital; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital due to the capacity or staffing in Accident and Emergency and hospital wards.

(AQW 21824/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 1 May 2010, Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations have been required to report to the HSC Board any Serious Adverse Incident relating to the services they provide. Prior to that date, incidents were reported to the Department.

The total number of Serious Adverse Incidents reported to the Health and Social Care Board due to the capacity or staffing in Accident and Emergency and hospital wards in the last twelve months by (i) Causeway Hospital is one; and (ii) Antrim Area Hospital is two.

Oakridge Social Education Centre, Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the cost per capita for people with disabilities attending Oakridge Social Education Centre, Dungannon.

(AQW 21833/11-15)

Mr Poots: The estimated budgeted cost per capita (i.e. per place) in Oakridge Social Education Centre for 2012/13 was approximately £12,500.

Older People with Learning Disabilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made (i) in improving services and plans for future service provision for older people with a learning disability and their families, including having up to date and accurate information about their needs and wishes; and (ii) early planning to minimise the need for crisis interventions and reviewing funding allocations to take account of the increasing numbers of older people with a learning disability.

(AQW 21841/11-15)

Mr Poots: Planning for the future needs of older people with a learning disability and their families is a priority for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and HSC Trusts.

- (i) The recently published (March 2013) Bamford Action Plan 2012- 2015 requires the HSCB and the Trusts to carry out a scoping exercise to enable drawing up of plans for services aimed at meeting older parents'/carers' needs. To this end, the Trusts have been asked to identify numbers of older carers in their area. These returns will be considered at the May meeting of the Bamford Learning Disability Sub Group and thereafter, costed plans will be developed.
- (ii) These actions will improve needs assessment and planning to inform the future commissioning of services to meet growing service demands. There will also be further development of services in the community to include short break/respite services, additional domiciliary support and leisure and social activities e.g. – caring breaks models.

The HSC will continue to work with the NI Housing Executive to address the housing and support needs of those living with disabilities.

Older People with Learning Disabilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are in place to support older people with a learning disability who, because of their age, will no longer receive day services.

(AQW 21842/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are no plans to cease day services for people with a learning disability on the basis of their age.

The Health and Social Care Board has advised that services for people with a learning disability are commissioned and delivered on the basis that it is a lifelong condition.

A key priority for the Board is to respond to the growing number of older people with a learning disability across a range of needs. This includes day services and day opportunities which are more age appropriate, and short breaks which benefit the individual and their carer.

Older People with Learning Disabilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to work with the Minister for Social Development to minimise the need for crisis moves by identifying and responding early to the housing and support needs of older people with a learning disability and their families.

(AQW 21844/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recognise the importance of transition planning for older people with a learning disability and their families. Housing needs and associated care and support has to be planned and based on the specific needs of individuals.

Through the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Bamford and 1:1 meetings, I will continue to work with my ministerial colleagues on these issues. Co-operation is ongoing through the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Local Area Supporting People Partnerships, which are composed of both HSC and Housing representatives, working closely to meet the needs of those with a learning disability and also other groups of people with social housing needs.

In addition to this, the HSC Board and the NI Housing Executive co-chair a Mental Health and Learning Disability Community Integration Project. The primary function of which is to plan housing with care for adults with a learning disability and/or mental health needs, who wish to live independently. The work of this group will be shaped by a scoping exercise on needs.

Registered day Nurseries in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the name and capacity of each registered day nursery in North Down.

(AQW 21849/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently 18 day nurseries registered in the North Down constituency, with 835 places. The location and maximum number of places at each nursery is listed in the table at Annex A.

ANNEX A

Day Nurseries and Registered Places in the North Down Constituency

Name	Post Code	Places
Rockport School Day Nursery	BT18 0DD	40
Glencraig Integrated Children's Centre Day Nursery	BT18 0DJ	40
Merdyn Day Nursery	BT18 9DF	66
Oakey Dokey Day Care	BT18 9EL	36
Tiggers Palace Day Nursery	BT18 9RD	59
Bright Beginnings Day Nursery	BT19 1RB	47
Little Bears Day Nursery	BT19 6EU	46

Name	Post Code	Places
Primacy Day Nursery	BT19 7PQ	20
Little Stars Private Day Nursery	BT19 7PU	52
Stepping Stones Day Nursery	BT20 3EQ	53
Cabbage Patch Private Day Nursery	BT20 4JZ	40
Blue Bell Lodge Private Day Nursery	BT20 4QU	62
Big Red Balloon	BT20 4RG	36
Country Kids Day Nursery	BT21 0LJ	67
Happy Days Day Nursery	BT21 0PZ	60
Happy Days Day Nursery	BT23 7PT	41
Playhouse Day Nursery	BT23 7PT	50
Little Kingdom Kids	BT20 5EX	20
	Total	835

Illicit Drug Trading in Prisons

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 21082/11-15, for his assessment of these dispensing arrangements in terms of tackling illicit drug trading in prisons.

(AQW 21857/11-15)

Mr Poots: As outlined previously in AQW 21082/11-15, the current arrangements for the distribution of prescription medicines to prisoners are based on the Department of Health / HM Prison Service document "A Pharmacy Service for Prisoners" (2003) and aims to meet the HM Inspectorate of Prisons Expectation no. 39 which states "Prisoners are cared for by a pharmacy service which assesses and meets their needs and is equivalent to that in the community."

The South Eastern H&SC Trust (SET) is working closely with the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to address the issue of illicit drug use in prisons.

In respect of the trading of prescription medications, the SET has taken a number of steps to tackle the problem:

- In September 2012, within HMP Hydebank Wood and HMP Magilligan, the SET moved a number of highly tradable prescription medications onto its list of those medications which can only be administered directly to a prisoner by nursing staff ("supervised swallow"). This initiative has proven very successful and has removed these highly tradable medications from the prison environment at these establishments.
- Following the successful introduction of this policy in HMP Hydebank Wood and HMP Magilligan, the SET and Northern Ireland Prison Service are now working towards its implementation in HMP Maghaberry.
- A successful pilot scheme in Lagan House, using a new 'medication' room to ease pressures on the existing treatment room, was completed in March 2013 and this will now be implemented throughout HMP Maghaberry. On completion of this work, the Trust will move all tradable medications prescribed in HMP Maghaberry onto the "supervised swallow" list.
- A number of initiatives are also being considered by SET's Primary Care GPs to reduce the prescribing of these tradable medications in the prison environment in line with the RCGP guidelines 'Safer Prescribing in Prisons' (2011).

Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Department was designed to deal with 30,000 patients per year but receives 72,000 patients per year, what additional resources have been made available to staff in the Accident and Emergency Department.

(AQW 21876/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has made significant additional funding available to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to improve emergency care performance at Antrim Area Hospital. Additional resources have been allocated to provide additional staff, implement an Emergency Department Action Plan and address winter pressures.

The Northern Trust has advised that since 2010/11, bed capacity at Antrim Area Hospital has increased by 25% and medical staffing levels in Medicine and Surgery have increased. The emergency consultant complement has increased from four to eight, and non-consultant grade doctors have increased from one to four. The nursing staff complement has increased from 54.89wte nurses to 60.89wte. There has also been investment in bank, agency and overtime nursing to support the emergency department in dealing with significant pressures. A new 24 bed ward opened on 17 April 2013 which will improve waiting times for people who need to be admitted to hospital from the emergency department and allow expansion of the Medical Assessment Unit.

Despite this investment, there are significant space constraints within the current emergency department which can impact adversely on patient flow within the department. A new £9 million state of the art emergency department has been constructed which will cater for up to 90,000 attendances a year. The new unit is expected to be operational from 26 June 2013.

Cancer Rates

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cancer rates in each District Electoral Area in each of the last five years, broken down by type of cancer.

(AQW 21890/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

The data requested does not have large enough numbers to provide robust and meaningful comparisons.

Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the new Accident and Emergency Department for the Antrim Area Hospital, including when the facility will be operational.

(AQW 21895/11-15)

Mr Poots: Work on the new Accident and Emergency Department is nearing completion and the facility is expected to be handed over to the Northern Trust on 29 April 2013. The new unit is due to be operational from 26 June 2013.

Mid Ulster Hospital: Programmes of Care

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the Programmes of Care that were available in the Mid Ulster Hospital for (i) inpatients; (ii) day cases; and (iii) outpatients as of (a) 31 March 2012; and (b) 31 March 2013.

(AQW 21905/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years, the Mid Ulster Hospital provided services within the Programmes of Care indicated in the table below.

	2011/12	2012/13
Inpatients	Acute Programme of Care Elderly Care Programme of Care	Acute Programme of Care Elderly Care Programme of Care
Day cases	Acute Programme of Care	Acute Programme of Care
Outpatients	Acute Programme of Care Maternity and Child Health Programme of Care	Acute Programme of Care Maternity and Child Health Programme of Care

A breakdown of the specialties provided at the Mid Ulster Hospital is published on the Department's website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm

Muckamore Abbey Hospital

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff were recruited to work at Muckamore Abbey Hospital in 2011-12.

(AQW 21932/11-15)

Mr Poots: Staff recruited to Muckamore Abbey Hospital during the specified period is detailed in the table below. This information has been supplied by the Belfast HSC Trust and has not been validated by the Department.

Grade	Headcount	WTE
Admin & Clerical Band 3	2	1.80
Domestic Services Band 2	8	3.96
Laundry Worker Band 1	1	0.80
Learning Disability Social Worker Support Band 5	3	3.00
Learning Disability Nurse Band 5	12	12.00
Learning Disability Nurse Band 6	2	2.00
Mental Health Nurse Band 6	1	1.00
Nurse Manager Band 8B	1	1.00
Total	30	25.56

General Anaesthetic

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to what extent are patients, who have received surgery requiring a general anaesthetic, discharged the same day as admission; (ii) under what circumstances is this the preferred option; (iii) whether these patients can elect to be discharged on the same day; and (iv) to outline the benefits to the patient and the facility of a same day discharge.

(AQW 21961/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) This information is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.
- (ii) The decision about when day case surgery is the preferred option will depend on both the operation and the patient. Many procedures are suitable for day surgery, and both the British Association of Day Surgery and the Audit Commission have suggested lists of procedures which

could normally be undertaken as day surgery. The Patients will be assessed for any underlying condition that would make day surgery inappropriate.

- (ii) Any decision of the fitness of a patient to be discharged the same day is a matter of clinical judgement, which rests with clinicians responsible for their care.
- (iv) If procedures are carried out as daycases this will ensure more efficient utilisation of staff and resources. The higher bed turnover will improve occupancy rates, reduce the number of hospital admissions and will positively impact on waiting lists, so enhancing the patient experience.

Congenital Cardiac Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the review of congenital cardiac services in Belfast.

(AQW 21989/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following public consultation the Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Surgical services (PCCS) Working Group, established by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), produced a post-consultation framework which identified 8 options for the future commissioning of PCCS for Northern Ireland. The Working Group has been asked to consider these options and recommend to the HSCB a preferred way forward (PWF) for the future commissioning of this service. This will be considered by the Board on 25 April 2013 and, if approved, the PWF will be forwarded to my Department for consideration by me. I am aiming to announce my final decision on the arrangements for the future commissioning of PCCS services shortly after receiving the Board's recommendation.

Suicide Prevention Co-Ordinator: East Belfast

Mr Copeland asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the progress of the proposed appointment of a Suicide Prevention Co-Ordinator for east Belfast.

(AQW 22001/11-15)

Mr Poots: Senior staff in the Public Health Agency have reviewed East Belfast Community Development Agency's (EBCDA) proposal for an additional Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator for east Belfast. After discussion with colleagues from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board, it was agreed that clarification was required from EBCDA on a number of issues in their application. The Public Health Agency wrote to the Chair of EBCDA on 17 April 2013 to seek a meeting. A date has not yet been finalised for this meeting.

Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the seven consultants' concerns regarding the safety of the Accident and Emergency Department at Antrim Area Hospital, for an update on the situation.

(AQW 22069/11-15)

Mr Poots: I visited Antrim Area Hospital on Monday 22 April 2013 to hear at first hand the consultants' concerns. I am advised by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that it is working with the emergency department consultants to mitigate the potential risks within the hospital's emergency department. The Trust has put in place a range of measures to ensure patient safety at the emergency department including: expanding the Medical Assessment Unit which allows GPs direct access to specialist assessment beds; increasing support for triage and reviewing and strengthening the escalation process; and, making further investment in nursing staff and increasing paediatric support. The Trust is also looking at improvements in other areas of the hospital to help improve patient flows in and through the emergency department.

Department of Justice

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Joseph McCabe, to detail (i) whether he took part in any treatment programs whilst in custody; (ii) when he was released from prison; (iii) the terms of his release/licence; (iv) which agencies were tasked with monitoring him after release; and (v) whether he has breached any terms of release and/or Sexual Offences Prevention Orders on any occasion since his release.

(AQW 21379/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): Disclosure of information relating to Mr McCabe's attendance at treatment programs whilst in custody would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Mr McCabe was released from prison on 17 February 2013 and was being monitored by PBNI who took recent breach action.

Mr McCabe was sentenced under Article 26 of the Criminal Justice Order (NI) 1996 which required him to serve a period of time in custody followed by a period of time on a supervised licence in the community. Licencing conditions are individually tailored to manage each offender and therefore cannot be disclosed under the Data Protection Act.

Prisoner Riots: Televisions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19335/11-15, whether any televisions have been destroyed as a result of prisoner riots, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21390/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my response to AQW/20188/11-15.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 20453/11-15 and AQW 19382/11-15 and given that a number of staff were suspended for up to thirty months each, to detail (i) why all cases are not given precedence in terms of reaching speedy conclusions, commensurate with Code of the Conduct and Discipline timescales, legislative requirements and procedures; and (ii) whether the Northern Ireland Prison Service will implement procedures to ensure that timescales are adhered to, so the length of suspensions are kept to the minimum and that Prison Service funding is spent with care and propriety whilst treating staff fairly and reasonably.

(AQW 21392/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) deals with disciplinary cases as quickly as possible taking account of any relevant issues which may cause delay.
- (ii) The new disciplinary system, which is shortly to be introduced for NIPS staff, will introduce new procedures with regard to the suspension of employees.

Data Protection Act 1998: Disclosure of Requested Information

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 19382/11-15, to detail the section of the Data Protection Act 1998 that prevents the disclosure of the requested information.

(AQW 21450/11-15)

Mr Ford: The data protection principles as mentioned at Section 4, and detailed within Schedule 1, of the Data Protection Act 1998 prevent the Northern Ireland Prison Service from disclosing the information the Member has sought.

Flying Flags at Courthouses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the requirements for flying flags at courthouses is contained within the assignment instructions for contracted staff.

(AQW 21451/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that the requirements for flying flags at courthouses are contained within the assignment instructions and operational management instructions for contracted staff.

Legal Aid Costs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Legal Aid was granted to the individual to pursue case number 12/079265/01 at East Tyrone Magistrates Court; and to detail the Legal Aid and all other costs incurred on his behalf in this case.

(AQW 21455/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no record of legal aid being granted under case number 12/079265/01

Legal Aid Application Criteria

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Justice to outline the Legal Aid application criteria for applicants with financial assets.

(AQW 21459/11-15)

Mr Ford: The legal aid criteria varies depending on the legal aid scheme to which the application applies.

Criminal legal aid is granted by the court, under Part III of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, and subject to two tests, the means test and the merits test. The means test requires the judge to determine whether the defendant has sufficient means to mount his own defence in circumstances where legal representation is necessary. There is currently no fixed financial limit applied to the means test. The merits test requires the judge to determine whether the interests of justice require that the defendant be legally represented. If these tests are satisfied the court can grant criminal legal aid.

In civil proceedings, legal aid is granted by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission in accordance with means and merits criteria as set out in the Legal Aid Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, the Legal Advice and Assistance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981 and the Legal Aid (Assessment of Resources) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981.

For Legal Advice and Assistance the disposable capital limit is £1,000. Applicants with disposable capital above this limit are ineligible for funding.

For Assistance by Way of Representation the disposable capital limit is £3,000. Applicants with disposable capital above this limit are ineligible for funding unless they are on income support, income based job seekers allowance, guaranteed state pension credit, or income related employment and support allowance.

For Civil Legal Aid the lower disposable capital limit is £3,000 with an upper disposable capital limit of £6,750 which is increased to £8,560 in personal injury claims. Applicants with disposable capital above the upper limit are ineligible for funding. Applicants with disposable capital below £3,000 may be granted free Civil Legal Aid, whereas applicants between the two thresholds may be granted funding but be liable for contributions towards the costs of their Civil Legal Aid.

Republican Action Against Drugs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why there is a variance within some court divisions in respect of persons seeking reporting restrictions due to alleged threats from Republican Action Against Drugs; and whether the law on reporting restrictions is open to interpretation.

(AQW 21493/11-15)

Mr Ford: The application and interpretation of legislation covering reporting restrictions is an issue for the trial judge taking account of the details of each individual case.

Agency Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether agencies that are contracted to provide staffing and services to his Department, are compliant with all regulations, particularly in employment matters, which the Department practises.

(AQW 21499/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice follows the procurement guidance as laid out by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) which is a Centre of Procurement Excellence (CoPE).

Contractors appointed by CPD, Supplies and Services Division, to deliver services are contractually obliged to comply with all legislation and good practice pertaining to their industry.

Prison Service Trust Outreach Workers

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the effectiveness and importance of Prison Service Trust outreach workers.

(AQW 21521/11-15)

Mr Ford: Any assessment of the effectiveness and importance of Prison Service Trust Outreach Workers is a matter for the Board of Directors of the Prison Service Trust.

Public Prosecution Guidelines

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice whether he has plans to introduce public prosecution guidelines to ensure that individuals who have committed serious offences involving sexual or violent crimes are sentenced appropriately.

(AQW 21529/11-15)

Mr Ford: The issue of guidelines for the prosecution of offences is a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions. A Code for Prosecutors, available on the PPS website, provides guidance on the general principles to be applied in determining, in any case, whether criminal proceedings should be instituted.

Where criminal proceedings are instituted, the legislative framework provides a range of disposals for those convicted of sexual or violent crimes. Determining the appropriate sentence within this framework is a matter for the judiciary.

The Policing Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the PSNI. It is for the Board to determine how best to exercise its authority in this regard in holding the Chief Constable to account.

Public Prosecution Guidelines

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice whether he has plans to meet with the Policing Board to ensure that police officers are not merely cautioning individuals who have committed serious sexual or violent offences.

(AQW 21531/11-15)

Mr Ford: The issue of guidelines for the prosecution of offences is a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions. A Code for Prosecutors, available on the PPS website, provides guidance on the general principles to be applied in determining, in any case, whether criminal proceedings should be instituted.

Where criminal proceedings are instituted, the legislative framework provides a range of disposals for those convicted of sexual or violent crimes. Determining the appropriate sentence within this framework is a matter for the judiciary.

The Policing Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the PSNI. It is for the Board to determine how best to exercise its authority in this regard in holding the Chief Constable to account.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how much funding will be made available through the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships for 2013/14; (ii) the purpose of the funding; and (iii) how can communities access this funding.

(AQW 21538/11-15)

Mr Ford: Just over £5.1m is being provided jointly by my Department and the Policing Board to fund the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) in 2013/14. It is worth adding, however, that many PCSPs also attract match-funding from their local councils or other sources.

The purpose of this funding is to support the PCSPs in the implementation of their local action plans, which are aimed at improving community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, and supporting community confidence in policing by working in partnership with communities to ensure local accountability.

The Action Plans may include funding for community-based projects; however, the decision on how funding is accessed and allocated is the responsibility of each PCSP, on the basis of consultation, community engagement and research carried out to identify local priorities.

In addition to funding for delivery against PCSP Action Plans, my Department will also be providing, through PCSPs, additional funding, in the region of £100,000 for Priority Youth Interventions. This initiative is aimed at providing programmes during the summer, and at high risk times, to engage young people in a range of diversionary, intervention and developmental activities.

Finally, in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 approximately £500,000 was also made available to PCSPs from the Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS). As the money for ARCS is derived from criminal confiscation receipts, it is not possible to know in advance the quantum of funding which may be available in any given year; however, it is my intention that the PCSPs will be able to make bids to ARCS during the 2013/14 period.

Translation Services

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department spent on translation services for visiting foreign nationals in each of the last five years.

(AQW 21562/11-15)

Mr Ford: Expenditure on translation services for visiting foreign nationals cannot be provided as the Department and its Agencies does not record translation costs in a way that makes this possible.

Prisoner Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice which agencies deemed Kenneth Douglas fit for release on 23 April 2012 having already been returned to custody on 12 March 2010; and whether therapy afforded to him and his wife was considered, on both occasions, when a decision was made regarding the release.

(AQW 21614/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the response I provided to AQW 20041/11-15.

All information available would have been considered by the multi disciplinary case conference when making decisions regarding the release of Mr Douglas.

Prisoner Deaths in Custody

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18760/11-15, to detail (i) the number of prisoner deaths in custody between 1 January 2008 and 31 March 2013 and in how many of those cases the Prisoner Ombudsman recommended that disciplinary investigations be conducted; (ii) the number of cases arising from complaints made by prisoners; and (iii) the number of death in custody and other cases into which the Northern Ireland Prison Service conducted investigations of its own accord.

(AQW 21615/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been 31 deaths recorded by NIPS between 1 January 2008 and 31 March 2013. Although two deaths occurred while the prisoner was on release from the prison, NIPS still record them as the Prisoner Ombudsman is required to complete an investigation.

Of the investigations completed, the Prisoner Ombudsman has recommended that disciplinary investigations be conducted in one case.

The Prisoner Ombudsman has made four recommendations for disciplinary investigations arising from complaints received from prisoners during the aforementioned dates.

NIPS conducted two further investigations of its own accord having received death in custody reports and will continue to do this in all cases where there is alleged or suspected misconduct.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21068/11-15 given that the Code of Conduct Discipline and the Northern Ireland Prison Service Managers Discipline Handbook has not been updated to meet legislative requirements and that appeals by prison staff continue to be upheld on the grounds that dismissal decisions by the Northern Ireland Prison Service were unfair and that procedures are not being followed, to detail the basis for his satisfaction.

(AQW 21616/11-15)

Mr Ford: As previously stated, I am satisfied that prison staff are, and will be, afforded the necessary safeguards throughout the disciplinary process.

With any disciplinary system there will always be cases that are upheld on appeal.

RUC Reserve Gratuity Fund

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice for an update on RUC Reserve Gratuity Fund and his he plans for the £392,000 remaining in the fund.

(AQW 21617/11-15)

Mr Ford: This residue will be retained until the Department is confident that no further payments may be made. No decisions have yet been taken on how the residue can and should be used, but my Department is considering a number of options.

Prisoner Granted Temporary Leave

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 20234/11-15, whether the prisoner was able to obtain temporary release from the Prisoner Assessment Unit to attend a wedding; and if so, (i) on what date was he (a) released; and (b) returned; (ii) what was his relationship to the persons getting married; (iii) did he fully meet the criteria for this release; (iii) what level of staff approved the temporary release; (iv) what grade of Prison Service staff accompanied the prisoner during his release; and (v) whether he was in preparation for full release from custody when granted this leave, and if so on what date was he subsequently released.

(AQW 21633/11-15)

Mr Ford: Having met the necessary criteria, Mr Parker was granted an Accompanied Temporary Release from Maghaberry prison to attend his daughter's wedding. He was released from Maghaberry on 21 June 2008, accompanied by a Governor and an officer, and returned to the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) at 20.00 hours on 21 June 2008.

Mr Parker was assessed as being suitable for a period of Accompanied Temporary Release by a multi disciplinary board. His application was approved by the Governor in charge of Life Management Unit.

Accompanied Temporary Release forms part of the process for the eventual release of each prisoner on the Pre Release scheme. Mr Parker was subsequently released from custody on 10 January 2012.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21140/11-15 and AQW 20186/11-15, (i) why the Prison Service does not have a policy that sets out additional mandatory requirements that are not contained in the Code of Conduct; (ii) for his assessment of the impact on Prison Service staff of the lack of a suspension policy; and (iii) what assurances he can give that these issues will be addressed prior to the new disciplinary system becoming operational.

(AQW 21635/11-15)

Mr Ford: As previously explained suspension from duty is made in accordance with the procedures outlined in the current Code of Conduct and Discipline. There is therefore no requirement for any additional policy to support such procedures.

Trial Costs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) on what grounds the murder convictions against Christopher Francis Kerr and Aaron Cavana Wallace were quashed; (ii) for a breakdown of the costs to date involved in each trial, appeal and any other relevant proceedings, including Legal Aid; and (iii) for an estimate of the final costs.

(AQW 21644/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Court of Appeal delivered a judgment in this case on 19 December 2012 ruling the convictions to be unsafe. A copy of the summary judgment is available on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website in the "Judicial Decisions" section.

The tables below show a breakdown of estimated costs of court proceedings.

Table 1 details the estimated costs to date and includes those attributed to the seven defendants charged in the original trial, along with those that subsequently proceeded with an appeal. Table 2 provides an estimate of the total cost of the case. However, costs in respect of one defendant in the Court of Appeal are currently being assessed and are not available at this stage.

TABLE 1 - ESTIMATED COST TO DATE

Cost Type	Estimated Cost £
PSNI ¹	Not Available
PPS Prosecution ²	£217,627.00
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ³	£5,259,367.60
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	£117,775.12
Jury Costs	£26,137.96
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£10,510.00
Total	£5,631,417.68

- 1 The PSNI have indicated that all duty associated with the case was pre-detailed duty and no additional costs were incurred.
- 2 This figure represents the costs paid to date, however final costs for all fees for counsel and witness expenses have not yet been invoiced.
- 3 Includes defendants' legal aid costs for Crown Court and Court of Appeal cases. Costs in respect of one defendant in the Court of Appeal are not currently available and are not included in the table.

TABLE 2 - ESTIMATED TOTAL COST

Cost Type	Estimated Cost £
PSNI ¹	Not Available
PPS Prosecution ²	£400,000.00
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ³	£5,447,551.60
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	£119,160.86
Jury Costs	£26,137.96
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£10,680.00
Total	£6,003,530.42

- 1 The PSNI have indicated that all duty associated with the case was pre-detailed duty and no additional costs were incurred.
- 2 Estimated that final PPS costs will not exceed £400,000.
- 3 Includes defendants' legal aid costs for Crown Court and Court of Appeal cases. Costs in respect of one defendant in the Court of Appeal are not currently available and are not included in the table.

Breach of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice on what dates in 2012 was Stuart Townsend (i) jailed; and (ii) released from custody for breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

(AQW 21645/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr Townsend was remanded into custody on a charge of Breach of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order on 18 January 2012 and released on bail on 23 January 2012. He then served a sentence of imprisonment for a number of offences including Breach of a Sexual Offences Order between 15 June and 8 October 2012.

Jury Service

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice whether he would consider excusing those called for Jury Service, in the event of cases which extend beyond ten working days, when the impact of their continued service would be deemed detrimental to the economy.

(AQW 21728/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 sets out the categories of person who are disqualified, ineligible or excusable from jury service as of right. Individuals may also apply to the Juries Officer to have jury service deferred until a later date or ask to be excused if they have a valid reason which may include business or economic issues. Applications for excusal may also be considered by the trial judge. However, juror excusals need to be considered along with the requirements of the court including the need to have sufficient numbers of jurors and a representative jury.

Given the existing powers to grant discretionary excusal, I have no plans to reform the eligibility criteria for jury service.

Newtownards Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what adaptations or alterations will be made to Newtownards Courthouse to accommodate any increase in the volume of users as a result of the closure of Bangor Courthouse.

(AQW 21757/11-15)

Mr Ford: Newtownards Courthouse has adequate facilities to accommodate the increase in the volume of users as a result of the closure of Bangor Hearing Centre.

An additional consultation room has been provided at minimal cost which equips the courthouse with five consultation rooms.

Cost of the Courts System

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Justice how he proposes to minimise the cost of the courts system relating to youth justice and the probationary help for young offenders.

(AQW 21774/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department is committed to working collaboratively on early intervention with other Government Departments under the umbrella of Delivering Social Change.

Within Justice, my Department, in conjunction with other justice agencies and the voluntary and community sector, seeks to divert young people away from crime through a variety of measures including Reducing Offending in Partnership and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, as articulated in the Community Safety Strategy and the emerging Reducing Offending Strategic Framework.

We are also currently piloting Youth Engagement Clinics in Belfast. This innovative approach seeks to divert young people who offend both from court and from future offending. At the core of the approach is the idea that earlier engagement with young people who offend, with a view to helping them make an informed decision about their options, will improve the rates of diversion from the courts. The pilot will end on 31st May and will be subject to a full evaluation to help inform a decision on whether Youth Engagement Clinics should be continued and introduced in other areas.

Ultimately, these measures should contribute to keeping young people out of court, thereby reducing the cost of the court system.

Illegal Fuel

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Justice to detail how much illegal fuel has been seized and how it has been disposed and the cost, in the last eight years.

(AQW 21776/11-15)

Mr Ford: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs have provided the following information. The figures below detail the quantities of fuel seized in Northern Ireland in each of the years requested. Seized fuel is disposed of under a contract as recycled, non-motor, oil for industrial use. The process is licensed and closely governed. The cost for disposal of seized fuel is incorporated into an overall contract for all goods seized by HMRC; the individual costs for disposal of seized fuel cannot be disaggregated.

Year	Fuel seized (litres)
05/06	1.08m
06/07	0.84m
07/08	0.82m
08/09	1.09m

Year	Fuel seized (litres)
09/10	1.04m
10/11	0.64m
11/12	1.13m
12/13	0.68m

Private Car Park Fines

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Justice to outline the legal position regarding fines imposed by private car park companies within retail developments.

(AQW 21829/11-15)

Mr Ford: The charging of a fine for parking on private land is a matter of civil law.

Distribution of Prescription Drugs to Prisoners

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21082/11-15, whether he is satisfied that the dispensing arrangements described, including whereby prisoners can in some circumstances obtain a 28 day supply of drugs and a 7 day supply of potentially dangerous drugs, are compatible with tackling the illicit trading in drugs in prisons.

(AQW 21887/11-15)

Mr Ford: All prisons throughout the UK have a policy in place for prisoners to access in-possession medication. This is entirely appropriate, and allows prisoners the opportunity to take personal responsibility for their own medication similar to being in the community.

Both the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the South Eastern Trust (SET) are keen to reduce the potential for abuse. Procedures have been introduced by SET in relation to certain prescription medications which only permit the supervised administration of these to prisoners by nursing staff. This has reduced the opportunity for abuse of prescribed medication.

Prisoners who have been risk assessed can access in-possession medication for up to one month.

I am content that NIPS and SET will continue to work in close partnership around the issues of medication distribution and in-possession medication to prevent abuse and illicit trading in drugs in prisons.

AccessNI Checks

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice if there are plans to allow AccessNI checks to be transferred between jobs.

(AQW 22024/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have accepted a recommendation made by Sunita Mason, the Independent Advisor for Criminality Information in England and Wales, that a system of portable disclosures and updated online checking be introduced in Northern Ireland. The change requires legislation provision and the introduction of changes to the current computer system. I am planning to introduce the former in the next Justice Bill. The work on the changes to the computer system has begun.

Once the change is implemented, citizens may not need to re-apply for an AccessNI check as they move between employers.

Operation Loft

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21152/11-15, whether a meeting has taken place to discuss issues surrounding Operation Loft and in particular, the possibility of suspects receiving privileged information.

(AQW 22115/11-15)

Mr Ford: I understand that a debrief regarding the operation has been held by the relevant Agencies.

Department for Regional Development

Departmental Equipment

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development whether equipment supplied by his Department was used to clear farm lane ways of snow during the recent heavy snow.

(AQW 21483/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service made its resources available to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to assist with the clearance of farm lanes in emergency situations.

Car and Passenger Recovery

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many cars and passengers had to be recovered and rescued by Roads Service during the recent heavy snow.

(AQW 21485/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: During the recent heavy snowfall, which has been unequalled in recent years, my Department's Roads Service worked continuously to keep the strategic road network open and subsequently, as resources permitted, continued to work to open minor roads in the more rural areas.

The vast majority of rescue incidents, involving the recovery of passengers and vehicles, were carried out in conjunction and cooperation with the emergency services. In these instances, Roads Service carried out the physical work to reopen roads to enable the emergency services to gain access and secure the rescue and recovery of stranded motorists.

Roads Service does not maintain full and detailed records of instances where it is involved in the provision of assistance to stranded motorists. However, based on the available information it is estimated that Roads Service was involved in the provision of assistance to around seventy stranded motorists.

Clearing Snow in Rural Areas

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many contractors were commissioned to assist in clearing snow in rural areas following the recent heavy snowfall.

(AQW 21487/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: During the recent heavy snowfall, my Department employed several contracting firms and agencies of different sizes, along with a range of plant and equipment.

Larger firms, including sub-contractors, were able to deploy resources to various locations at any one time, to reflect operational priorities and taking account of specific needs, and worked in both rural and urban environments. Roads Service's internal contractor, Roads Service Direct, also deployed manpower, plant and equipment, supported at some locations by Rivers Agency and Newtownabbey Borough Council to deal with problems that arose in that specific council area.

In total, approximately 118 external contractors were utilised by Roads Service alongside the Agencies mentioned above.

A5 Road Project

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the proposed A5 road project, why his Department did not carry out an appropriate assessment of the Rivers Foyle and Finn Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive.

(AQW 21541/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is responsible for carrying out an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive. As allowed by the Habitats Directive, a screening exercise was carried out on behalf of my Department. In carrying out this level of assessment, design and construction commitments were considered. It was concluded that it was unlikely the proposed scheme would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the River Foyle and tributaries and River Finn Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

The findings of the screening exercise were issued to the two relevant statutory bodies: the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Both Statutory Bodies agreed with the conclusions of the screening exercise. The Loughs Agency and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure were also consulted but did not respond.

Following the Judge's recent ruling, I have decided it is more effective to address the defect, rather than appeal the judgement. I have asked for a report to be prepared to address, amongst other things, impacts on the SACs and proposed mitigation. This report will be publically consulted upon and the findings of this exercise will allow me to undertake an appropriate assessment sometime this summer. I have also asked for a third party review of the project consultant's work in respect of the entire appropriate assessment process, including the scope of the report referred to above, in order to assist my deliberations.

A5 Road Project

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the proposed A5 road project, to detail the organisation responsible for carrying out an appropriate assessment of the Rivers Foyle and Finn Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive.

(AQW 21567/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question, AQW 21541/11-15.

A5 Road Project

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the proposed A5 road project, whether he will conduct an inquiry into why carry an appropriate assessment of the Rivers Foyle and Finn Special Areas of Conservation was not carried out under the Habitats Directive.

(AQW 21573/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question, AQW 21541/11-15.

Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 17631/11-15, to detail the nature of the £22.05m in assets that his Department has identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board, broken down by year.

(AQW 21586/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department and its Arm's Length Bodies, Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company and Northern Ireland Water, regularly review the assets they hold to establish whether they are still required, will be needed for future projects / operational purposes or can be declared surplus to requirements.

This ongoing process of reviewing asset holdings results in a rolling programme of asset disposals. This process also informed the capital receipt target identified for my Department.

The capital receipt target identified for my Department was based on proposed disposals of former operational depots / sites, land, properties, car parks and redundant water and wastewater treatment works and pumping stations. Each year a range of these different types of assets have / will be disposed of either on the open market or through transfers to housing associations.

Electric Cars

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures his Department has in place to encourage people to use electric cars.

(AQW 21597/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department, along with the Department of the Environment, leads the ecar project, a consortium of public and private sector partners working to bring electric vehicle charging infrastructure to Northern Ireland with grant funding from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. By the Summer of 2013, 14 rapid 50kW charge posts and 160 fast 22kW charging posts will have been installed. Each fast charge post can charge two vehicles simultaneously.

A number of activities have been undertaken to increase awareness and encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, including:

- (i) developing an ecar website www.ecarni.com and mobile phone 'app',
- (ii) a major 3-day test-drive event at Titanic Belfast; and
- (iii) a number of marketing videos and advertisements.

The ecar Project will continue to provide a number of marketing and communications activities in the coming year.

My Department is offering a grant of up to £1,500 for the installation of a home or workplace charge point for the first 180 people to buy a new electric vehicle before the end of March 2014. The general cost of an installation ranges from £1000 - £1500.

There are also several UK wide incentives available to increase the uptake of electric vehicles, such as grants of up to £5,000 towards the purchase of an electric car and up to £8,000 towards an electric van. Other incentives include exemption from fuel duty, vehicle excise duty, company car tax, van benefit charge, fuel benefit charge and enhanced capital allowances for businesses to relieve the entire cost of an electric car or van against taxable profits in the first year of acquisition.

Winter Weather Vehicles

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to reduce the average age of the fleet of winter weather vehicles designed to remove snow from the roads network.

(AQW 21624/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has produced a detailed business case outlining the need for increased and sustained investment in the winter service fleet. It is hoped that the Executive will recognise the importance of this key activity and give it priority in the capital allocations to my Department. Should sufficient funding be made available, it will be possible for Roads Service to invest in new snow blowers, in addition to the replacement of gritters and snow ploughs.

A26 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development at what stage is the A26 project; and what steps are being taken to expedite the project.

(AQW 21649/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member may be aware that a Public Inquiry for the A26 scheme took place from 5-7 November 2012. The Inspector's report on the Public Inquiry is expected to be provided to the Department by the end of April 2013. The Department will then be able to assess if any additional work

or changes may be necessary to advance the project. It is anticipated the Departmental Statement indicating the way forward, will issue later this year.

At present, there is insufficient funding within the current budget period 2011-15 to commence the construction of this scheme. However, the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021 includes the A26 project as part of a £390 million package of high priority strategic road improvements, to be funded through alternative finance in the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. The Executive agreed the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21 on 8 October 2012.

A commitment to fund the revenue consequences of this roads package will be required, and so the timing depends on future resource budgets. In the event of alternative finance not being available, the scheme could be included, together with other priority schemes, in the bidding process for conventional capital funds, within the next Budget period.

In the meantime, my officials will continue to develop the scheme to the point where the Orders can be published and the procurement could commence, should additional funding become available.

Abercorn Bridge, Newtownstewart

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline a timescale for the reconstruction of the Abercorn Bridge in Newtownstewart.

(AQW 21652/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is carrying out on site investigatory work to determine the most efficient and cost effective method of repairing and strengthening Abercorn Bridge.

A considerable amount of investigative and design work has still to be undertaken before a definite commitment can be given as to the timing of works to the bridge. It is anticipated the first phase of work, to strengthen the approach to the bridge from Newtownstewart, could begin in autumn 2013. Subsequent phases of work are also expected to be carried out to repair the bridge deck and substructure of the main spans over the river.

New Bridge in Beragh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline a timescale for the completion of the new bridge in Beragh as part of the flood relief scheme.

(AQW 21653/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service commenced work to widen Beragh Bridge and provide a new footway connection between McFarland Terrace and Main Street, in January 2013. The work on site is expected to be completed during June 2013.

During the development of this scheme, officials liaised with DARD's Rivers Agency to confirm that the widened bridge would be compatible with future flood protection measures.

Door to Door Transport Scheme

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of Disability Action being awarded the Door to Door Transport Scheme on an interim basis only, what are the future plans for the scheme in Antrim.

(AQW 21667/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department will consider how best to meet the transport needs for people with disabilities across Northern Ireland in the future informed by potential pilots and consultation with all stakeholders. It is too early at this stage to indicate the details of what scheme may be proposed but Disability Action have no plans to change services in Antrim.

Larne Line Railway Station

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the works for the railway stations along the Larne Line, including platform extensions and a footbridge for Jordanstown station. **(AQW 21668/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Officials have liaised with Translink which has confirmed that a project to construct a footbridge at Jordanstown Halt is included in Translink's current Capital Plan. Subject to completion of a business case and availability of funding, it is planned to build the footbridge in 2015/16.

Many of the platforms at stations and halts were extended as part of the New Trains Two Programme. The platform extension work is being taken forward over two phases. Phase 1, which included work at Yorkgate, Whiteabbey, Jordanstown, Carrickfergus, Downshire, Whitehead, Larne Town and Larne Harbour, is complete.

Phase 2 is well underway, having started on site at the end of February 2013. This phase includes Greenisland, Trooperslane and Clipperstown. It is planned to have these all completed by summer 2013.

A20 Newtownards to Portaferry Road

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the cost of resurfacing the A20 Newtownards to Portaferry road, in each of the last 5 years. **(AQW 21722/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department has completed a number of resurfacing schemes on the A20 Newtownards to Portaferry Road during the last five years at a total cost of £782,000.

Details of the schemes, including the associated costs, are set out in the table below:

RESURFACING SCHEMES ON THE A20 NEWTOWNARDS TO PORTAFERRY ROAD DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	Location	Cost
2009/10	Londonderry Park – Teal Rocks	£235,000
2011/12	Deerpark Road at Ardkeen	£167,000
2012/13	Maltings – Finlays Road	£380,000
	Total	£782,000

A20 Newtownards to Portaferry Road

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much has been spent on road safety measures on the A20 Newtownards to Portaferry road; and (ii) the location of the works, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 21723/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Details of road safety schemes carried out by my Department along the A20 Newtownards to Portaferry Road in the last five financial years, along with their associated costs, are set out in the table below:

Year	Location	Description of Works	Cost
2012 - 13	A20 Main Street Kircubbin	New Puffin Controlled pedestrian crossing	£33,000
2011 - 12	N/A	-	-

Year	Location	Description of Works	Cost
2010 – 11	A20 Rowreagh Road / Gransha Road junction	Junction improvement scheme and associated carriageway resurfacing	£126,000
	A20 Portaferry Road Greyabbey	Reflective Marker posts renewal	£750
2009 – 10	A20 Newtownards – Portaferry Road (various locations)	Reflective road studs / reflective marker posts placed at various pre-determined locations agreed with the PSNI Road Policing unit locations include: 1 Finlay's Road junction 2 Mountstewart Road junction 3 Gas works adjacent to Mountstewart 4 Spring Lane junction Greyabbey	£3,500
2008 - 09	N/A	-	-
		Total	£163,250

Roads Service officials will continue to monitor and inspect this route, in conjunction with the PSNI Road Policing Unit, and implement additional traffic management measures to promote roads safety, where such measures are considered to be appropriate.

New Street Lighting on the Darragh Road and Dermott Areas of Comber

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent, to date, on the current programme of installing new street lighting on the Darragh Road and Dermott areas of Comber; and when this work will be completed.

(AQW 21725/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The street lighting replacement work at Darragh Road, Dermott Road, Dermott Crescent, Dermott Park and Dermott Gardens in Comber has cost approximately £90,000 to date. It is estimated the overall scheme costs will be in the region of £125,000.

My officials anticipate that the excavation and column installation work will be completed by the end of April 2013, with the follow up electrical installation work and the provision of electricity supplies being completed by the end of June 2013.

Cost of Clearing Roads

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the additional cost for clearing roads following the recent severe weather and whether this money was allocated from his Department's existing budget.

(AQW 21732/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member may be aware there was significant private sector input involved in clearing roads as a result of the recent heavy snow. It may be some time before my Department's Roads Service receives all the invoices from contractors, therefore, I am not yet in a position to provide accurate details on the associated costs. However, it is estimated the total cost for my Department will be around £3million, which will be met from within existing budgets.

External Lead Water Supply Pipes

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to ensure the removal of all external lead water supply pipes to domestic buildings.

(AQW 21769/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that some properties built before 1970 may be connected to the public water mains by a lead service pipe. The part of the service pipe from the customer's tap to the property boundary, which is known as the supply pipe, is the responsibility of the customer while responsibility for the part of the pipe from the property boundary to the water main, which is known as the communication pipe, rests with NIW.

NIW has a 25 year programme to identify and replace lead pipes within its infrastructure. As part of this programme customers are informed when lead communication pipes have been replaced and are encouraged to replace their lead supply pipe work. At the request of a customer, NIW will replace the communication pipe free of charge provided that the customer replaces their supply pipe.

The programme, which has been in operation for some 10 years, has been allocated funding of £500,000 per year for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Financial Assistance for Farmers

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development what financial assistance will be provided to farmers who have had their roadside fences and hedges damaged by snow clearance operations conducted by Roads Service.

(AQW 21861/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my Ministerial Statement on my Department's response to Severe Winter Weather (Official Report 9 April 2013), and confirm that where my Department has inadvertently damaged or taken action that has subsequently resulted in damage to fences, it will consider compensation claims that are supported with appropriate evidence.

Guidance notes on how to make a claim can be found on the NI Direct internet site at the following web address: www.nidirect.gov.uk/property-damage-compensation-claim-form.pdf

My Department will endeavour to process these claims as quickly as possible.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development when his Department will publish the Bridge Order for the Narrow Water Bridge project.

(AQW 21885/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: This project is being progressed by Louth County Council and my Department's Roads Service is working with the Council's representatives and their technical advisers to prepare a draft Bridge Order, under Article 4 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, and a Diversion and Extinguishment Order, under Articles 5 & 6 of that Order. The draft Orders are now cleared for publication by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Departmental Solicitor's Office and my Department proposes to publish notice of the Orders during weeks commencing 22 and 29 April 2013.

The Orders need to be advertised for two successive weeks followed by a statutory consultation period of at least 30 days, and subject to any objections received, I will have to consider whether a Public Inquiry is required and follow due process.

NI Water's Pumping System

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons why NI Water's pumping system was unable to prevent flooding in Downpatrick on 17 April 2013.

(AQW 21925/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has restored Market Street Wastewater Pumping Station to normal operation following the internal flooding of properties in Downpatrick on 17 April 2013.

NIW is now interrogating all available data on the Pumping Station for the preceding period to ascertain the cause of the flooding. It aims to complete its investigations and issue a statement by 26 April 2013.

A5 Road Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to reinstate lands disturbed by preliminary works undertaken in preparation for the A5 road scheme; and what compensation arrangements exist for affected landowners.

(AQW 22022/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department recognises that some of the preliminary works already completed will need to be reversed and is willing to instruct its contractors, to carry out such works at the request of landowners. Roads Service officials have already written to landowners in this regard.

The timescales for completing these works will be dependent upon the number of requests received. Where landowners arrange for the works to be carried out privately, appropriate payments will be made, subject to there being prior agreement with the Department regarding the scope and nature of the works.

I acknowledge that many landowners have submitted compensation claims for vested lands, and some advance payments have been made. Officials will be writing again to these particular landowners advising of the following three available options:

- the Department vacates the lands and reinstates boundaries, in agreement with landowners, with compensation for loss of use of lands paid to landowners;
- the Department vacates the lands and carries out no further works on the understanding that the landowner will reinstate boundaries and lands. Compensation for this work would be paid by the Department, subject to prior agreement regarding the extent of works and rates. Compensation for loss of use of lands will again be paid to landowners; and
- fences and lands are left in their current state until further decisions are made regarding the overall scheme and landowners are compensated for ongoing loss of use of their land.

Department for Social Development

Factory Girls Sculpture in Harbour Square, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development how he will ensure the completion of the Factory Girls sculpture in Harbour Square, Derry as part of the City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 21361/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Following a meeting between officials from my Department and officers of the City Council of Londonderry, it has been agreed that a Pre-Application Discussion will be arranged with Planning Service to establish if the proposed project on Harbour Square is capable of obtaining planning permission. If it is established that planning permission for the project could be obtained, then significant work will have to be undertaken on the design to enable the project to be accurately costed and a funding package put in place. Given the amount of work involved, it is unlikely that the Factory Girls project can be completed as part of the UK City of Culture 2013 celebrations.

ATOS Healthcare

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have scored zero at their assessment by Atos Healthcare but have been scored fifteen at the review stage or following an appeal.

(AQW 21391/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Due to system limitations, it is not possible to detail how many claimants who were awarded zero points in their Work Capability Assessment medical examination subsequently scored fifteen points following a reconsideration of the original decision or an appeal.

Between June 2011, when Atos Healthcare commenced carrying out Work Capability Assessments, and March 2013, 113,341 claimants participated in the Work Capability Assessment process used to determine entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance. During this period, 33,060 claimants were awarded zero points following an examination for Employment and Support Allowance conducted by Atos Healthcare.

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.

Maisonettes in Moyle Walk, Belvoir

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development when the proposals made in 2008 to improve the Economy 7 heating and double glazing in the maisonettes in Moyle Walk, Belvoir will be carried out.

(AQW 21426/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The properties have been nominated for a proposed stock transfer programme. The Housing Executive is currently working with my Department and the Strategic Investment Board to finalise the stock transfer process to ensure this process is fit for purpose and achieves value for money in the use of public funds.

My officials advise that this work should be complete in the coming weeks, after which the Housing Executive will be in a position to initiate the process for schemes to progress later this year.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment has been made of the cost of means testing Winter Fuel Payments; and whether this cost would be greater than the cost of the current scheme.

(AQW 21428/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Means testing universal pensioner benefits would add an additional layer of complexity, and additional administrative cost. We know from experience with Pension Credit and Rates Rebate that the take-up of means tested benefits among pensioners is well below 100%. A universal approach means that help reaches all, including the most vulnerable and those most reluctant or least able to make a means tested claim.

The Winter Fuel Payment provides assurance to older people that they can turn up their heating during the cold winter months because they know they will receive significant help with their bills. The payment is made on a near universal basis, it went to approximately 316,000 people in Northern Ireland in 2011/2012, and most payments are sent out automatically with no need to claim. This is the most simple and efficient way of administering the payment and ensuring that vulnerable pensioners do not miss out.

No assessment has been made of the likely administrative costs of means-testing the Winter Fuel Payments Scheme. This information would, therefore, only be available at disproportionate cost.

Employment and Support Allowance: Phone Number

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development whether there have been any problems with the Employment and Support Allowance phone number over the last six months.

(AQW 21443/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Employment and Support Allowance Centre operates two telephone lines for claimants and their representatives; a 0800 number for making a claim and a 0845 number that handles calls about an existing claim when someone wants to report a change of circumstances or has a general enquiry about a claim.

Between October 2012 and March 2013, the two telephone lines received a total of 157,530 calls, of which 143,260 were answered, a response rate of 91%. During the same period, average call waiting times did not exceed 2 minutes 30 seconds on either telephone line.

Although response rates and call waiting times remain within acceptable levels, when there are large volumes of customers contacting the Centre, delays can occasionally occur. As a result, staffing levels are kept under constant review and when demand to answer telephone calls increase, assistance is provided by trained staff from other areas across the Centre.

St Lucia Barracks Site, Omagh

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development what plans his Department has to develop the St Lucia Barracks site in Omagh.

(AQW 21444/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department commissioned a Masterplan to inform the future development of St Lucia former military barracks which contained proposals for the different areas of the site. These proposals have not been developed as there is a leasehold covenant on the Listed Buildings within the complex which limits their use to military purposes only. The listed buildings and parade ground at St Lucia remain the property of the Ministry of Defence. That part of the site has not been transferred to the Executive; however this issue is currently being examined. Further development of the plans for St Lucia will depend on the release of the Lease as well as the future development of Lisanelly.

Urban Renewal Scheme: Castlederg

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development what proposals his Department has for an urban renewal scheme in Castlederg.

(AQW 21445/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development's physical regeneration programmes are focused on urban towns and city centres. Castlederg is defined as a rural Intermediate Settlement with a population of 2,739 and as such it cannot benefit from any of the Department's current regeneration programmes. DSD officials are working with DARD officials to explore the potential to better co-ordinate urban and rural regeneration needs to maximise, and where possible integrate, funding opportunities available for regeneration of both

urban and rural communities, as set out in the Rural Development White Paper Action Plan.

Environmental Improvement Scheme for Fintona

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development what proposals his Department has in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and Omagh District Council for an environmental improvement scheme for Fintona.

(AQW 21447/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Fintona has a population of approximately 1359 and is therefore defined as rural by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Responsibility for the regeneration of rural areas lies with the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Fintona did however benefit previously from DSD funding through the Areas at Risk pilot programme. The scheme provides funding for up to two years in an effort to increase community cohesion and capacity, strengthen community infrastructure and achieve a more sustainable approach to community participation and development. A small amount of the £127,543 funding received during the period from July 2009 to March 2012 was spent on minor environmental improvements.

Rejuvenation and Environmental Enhancement of Border Villages

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development what proposals his Department has for the rejuvenation and environmental enhancement of border villages such as Clady, County Tyrone.
(AQW 21448/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The remit of the Department for Social Development is limited to urban regeneration. Therefore, the Department's physical regeneration programmes are focused on urban towns and city centres. Villages such as Clady, with populations of around 500 people, are defined as rural Small Villages or Hamlets and as such the Department is unable to provide them with funding from any of its regeneration programmes. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible for rural regeneration.

Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 17631/11-15, to detail the nature of the £50.01m in assets that his Department has identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board, broken down by year.
(AQW 21457/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No physical assets were identified to the Asset Management Unit of the Strategic Investment Board. Savings were made by the Department through a reduction in Housing Association grant rates of approximately 20% making Associations bring more private funding into the Social Housing Development Programme while still enabling PFG targets to be met. This created a saving of £16.67 million each year over the three years from 2012/13 to 2014/15 bringing the total to £50.1 million.

Quota System for Benefits

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development what assurances he can give that a quota system will not be introduced for people's access to benefits and that each claim will be judged on its own merits.
(AQW 21466/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Social Security benefits are awarded subject to the satisfaction of specific conditions and eligibility criteria which are different for each benefit. Each claim is judged on its own merits.

I can offer assurance to the member that there are no plans to introduce a quota system for people's access to benefits.

Housing Associations Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the funding provided to Housing Associations over the last three financial years.
(AQW 21492/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the funding the Department has allocated to Housing Associations including the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association (NICHA) in each of the last three years.

	Social Housing Development Programme	NICHA	Get Britain Building	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
2010/11	166.8	18.0		184.8
2011/12	143.1	28.3		171.4
2012/13	85.1	38.0	11.9	135.0

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development what flexibilities he has secured in the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 21514/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I announced on 22 October 2012 that I had secured payment flexibilities for Northern Ireland following detailed discussions with Lord Freud. Officials are currently developing and consulting public representatives and voluntary sector representatives on a set of guidelines for determining the circumstances when the Universal Credit payment should be paid on a twice-monthly basis or split between partners in a household. They are also considering the operational details of paying the housing element of Universal Credit direct to landlords.

This work is currently underway and an Oversight Board has been established, chaired by the Department's Permanent Secretary, with input from a cross section of representatives from the community sector and academia. Two open forum events have taken place with members of the public and voluntary and community sector organisations to explore their views.

The Oversight Board is considering feedback from discussion events in addition to other research which will provide input to the Permanent Secretary. I expect to receive this report shortly.

Gambling Licensing Legislation

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any plans to review the gambling licensing legislation to permit customers of banks to enter into free prize draws.

(AQW 21536/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following a review of local gambling laws, I recently announced my intention to amend the law so as to permit such promotional prize draws within Northern Ireland. I hope to bring this legislation to the Assembly before the end of the current mandate.

Abuse Victims

Ms Brown asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the provision of emergency accommodation that his Department makes available for (i) victims who do not wish to return home to their abuser in the immediate aftermath of an attack; and (ii) their children.

(AQW 21551/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive operates in line with the provisions of the Housing (NI) Order 1988 homelessness legislation. In circumstances where a victim of domestic abuse, with or without children, approaches the Housing Executive seeking accommodation, the Housing Executive will seek to secure the most suitable temporary accommodation to meet the needs of the particular household. Such temporary accommodation may be a refuge for victims of domestic violence, for example Women's Aid, voluntary sector hostels, Housing Executive hostels, or private sector accommodation. A homelessness assessment will be undertaken where the victim of domestic abuse does not wish to return home.

ATOS Healthcare

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many audits have been carried out on the performance of Atos Healthcare, particularly in relation to the number of cases in which claimants were awarded zero points after an assessment but were awarded fifteen points on appeal; and what were the outcomes of these audits.

(AQW 21555/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In August 2011 the Department appointed an independent Health Assessment Adviser to monitor the quality of the medical outcomes from Atos Healthcare. The Health Assessment Adviser has undertaken a total of 1,134 audits during the period December 2011 until February 2013 and has found the quality of the medical assessments to be of a high standard.

There have been no audits undertaken on cases which have gone through the appeals process who were awarded zero points following medical assessment but had this increased to 15 points on appeal as currently the detailed reason for the Appeals Service overturning a decision is not shared with the Department. The Department is currently working with the Appeals Service to secure this additional information.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Executive Rent Arrears

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what (i) number; and (ii) percentage of Housing Executive tenants in North Down are in rent arrears.

(AQW 21571/11-15)

Mr McCausland: At the end of March, there were 982 (approximately 38%) Housing Executive tenants in rent arrears in the Bangor District Office area.

Queen's Parade in Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what progress has been made on the proposals for the development of Queen's Parade in Bangor.

(AQW 21572/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has agreed to purchase the landholdings at Queen's Parade assembled by the developer, Karl Greenfarm Properties Limited. The content of sale was signed on 25 March 2013. My Department will commence work on assembling the remaining land needed for the development scheme and attaining planning approval. This will take in the region of 2 years to complete. In the intervening period my Department is supporting a project to provide temporary space for local artists and performance space to revitalise the Queen's Parade area.

Paragraph 2.6 of the Dignity at Work Policy

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development why his Department's website featured an article promoting a GAA match, in breach of paragraph 2.6 of the Dignity at Work policy; and why, having been removed, the article was reinstated.

(AQW 21576/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The article was published on the Departmental Intranet site to acknowledge a charitable sporting event marking the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Social Security Agency (SSA). The pictures accompanying the article were removed from the Intranet site, as they were not considered to be in compliance with the NICS Dignity at Work (DAW) policy. A decision was taken later to reinstate the photographs on the Intranet site as they were being published in the context of the efforts of staff in fundraising for the Children's Hospice.

As this decision has subsequently raised concerns in the Department about the interpretation of the DAW policy, I have asked my officials to ensure that the policy guidance on publishing articles on the Intranet is clear in its interpretation and that staff are made clear on the Department's policy position.

Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to detail the initiatives introduced by his Department in response to the 2004 Report from the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities; (ii) which initiatives currently focus on the issues raised in the 2004 report; and (iii) the results of any evaluations into initiatives designed to address the issues raised in this report.

(AQW 21599/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Government published "Renewing Communities" in response to the Report from the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities in April 2006 detailing actions and initiatives required of a number of Departments. Details of the initiatives introduced by my Department as a result of the Report together with an outline of the work which my Department is currently progressing as a result of the evaluations of those initiatives are presented at Annex A.

ANNEX A

Vocational training through flagship developments (Renewing Communities 1.21)

This commitment was met and the Victoria Square scheme opened in March 2008. Building on the success of the Victoria Square scheme DSD will implement a Community and Business Opportunity Plan for the proposed Royal Exchange scheme that will include initiatives to provide employment and training for unemployed people in the scheme.

Expansion of NR (Renewing Communities 2.1)

In June 2003, "People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" was launched targeting the communities living in the most deprived 10% of wards across Northern Ireland using the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM). Following the review of the MDM in 2005, four additional areas were targeted for support, bringing the total number of areas to 36. A consequence of the 2004 Report from the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities was that the Neighbourhood Renewal budget was increased by an additional £2 million per year from April 2007.

A mid-term review of the Strategy was carried out which considered the overall impact of the Strategy for those who reside in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and can be access by the following link <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/people-and-place-mid-term-review.pdf> .

It should be noted that the Department also provides support to those areas outside the MDM top 10% through its Area at Risk Programme, as well as supporting a number of isolated small pockets of deprivation with very small populations (less than 1000) through the Housing Executive's Small Pockets of Deprivation (SPOD) programme.

Re-launch of Local Community Fund (Renewing Communities 2.2)

The Local Community Fund (LCF) was re-launched for a further 2 years by Minister Hanson in April 2006 as part of the Government's Renewing Communities initiative targeting those areas within the 11% - 20% most deprived communities as defined by Noble 2005 complementing the support provided through the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for the 10% most deprived communities. The Department now provides support to the top 20% most deprived areas through Neighbourhood Renewal and the Areas at Risk Programme.

**Areas at Risk
(Renewing Communities 2.3)**

The Areas at Risk Programme was launched in June 2006 to provide support to communities outside the Noble 10% indicators of the most disadvantaged but at risk of economic, social or environmental decline. The programme has an annual budget of £1million up to year ending 31 March 2015, with each area receiving support for a maximum of 2 years. To date 37 areas throughout Northern Ireland have or are currently receiving support through the programme.

The pilot programme was evaluated on two separate occasions and found to be delivering its objectives against the policy intention.

**Strategic Regeneration Framework for Belfast
(Renewing Communities 2.4)**

The concept of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks emerged from DSD's work with particular disadvantaged communities in 2006. The Department commissioned its regeneration partners, the Belfast Area Partnerships (BAPs) to develop Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) in 2006 as part of the Renewing Communities initiative. SRFs were intended to act as high level, strategic reference documents to guide relevant stakeholders in the regeneration of the city of Belfast over a ten to fifteen year timeframe.

The development of each individual SRF was led by the relevant Belfast Area Partnership with the assistance of professional consultancy teams. The process, which involved local consultation, concluded in the latter part of 2008/early 2009 when final documents were presented to DSD. DSD and Belfast City Council (BCC) co-chaired a steering group to oversee the process, which also involved substantial local consultation.

Since 2009 BRO, in conjunction with BCC and the BAPs, undertook a process of engagement across government departments to communicate the aims of the SRFs and agree shared priorities. BCC has now incorporated the SRFs into their draft Masterplan Review for the city.

**Targeted regeneration of worst urban dereliction
(Renewing Communities 2.5)**

To target the worst dereliction, through a strategic approach, the Department commissioned 5 Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplans for the Lower Shankill, Inner East Belfast, Shore Road/York Road, Crumlin Road (including Lower Olpark) and Lower Falls. Although all the plans went out to public consultation in 2010 they still remain in draft form.

**Improving Arterial Routes
(Renewing Communities 2.6)**

Between 2006 and 2008, the Department undertook a comprehensive programme of improvements to secondary arterial routes, complimenting the work already completed on arterial routes, at a cost of around £5.9m.

**Incentivising private sector housing, support for private residents of urban renewal areas, affordability general – co-ownership scheme and better use of public land to deliver social and affordable housing
(Renewing Communities 2.7 – 2.10)**

Taken forward as two year pilot actions, these initiatives have been overtaken by Sir John Semple's Review into Affordable Housing which was published in the Spring of 2007 and "Facing the future" a Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland published for consultation in October 2012.

Capacity**(Renewing Communities 3.2)**

Capacity building in disadvantaged communities was initially taken forward through the creation of local Community Empowerment Partnerships (CEPs), geared to engage local communities and help build the capacity, expertise and skills of local people. More recently, and in recognition of the need to complement the wider regeneration agenda, this capacity building work was integrated into delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy particularly through the creation of Neighbourhood Partnerships which drew on the skills of local people involved with the CEPs.

**Engaging faith based organisations in community development
(Renewing Communities 3.7)**

DSD provides regional support for faith-based community development through a contract with the Churches Community Work Alliance (CCWA) to the end of March 2015. An evaluation is due in 2014/15 and this will be used to determine future arrangements.

In May 2010 DSD established a pilot Community Faiths' Forum to generate proactive discussion and engagement with representatives from Christian and non Christian faith groups across Northern Ireland. The pilot was evaluated in March 2012 and it was recommended that it should be extended to March 2015.

**4.6 Work with NI funders Forum
(Renewing Communities 4.6)**

The NI Funder's Forum was established in February 2003 to bring together the main statutory and private funders of the voluntary and community sector to agree a programme of work, to share information and to explore the possibility of achieving a degree of complementarities between funding programmes. The Forum has not met for a number of years but the work begun by it continues within Government as Departments seek to join up funding interventions where appropriate, reduce bureaucracy in grant funding to the sector and ensure that all interventions are evidenced based and outcome focused.

DSD recently hosted a half day Funder's Seminar on Friday 7 December 2012 to help develop more awareness and greater co-operation between funding organisations both government and non government.

**Strategy for VCS Support Services
(Renewing Communities 4.7)**

In the past year DSD has completed a review of regional support arrangements, successfully introducing new arrangements designed to eliminate duplication, promote collaborative working and ensure quality of service with a greater focus on the outcomes to be achieved. In putting the new arrangements in place, DSD has worked collaboratively with other Departments where it was appropriate. Moving forward the new support arrangements are being closely monitored to ensure that they are working well. Evaluations are due in 2014/15 and these will be used to determine future arrangements.

**Modernisation and Youth facilities
(Renewing Communities 4.8)**

The £15m Modernisation Fund Capital Programme which began in 2008 has supported 61 projects in total. Forty of these projects had a direct link to improving services for youth and were allocated £7 million pounds from the overall programme funding. Over a third of the projects funded were specifically targeted for improvements to facilities for youth in disadvantaged areas. Grant funding of over £3 million pounds was allocated to achieve this objective.

Evaluations to date have revealed that over 8000 young people are using equipment / facilities provided by the funding programme. Over 4000 of the young people involved in these projects have

gained new skills and have increased their confidence. 800 young people have also gained further qualifications as a result of our funding.

ATOS Healthcare

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the assessments carried out by Atos Healthcare in which zero points were scored, but 15 points awarded on appeal, how long a claimant must wait before being called for another assessment; and whether this length of time is statutory or flexible.

(AQW 21634/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is flexibility regarding the length of time an Employment and Support Allowance claimant will wait before being called for a re-referral following a successful appeal. In the vast majority of cases, a claimant will not be re-referred for at least 6 months following a successful appeal, irrespective of how many points they were originally awarded. However, if the claimant's condition is considered serious enough, the period before the re-referral process commences can be extended for up to two years.

Privately Owned Properties

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate in the change in the number of privately owned properties in the rented sector between 2007 and 2012.

(AQW 21676/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department publishes statistics on Housing at the following link: -

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/housing_stats

Table 1.3 shows that the number of "Private Rented and Other dwellings" increased from 64,200 in 2006/07 to 113,300 in 2010/11. Figures for 2011-12 will be available in mid to late May 2013.

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.

Welfare Reform Bill: Rural Proofing

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has rural proofed the draft Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 21687/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In line with its Section 75 statutory duties my Department carried out an Equality Impact Assessment of the measures contained in the draft Bill and consulted between September and November 2011. The completed document was published in May 2012 and in recognition of concerns raised by respondents in relation to the suitability of the data used in the original assessment my Department gave a commitment that an update would be provided in relation to Section 75 impacts when new data became available.

In partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions my Department has developed a "Policy Simulation Model" (PSM) which is a micro-simulation model used for poverty and scenario analysis and can be used to demonstrate the financial impacts on different demographic groups as a result of policy changes to the tax and benefits system. The PSM is based on the Family Resources Survey (FRS) and therefore covers the same Section 75 groupings as the main survey.

Individual Regulations falling out of the Bill will also be subject to screening including, where appropriate, rural proofing.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development why Community Care Grants are not available to people who are in receipt of contribution-related Employment and Support Allowance.

(AQW 21712/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A person may qualify for contributory Employment and Support Allowance, even though they may have access to substantial savings or other income, whilst those on income-related benefits are subject to a means test and are less likely to have access to other funds. This places them in a more vulnerable position and in greater need of help.

The Social Fund is intended to provide help to the most vulnerable people in society who may need additional help to meet specific needs. However, it is subject to financial constraints, as available resources are finite. For this reason entitlement to Community Care Grants is purposely restricted to those in receipt of the four main means-tested benefits, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and, for those of pension age, to those in receipt of Pension Credit. My Department firmly believes that this qualifying criterion remains the fairest assessment which enables funds to be targeted at those who are least able to meet essential expenses.

Subject to the necessary Welfare Reform Bill receiving Royal Assent a new Discretionary Support Scheme will be introduced. This will capture the discretionary elements of the Social Fund, Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. The new scheme will be income based so that those in employment on low incomes can also benefit.

Housing Estates in Bangor: Double Glazing

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what housing estates in Bangor are still to have double glazing installed; and when the work will begin.

(AQW 21758/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have a double glazing scheme in the 2013/14 programme in the Bangor area for a total of 239 dwellings in Rathgill/ Willowbrook, Crawfordsburn/ Groomsport, and Kilcooley, which is due on site in October 2013.

Housing Estates in Holywood: Double Glazing

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what housing estates in Holywood are still to have double glazing installed; and when the work will begin.

(AQW 21761/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have a double glazing scheme in the 2013/14 programme in the Holywood area for a total of 140 dwellings in Loughview, Redburn, Kinnegar, and Woodlands, Holywood, which is due on site in February 2014.

Funding for Public Realm Works in Villages

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has any plans for funding to be made available for public realm works in villages.

(AQW 21762/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department conducts its urban regeneration functions in settlements with a population of 4,500 or over. Villages have populations of less than 2,250 and do not fall within my Department's regeneration remit.

In recognition of the needs of smaller settlements my Department made a commitment in the Rural Development White Paper Action Plan to work with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to explore the potential to better co-ordinate urban and rural regeneration needs to

maximise, and where possible integrate, funding opportunities available for the regeneration of urban and rural communities. Officials are currently taking this work forward.

Proposed Stock Transfer at Rathmullan Drive, Newtownards

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development when he will proceed with the proposed stock transfer at Rathmullan Drive, Newtownards.

(AQW 21764/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As I advised the Member in my reply to AQW 18630/11-15, the properties have been nominated for a proposed stock transfer programme. The Housing Executive is currently working with my Department and the Strategic Investment Board to finalise the stock transfer process to ensure this process is fit for purpose and achieves value for money in the use of public funds.

My officials advise work should be complete in the coming weeks, after which the Housing Executive will be in a position to initiate the process for schemes to progress later this year.

Welfare Reform Bill: Single Room Supplement

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, were the single room supplement element of the Welfare Reform Bill not to proceed, for an estimate of the resources that would be needed to fill the gap created by such a decision.

(AQW 21821/11-15)

Mr McCausland: If Housing Benefit size criteria provisions were to be removed from the Welfare Reform Bill, my Department has estimated that, taking into account the number of existing social tenants (32,650) the cost would be in the region to £17 million.

Employment Support Allowance: Medical Assessments

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development how claimants who have undergone a medical assessment as part of the migration process to Employment Support Allowance are informed of the outcome of their assessment; and whether this communication can be improved to ensure that claimants are notified in a clear and explicit manner.

(AQW 21838/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The preferred method of contact with customers, both at initial stage of migration from Incapacity Benefit Reassessment to Employment and Support Allowance and at the outcome stage, is by telephone.

If no telephone number is held in respect of a claimant who fails to migrate to Employment and Support Allowance a letter is issued asking them to contact the Incapacity Reassessment office in order to be advised of the outcome of their assessment.

Customers who are ultimately found not to have a limited capability for work will have their Incapacity Benefit claim disallowed and will be contacted by the Customer Advice and Support Team to discuss potential entitlement to alternative benefits. The team will also inform the customer of their appeal rights and provide them with ongoing advice and support.

The clerically issued form advising the claimant that they have been disallowed Employment and Support Allowance has been produced to ensure it meets the recognised 'Plain English' standards. This ensures the wording is clear, straightforward and easily understood by the claimant.

From 3 September 2012, as a result of a review of the Work Capability Assessment, Decision Makers Justifications, which provides the claimant with a clearer explanation of the decision and all the evidence considered by the Decision Maker, have been issued to claimants in cases which have been disallowed.

Whilst improvements have been made to the notification letter it is kept under constant review.

Welfare Reform: Benefit Cap

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what benefits are to be included in the proposed benefit cap; (ii) what exemptions exist for claimants; and (iii) whether his Department intends to extend the cap to cover other benefits over the next two years.

(AQW 21997/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The benefits to be included in the benefit cap will be set out in regulations following the passage of the Bill. The Bill allows all benefits to be included in the cap apart from state pension credit and state retirement pensions.

The cap will apply to the combined income from:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ■ Bereavement Allowance | ■ Income Support |
| ■ Carer's Allowance | ■ Jobseeker's Allowance |
| ■ Child Benefit | ■ Maternity Allowance |
| ■ Child Tax Credit | ■ Severe Disablement Allowance |
| ■ Employment and Support Allowance (except where it is paid with the support component) | ■ Widowed Parent's Allowance |
| ■ Guardian's Allowance | ■ Widowed Mothers Allowance |
| ■ Housing Benefit | ■ Widows Pension |
| ■ Incapacity Benefit | ■ Widows Pension Age-Related |

In recognition of the additional financial pressures they face, households will be excluded from the cap where someone in the household is entitled to:

- Disability Living Allowance or its replacement Personal Independence Payment,
- Attendance Allowance,
- Industrial Injuries Benefit and equivalent payments under the War Disablement Pensions or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme,
- the support component of Employment Support Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance.

War widows and widowers will also be exempt.

To increase incentives to work, households which include a member entitled to Working Tax Credits (including those with a nil award) will also be excluded from the cap. There will also be a grace period where those who have been continuously in work for the previous 12 months will be exempt from the benefit cap for 39 weeks.

Initially this cap will be delivered through Housing Benefit payments, so households who are not getting housing benefit will not have the cap applied. Ultimately it will be administered as part of the new Universal Credit system.

There are no plans to extend the cap to cover other benefits over the next two years. The cap is based on average earnings in Great Britain which is more advantageous to Northern Ireland claimants, as average earnings are higher in Great Britain than in Northern Ireland. The reason for introducing the cap is to set limits on the overall levels of benefit that it is reasonable for the state to provide. We need to be fair to the taxpayer and it is not reasonable or fair that households on out of work benefits should receive a greater income from benefits than the average weekly wage for working households.

Welfare Reform Concessions

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 17660/11-15, when he expects stable cost estimates to be available.

(AQW 22044/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As set out in my previous answer to AQW 17660/11 – 15, I expect that stable cost estimates will be available once detailed design work has taken place and suppliers have provided costed solution proposals. I anticipate that this will happen by Autumn 2013 subject to the outcomes of the current Cabinet Office review of the Universal Credit programme in the Department for Work and Pensions.

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